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# **AUTHENTICITY OF NAHJ AL-BALAGHAH**

**S. Mohammad H. Ghassemi Zavieh**

A thesis submitted to  
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of master of  
Arts

Institute of Islamic Studies  
McGill University  
Montreal

**Mohammad Ghassemi, 1994**



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To  
My father

## ABSTRACT

Author: S. Mohammad H. Ghassemi Zavieh

Title: Authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*

Degree: Master of Arts

Department: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University

---

This study undertakes two major issues concerning the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, namely, the compilation and composition of the book. Shī'ī scholars, with almost no exception, have credited the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. In contrast, Sunnī scholars and Orientalists hold different opinions about the matter. The early scholars among Sunnīs and their western counterparts mostly credited Murtaḍā with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, while later scholars generally vacillate between the two brothers. This study attempts to resolve misconceptions concerning the compilation of the book. It also suggests that in all probability Raḍī is the compiler while there is hardly any evidence to credit Murtaḍā.

The problem of the composition of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, namely, the attribution of its contents to `Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib is more problematic. Unlike the Sunnī scholars, the Shī'īs believe that the contents of the book represent `Alī's discourses. This thesis examines the most important arguments of both opponents and proponents of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and suggests that since a large portion of the book is present in the earlier sources, the generalization of some Sunnī scholars in doubting the entire book cannot be sustained. It shows that the most controversial passages in *Nahj al-Balāghah* as well as many other passages are traced back to earlier sources. The main aim of this part of the study is to portray *Nahj al-Balāghah* as a collection of

Shī'ī *ḥadīths* with one major difference, that no chain of transmission is appended to it. This is to suggest that the contents of *Nahj al-Balāghah* can be seen in different *ḥadīth* categories. The chains of transmission of a large portion of the book, however, can be traced in some earlier sources. Moreover, according to authoritative scholars in literature, the remaining portion of *Nahj al-Balāghah* whose chains of transmission have not been found in earlier sources, still exhibit consistency in the style, suggesting that it is composed by a single author. Thus, to test the validity of these traditions would entail examination of the text and the chain of transmission in accordance with the science of *ʿilm al-ḥadīth*. This, however, falls outside the scope of this study.

## RESUME

Auteur: S. Mohammad H. Ghassemi Zavieh

Titre: L'Authenticité de *Nahj al-Balāghah*

Grade: Maîtrise és Arts

Faculté: Institut d'études Islamiques, McGill University

---

Cette thèse traitera deux questions à l'égard de l'authenticité de *Nahj al-Balāghah*, notamment la compilation et la composition du livre. Les savants shi'ites, avec peu d'exceptions, ont attribué la compilation de *Nahj al-Balāghah* à al-Sharīf al-Radī. Par contre, les savants sunnites et les orientalistes divergent de cette opinion. Les premiers savants sunnites ainsi que les premiers occidentaux à entreprendre l'étude de la question ont souvent attribué *Nahj al-Balāghah* à Murtaḍā; pourtant, les savants plus récents hésitent entre les deux frères. Dans cette étude, nous avons essayé de résoudre ce problème. Nous suggérerons également que selon toute apparence Radī fut le compilateur et qu'il existe peu d'évidence pour attribuer la compilation à Murtaḍā.

La question de la composition de *Nahj al-Balāghah*, c'est à dire, l'attribution de son contenu à 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, est plus controversée. Contrairement aux opinions des savants sunnites, les shi'ites croient que le contenu du livre est le véritable discours d'Alī. Cette thèse examinera les arguments les plus importants des opposants et partisans de l'authenticité de *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Nous suggérerons que, puisque une grande partie de l'oeuvre paraît dans des sources antérieures, on ne peut accepter les généralisations des savants sunnites qui doutent de l'authenticité. Nous montrerons que les extraits les plus contestés de *Nahj al-Balāghah*, ainsi que maintes autres, se trouvent

dans des sources antérieures. L'objet de cette partie est de montrer *Nahj al-Balāghah* comme un recueil de *ḥadīths* shi'ites qui se distingue par le fait que les chaînes d'autorités ne sont pas citées. Ceci veut dire que le contenu de *Nahj al-Balāghah* peut se classer dans les diverses catégories de *ḥadīth*. Pourtant les chaînes d'autorités d'une grande partie du livre se trouvent dans des sources antérieures. D'ailleurs, selon certains maîtres de la littérature, la portion de *Nahj al-Balāghah* dont les chaînes d'autorités n'ont pas été trouvées dans des sources antérieures montre une harmonie stylistique qui laisse croire qu'il s'agit de l'oeuvre d'un même auteur. Cependant, vérifier la validité de ces *ḥadīths* entraînerait une examination de texte et de la chaîne d'autorités selon la science de *'ilm al-ḥadīth* qui se situe hors de la portée de cette étude.



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## IMPORTANT NOTES

1. The version of *Nahj al-Balāghah* used in this thesis is that of Muḥammad Dashtī and Kāẓim Muḥammadī's *Muḥjam al-Mufahras li Alfāz Nahj al-Balāghah* (Qum: Jāmi'at al-Mudarrisīn, 1985), which is in fact a facsimile edition of Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ's edition of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. This version contains a full index to *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

2. Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ's own edition of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is used only for references to Raḍī's introduction to *Nahj al-Balāghah* because Raḍī's introduction is not included in *al-Muḥjam*. Other editions of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, if any, are only used to refer to the editor's comments.

3. Quotations from *Nahj al-Balāghah*, as well as other Arabic and Persian sources, are translated by the present writer, unless it is mentioned in the footnotes.

4. When referring to *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the following codes are used:

kh: for *khuṭab* (sermons)

k: for *kitāb* or *risālah* (letters)

h: for *ḥikam* (maxims or short sayings)

gh: for some short sayings inserted in the middle of this section under the title of *Gharīb Kalāmih*.

5. Several references to *Nahj al-Balāghah* consist of two numbers separated by a slash, signifying that the passage itself has some sub-sections.

example: h: 227/2 = short saying 227, section 2.

6. The transliteration system is that of the Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University.

7. H.Sh. is used for references to Persian calendar.

## INTRODUCTION

### **al-Sharīf al-Raḍī: The Alleged Compiler of Nahj al-Balāghah**

Among the outstanding students of al-Mufīd, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, who although died at the young age of 47, outshone all the others with the exception of his elder brother al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā. Raḍī descended directly from `Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib through the seventh Shī`ī Imam, Mūsā al-Kāẓim, in the following order: Abū al-Ḥasan al-Sharīf al-Raḍī Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Mūsā ibn Muḥammad ibn Mūsā ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā ibn Ja`far ibn Muḥammad ibn `Alī ibn Ḥusayn ibn `Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. From his Mother's side also he traces his descent from `Alī through the famous al-Nāṣir al-Kabīr (d. 225/840 or 230/844), the conqueror and ruler of Daylam who descended from `Alī ibn Ḥusayn, the fourth Shī`ī Imam.

Raḍī's father Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥusayn known as al-Sharīf al-Ṭāhir al-Awḥad<sup>1</sup> and Dhū al-Manāqib was the most eminent among the `Alawīds of his time. Abū Aḥmad held very important posts under the `Abbāsīd rule and was very much respected by the `Irāqīs. He occupied the post of Naqīb al-Nuqabā of the Ṭālibīyīn,<sup>2</sup> the highest position ever given to a Shī`ī under the `Abbāsīd regime. At the same time, he was responsible for *Dīwān al-Mazālim* (the highest court of appeal) as well as the head office of pilgrims to Mecca for both Sunnīs and Shī`īs. Apart from the duties mentioned above, he played a very important role in settling certain political disputes between the `Abbāsīd caliph and Buwayhid rulers on the one hand and the Hamadānī rulers on the other.

---

<sup>1</sup> This title was given to him by Bahā' al-Dawlah, the Daylamī ruler which meant "uniquely purified".

<sup>2</sup> This term is a title for descendent of Abū Ṭālib.

Radī was born in Baghdad to an eminent family and very soon displayed his extraordinary brilliance before the age of ten. He completed his elementary studies of grammar and literature before this age and together with his brother joined al-Mufīd's students to complete his studies in *fīqh* (jurisprudence). His biographers narrate surprising stories about his wit and alertness of mind.<sup>3</sup> He started composing poetry before the age of ten or nine, the excellence of which surprised all his teachers.<sup>4</sup> He studied various branches of the Arabic language and literature as well as Islamic sciences under the supervision of eminent writers and scholars of their field at that time.<sup>5</sup>

When Radī was nine years old his father Abū Aḥmad and his uncle were arrested (369/980) by `Aḍud al-Dawlah (ruled 367- 72/978-83) and imprisoned in a fort in Shīrāz (Fars) because of their political influence. The arrest marked a very important point in Radī's both intellectual and political life. With Abū Aḥmad's imprisonment, his entire property was confiscated. Radī, the ambitious teenager, who had been brought up in a very eminent and rich family, showed his reaction immediately to this arrest by composing his poetry to pay tribute to his father and ancestors.<sup>6</sup> It was probably at this time that Radī started to think seriously of restoring

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, what is narrated by his teacher Ibn al-Jinnī about his genius in response to al-Sīrafī, his grammar teacher's question in Ibn al-`Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī 1350 A.H.), v. 3, p. 183f; `Abdullāh ibn As`ad al-Yāfi`ī, *Mir'āt al-Jinān* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A`lamī li al-Maṭbū`āt, 1970), v. 3, p. 18; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi al-Wafayāt* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1988), v. 2, p. 375; Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A`yān wa Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*, ed. Iḥsān `Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādīr, 1977), v. 4, p. 416, and other sources.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Abū Maṣṣūr al-Tha`ālibī, *Yatīmah al-Dahr* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1956), v. 3, p. 136; also in the sources mentioned in the previous note.

<sup>5</sup> Some of Radī's teachers will be introduced in the following pages.

<sup>6</sup> This part of Radī's poetry contains some the best poetry composed by him and is called *fakhrīyāt* in the Arabic language.

his father's political reputation and even aspire to occupy the position of the caliphate. His being a descendant of the Prophet together with his great knowledge in all aspects of the Islamic sciences and Arabic language and literature, very handsome and charismatic figure and political involvement of his `Alawīd ancestors from both mother and father's side, all were factors which encouraged him to take the issue of occupying the position of the caliphate seriously.

After `Aḍud al-Dawlah died, his son Ṣamṣām al-Dawlah continued keeping Raḍī's father in prison until Sharaf al-Dawlah, the second son of `Aḍud al-Dawlah, while proceeding to Baghdad from Kirmān in 376/986 to depose his brother Ṣamṣām, set him free from the prison. Due to Abū Aḥmad's great reputation and his influence amongst the people of Baghdād, particularly among those of the Ṭālibīds and `Alawīds, Sharaf al-Dawlah took the opportunity to ask Abū Aḥmad to accompany him while raiding Baghdād, probably to assure the people that no harm would come to them.

By the time Abū Aḥmad was set free and entered Baghdād with Sharaf al-Dawlah, Raḍī had already completed his studies with the sacrifice of his kind and compassionate mother, who sold her entire property including jewellery to support her two sons Raḍī and Murtaḍā, to continue their studies. Raḍī had started teaching at the young age of 17 and by twenty his studies were completed and his own school Dār al-`Ilm was established.

Raḍī's father died at the age of 97 in 403/1012, just three years before Raḍī himself, and the important responsibilities held by him fell upon Raḍī who also represented his father in holding these offices many years during his father's lifetime.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> It is interesting that although Murtaḍā was the elder brother and a very distinguished scholar, he was not given any of these offices during his father's life time and also after his death until Raḍī's death in 406/1015.



Radī was a tolerant, broad-minded and affectionate man. He did not compromise his friendship with non-Muslim scholars and writers, such as Abū Ishāq al-Ṣābī in spite of the social and religious pressure from the Muslims. Despite his strong religious commitment, he studied under the supervision of some Sunnī teachers without any hesitation and with mutual respect. Unlike most of the poets, he never praised anyone for money and never accepted any reward or gift for his poems or for any other reason from the caliphs or rulers or even from his own father.<sup>8</sup> According to his biographers, if he praised them in his poems it was only because of his true love and friendship or for their knowledge and scholarship. Indeed in no way he saw any of those caliphs and rulers greater than himself. Even when praising them in his poems he speaks from a higher position and very often reminds them that in no way can he be seen as less than the caliphs. In a poem addressed to the caliph al-Qādir, he compares himself with the caliph saying:

عَظُفًا ، أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ، فَإِنَّا فِي دَوْحَةِ الْعَلِيَاءِ لَا نَتَمَرَّقُ  
مَا بَيْنَنَا ، يَوْمَ الْفَخَارِ ، تَفَاوُتٌ ، أَبَدًا كِلَانَا فِي الْمَعَالِي مُعْرِقُ  
إِلَّا الْخِلَافَةَ مَبِيزَتَكَ ، فَإِنِّي أَنَا عَاطِلٌ مِنْهَا ، وَأَنْتَ مُطَوَّقُ

"You ought to know O, commander of the faithful that the high lineage we both belong to is the same; there is no difference between us in the matter of pride.

time and also after his death until Radī's death in 406/1015.

<sup>8</sup> There are many anecdotes in Radī's life confirming that he never accepted any gift or reward from anybody, even his own father. In one occasion 1000 Dīnārs were sent to Radī by the Buwayhid *Wazīr*, al-Mahlabī. Radī returned it and the ruler sent it back three times to Radī with different excuses and finally the ruler asked Radī to distribute it among his students. Radī asked his students if anybody wanted to take anything from that money. Only one student stood and touched a coin, but returned it back. When Radī asked for the reason, he answered that he needed some money which he had borrowed from a friend to buy some oil for his lamp the night before. When Radī came to know that sometimes his students could not find funding for the school, he ordered that each of the students be provided with a key of the treasury. See Muḥammad Bāqir Khāwṣārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fī Aḥwāl al-'Ulamā' wa al-Sādāt* (Qum: Maktabat Ismā'īlīyān, 1390-1392 A.H.), v. 6, pp. 195-6.

and you have put its chains on your neck and I am free of it."<sup>9</sup> It is said that when the caliph came to know of Raḍī's verses, he said, "'*alā raghm al-Sharīf*" (in spite of al-Sharīf).<sup>10</sup> We are also told that once in a dinner party Raḍī was caressing his beard and the caliph al-Ṭā'ī asked him if he felt the smell of the caliphate from his beard and was astounded by Raḍī's reply that he rather smelt the fragrance of prophethood.<sup>11</sup>

### Raḍī's Intellectual Life

Despite his short life, Raḍī delved into many subjects of Islamic sciences, Arabic language and literature.<sup>12</sup> Books that he wrote on any topic became a unique performance of its kind.<sup>13</sup> Many of his works immediately drew the attention of his contemporary scholars including his teachers.<sup>14</sup> Comparatively, Raḍī produced fewer works than his brother Murtaḍā and other distinguished Shī'ī scholars of the time, such as al-Ṭūsī. This may be partly because of his involvement with politics and poetry, and partly due to his premature death. However, the literary and religious value of his works can in no way be described as less significant than that of the other

<sup>9</sup> al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Dīwān al-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādīr, n.d.), v. 2, p. 42.

<sup>10</sup> See al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi al-Wafayāt*, v. 2, p. 374.

<sup>11</sup> This is a very delicate metaphor implying that in contrast to al-Ṭā'ī who occupied the position of the caliphate, Raḍī saw himself deserving the station of prophethood and at the same time indicating that he was a descendent of the Prophet. See *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Zakī Mubārak, *Abqariyat al-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Hijāzī, 1952), p. 208.

<sup>13</sup> See 'Alī ibn Yūsuf Qiftī, *Inbāh al-Ruwāt 'alā Anbāh al-Nuḥāt* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1986), v. 3, p. 114.

<sup>14</sup> When Raḍī was 23 years old, Ibn Jinnī, his teacher, wrote a volume on one of his poems which turned into the textbook for the students of literature. See 'Alī Davānī, *Sayyid Raḍī Mu'allif-e Nahj al-Balāghah* (Tehran: Bunyād-e Nahj al-Balāghah, 1359 A.H.), p. 10. According to Yāqūt al-Hamawī, Ibn al-Jinnī also wrote a commentary on another *Qaṣīdah* of Raḍī in which he praised Sāhib ibn al-'Ubād. See Muhammad Hādī Amīnī, *al-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (Tehran: Mu'assasat Nahj al-Balāghah, 1408), p. 36.

Shī'ī scholars who lived much longer than him.

Ironically, despite Raḍī's own desire in using poetry only as an instrument for his goals, his poetry overshadowed his other works and constituted a major part of his posthumous heritage. According to al-Tha`ālibī and other scholars, Raḍī was undoubtedly the greatest poet of the Tālibīyīn, perhaps the greatest poet the tribe of Quraysh had ever produced.<sup>15</sup> Some scholars even go further to say that he was the greatest poet of the Arabic language and greater than the famous Arab poet, al-Mutanabbī,<sup>16</sup> or even the greatest poet human being had ever seen (*Ash`ar al-nas kulluhum*).<sup>17</sup>

However, his other works in *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* and *kalām* are justifiably comparable with the works of the greatest scholars of these fields. Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī writes that "Raḍī wrote a book on the meaning of the Qur'ān, the kind of which would be impossible to compile."<sup>18</sup> On the authority of Ibn Jinnī, Raḍī's teacher, Ibn al-`Imād writes a similar statement about two of Raḍī's books that "Raḍī wrote a book on the meaning of Qur'ān, the like of which would be impossible to compile; and he compiled another book on the metaphor of Qur'ān, which became a scarce book of its kind."<sup>19</sup>

Raḍī studied under the supervision of scholars, most of whom are considered to

<sup>15</sup> See Abū Maṣṣūr al-Tha`ālibī, *Yatīmah al-Dahr* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1956), v. 3, p. 136; and al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt*, v. 2, p. 374.

<sup>16</sup> See Zakī Mubārak, *Abqariyat al-Sharīf al-Raḍī*, v. 1, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> Muḥsin al-Amīn writes, "It is said that with the exception of Murtaḍā, Raḍī was the most knowledgeable among the people and with the exception of Raḍī, Murtaḍā was the greatest poet among them." al-Amīn, *A`yān al-Shī'ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta`āruf, 1986), v. 9, p. 216.

<sup>18</sup> Aḥmad Ibn `Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1931), v. 2, p. 246.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn al-`Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, v. 3, p. 183.

be the greatest scholars of the time in their fields. Similarly, distinguished scholars were produced from among his students who narrated traditions on his authority. He also had a very close friendship and literary correspondence with some of the greatest poets and men of letters of his time. Raḍī compiled several important books with some still extant. At least 19 books are mentioned for him most of which are unique performances of their kind. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the most important compilation of Raḍī is the subject of the present study.<sup>20</sup>

### The Content of Nahj al-Balāghah

As claimed by its compiler, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah* is an anthology of selected speeches, sermons, letters and aphorisms of `Alī ibn Abī Tālib. The compilation of this book, which is considered to be the most important work of Raḍī,<sup>21</sup> was completed in the month of Rajab of the year 400/1008.<sup>22</sup> The book contains 241 sermons, 79 letters and 489 short sayings of `Alī.<sup>23</sup>

*Nahj al-Balāghah* covers various issues dealing with major problems of theology, *fiqh*, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, prophetology, imamate, ethics, social philosophy, history, politics, administration, civics, science, rhetoric, literature, poetry, metaphysics, piety, spirituality, delicate description of nature and more. It is claimed that most of the discussion about various theological and philosophical notions in

<sup>20</sup> For Raḍī's teachers, students, friends and works, see Muḥammad Hādī Amīnī, *al-Sharīf al-Raḍī*, pp. 59-134; `Abd al-Husayn Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, v. 4, pp. 183-6, pp. 198-200. `Alī Davānī, *Sayyid Raḍī Mu'allif-e Nahj al-Balāghah*, pp. 27-8, pp. 53-64, 95-7.

<sup>21</sup> It is said that Raḍī's performance in his selection of `Alī's sayings was greater than his own writings like that of Abū Tammām in his selection of poem in *Dīwān al-Himāsah*.

<sup>22</sup> As the compiler notes at the end of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 125.

<sup>23</sup> The numbers above may vary from 238 to 241, 77 to 79, and 463-489 in different editions because some editors included a few sayings together and some others gave them separate numbers.

Islam have their origin in this book. The book can be seen as an early source reflecting the teaching of the Quran, *ḥadīth* and early Muslims from a historical perspective. It portrays a clear picture of many socio-political problems of the early Islamic society. Although dealing with many legal issues, it has been totally ignored even by Shī'ī jurists as a source of Islamic law and jurisprudence, perhaps because it is always required that an *isnad* be produced for any *ḥadīth* used as a source of law.

### **The Significance of the Study on Nahj al-Balāghah**

*Nahj al-Balāghah* is one of the most important books for Muslims in general, and for the Shī'īs in particular. The book occupies such an important place among the Islamic sources that it has attained the distinction of being called "The Brother of the Qur'ān." *Nahj al-Balāghah* has gained the admiration of innumerable Muslim and non-Muslim scholars of Arabic language and literature. Raḍī himself as its compiler can be seen as the first and best admirer of `Alī's sayings. In his introduction to the book, he states: "`Alī's sayings comprise wonders and surprises of eloquence and rhetoric and brilliant jewels of Arabic language." Raḍī adds that "`Alī's sayings carry the reflection of the divine knowledge and savour of the Prophet's utterances." He says: "His (`Alī's) sayings are such an on-rushing stream that its flow cannot be encountered and such treasure of delicacies cannot be matched."<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, `Alī's utterances had been admired long before Raḍī compiled his *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Distinguished scholars, such as al-Jāḥiẓ, considered `Alī to be the most eloquent among the *Rāshidūn* caliphs<sup>25</sup> or the most eloquent among the Arabs after the Prophet. Famous writers like Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Yaḥyā al-Kātib (d. 132/749) and Ibn

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<sup>24</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ (Qum: Dār al-Hijrah, 1980), Raḍī's introduction, p. 34.

<sup>25</sup> This thesis will provide quotations from al-Jāḥiẓ in its appropriate place in the following chapters.

Nubātah (d. 374/984) proudly testify their indebtedness in becoming eloquence writers to memorizing `Alī's sermons.<sup>26</sup> Mu`āwiyah, a bitter enemy of `Alī, confirms that "No one taught the method of eloquence to the Quraysh but `Alī."<sup>27</sup> After the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, many scholars expressed their extreme appreciation towards it. Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī and Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd considered it lower than the word of God and the Prophet but higher than the word of human beings (*dūna Kalām al-Khāliq wa fawqa Kalām al-Makhlūq*).<sup>28</sup> Fayḍ al-Islām states that "*Nahj al-Balāghah* is the juice of the sayings of the prophets and the commentator of the secrets of the Qur'ān."<sup>29</sup>

Muḥammad `Abduh, a distinguished Sunnī scholar stated in the introduction to his commentary of *Nahj al-Balāghah* that "There is no one among the Arabic speaking people who fails to confirm that the word of `Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib is the noblest after the Word of God and His Prophet, the richest in its material, the most eloquent in its style, and the most comprehensive of the glorious meanings".<sup>30</sup> `Abduh considered *Nahj al-Balāghah* as a proof-text for dictionaries of the Arabic language. He says: "Indeed there is nothing of value that man may think of which cannot be found expressed in more perfect and superior form in this book."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 1, p. 24. Also see Hibat al-Dīn al-Shahrastānī, *Mā huwa Nahj al-Balāghah* (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Nu'mān, 1979), p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad Husayn Al Yāsīn, *Nahj al-Balāghah Az kīst*, trans. Mahmūd `Abedy (Tehran: Bunyād Nahj al-Balāghah, 1982), p. 17, quoted from Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd.

<sup>28</sup> See for instance, Sa'īd ibn Hibatullāh Rāwandī, *Minhāj al-Barā'ah fī Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (Qum: Maktabat Ayat Allāh al-Mar'ashī, 1406/1986), v. 1, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> `Alī Naqī Fayḍ al-Islām, *Tarjumah wa Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (Tehran: Chāp-e Aftāb, 1326 H.Sh.), v. 5, p. 820.

<sup>30</sup> Muḥammad `Abduh, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah li al-Tibā'ah wa al-Nashr, 1980), p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Muhammad Hasan Nā'il al-Marṣafī says:

*Nahj al-Balāghah* is a clear proof that `Alī is the best living example of the light, wisdom, guidance, eloquence, and miracle of the Qur'ān. There are signs of vast scholarship, correct statesmanship, and illuminating sermons in *Nahj al-Balāghah* the like of which cannot be found in the works of any other great thinker or philosopher. In this book `Alī has delved into the depths of knowledge, religion, and politics bringing out pearls of wisdom in each of them.<sup>32</sup>

Shahrastānī states that "From the literary perspective, we claim that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is greater than any other book except the Quran."<sup>33</sup> In a recent article in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, M. Djebli states: "*Nahj al-Balāghah* is one of the great masterpieces of Arabic literature."<sup>34</sup>

Many other distinguished scholars such as Jurjī Zaydān, Nāṣif al-Yāzījī, Zakī Mubārak, Amīn Nukhaylah, Muhammad Amīn al-Nawāwī, Muhammad Shukrī al-Alūsī, `Abbās Maḥmūd al-`Aqqād and Muhammad Muḥy al-Dīn `Abd al-Ḥamīd expressed similar statements towards *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>35</sup> So far George Jurdaq's *Rawā'i Nahj al-Balāghah* can be seen as the best literary appreciation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

<sup>32</sup> Shahyār Sa`ādat, "The Nahj al-Balāghah: An Introduction" *al-Tawḥīd Quarterly*, v. II. No. 2 (1405 A.H.), p. 28.

<sup>33</sup> See Hibat al-Dīn al-Shahrastānī, *Mā huwa Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 52. Shahrastānī also narrates a conversation of his with a British scholar, in which this scholar says: "If this great orator (`Alī) was preaching in our time, you would see people from Europe moving like waves in his lectures seeking a drink from the endless ocean of his knowledge." p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> M. Djebli, "*Nahj al-Balāghah*", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second edition, p. 904.

<sup>35</sup> For citations from these scholars in Arabic language, see `Abd al-Zahrā Husaynī al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asāniduh* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-`Ilmī li al-Maṭbū'āt, 1975), pp. 87-99; Shahrastānī, *Mā huwa Nahj al-Balāghah*, pp. 5-12; Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Baghdādī al-Alūsī, *Bulūgh al-Arab fī Ma`rifat Ahwāl al-Arab*, ed. Muhammad Bahjat al-Atharī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmīyah, 1980), v. 3, p. 180; Sayyid Ali Riza also quotes from many orientalist and Muslim scholars very appreciative opinions about *Nahj al-Balāghah*. See *Nahj al-Balāghah Peak of Eloquence*, translated to English by Sayed Ali Reza (New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'ān, 1958), pp. 12-15.

Since its appearance, *Nahj al-Balāghah* has been the object of considerable commentaries, translations and other scholarly studies. `Abd al-Husayn Amīnī, a very distinguished Shī`ī scholar, names 81 commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāghah*<sup>36</sup> and his son Muḥammad Hādī enumerates 129 commentaries.<sup>37</sup> Riḍā Ustādī names 370 works on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which includes commentaries of the whole book or parts of the book as well as other studies.<sup>38</sup> Among the commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāghah* is that of Ibn Abī al-Hadīd (d. 656/1258 ), in 20 volumes, which still stands out as the most distinguished of all.

In Western scholarship, *Nahj al-Balāghah* has raised the question of the authenticity, which deserves serious consideration. Many Arab and Muslim scholars in the Sunnī world concur with their Western counterpart on this issue. Therefore, the study of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* seems to be a necessary prerequisite before embarking upon other scholarly studies on *Nahj al-Balāghah*. This thesis is an attempt to furnish material in the hope of resolving the problem of the authenticity of this important work.

## Content of the Chapters

The introduction will outline certain salient features of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, such as the history of its compilation, a brief biography of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, the alleged compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, and a brief summary of subsequent chapters. The thesis will not deal with the biography of Imām `Alī himself, as this is well documented in the historical sources.

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<sup>36</sup> See `Abd al-Husayn Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, v. 4, pp. 181-6.

<sup>37</sup> See Muḥammad Hādī Amīnī, *al-Sharīf al-Raḍī*, pp. 157-182.

<sup>38</sup> Riḍā Ustādī, *Kitābnāmeḥ-e Nahj al-Balāghah* (Tehran: Mu'assasat Nahj al-Balāghah, 1359 H.Sh.), pp. 5-67.



Chapter one will take up the question of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>39</sup> Here the history of the question of authenticity and its development will be briefly discussed. Both the proponents and opponents of Raḍī's compilership will be surveyed. The main argumentation of both Sunnīs and Shī'īs, as well as Western scholars and their responses, will be tested to find out which of these two brothers, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī or his elder brother al-Sharīf al-Murtadā, is more likely to be *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s compiler. Any other alternative, such as collective compilation will be examined and some suggestions will be offered. To do so, two main steps will be taken. First, Raḍī's and Murtadā's books including *Nahj al-Balāghah* as well as bio-bibliographical sources will be scrutinized for identifying its compiler and second, it will deal with reasoning and rational arguments of both parties based on internal and external evidence.

In the second chapter, the question of the authorship of *Nahj al-Balāghah* will be scrutinized. In other words, this chapter will look for the candidates who are suggested to be the composers of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Modern scholarship suggests that `Alī ibn Abī Tālib and al-Sharīf al-Raḍī are two likely candidates. Yet other viewpoints suggesting that some parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* are authentic, while others are merely attributed to `Alī will be explored. The latter theory translates into the thesis that those parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* which are considered to be not authentic are either made up by Raḍī himself or attributed to `Alī by some other Shī'ī scholars. To tackle the issue of authorship, a general overview of the different ideas concerning this matter will be first surveyed. The major theories will be studied and objections

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<sup>39</sup> For the purpose of this paper, compilation refers to the mere act of collecting, accumulating, and assembling materials together in a book titled *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Authorship here is used to signify the actual producer of the utterances in the book. The term authenticity responds to the attribution of the content of the book to `Alī ibn Abī Tālib.

levelled against *Nahj al-Balāghah* and responses by the proponents will be discussed.

The third chapter will be devoted to the study of *Nahj al-Balāghah's* sources. Sources mentioned by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, as well as extant sources compiled before *Nahj al-Balāghah* in which its content is traceable, and extinct sources compiled before *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which are mentioned by other authors, will be touched upon. This chapter will also examine some sources compiled after *Nahj al-Balāghah* containing `Alī's utterances with complete chains of transmissions other than those of Raḍī's sources; or books written after *Nahj al-Balāghah* which record `Alī's utterances with some textual differences, suggesting that they are narrated from sources other than those of Raḍī. This chapter aims to show that the significant portion of *Nahj al-Balāghah's* content had already been narrated by other scholars before Raḍī. The last section of this chapter will introduce some earlier manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* for reasons discussed in the relevant section.

The conclusion will be devoted to summarizing the main findings of the thesis. As for the first problem, an effort will be made to contribute to the scholarly debate on the issue of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* either by resolving the problem of its compilation, or at least by providing some new arguments. With respect to the authorship, which is more problematic, the thesis would conclude with comparison of *Nahj al-Balāghah* with other Shī'ī *ḥadīth* collections. It will be shown that in this book one may find utterances which are of unquestionable authenticity (*mutawātir*) while other parts fall into other *ḥadīth* categories (*musnad*, *mursal*, *ḍa'īf*, and *khbar wāḥid*).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> For more information on the categorization of the *ḥadīth* in Islamic tradition, see Wael B. Hallaq, "On Inductive Corroboration, Probability and Certainty in Sunnī Legal Thought" in *Islamic Law and Jurisprudence*, ed. Nicholas Heer (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), pp. 3-31; J. Robson, "Ḥadīth", *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2), v. 3, pp. 23-28.

# CHAPTER I

## COMPILATION OF NAHJ AL-BALAGHAH

### Introduction

This chapter will discuss the issue of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to seek out the different viewpoints and offer some suggestions.

The two major figures to whom the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is generally attributed are al-Sharīf al-Raḍī<sup>1</sup> and his elder brother al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā.<sup>2</sup> Some further suggestions, however, such as collective compilation, are also advanced. The idea of collective compilation translates into the theory that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was developed during a long period of time and finally surfaced as a complete book in its present form at the time of Raḍī and Murtaḍā or even later. However, the supporters of the idea of collective compilation do not deny that *Nahj al-Balāghah* as a book surfaced in the fourth/tenth century and was compiled either by Raḍī or Murtaḍā. Their argument is that after the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Shīʿī scholars continued to enlarge the book by adding some new parts to it. Therefore, it will be appropriate to discuss the issue of addition to *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the next chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis we will refer to him as Raḍī. For a short biography, see the introduction of this thesis.

<sup>2</sup> Hereafter referred to as Murtaḍā, he is ʿAlī Ibn al-Husayn ʿAlam al-Hudā, also known as al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, Raḍī's elder brother and one of the very distinguished Shīʿī jurists. For more information on him, see the introduction of this thesis.

## The Rise of the Problem of Authenticity

Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1283)<sup>3</sup> seems to have been the first scholar to raise doubts concerning both the compilation and the authorship of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>4</sup> Based on this start, the majority of later biographers such as Ibn al-Athīr (d. 739/1338) in *Mukhtaṣar al-Wafayāt*, al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) in *Mizān al-ʿiḍāl*, al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1362) in *al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt*, al-Yāfiʿī (d. 768/1366) in *Mirʾāt al-Jinān*, Ibn al-ʿImād (d. 808/1405) in *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1448) in *Lisān al-Mizān*, Ḥādjī Khalīfa (d. 1067/1657) in *Kashf al-Zunūn*, and finally, Brockelmann (d. 1376/1956) in *Geschichte der arabischen literatur* confirmed Ibn Khallikān's suspicions with or without referring to him.

Among the modern scholars, Edward Abbott Van Dyck in his compilation, *Iktifāʾ al-Qunūʾ*, and Jurjī Zaydan in *Tārīkh al-Adāb al-ʿArabīyah* attribute the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Murtaḍā. On the other hand, ʿUmar Farrūkh in *Tārīkh al-Adab al-ʿArabī* confirms that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by Raḍī, and so does Zakī Mubārak in his comprehensive work, *ʿAbqarīyat al-Sharīf al-Raḍī*.

## The Compilation of Nahj al-Balāghah

The first doubt concerning the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* seems to have

<sup>3</sup> Abī al-ʿAbbās Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Khallikān is an outstanding biographer of the seventh century A.H. and the author of *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān wa Anbāʾ Abnāʾ al-Zamān*, and some other important books. In this study *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān* is under the consideration. For more information on him, see article "Ibn Khallikān" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2), by J. W. Fuck, v. 3, p. 832 f; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān wa Anbāʾ Abnāʾ al-Zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādīr, 1977), v. 1, pp. 5-13; Muḥammad ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādīr, 1973), pp. 110-118; Dāwūd ibn ʿUmar al-Antākī, *Tazyīn al-Aswāq bi Tafṣīl Ashwāq al-Ushshāq* (Beirut: ʿAlam al-Kutub, 1993), v. 2, pp. 60-61.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd's asking his teacher's opinion about the sermon *al-Shiqshiqīyah* suggests that there already existed some doubts and questions in the minds of people. However, Ibn Khallikān was the first to record such doubts.

been raised by Ibn Khallikān and with the passage of time it developed into a serious question repeated by many concerned scholars. There is unanimous agreement among Shī'ī scholars that Raḍī is the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. But Ibn Khallikān, for the first time, and many other biographers<sup>5</sup> after him, attributed the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī's brother, Murtaḍā. For the Shī'īs, the life history of these two brothers is very clear from their early childhood, and each one has his own significance among the Shī'ī scholars: Murtaḍā is known as a very famous jurist and theologian, while Raḍī is better known as a great poet and man of letters.

Editors and writers of commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāghah* and its translators into different languages, beginning with `Alī ibn Nāṣir al-`Alawī,<sup>6</sup> (a contemporary of Raḍī), through al-Rāwandī (d. 573/1177), and Maytham al-Bahrānī (d. 679/1280),<sup>7</sup> and Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, and concluding with later scholars such as Muḥammad `Abduh, `Abd al-Zahrā al-Ḥusaynī al-Khatīb, `Alī Naqī Fayḍ al-Islām and Muḥammad Jafri, all attributed the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī. Moreover, there is no manuscript or published copy of *Nahj al-Balāghah* holding Murtaḍā's name on it as the compiler.

It is also significant to mention that many of those who argued against the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* did not doubt its compilation by Raḍī. Perhaps that is because if *Nahj al-Balāghah* were composed by someone other than `Alī himself, it would be easier to attribute it to an individual like al-Sharīf al-Raḍī who had great ability in literature. Shafī' al-Sayyid says, "Shī'īs exaggerate in promoting `Alī's character. They equal him with God's prophets and Raḍī is one of them."<sup>8</sup> He

<sup>5</sup> Some names are mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

<sup>6</sup> His exact date of death is not known.

<sup>7</sup> Maytham al-Bahrānī's *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* is considered one of the earliest and greatest commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

continues; "Raḍī had the ability of producing good literature like `Alī's."<sup>9</sup>

## Arguments

### 1. Partisans of Murtaḍā's Compilership

The main argument concerning the issue of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is centered on Raḍī and Murtaḍā. Some further suggestions, such as collective compilation, have been made on this issue. The idea of collective compilation does not seem to be agreed upon by many scholars; therefore, we will just sketch them briefly in the next chapter. This chapter will concentrate on finding out which one of these two brothers is more likely to have been the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

It has already been mentioned that Ibn Khallikān was the first scholar to raise the question about the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. He writes, "People are of different opinions about *Nahj al-Balāghah*, a collection of the words of `Alī ibn Abī Tālib, whether Murtaḍā or his brother Raḍī compiled it. It is said that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is not `Alī's composition, but rather the one who attributed it to `Alī was its author."<sup>10</sup> However, he did not mention any of those who are "of different opinions about *Nahj al-Balāghah*", nor can we find any scholar who mentioned this before him.

Commenting on Ibn Khallikān's statement about *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s compilation, `Alī Naqī Munzawī says, "The reason that Ibn Khallikān makes this mistake is that both Raḍī and Murtaḍā were named by the nickname "Murtaḍā", being

<sup>8</sup> Of course, this is not an accurate representation of the general Shī'ī viewpoint; it serves only to illustrate al-Shafī' al-Sayyid's view of Raḍī.

<sup>9</sup> See Shafī' al-Sayyid, "*Nahj al-Balāghah*," in *al-Hilāl*, v. 83, No:12 (December 1975), pp. 95-96.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān wa Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*, v. 3, p. 313 (number 433).

named after their ancestor, `Alī ibn Abī Tālib."<sup>11</sup> This is not, however, an acceptable justification for two reasons: First, as it is pointed by Murtaḍā Shīrāzī that there is no evidence that Raḍī was called by the nickname Murtaḍā."<sup>12</sup> Secondly, Ibn Khallikān is very clear whom he is writing about because he also has a biography of Raḍī in the same book.<sup>13</sup>

Two important points are worth mentioning on this issue. First, contrary to the understanding of many scholars, Ibn Khallikān himself does not seem to be sure of his statement. Secondly, he did not mention *Nahj al-Balāghah* under Raḍī's biography, but rather under the biography of his brother Murtaḍā which shows his inclination towards the belief that Murtaḍā was *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s compiler. Perhaps, that is why many other biographers took his account for granted.

After Ibn Khallikān, many other historians and biographers repeated his words with or without referring to him. Ibn al-Athīr, in *Mukhtaṣar al-Wafayāt*, repeats almost the exact same words.<sup>14</sup> Al-Dhahabī in *Mīzān al-Fitdāl*, and *Siyar A`lām al-Nubalā*, takes a stronger position, showing that he is almost certain about the issue. Under Murtaḍā's biography he states, "He is the compiler of the book *Nahj al-Balāghah* which is attributed to Imam `Alī."<sup>15</sup> Yet he mentions, "It is also said that al-Sharīf al-Raḍī compiled it."<sup>16</sup> It is to be noted that there is a significant change in his

<sup>11</sup> `Alī Naqī Munzawī, *Fihrist Kitābkhāneh-e Ihdā'ī-e Mishkāt* (Tehran: Intishārāt-e Dānishgāh Tehran 1325-1330), v. 2, p. 306.

<sup>12</sup> Murtaḍā Shīrāzī in his introduction to the translation of *Istinād Nahj al-Balāghah*, by Imtiyāz `Alī `Arshī, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A`yān wa Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*, v. 4, p. 416.

<sup>14</sup> `Arshī, *Istinād Nahj al-Balāghah*, Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1363 H.Sh. see the editor's notes in the footnote p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A`lām al-Nubalā* (Beirut: Mu`assasat al-Risālah, 1986), v. 17, p. 588.

<sup>16</sup> Iḥsān `Abbās, the editor, in the footnote says, "This is more popular." see *ibid*.

perspective from one book to another. In *Mizān al-ʿĪdāl* his statement is even stronger. He says, "He (Murtaḍā) is accused of fabricating *Nahj al-Balāghah*." In this book he does not mention Raḍī as another alternative.<sup>17</sup>

Knowing that al-Dhahabī himself mentions *Nahj al-Balāghah* in Murtaḍā's biography, the editors of his book, Muḥammad Naʾīm al-Arqasūsī and Shuʿaib al-Arnaʾūt thought it to be compiled by Raḍī. In the footnote they write, "He is the author of the well known book *Nahj al-Balāghah*, assuming that he collected ʿAlī's words in it."<sup>18</sup>

In his *al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt*, al-Ṣafadī is much more conservative for two reasons. First, he does not give his own opinion, but rather repeats the words of Ibn Khallikān, "There is a disagreement on the book *Nahj al-Balāghah*, whether he (Murtaḍā) or his brother (Raḍī) fabricated it."<sup>19</sup> Secondly, unlike his predecessors, he mentions *Nahj al-Balāghah* in Raḍī's biography as well. He writes, "It is assumed that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is his composition."<sup>20</sup>

Like most of his predecessors, al-Yāfiʿī in *Mirʾāt al-Jinān* does not make any mention of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the biography of Raḍī.<sup>21</sup> Rather, he repeats the same uncertain words about the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā's

<sup>17</sup> Idem, *Mizān al-ʿĪdāl* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1963), v. 3, p. 124. Indeed his opinion about the attribution of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to ʿAlī defers from one book to another which will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>18</sup> Idem, *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā*, v. 17, pp. 286-7.

<sup>19</sup> al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1988), v. 21, p. 6. His attitude on the issue of the authorship differs slightly from that of Ibn Khallikān which will be discussed in the coming chapter.

<sup>20</sup> Idem, *al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt* (Istanbul: Maṭbaʿat Wizārat al-Maʿārif, 1949), v. 2, p. 374.

<sup>21</sup> ʿAbdullāh ibn Asʿad al-Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt al-Jinān* (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Aʿlamī li al-Maṭbūʿāt, 1970), v. 3, p. 18.



biographical notice: "Scholars are of different opinions about the book *Nahj al-Balāghah*, a collection of the utterances of `Alī ibn Abī Tālib, may God be satisfied with him, whether he (Murtaḍā) or his brother Raḍī compiled it. It is said that they are not `Alī's words, but rather, one of them fabricated them and attributed them to him (`Alī). God knows best."<sup>22</sup>

In *al-Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, Ibn al-`Imād seems to have been following Ibn Khallikān with respect to *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Under the biography of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, he does not mention *Nahj al-Balāghah*,<sup>23</sup> while under al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, he directly quotes from Ibn Khallikān.<sup>24</sup> Ibn al-`Imād himself, however, does not make any comment on the issue.

In *Lisān al-Mizān*, Ibn Ḥajar al-`Asqalānī echoed the words of al-Dhahabī under Murtaḍā's biography with a greater anti-Shī`ī flavour. He writes, "He (Murtaḍā) is accused of fabricating *Nahj al-Balāghah*."<sup>25</sup>

Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1372), although giving an appreciative biography of Raḍī,<sup>26</sup> repeats the words of al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar, accusing Murtaḍā of fabricating *Nahj al-Balāghah*, using words which throw doubt on both the authorship and the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. He writes, "He is the one who fabricated *Nahj al-Balāghah*. May God disgrace him and those like him from among the filthy and the

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., v. 3, p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn al-`Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī 1350 A.H.), v. 3, p. 182.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., v. 3, p. 256.

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mizān* (Beirut: Mua'ssasat al-A`lamī li al-Maṭbū`āt, 1971), v. 4, p. 223.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Kathīr al-Dimashqī, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 1987), v. 12, p. 4.

defiled."<sup>27</sup>

Among modern scholars, Brockelmann believes that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by Murtaḍā rather than Raḍī. He says: "The book *Nahj al-Balāghah* is attributed to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī; the truth is that it is a compilation of his brother al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā."<sup>28</sup> Jurjī Zaydan repeated the same words without any further proof. Writing Murtaḍā's biography, Jurjī Zaydān lists *Nahj al-Balāghah* as Murtaḍā's first book. He writes, "Among his books is *Nahj al-Balāghah* which contains sermons and utterances attributed to Imām `Alī and it is well known that Murtaḍā gathered `Alī's sermons and sayings and those of the others in this book."<sup>29</sup> Moreover, he did not make any mention of *Nahj al-Balāghah* while writing Raḍī's biography.<sup>30</sup>

Edward Van Dyck seems to be confused about both Raḍī and *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Although he mentions Raḍī's name in more than three places in his book, he misspelled his name (Rāzī) and introduced *Nahj al-Balāghah* as one of the Shī`ī ḥadīth collections. Van Dyck gives the date 406/1008 for the compiler's death, which together with other indications, shows that he is writing about al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. Elsewhere, he introduced *Nahj al-Balāghah* as Murtaḍā's compilation and repeated the same doubts as the other biographers.<sup>31</sup>

Like most of the above mentioned scholars, Khayr al-Dīn Zirīklī (d. 1396/1976)

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., v. 12, p. 56.

<sup>28</sup> Carl Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-`Arabī* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma`ārif, 1968). Trans. `Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Najjār, v. 2, p. 62.

<sup>29</sup> Jurjī Zaydān, *Tarikh Adāb al-Lughah al-`Arabīyah* (Cairo: Maṭba`at al-Hilāl, 1930), v. 2, p. 288.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., v. 2, p. 257.

<sup>31</sup> See Edward Abbott Van Dyck, *Iktifā' al-Qunū`* (Cairo: Maṭba`at al-Hilāl, 1896), p. 181, 356.

does not mention *Nahj al-Balāghah* when writing Raḍī's biography.<sup>32</sup> According to him, most of Murtaḍā's biographers believe that he was the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>33</sup> To establish his point, he cites a direct quotation from al-Dhahabī about *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which has already been quoted.<sup>34</sup>

Among contemporary scholars, `Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥālāh mentions *Nahj al-Balāghah* neither among al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's<sup>35</sup> nor his brother al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā's<sup>36</sup> books.

Though not clearly stated by some of these scholars, the fact that they discussed *Nahj al-Balāghah* under the biography of Murtaḍā, suggests that they regard him as *Nahj al-Balāghah's* author. However, scholars - other than biographers - who believed in the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* by Murtaḍā did not provide any cogent arguments to support their claim. Besides, whatever is written by the biographers is usually very brief and mostly transmitted from Ibn Khallikān.

On the other hand, Raḍī's adherents defended themselves in two ways: relying on biographical and historical sources, and reasoning supported by evidence other than biographical references. For the first part, famous biographical books as well as historical sources will be surveyed here in a chronological order.

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<sup>32</sup> Khayr al-Dīn Ziriklī, *al-A`lām* (Beirut: Dār al-`Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1980). v. 6, p. 99.

<sup>33</sup> This indeed is true in Sunnī world and partially among the Western scholars, but not among the Shī`ī scholars, as it will be discussed in the coming pages.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., v. 4, p. 278.

<sup>35</sup> `Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥālāh, *Mu`jam al-Mu'allifīn, Tarājim Muṣannifī al-Kutub al-`Arabīyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-`Arabī, 1980). v. 9, p. 261.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., v. 7, p. 81.

## 2. Supporters of Raḍī's Compilership

Among scholars who were contemporaries of Raḍī, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1068)<sup>37</sup> mentions neither Raḍī nor *Nahj al-Balāghah* in his books *al-Fihrist* and *al-Rijāl*,<sup>38</sup> nor did he mention *Nahj al-Balāghah* among Murtaḍā's books while writing his biography.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, al-Najāshī (450/1058), in his *al-Rijāl*,<sup>40</sup> mentions *Nahj al-Balāghah* as a collection of `Alī's words compiled by Raḍī.

Although al-Najāshī's attribution of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī and al-Ṭūsī's<sup>41</sup> not attributing it to Murtaḍā seem to be enough to discredit Ibn Khallikān's doubts who was writing three centuries after Raḍī,<sup>42</sup> this chapter will look at some other sources - after Raḍī, yet earlier than Ibn Khallikān - for further illumination of the problem.

Later scholars - though still earlier than Ibn Khallikān - are divided into two

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<sup>37</sup> Abū Ja`far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, known as Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifah.

<sup>38</sup> As is pointed out by `Arshī, it is somewhat surprising that al-Ṭūsī did not mention Raḍī and *Nahj al-Balāghah* in his books *al-Rijāl* and *al-Fihrist*. However, it should be remembered that Raḍī had died two years before Ṭūsī left Ṭūs for Baghdad in 408, A.H. and he was not as famous as his brother Murtaḍā. Furthermore, it is clear that al-Ṭūsī did not cover all the Shī'ī scholars in his books because we can see two important scholars writing biographical books immediately after him, in order to complete his books. *al-Fihrist* by al-Rāzī and *Ma`ālim al-`Ulamā'* by Ibn Shahrāshūb both were written as completion of *al-Fihrist* of al-Ṭūsī (*Tatimmat Kitāb al-Fihrist li al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī*). Ibn Shahrāshūb says that he added 600 books to *al-Fihrist* of Ṭūsī, among them *Nahj al-Balāghah* and secondly, other books by Raḍī. However, the best possible justification is that Ṭūsī forgot Raḍī in his books as he forgot his famous colleague, al-Najāshī. In Ṭūsī's biography we find him relating *ḥadīth* from Raḍī. Therefore, it seems almost impossible for him not to have known Raḍī.

<sup>39</sup> After al-Mufīd passed away in 413, al-Ṭūsī joined Murtaḍā's pupils and studied under his supervision until 436, the year Murtaḍā passed away. Since Ṭūsī had been Murtaḍā's student for more than 23 years, and since he stated in both *al-Rijāl* and *al-Fihrist* that he studied all Murtaḍā's books with him, it seems that he would have mentioned *Nahj al-Balāghah* if it was compiled by Murtaḍā, since he does mention Murtaḍā's other books.

<sup>40</sup> al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl* (Qum: Jāmi`at al-Mudarrisīn, 1986), p. 192 & 283.

groups with regard to *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Abū Mansūr al-Tha`ālibī (d. 429/1038) in his books *Yatīmat al-Dahr*<sup>43</sup> and *Tatimmat al-Yatīmah*,<sup>44</sup> and Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 469/1076) in his *Tārīkh Baghdād*,<sup>45</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī<sup>46</sup> (d. 597/1200) in his *al-Muntaẓam*<sup>47</sup> and Ibn Ḥazm<sup>48</sup> (d. 456/1064) in his *Jamharat Ansāb al-`Arab*<sup>49</sup> while writing Raḍī and Murtaḍā's biography, make no mention of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

Al-Qifṭī<sup>50</sup> (d. 646/1248) gives a biography of Raḍī in his book, *al-Muḥammadūn min al-Shu`arā*, without mentioning *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>51</sup> However, he might not be expected to give a biography of Murtaḍā in this book because as the title of the book suggests, it is only concerned with poets named Muḥammad. In his other book, *Inbāh al-Ruwāt `alā Anbāh al-Nuḥāt*, he mentions *Nahj al-Balāghah* neither under Raḍī<sup>52</sup> nor under Murtaḍā.<sup>53</sup> Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, in *Mu`jam al-Udabā'*, does not write a biography of Raḍī, nor does he mention *Nahj al-Balāghah* while writing on Murtaḍā.<sup>54</sup> `Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Bākhrazī (d. 467/1249) while writing the most

<sup>41</sup> al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī are two distinguished contemporary scholars of Raḍī.

<sup>42</sup> To give credit to a biographical source, precedence is one of the most important elements; therefore, there seems to be no reason to leave al-Najāshī's word out and take Ibn Khallikān's.

<sup>43</sup> Abū Mansūr al-Tha`ālibī, *Yatīmat al-Dahr* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1956.) v. 3, p. 136.

<sup>44</sup> Idem, *Tatimmat al-Yatīmah*, ed. `Abbās Iqbāl (Tehran: Fardīn 1303 A.H.), v. 1, p. 53.

<sup>45</sup> Aḥmad Ibn `Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1931), v. 2, p. 246 and v. 11, p. 402.

<sup>46</sup> Abū al-Faraj `Abd al-Raḥmān ibn `Alī ibn al-Jawzī.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* (Ḥaydarābād al-Dekan: Maṭba`at Dā'irat al-Ma`ārif al-Uthmānīyyah, 1358-9, A.H.), v. 8, p. 120.

<sup>48</sup> Abī Muḥammad `Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa`īd ibn Ḥazm.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansāb al-`Arab* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma`ārif, 1962), p. 63.

<sup>50</sup> He is Jamāl al-Dīn Abī al-Ḥasan `Alī ibn Yūsuf al-Qifṭī.

appreciative biography of Raḍī and Murtaḍā, does not mention any of their books, including *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>55</sup>

Muntajab al-Dīn `Alī ibn Bābwayh al-Rāzī (d. 585/1189) in *al-Fihrist*,<sup>56</sup> Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192) in *Ma`ālim al-`Ulamā'*,<sup>57</sup> al-Shaykh `Abd al-Jalīl al-Qazwīnī al-Rāzī in *al-Naqd*<sup>58</sup> (compiled 559-566/1163-1170)<sup>59</sup> do mention Raḍī and attribute the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to him.

With nearly no exception later Shī`ī scholars<sup>60</sup> attributed the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī. Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn in *A`yān al-Shī`ah*,<sup>61</sup> Muḥammad Bāqir Khāwansārī in *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*,<sup>62</sup> Shaykh Aghā Buzurg Tehrānī, in *al-Dharī`ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī`ah*,<sup>63</sup> are among the distinguished later Shī`ī scholars who discussed the issue of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, writing extensive biographies of Raḍī and Murtaḍā. Examining different Shī`ī and Sunnī viewpoints, they all attribute the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī and appreciate his excellent selection of

<sup>51</sup> `Alī ibn Yūsuf al-Qifṭī, *al-Muḥammadūn min al-Shūrā* (Riyāḍ: Dār al-Yamāmah, 1970), p. 24.

<sup>52</sup> Idem, *Inbāh al-Ruwāt `alā Anbāh al-Nuḥāt* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-`Arabī, 1986), v. 3, p. 114.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., v. 2, p. 249-250.

<sup>54</sup> Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu`jam al-Udabā'* (Cairo: Dār Ma'mūn, 1936-38), v. 12, pp. 146-157.

<sup>55</sup> `Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Bākhazī, *Dumyat al-Qaṣr wa `Uṣrat Ahl al-`Aṣr* (Ḥalab: al-Maṭba`ah al-`Ilmiyyah, 1930), p. 74, 75.

<sup>56</sup> Under the biography of al-Qāḍī Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Qarīb, he writes: "He used to write *Nahj al-Balāghah* by heart and he wrote his *Risālah al-`Abaqah* as commentary of Raḍī's saying, "Alī's words carry the reflection of the Divine Knowledge and savour of the Prophet's utterance." He also mentioned *Nahj al-Balāghah* under the biography of Hibatullāh ibn al-Ḥasan al-Rāwandī and made a mention of his book, *Minhāj al-Barā`ah fī Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*. The reason that al-Rāzī did not write a biography of Raḍī although he mentioned his name in many places (e.g. P. 32, 75, 115) is that his book *al-Fihrist* is intended to complete al-Tūsī's *al-Fihrist* and covers scholars after him. See Muntajab al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Fihrist* (Qum:Chāp-e Mehr, 1987), p. 31, 115.

`Alī's most eloquent utterances in this book.<sup>64</sup> Zakī Mubārak<sup>65</sup> and `Umar Farrukh<sup>66</sup> are among the contemporary scholars according to whom *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by Raḍī.

Among the Western scholars, Louis Massignon has no doubt about Raḍī's compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, but gives a wrong date of 403/1011 instead of 400/1008 for compilation which is not confirmed by any of bibliographical sources.<sup>67</sup> Quoting from Massignon, Gerard G. Salinger confirms the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* by Raḍī<sup>68</sup> and repeats the same date on his authority.

### 3. Internal and External Evidence

Defenders of Raḍī's compilership have also given arguments other than those based on the historical and biographical sources. In this chapter, some of these arguments will be reviewed. *Nahj al-Balāghah* and Raḍī's other books will be

<sup>57</sup> Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Ma`ālim al-`Ulamā'* (Tehran: Iqbāl, 1353, A.H.) p. 44, No:327.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Naqd is not a biographical work, but because it is one of the earliest sources which mentions *Nahj al-Balāghah* and its compiler, I have mentioned it here.

<sup>59</sup> `Abd al-Jalīl Qazwīnī, *al-Naqd*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Urmawī (Tehran: Zar, 1358 H.Sh.), p. 107, 210.

<sup>60</sup> It has already been pointed that one exception is mentioned in this respect. Khāwnsārī writes, "It is strange that Ḥasan ibn Sulaymān, a pupil of al-Shahīd (Muḥammad ibn Makkī known as al-Shahīd al-Awwal) declared -in his book *Aḥwāl al-Muḥtadar*-, that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was a compilation of al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā." See Muḥammad Bāqir Khāwnsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fī Aḥwāl al-`Ulamā' wa al-Sādāt* (Qum: Maktabat Ismā'īlīān, 1970-2), v. 4, p. 304. This is very strange for a 14th century Shī'ī scholar to attribute the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Murtaḍā. I could not find his book to see what exactly he wrote on this issue. Ḥasan ibn Sulaymān was later than Ibn Khallikān. He had been alive in 802/1399 and the date of his death is not known to the author of *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*.

<sup>61</sup> Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A`yān al-Shī'ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta`āruf, 1986), v. 9, p. 216.

<sup>62</sup> Muḥammad Bāqir Khāwnsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, v. 4, pp. 294-303 and v. 6, p. 190-201.

examined to see if there is any indication about the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

1. In the introduction of *Nahj al-Balāghah* it is stated that the compiler had also written another book called *Khaṣā'is al-A'imma*. Moreover, in sermon 21 of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, *Khaṣā'is al-A'imma* is again mentioned as a book by *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s compiler.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, the author of *al-Khaṣā'is* and *Nahj al-Balāghah* must be the same person.<sup>70</sup> Since there is no doubt that *Khaṣā'is* was written by Raḍī,<sup>71</sup> one can conclude that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was also compiled by him. Furthermore, in both *Nahj al-Balāghah* and *Khaṣā'is al-A'imma*, there are many places where the phrase "*qāla al-Sharīf al-Raḍī*" - "al-Sharīf al-Raḍī says" - is repeated;<sup>72</sup> this is Raḍī's regular style whenever he wants to refer to himself while giving his own comments on a certain point.<sup>73</sup>

2. According to al-Najāshī and other biographers, *Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl* is another

<sup>63</sup> Shaykh Aghā Buzurg Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī'ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1983), v. 4, p. 144; v. 14, pp. 111-161 and 197-207; v. 6, p. 229; v. 24, p. 413.

<sup>64</sup> Since there is no disagreement among the Shī'ī scholars with regard to the issue of compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and the number of those scholars who wrote on Raḍī, Murtaḍā and *Nahj al-Balāghah* is in hundreds, they will be not listed in this chapter. In the coming chapters, however, some of them will be introduced for different reasons.

<sup>65</sup> Zakī Mubārak, *Abqarīyat al-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Hijāzī, 1952), p. 206.

<sup>66</sup> `Umar Farrūkh, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-`Arabī* (Beirut: Dār al-`Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1983), v. 3, p. 60.

<sup>67</sup> Louis Massignon, *Salmān pāk and the Spiritual Beginnings of Iranian Islām*, translated from French by Jamshedji Maneckji Unvala (Bombay: Bombay University Press, 195?), p. 35.

<sup>68</sup> Gerard G. Salinger, *Kitāb al-Jihād from Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Da`ā'im al-Islām*, Ph.D Dissertation (Columbia University, 1959), p. X.

<sup>69</sup> See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 21, p. 20.



book by Raḍī.<sup>74</sup> Commenting on a Quranic verse, Raḍī in *Ḥaḡā'iq al-Ta'wīl* says: "Anyone who is looking for a reason for my claim can look at my book which is called *Nahj al-Balāghah*."<sup>75</sup> Raḍī himself also mentions *Ḥaḡā'iq al-Ta'wīl* in another book, *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān*, more than 16 times either by the title or as, "my large book."<sup>76</sup> Therefore, one can conclude that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is Raḍī's compilation.

3. al-Najāshī and others have recorded *al-Majāzāt al-Nabawīyah* as Raḍī's book.<sup>77</sup> In this book, Raḍī used the phrase, "I mentioned it in *Nahj al-Balāghah*" or "I mentioned it in my book called *Nahj al-Balāghah*", or similar sentences more than five times.<sup>78</sup>

4. In turn,<sup>79</sup> *Majāzāt al-Athār al-Nabawīyah* is also mentioned in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>80</sup>

Brockelmann attributed three of Raḍī's other books, *Majāzāt al-Qur'ān* (*Talkhīṣ*

<sup>70</sup> This introduction suggests that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled after *Khaṣā'is al-A'immah*.

<sup>71</sup> See al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 398; also Sa'īd ibn Hibatullāh al-Rāwandī (d. 555/1160), p. 6. Raḍī himself mentions *Khaṣā'is al-A'immah* as his book in *al-Majāzāt al-Nabawīyah*, p. 274 & 275. Kāshif al-Ghīṭā' states that Raḍī mentioned this book in chapter five of *Ḥaḡā'iq al-Ta'wīl*, as well. See *Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah* (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Rā'ī, 1354, A.H.) p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> See Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Khaṣā'is al-A'immah* (Mashhad: Majma' al-Buhūth al-Islāmīyah 1986), p. 200, 202, 207, 208, also see *Nahj al-Balāghah*, for instance, sermons 19, p. 20; 21, p. 20; 25, p. 21; 28, p. 22; 32, p. 23; 77, p. 29; 39, p. 24; 42, p. 24; and short sayings 434, 443, 459, 464, 466, 469, 472, 479, 480, pp. 123-125. One may think these phrases were added by commentators or written by the compiler. I compared Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ's edition of *Nahj al-Balāghah* - which is edited on the basis of many manuscripts and purified of any additions of editors and commentators - with some other copies and find out that those phrases existed in the earlier manuscripts. For example, in most of the places the phrases are exactly the same. Compare for instance, *Sharḥ Ibn Maytham* with mentioned addresses according to the table given at the end of the thesis.

<sup>73</sup> The same style is used by al-Mufīd, Raḍī's teacher. See al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād* (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Ḥaydarīyah, 1962), p. 112, 360.

<sup>74</sup> See al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 283.

*al-Bayān fī Majāzāt al-Qur'ān*), *al-Majāzāt al-Nabawīyah* and *Kitāb Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*,<sup>81</sup> to his brother Murtaḍā, as he also did in the case of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>82</sup> He is very certain about the first book, *Majāzāt al-Qur'ān*. The other two, he says, can possibly be attributed to Murtaḍā. For the following reasons, Brockelmann's attributing the aforementioned books to Murtaḍā does not seem to be accurate.<sup>83</sup>

a. Bio-bibliographical sources can be divided into two groups with respect to Raḍī's books. They either do not mention these books or if they do, they without almost any exception, credit Raḍī, not his brother Murtaḍā, with these works. Therefore, we cannot find a single Muslim scholar before Brockelmann who attributes any of these books to Murtaḍā. On the other hand, there is a significant number of distinguished scholars who attribute them to Raḍī.<sup>84</sup>

b. Brockelmann does not give any evidence for this statement. None of the sources he mentions in the bibliography or refers in the article has ever made such a

<sup>75</sup> al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Ḥaqā'iq al-Ta'wīl fī Mutashābih al-Tanzīl* (Mashhad: Chāp-e Astān Quds, Trans, Maḥmūd Fāḍil 1366, A.H.), p. 274.

<sup>76</sup> al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān fī Majāzāt al-Qur'ān* (Tehran: Maṭba'at Majlis al-Shūrā, 1953). See for instance, pp. 11, 24, 22, 31, 40, 67, 72, 85, 94, 148, 175, 180, 206, 213, 233, 240.

<sup>77</sup> Raḍī mentioned *Majāzāt al-Nabawīyah* in his other book, *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān*, p. 140.

<sup>78</sup> Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Majāzāt al-Nabawīyah*, ed. Maḥmūd Muṣṭafā (Cairo: Muṣṭafā Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1937), p. 40, 60, 152, 189 & 285.

<sup>79</sup> By mentioning *Nahj al-Balāghah* in *Majāzāt* and vice versa, one may confuse the fact that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled before *al-Majāzāt*, for it is mentioned in the introduction of *Nahj al-Balāghah* that the author would leave a few blank pages for further additions. The same thing happened with Raḍī's other books. He mentioned *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān* in both *al-Majāzāt*, and *Ḥaqā'iq al-Ta'wīl*, and vice versa, which creates the same kind of confusion. It seems that he had been writing two or more books at the same time. This is confirmed by his mentioning *al-Ḥaqā'iq* in *al-Talkhīṣ* in many places referring his readers to the first book, while in p. 148 he says, "I will describe it in *al-Ḥaqā'iq* when I reach its place in the book."

<sup>80</sup> Under the commentary of the phrase *al-'Aynu wikā' al-Sah*, it is stated, "I talked

claim. For instance, Edward Browne, one of Brockelmann's sources in his article, says exactly the opposite of what Brockelmann says. Browne writes, "*Majāzāt al-Qur'ān* is an exposition of the metaphors and other figures of speech employed in the Qur'ān compiled by Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn known as Sharīf Riza<sup>85</sup> (d. 406/1015)."<sup>86</sup>

c. Several important Islamic sources have not been used in Brockelmann's article; Shī'ī sources in particular are completely missing.<sup>87</sup>

d. Abū al-Fath Ibn Jinnī, Raḍī's teacher, mentioned two of these books, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* and *Majāzāt al-Qur'ān*, with great admiration and this is well documented in most of the sources dealing with Raḍī and his books.<sup>88</sup>

e. In *al-Majāzāt al-Nabawīyah*<sup>89</sup> and *Majāzāt al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Jinnī is mentioned as the author's teacher more than twice.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, with respect to the fact that most of the scholars mentioned Ibn Jinnī as Raḍī's teacher and there is no indication that

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on this phrase in my book, *Majāzāt al-Nabawīyah*. See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, h.466, v. 3, p. 124.

<sup>81</sup> This is Raḍī's commentary of Qur'ān which is not available to us except for chapter five published under the title of *Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl fī Mutashābih al-Tanzīl*, which is also referred to as "al-Ḥaqā'iq" or "my large book" by its author in his other books. Some scholars, however, consider *Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl* and *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* as two different books.

<sup>82</sup> C. Brockelmann, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, "al-Murtaḍā al-Sharīf", 1987, v. VI, old edition, p. 736.

<sup>83</sup> The reason that I had to deal with the attribution of Raḍī's other books to Murtaḍā although Brockelmann is the only one who questions them, is that I relied on these books in my arguments about the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Therefore, it is necessary to establish Raḍī's authorship of these books.

<sup>84</sup> See for instance: `Alī ibn Yūsuf al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-Ruwāt `alā Anbāh al-Nuḥāt* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-`Arabī, 1986), v. 3, p. 114; Khayr al-Dīn Zirīklī, *al-A`lām* (Beirut: Dār al-`Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1980), v. 6, p. 99; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Ma'ālim al-`Ulāmā'* (Tehran: Iqbāl, 1353, A.H.) p. 44, No:327; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A`yān wa Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*, v. 4, p. 416; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt* (Istanbul: Maṭba'at Wizārat al-Ma'ārif, 1949), v. 2, p. 374; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A`lām al-Nubalā* (Beirut: Mu`assasat al-Risālah, 1986), v. 17, pp. 286-7; Ibn al-`Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, v. 3, p. 182; Aḥmad Ibn `Alī al-Khaṭīb al-

Murtadā was ever his student, one can conclude that Raḍī must be the author of these books.

f. Brockelmann, however, contradicts himself in his book *Geschichte der arabischen litteratur* (*Tārīkh al-Adab al-ʿArabī*) by attributing all of these books to Raḍī. In this book, he questions the attribution of *Tayf al-Khayāl* to Raḍī instead of his brother. In doing so, he is most probably right, but there he does not have doubts about the above mentioned three books.<sup>91</sup>

g. Brockelmann seems to have changed his mind about the authorship of these three books in his article in the new edition of *Encyclopedia of Islam*. He writes, "But the recent editors of *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān fī Majāzāt al-Qurʿān* and *Majāzāt al-Nabawīyah* have opted for al-Raḍī as author of these (in the first case, following Ḥādjī Khalīfa, no:11377). Also in the same place mentioned by Ḥādjī Khalīfa is a

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Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1931), v. 2, p. 246; Zakī Mubārak, *ʿAbqariyat al-Sharīf al-Raḍī*, p. 46; ʿAlī Davānī, *Sayyid Raḍī Mu'allif-e Nahj al-Balāghah* (Tehran: Bunyād Nahj al-Balāghah, 1359 H.Sh). p. 100; ʿUmar Farrūkh, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-ʿArabī* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li al-Malāyīn, 1983), v. 3, pp. 59-64; Shawqī Dayf, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-ʿArabī*, v. 2, p. 128; and Shīʿī scholars unanimously opted for Raḍī as the author of these books.

<sup>85</sup> The spelling error is from the writer.

<sup>86</sup> T. W. Arnold & Reynold A. Nicholson, *A volume of oriental studies presented to Edward G. Browne* (Amsterdam: Philo press, 1973), p. 137, no.2.

<sup>87</sup> In the bibliography he introduces (Ṭusy) Ṭūsī but he does not seem to have quoted anything from him. Indeed, Ṭūsī gives a long list of Murtadā's books which would free the writer from searching for Murtadā's books in the later sources such as Goldziher and Edward Browne.

<sup>88</sup> See for instance Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt al-Jinān*, v. 3, p. 19 and Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān wa Anbāʾ Abnāʾ al-Zamān*, v. 4, p. 416 f.

<sup>89</sup> al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *al-Majāzāt al-Nabawīyah*, p. 60, no:39.

<sup>90</sup> See al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān*, p. 36 & 77.

<sup>91</sup> See Carl Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-ʿArabī*, p. 62. Brockelmann is confused

*Kitāb al-Qur'ān*."<sup>92</sup> It may be argued that the reason that Brockelmann is more realistic in his later article is that he uses a wider variety of sources, particularly, Shī'ī sources, which he now takes into serious consideration.

h. We have two important sources suggesting that these books were written by Raḍī. First, al-Ṭūsī (a colleague of Murtaḍā, under the supervision of al-Mufīd for five years, and Murtaḍā's own student for 23 years) who is considered to be the earliest and the person most familiar with Murtaḍā does not mention any of these books for him while he lists more than 70 other books.<sup>93</sup> Second, al-Najāshī, a colleague of Ṭūsī, who wrote his book in the lifetime of the two brothers, credits Raḍī with these books.<sup>94</sup> Certainly, Raḍī wrote a book with this title. As F. Krenkow argues, "We cannot possibly admit that the two brothers wrote two books with exactly the same titles and the same or similar content."<sup>95</sup> Therefore, we either have to agree with all those earlier writers or with Brockelmann, and there is no reason to prefer Brockelmann's statement to those contemporaries of Raḍī and Murtaḍā, for whom the possibility of making a mistake is less likely. It should be mentioned here that Raḍī's mentioned books were so important that they became popular immediately after they were written and were greatly admired by the scholars of the time. Therefore, the possibility of confusion of their authorship is quite unlikely.

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in this book, as well, saying that "Ibn Khallikān used *Majāzāt al-Qur'ān* for *Majāzāt al-Nabawīyah*." We know that these are two different books of Raḍī and even Brockelmann himself makes a distinction between them in his article in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

<sup>92</sup> C. Brockelmann, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, "al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā", new edition, v. 7, p. 634.

<sup>93</sup> See al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist* (Mashhad: Mashhad University Press, 1972). pp. 218-220 and *al-Rijāl* (Najaf: Maktabat al-Ḥaydarīyah, 1961). pp. 484-5.

<sup>94</sup> See al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 283.

<sup>95</sup> F. Krenkow, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, "al-Sharīf al-Raḍī", old edition, 1987, v. VII, p. 330.

5. *Nahj al-Balāghah* is mentioned in *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān fī Majāzāt al-Qur'ān*.<sup>96</sup>

#### 4. Authorizations

Authorization (*ijāzah*)<sup>97</sup> given to Muslim scholars by their teachers should be added to the sources mentioned above. In some *ijāzahs* given by early scholars to their pupils, *Nahj al-Balāghah* is ascribed to Raḍī, while there is no *ijāzah* in which it is attributed to Murtaḍā.<sup>98</sup>

6. Al-ʿAllāmah al-Amīnī reports having seen a manuscript of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in Najaf with an *ijāzah* written by Murtaḍā to a pupil for narrating *Nahj al-Balāghah*, in which he refers to *Nahj al-Balāghah* as "my brother's book."<sup>99</sup>

7. Ibn Abī al-Hadīd (d. 655/1257) and Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Maytham al-Bahrānī possessed manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* written in Raḍī's own hand.<sup>100</sup> Arshī reported that in his manuscript of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, there were notes in the margin

<sup>96</sup> This source is mentioned by Ridā Ustādī in his book, *Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah*, but I could not find it in *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān*. He probably used another edition of the book.

<sup>97</sup> *Ijāzah* when used in its technical meaning means one of the methods of receiving the transmission of a *ḥadīth*. Among traditional Muslim scholars, there is a custom of giving *ijāzah* (authorization) to the students who finish a certain level of studies in Islamic schools. With this permission, the student is allowed to narrate traditions from his teacher who also narrates from his own teacher; this chain of transmission through the teachers goes to the Prophet. For the Shīʿī scholars the *ḥadīth* transmission usually passes to the Prophet through the Imams or stops at one of them. In other words, a *ḥadīth* can be reported by an Imam himself without going back to the Prophet. See the article "Idjāza" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2), v. 3, p. 1021.

<sup>98</sup> Dānish Pazhūh mentioned more than nine *ijāzahs* in which *Nahj al-Balāghah* is ascribed to Raḍī. See Muḥammad Taqī Dānish Pazhūh, *Fihrist Kitābkhāneh-e Ihdāʾī-e Mishkāṭ* (Tehran: Intishārāt-e Dānishgāh Tehran, 1325-1330), v. 5, pp. 1609-1613.

<sup>99</sup> See Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār* (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Wafā, 1983), *ijāzahs* of al-ʿAllāmah al-Hillī (d. 726/1326), v. 107, p. 71 and *ijāzas* of al-Shahīd al-Awwal (734-786/1333-1384) in v. 107, p. 191.

<sup>100</sup> See Ibn Abī al-Hadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl

starting by the phrase, "In Raḍī's copy ...". According to `Arshī, this means that the owner of that copy had access to a copy which was either written by Raḍī or certified by him.<sup>101</sup>

8. In addition to all these pieces of evidence, and perhaps most important of all, there is no indication to show that Murtaḍā had ever claimed to be the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. This is with respect to the fact that over fifty books of Murtaḍā and significant number of his *ijāzahs* to his pupils are available to us. On the other hand, Murtaḍā's own daughter reports *Nahj al-Balāghah* on authority of his uncle Raḍī which is a clear testimony of the fact the Raḍī was the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>102</sup>

## 5. Translations and Commentaries

Immediately after the appearance of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Muslim scholars started to write commentaries on it and to translate it into other languages. Among the commentators and translators of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, there is not one who attributed *Nahj al-Balāghah's* compilation to Murtaḍā. On the other hand, they all agree that it was compiled by the younger brother, Raḍī. Some scholars have listed up to 200 works written about *Nahj al-Balāghah*. The followings are some of the early commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which seem to be significant for this study.

1. al-Sayyid `Alī ibn Nāṣir al-`Alawī, a contemporary of Raḍī, who probably

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Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-`Arabīyah, 1959-1963), v. 12, p. 2 under kh:223. See also Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Maytham, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (Tehran: Mu'assasat al-Naṣr, 1378-1384 A.H.), v. 3, p. 231, kh.171.

<sup>101</sup> This, however, does not seem to be a convincing reason for attributing the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī because he could have owned a copy of *Nahj al-Balāghah* even if it were Murtaḍā's compilation and one could have referred to it as Raḍī's copy.

<sup>102</sup> `Alī Davānī, *Sayyid Raḍī Mu'allif-e Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 23, 116.

wrote the first commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, under the title *A`lām Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>103</sup>

2. *Ma`ārij Nahj al-Balāghah* written by Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan Abū al-Qāsim Zayd ibn Muḥammad ibn `Alī al-Bayhaqī al-Nishābūrī<sup>104</sup> known as Farīd of Khorāsān (d.548/1153 or 565/1169). A copy of this commentary has been held by Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ ibn Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ṭān al-Qaṭfī al-Baḥrāynī.<sup>105</sup> This copy shows that its author had read his version of *Nahj al-Balāghah* through three transmitters to Raḍī who was considered the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in this commentary.

3. *Sharḥ Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd* (d. 655/1227) which is the most comprehensive commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*. The author ascribed the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī and wrote an extensive biography of him. Among the early commentaries of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, those of Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī, Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī's,<sup>106</sup> *Minḥāj al-Barā`ah*, *Sharḥ al-Nafā'is* by an unknown author, and *Sharḥ Kamāl al-Dīn al-`Atā'iqī al-Ḥillī*<sup>107</sup> (compiled in 770/1368) can be mentioned. Overwhelming evidence suggests that there is no commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah* in which its compilation is not ascribed to Raḍī.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Shaykh `Abbās al-Qummī considered Abī al-Qāsim al-Bayhaqī as the first commentator of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. See al-Qummī, *al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb*. (Najaf: Maṭba`at al-Ḥaydarīyah, 1956), v. 3, p. 24.

<sup>104</sup> He is the teacher of Ibn Shahrāshūb of Māzandarān, the author of *Manāqib Al Abū Ṭālib*.

<sup>105</sup> `Arshī, *Istinād Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 26.

<sup>106</sup> The National Library of Iran holds a manuscript of this work. See *ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>107</sup> Kamāl al-Dīn `Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-`Atā'iqī al-Ḥillī, `Arshī says a copy of this book is in the library of Amīr al-Mu'minīn in Najaf.

<sup>108</sup> *Jawāhir al-Kalām* did not mention any commentary in which it is not ascribed to Raḍī.



## Conclusion

A careful look at the development of the Sunnī perspective on the issue of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* shows that there is an increasing tendency to doubt that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by Raḍī rather than Murtaḍā. Ibn Khallikān raises the question whether *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by Raḍī or Murtaḍā and within less than a century other scholars explicitly assert that it was compiled by Murtaḍā. It is also noteworthy that no further references were given by any of the scholars who expressed their opinion about *Nahj al-Balāghah*, except for what goes back to Ibn Khallikān or to later scholars who relied on him. They hardly ever used any Shīʿī source, which makes one doubt the accuracy of their information about *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>109</sup> Although these Sunnī scholars became authoritative sources later on, it seems that there is a decline in the popularity of this idea even among later Sunnī scholars.

Ibn Khallikān's statement, however, served its function well. Since Western scholars look at Islam mostly from a Sunnī perspective, the idea of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and its fabrication is commonly repeated by distinguished orientalist such as Brockelmann. Of course, there are understandable reasons why Western scholars observe Islam from the Sunnī view. The majority of the Muslim population is Sunnī. Sunnīs first became the object of Western attention and orientalist studies, and it was their books which were translated into foreign languages and gained authority among Western scholars. Therefore, it is not surprising if these scholars refer to Sunnī sources even if the subject was one which pertained to Shīʿīs.

Ibn Khallikān, as the first scholar to raise the question of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, in particular seems to have been very careless. He does not seem to

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<sup>109</sup> Some of Shīʿī sources prior to Ibn Khallikān has already been introduced.

be aware of Raḍī's mentioning *Nahj al-Balāghah* in his other books, nor is he aware of the outstanding commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāghah* which were already written in his time, such as the commentaries of al-Rāwandī and Ibn Abī al-Hadīd, nor does he give a biography of Ibn Abī al-Hadīd who had already discussed some doubts about *Nahj al-Balāghah* and introduced its compiler.<sup>110</sup> One can easily say that with respect to the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Ibn Khallikān simply made a mistake.<sup>111</sup>

These are several reasons why Murtaḍā was the object of greater attention in the Sunnī world than his brother Raḍī, and was therefore held responsible for the compilation (or fabrication) of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. As a very distinguished theologian and Shī'ī jurist of his time, Murtaḍā was regarded as a major figure in the theological battle between Sunnīs and Shī'īs. The presence of some Shī'ī ministers for a limited period in the court of the `Abbāsīd caliphs and the existence of relative political freedom had given Shī'ī scholars a good opportunity to freely express their ideas. Taking advantage of this open political atmosphere, Murtaḍā, and before him his teacher al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, and later his successor al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, established the basis of Shī'ī theology as a competent competitor of its Sunnī counterpart.<sup>112</sup> Murtaḍā made great efforts to have the Caliph recognize Shī'ī jurisprudence officially like those four Sunnī schools of thought (Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Ḥanbalī, Shāfi'ī). It is said that the `Abbāsīd caliph, al-Qādir Bi-Allāh asked him for 100,000 Dinars to proclaim recognition of the Shī'ī school of jurisprudence. Murtaḍā was ready to pay 80,000 Dinars from his own property and asked the Shī'īs to pay the rest, but because they

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<sup>110</sup> He only mentions his name once, while writing someone else's biography.

<sup>111</sup> `Abd al-Laṭīf Thanyān in his article "*Wafayāt al-A'yān*", *Majallat Lughat al-`Arab*, v. 4, pp. 506-509 mentions some of Ibn Khallikān's mistakes in *Wafayāt al-A'yān*.

<sup>112</sup> See Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān*, v. 4, p. 223. He writes, "Murtaḍā was the first one who extended the Shī'ī theology in jurisprudence and argued with his opponents."

did not or could not do so, the caliph refused to officially recognize<sup>113</sup> the Shī'ī school of thought. That is why, unlike his brother Raḍī, Murtaḍā is considered to be a great Shī'ī competitor against the Sunnīs. Therefore, in Sunnī circles, it is normal to attribute to Murtaḍā anything which is regarded as opposing Sunnī beliefs in the works of these two brothers, Raḍī clearly does not enjoy the same popularity as Murtaḍā does.

Nor should the disagreement between the Sunnīs and the Shī'īs in authorizing each other's sources be dismissed. With regard to the issue of *ḥadīth*, they do not authenticate what is related on the authority of their competitor. For a Shī'ī or Sunnī scholar, it is important to refer to his own sources when his addressee is his own community. None of these two parties would consider declarations of the other free of sectarian fanaticism and suspect motivations. Indeed, the truth is that very often these motivations play an important role in creating disagreements and animosity between the two opponent parties. For example, among the sources used in this chapter, one can see some Sunnī scholars using harsh words while writing about al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā and other Shī'ī scholars.<sup>114</sup> On the other hand, Shī'īs also accused Sunnīs of fanaticism in their anti-Shī'ī proclamations. If the most authoritative sources for one group is the most unreliable for the other, then for an outsider who wants to harmonize these two different and very often contradictory ideas, it would be very difficult to base a judgment only on what is written in the historical and biographical sources. That is why some other elements are also taken into account in this chapter as well as the coming chapters.

It is now time to formulate an answer to the question concerning the

<sup>113</sup> See Muḥammad Bāqir Khāwensārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, v. 4, p. 308.

<sup>114</sup> See, for instance, Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, v. 3, p. 256. Writing the biography of Murtaḍā, Ibn al-ʿImād says, "He (Murtaḍā) related *ḥadīth* from Sahl al-Dībājī, the liar."

compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, as to whose opinion is more reliable. Sunnīs do not seem to be familiar enough with Shīʿī scholars and their works. If a scholar is very outstanding, they may know about him, but when he is less familiar, he would be neglected or would not be presented appropriately.<sup>115</sup> There is no question that whenever a Sunnī writes a biography of a Shīʿī scholar, he does not do him justice, especially when his reliance on Shīʿī sources is minimal. For example, none of the biographers mentioned in this chapter provides a complete list of Murtaḍā's or Raḍī's books, while we can easily find most of their books listed in the earliest Shīʿī sources of their time. In fact, a scholar does not have the same significance for the opponent writer as he does for a writer from his own party.

Moreover, the danger of bias exists equally whether one writes about one's own people or about others. To borrow Zakī Mubārak's words, "If Sunnīs argue that Shīʿīs fabricated *Nahj al-Balāghah* for their sectarian motivations, why not say on our side (Sunnīs) that this slander of fabrication is fabricated by Sunnīs for the same sectarian motives."<sup>116</sup>

At this point, we must consider whether or not there is any reason for Shīʿīs to be biased in attributing *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī. Indeed, not only is there no reason to attribute *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī falsely, but, for many reasons, the attribution of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Murtaḍā would make it more authentic for both Sunnīs and Shīʿīs. First, Raḍī's creative ability in literature is used by the opponents of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to argue that it was his own composition. Unlike his brother, Murtaḍā does not have the same gift for literature. Therefore, if *Nahj al-Balāghah's* compilation is attributed to Murtaḍā, the possibility of its being fabricated by the compiler becomes

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<sup>115</sup> This problem is not just on the Sunnī side. The same is true of Shīʿī scholars when they are writing on a Sunnī scholar or his book.

<sup>116</sup> His ideas concerning *Nahj al-Balāghah* will be elaborated in the next chapter.

less plausible. Secondly, Murtaḍā has a greater position in theology and jurisprudence, and he is considered to have been the highest spiritual leader of the Shīʿī community of his time; therefore, he is unquestionably accepted as an authoritative source by Shīʿīs and for the same reason his higher standing in the Islamic sciences could not be denied by the Sunnīs either. On the other hand, in comparison to his brother, Raḍī enjoys a lesser reputation among Muslims for he was more involved in poetry and literature than in Islamic law, *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence. In particular, his love poems together with his close friendship with non-Muslims such as Abū Ishāq al-Ṣābī made him somewhat suspicious in the eyes of the orthodox.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, there is hardly any possibility of a Shīʿī bias in attributing *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī.

Without considering other evidence, the study of biographical sources, especially if both Sunnī and Shīʿī sources were given equal weight, would not lead us anywhere. In concluding this chapter, it may be suggested that, first, research on *Nahj al-Balāghah* and Raḍī and Murtaḍā, should be taken more seriously. Secondly, Shīʿī sources should be taken into account especially as there is little reason to fear Shīʿī bias in attributing *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Raḍī, as already noted.

All in all, evidence points in one direction, namely, that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, and not by his brother al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā. The reason why Ibn Khallikān and many other distinguished scholars had doubts with regard to the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is that Ibn Khallikān was simply mistaken. Influenced by his scholarship, other scholars repeated his mistake. In any case, a

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<sup>117</sup> It is said that once he was passing by the cemetery in which his friend Abū Ishāq al-Ṣābī was buried. He composed a poem for which he has been blamed for centuries. The poem itself is very expressive; he says: "O, Abū Ishāq, if the caravan would not blame my staying with you, I would rebuild your grave (*aḥyaytu qabrak*)."<sup>117</sup> It is also said that whenever he passed by al-Ṣābī's cemetery, he would dismount from his horse in respect. See ʿAlī Davānī, *Sayyid Raḍī Mu'allif-e Nahj al-Balāghah* (Tehran: Bunyād Nahj al-Balāghah, 1359 H.Sh).

biographer who deals with thousands of books and authors is not expected to conduct original research on each one of them, and among thousands of accurate records, one certainly can make some mistakes. More conclusively, Raḍī's repeated mention of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in his books is a clear testimony that the book was indeed compiled by him. It is hoped that this chapter will contribute to the scholarly debate on the issue of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* either by resolving the problem of its compilation, or at least by providing some new arguments to scholars who are seeking the truth.

## CHAPTER II

### PART I

#### NAHJ AL-BALĀGHAH'S AUTHORSHIP

Before we address the question of the authorship of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, a general overview of the different ideas expressed in this regard will be first surveyed. The major theories will be introduced and the viewpoints of opponents and proponents of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* through the examination of the objections levelled against *Nahj al-Balāghah* will be discussed.

Once again, Ibn Khallikān is held responsible for being the first to express doubts on the issue of authorship.<sup>1</sup> However, he does not say more than one sentence on the very important question he raises, nor does he use any argument to substantiate his doubt. Nevertheless, his statement is given more credit by the later biographers than it deserves.

The compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and `Alī ibn Abī Tālib are the two main figures discussed as regards the issue of authorship. However, some further suggestions, such as the combination of both or a chain of authors whose contribution produced the whole *Nahj al-Balāghah*, will also be noted.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As mentioned in the first chapter, Ibn Khallikān states: "It is said that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is not `Alī's word, rather it is the word of its compiler; God knows better."

<sup>2</sup> The idea that some additions in the text have taken place after Raḍī or Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd is one of the shakiest of arguments against the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. In the third chapter, some earlier manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in libraries of different countries, some of which belong to Raḍī's life time will be discussed. These manuscripts, together with over tens of commentaries written immediately after the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, leave no doubt that no change has ever made in *Nahj al-Balāghah* after Raḍī's death. There have been

## An Overview

Shī'īs and many Sunnī scholars<sup>3</sup> express no doubt as to the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. For them it is a collection of `Alī's utterances as compiled by Raḍī. Some contemporary Western scholars<sup>4</sup> as well as Muslim intellectuals<sup>5</sup> have given persuasive arguments in defending *Nahj al-Balāghah's* authenticity. Other Western and Sunnī scholars, however, have argued against its authenticity.

Over all, most of the scholars and biographers - with very few exceptions - who doubt the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* by Raḍī, also doubt its attribution to `Alī as a whole or in part. Yet there are some authors who consider *Nahj al-Balāghah* as a book compiled by al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, but they do not question its attribution to `Alī.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, there are scholars who consider *Nahj al-Balāghah* to be Raḍī's own composition.<sup>7</sup>

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scholars who used Raḍī's own copy or a certified copy by him for writing their own commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah* which will be mentioned.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Muḥammad `Abduh and among the contemporary scholars, Zakī Mubārak can be mentioned. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-`Arabīyah, 1959-1963), v. 10, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Laura Veccia Vaglieri argues that it is undeniable that a large portion of *Nahj al-Balāghah* could indeed be attributed to `Alī. See M. Djebli, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2), s.v, "*Nahj al-Balāghah*" (London, 1960-). Among the Western scholars, Massignon does not question the authenticity of entire book, rather he gives quite a few earlier sources for its content. Nevertheless, he mentions that "it contains passages of political and theological import." See Louis Massignon, *Salmān pāk and the Spiritual Beginnings of Iranian Islām*, translated from French by Jamshedji Maneckji Unvala (Bombay: Bombay University Press, 1957), p. 35. Salinger does not give any opinion of his concerning *Nahj al-Balāghah's* authenticity. According to Wadad al-Qadi, Western scholars including Gustav Richter and Salinger "denied" the attribution of the *`ahd* of Ashtar in *Nahj al-Balāghah* to `Alī. See Wadad al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document" *Studia Islamica*, (1978), v. 48, p. 77. In Salinger's dissertation, however, there is nothing from which the statement above can be understood. Unless she interprets the following statement in which one may not find the same implication. In the page referred by al-Qadi, Salinger states, "Qāḍī Nu'mān, and it may be added, al-Mu'izz with that skill which the enemies of the Fāṭimīds feared so much managed



This chapter will treat point by point, the arguments against the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and scholarly responses to each argument. Some arguments, however, are shared or repeated by more than one scholar; in such cases the main scholar or the first one who raised the question will be mentioned.

### Major Theories Concerning the Authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*

There are scholars who believe that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was composed by Raḍī. This view, although not supported by many scholars, is an important issue in the study of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. The second theory suggests that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was written and took shape over a long period of time and was finally completed by Raḍī. For instance, Aḥmad Amīn, an Egyptian scholar, accuses the Shīʿah of narrating traditions according to which divine knowledge and a lot of miracles were attributed to ʿAlī, and of "putting in his mouth" what is written in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>8</sup> Some scholars go further, saying that even after Raḍī and Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd some parts were added to *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>9</sup> The last and the most agreed

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to insert into this very conservative hand book some political dynamite whose efficacy cannot be overestimated." See Gerard G. Salinger, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, p. viii. Nonetheless, al-Qaḍī mentions that "neither Salinger nor Richer gave any reasons for their opinions." Wadad al-Qaḍī, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 77.

- <sup>5</sup> ʿAbd al-Zahrā al-Khaṭīb, Imtiyāz ʿAlī ʿArshī and Muḥammad Dashtī could be mentioned as some examples. Especially al-Khaṭīb's book, in four volumes, is a scholarly attempt to trace *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s sources.
- <sup>6</sup> Muḥammad Taqī Dānish Pazhūh, *Fihrist Kitābkhāneh-e Muḥammad Mishkāt* (Tehran: Intishārāt-e Dānishgāh-e Tehran, 1325-1330 H.Sh.), v. 5, p. 1623. He states, "Hasan Ibn Sulaymān al-Hillī in his *al-Muḥtaḍar* attributed *Nahj al-Balāghah* to al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā." Perhaps he is the only Shīʿī scholar who believes that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā. The question of compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* has been discussed in the first chapter.
- <sup>7</sup> As mentioned earlier, al-Dhahabī and some other biographers are among advocates of this idea.
- <sup>8</sup> Aḥmad Amīn, *Fajr al-Islam* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣrīyah, 1965), p. 270. See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 93, p. 36, for the quotation.

upon theory is that the work is a compilation of `Alī's utterances by Radī.<sup>10</sup> This chapter will examine the arguments made by the advocates of the theories mentioned above through the study of the objections raised against the attribution of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to `Alī and responses of the proponents of its authenticity. In the conclusion it will be suggested which one of the theories above is more reliable.

In this chapter one may find some religious arguments rather than pure historical ones. This is, however, because of the nature of the problem from its beginning as started by the Sunnīs and answered by the Shī'īs.

## **Reasons for Doubting *Nahj al-Balāghah's* Authenticity**

### **1. The *Sahābah* in *Nahj al-Balāghah***

Perhaps the immediate reason for which the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is questioned is that it contains utterances in which some companions of the Prophet, including Abū Bakr, `Umar and `Uthmān,<sup>11</sup> are criticized. These parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* are particularly controversial among Sunnī scholars. Ibn Hajar (852/1448), for instance, states: "Whoever studies *Nahj al-Balāghah* will certainly find out that its attribution to `Alī is a lie. In this book, there are distinct insults, and demotion of Abū Bakr and `Umar and expressions which do not meet with the personality of the companions of the Prophet."<sup>12</sup> Ibn Hajar's statement seems to be almost the exact text

<sup>9</sup> Hādī Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', *Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah* (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Rā'ī, 1354, A.H.), p. 113. The author refers to an article in *Majallat al-Ḥadīth*, No. 2, v. 13, p. 157, in which it is argued that some parts were added into *Nahj al-Balāghah*, even after Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd (Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' does not give the author's name).

<sup>10</sup> Shī'īs and many Sunnī scholars, such as Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd and Muḥammad `Abduh, support this perspective.

<sup>11</sup> These three are among the most distinguished companions of the Prophet and the caliphs after him.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalānī, *Lisān al-Mizān* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A`lamī li al-Maṭbū'āt, 1971), v. 4, p. 223.

copied from al-Dhahabī (748/1347).<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the most objective part of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which contains strong criticism of the companions, is the famous sermon of *al-Shiqshiqīyah*.<sup>14</sup> Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd defends the authenticity of the sermon saying: "The traditions reported on the authenticity of this sermon and similar sayings are successive (*mutawātir*)."<sup>15</sup> Zakī Bāshā, although regarded as one of the opponents of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* says: "There is no way to accuse Raḍī of fabricating the sermon of *al-Shiqshiqīyah* because it was very well known a hundred years before Raḍī was born through more than one chain of transmission (*al-riwāyah*)."<sup>16</sup>

Shīʿī scholars on the other hand, have argued this matter in two ways. First, they have pointed to sources in which this and other similar sayings are reported before Raḍī.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, through logical argument (*al-dalīl al-ʿaqlī*), they try to show the possibility of such statements having been made by ʿAlī. Contrary to their

<sup>13</sup> Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-ʿitidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1963), v. 3, p. 124; idem, *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā* (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risālah 1986), v. 17, p. 588.

<sup>14</sup> It is said that when ʿAlī was preaching this sermon, he was interrupted by someone who gave a letter to ʿAlī and after Ibn ʿAbbās asked him to continue. ʿAlī replied: "*Shiqshiqatun hadarat*" (it was a loquacity that happened); and that is why this sermon was called *al-Shiqshiqīyah*. This sermon is the third sermon in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd reports that his teacher Muṣaddiq ibn Shabīb al-Wāsiṭī had read the sermon of *al-Shiqshiqīyah* to ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad al-Khashshāb, and asked him about the authenticity of this sermon. Ibn Khashshāb replied, "By God, I am sure that it is ʿAlī's word." "People say that it is fabricated by Raḍī", al-Wāsiṭī said. Ibn Khashshāb answered, "Too far for Raḍī and others to be able to write like that. We have seen Raḍī's works and know his method of writing, which does not look like ʿAlī's." Then he continued, "By God, I have seen this sermon in books written two hundred years before Raḍī was born and I knew whose handwriting it was before Raḍī's father was born." Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd adds that he himself found this sermon in books of Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī who lived at the time of al-Muqtadir, the ʿAbbāsid caliph, long before Raḍī was born. He also found this sermon in *al-Inṣāf* of Abī Jaʿfar ibn Qubbah, a student of al-Balkhī. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 1, p. 205. This sermon is also related by al-Mufīd, Raḍī's teacher, with its chain of transmission. See al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Nuʿmān al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād* (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥaydarīyah,

opponents, who argue that the content of these sermons proves that they were not uttered by `Alī, Shī`ī scholars argue that the content itself is a proof that they are `Alī's utterances.<sup>18</sup> To establish this idea, they divide the *ṣaḥābah* into different categories and do not consider all of them pure and blameless;<sup>19</sup> the common Sunnī view gives all the *ṣaḥābah* a status which is given to the twelve Imams in the Shī`ī tradition.<sup>20</sup> Then Shī`īs provide evidence to prove that `Alī was trying to gain the leadership of the community after the Prophet's departure and regarded it as his right.<sup>21</sup>

According to Zakī Bāshā, there is a contradiction in the fact that `Alī criticized `Umar in one *khuṭbah*<sup>22</sup> and praised him in another place in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>23</sup> Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' retorts that *Nahj al-Balāghah*, like any other *ḥadīth* book, is subject to evaluation according to the criteria used for the appraisal of *ḥadīth*. To him, the passages in which `Alī praises `Umar is a *ḥabār wāḥid* (a tradition from a singleman), while the passages in which he criticizes him is frequently reported

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1962), p. 153.

<sup>16</sup> See Aḥmad Zakī Bāshā, *Tarjamāt `Alī ibn Abī Tālib* (Cairo: Maktabat al-`Ulūm, 1350, A.H.), p. 37.

<sup>17</sup> In the last chapter of this thesis some earlier sources of the sermon *al-Shiqshiqīyah* will be introduced.

<sup>18</sup> Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', *Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' states that the *ṣaḥābah*, who were 114000 in number according to some traditions and the last of whom passed away in the year 100/718, are considered like any other Muslim and are to be judged according to their behaviour.

<sup>20</sup> Sunnīs do not consider the *ṣaḥābah* infallible as Shī`īs do their Imams, but they give a sacred status to them and do not leave any room for criticism or blame of the *ṣaḥābah*. `Alī al-Wardī says, "Sunnīs love all the companions of the Prophet, even if they accompanied him for one day. According to them they are all the best and righteous. God is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him." See `Alī al-Wardī, *Wu`āz al-Salāṭīn* (Baghdad, n.p., 1954), p. 174. See also p. 168, his quotation from Ibn al-`Arabī. For the Sunnī perspective of the *ṣaḥābah*, see also Muḥammad al-Awwā, *al-Nizām al-Siyāsī li al-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah*, (Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1989), p. 129. It may be useful to mention that this Sunnī perspective of the *ṣaḥābah* seems to have been emerged among the later Muslims

through more than one chain; therefore, the validity of the sermon in which `Umar is praised is doubtful.<sup>24</sup> However, it should be noted that `Alī's criticism of `Umar<sup>25</sup> is not so strong as to constitute an insult, nor is the passage in which he is supposedly praised an appreciation; rather, that is also a kind of polite criticism.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, when he says *lillāhi bilādu fulān*, one can argue that there is no name to refer it to `Umar.<sup>27</sup>

However, it is not deniable that there were some disagreements, squabbles and mutual animosity among the *ṣaḥābah*. Nor can one ignore the well established historical fact that `Alī did his best to voice his concern about the issue of the successorship of the Prophet which he viewed as his exclusive prerogative. According to the consensus of both Sunnī and Shī`ī scholars, after the leadership of Abū Bakr was determined, `Alī was asked to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr. `Alī replied, "I am more appropriate for this matter (caliphate) and you are the one who has to pledge

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and is not a typical representative of earlier Muslims' view. Al-Jāhīz a very distinguished Muslim scholar, who does not have any Shī`ī tendencies, strongly criticized Mu`āwiyah and his son Yazīd and even accused them of being unbelievers. He accused those who do not permit the criticism of Mu`āwiyah and his son as *al-Nābitah* (innovators) and spoke of Mu`āwiyah as an arrogant, autocrat, and a symbol of division, violence, and oppression. See al-Jāhīz, *Rasā'il al-Jāhīz*, ed. `Abd al-Islām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1964), v. 2, pp. 10-23. This perspective is completely different from that of the later Sunnī scholars such as al-Ghazālī and of course much different from that of the common Sunnī view.

<sup>21</sup> The difference between the Mu`tazilī and Shī`ī view is that the Shī`īs believe that `Alī was appointed by the Prophet and according to the Divine will and by designation (*al-naṣṣ*). Therefore, his attempts to gain power were in accordance with his being appointed, while Mu`tazilīs justify `Alī's claim to the caliphate as his being the most appropriate and rightful for the position of the caliphate. For them it does not mean that he was chosen by *al-naṣṣ*. Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' on the other hand argued that "preventing someone who is the most appropriate and rightful from his definite right contradicts with right belief and justice." See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 11, pp. 109-115 for more details on his viewpoints. See also Kāshif, *Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 27-29, for his point of view.

<sup>22</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 3, p. 17.

allegiance to me."<sup>28</sup> When Abū `Ubaydah asked him to swear the oath of allegiance to Abū Bakr, `Alī replied, "By God, O, Quraysh, do not take away the sovereignty of Muḥammad from his household; do not depose his family members from his position; by God, certainly we are the most appropriate among the people for that (successorship of the Prophet)."<sup>29</sup> Similar statements in which `Alī claimed to be the most appropriate and rightful candidate for the leadership of the Islamic community can be found in almost any historical source which deals with the issue of the caliphate.<sup>30</sup> For this study it will suffice to show in brief that it was not only *Nahj al-Balāghah* which portrayed the disagreement between `Alī and other companions of the Prophet.<sup>31</sup> For instance, `Alī himself fought with Ṭalhah and Zubayr, two distinguished companions of the Prophet, in the famous battle of al-Jamal in which `Alī's opponents were led by `A'ishah, the Prophet's wife.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, there is no room to argue that `Alī would not talk against Abū Bakr and `Umar, while there is a consensus among scholars that `Alī believed in his being the most appropriate

<sup>23</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 228, p. 82.

<sup>24</sup> Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', *Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 60.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Sermon 228, p. 82.

<sup>26</sup> A similar phrase is used in the famous sermon called *al-Jihād*. `Alī uses the phrase *lillāhi abūhum* which for me is a criticism rather than a praise. In this sermon `Alī strongly criticizes Quraysh which leaves no room for regarding it as a praise.

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd believes that in this saying `Alī refers to `Umar and indeed, he praises him. He says he checked this sermon in Raḍī's own copy in which the word "*fulān*" glossed in the margin as `Umar. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 12, pp. 4-5. For the present writer, recording this saying in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, if it is taken as a praise, shows that Raḍī was recording `Alī's sayings without any regard for his own Shī'ī feelings, which may be taken as an argument for the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Fayḍ al-Islām sees this saying an indirect artistic criticism which is called *tawrīyah*.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imāmah wa al-Siyāsah* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Miṣrīyah, 1325 A.H.), v. 1, pp. 14-15.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

candidate for the position of the caliphate. Moreover, there are many distinguished scholars who have recorded *al-Shiqshiqīyah* before *Nahj al-Balāghah* with a complete chain of transmission.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, even if some parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* are not authentic because there are insults levelled against the *ṣahābah*, one cannot apply it for the whole book since those kinds of sayings in *Nahj al-Balāghah* are very limited in comparison to the whole book.

## 2. Literary and Linguistic Objections

The second objection to *Nahj al-Balāghah* is due to linguistic reasons. Decorated rhymed prose (*saḥf*), length of the sermons, and sublimity of thought and expression in the utterances are among questions raised by some scholars. For instance, Aḥmad Amīn states: "There are reasons which confirm doubts about *Nahj al-Balāghah*, among them rhymed prose and figures of speech which were not known at that time."<sup>34</sup>

Similar statements are made by many other scholars for whom the authenticity

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<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, Abū Ishāq al-Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt* (Tehran: Anjuman-i Athār Millī, 1355, A.H.), v. 2, p. 431; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 1, p. 150; Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, v. 15, p. 44; Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imāmah wa al-Siyāsah*, v. 1, p. 53; `Abd al-Zahrā Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asāniduh*, (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A`lamī li al-Maṭbū`āt, 1975), pp. 318-323.

<sup>31</sup> For more detailed information, see *al-Ghadīr*, in 12 volumes by Amīnī, in which the author aims to study `Alī's successorship of the Prophet, relying on Sunnī sources. Al-Wardī says, "These companions fought with and killed each other and accused one another of being infidel." See *Wu`āz al-Salāṭīn*, p. 174.

<sup>32</sup> See Abū Ja`far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1939), v. 3, pp. 465-543, for a detailed account of al-Jamal.

<sup>33</sup> Some earlier sources of this sermon will be given in the last chapter of this thesis.

<sup>34</sup> See Aḥmad Amīn, *Fajr al-Islam*, p. 149.

of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is questionable. For instance, Zakī Bāshā, in his book *Tarjamat `Alī ibn Abī Tālib*, states that the second sermon of *Nahj al-Balāghah* contains words which were not known to the Arabs until the (theological)<sup>35</sup> sciences developed, and that was after the time of `Alī.

Before delving into the views of the proponents of *Nahj al-Balāghah's* authenticity as regards on this issue, it is important to mention that the basis of the argument made by Aḥmad Amīn and repeated by some other scholars before and after him is itself questionable. Fuāt Sezgin has strongly argued against the idea that most sciences came to the Arab and Islamic world through translation of Greek books. He rather believes that Europeans themselves plagiarised different branches of science from the Islamic and Arabic sources and what later came to the Arab world was retranslation of their own sources.<sup>36</sup> He also states: "I believe that the production of scientific thought in Islam started in the first century of *hijrah*, not as some scholars have assumed, in the second half of the second century and the beginning of the `Abbāsīd caliphate."<sup>37</sup> This view should serve to remind us that some of Aḥmad Amīn's arguments may be less than reliable.

Pertaining to the problem of rhymed prose in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the proponents of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* are divided into two groups. In a passive manner, some of them tried to deny the existence of such arts in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, some scholars tried to justify their presence in it. For instance, in

<sup>35</sup> The term used by the author is mere "*ulūm*", but the content of the second sermon of *Nahj al-Balāghah* suggests that he is concerned with theological terminology.

<sup>36</sup> Fuāt Sezgin, *Muḥāḍarāt fī Tārīkh al-`Ulūm al-`Arabīyah wa al-Islāmīyah* (Frankfurt: Institute für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften, 1984), see pp. 21-36.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>38</sup> `Alī Al-Ibrāhīm, *Fī Rihāb Nahj al-Balāghah* (Beirut: Dār al-`ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1982), see Introduction by Muḥammad `Alī Asbar, p. 9.



response to Aḥmad Amīn, who believed in prohibition of using rhymed prose in the early Islamic era, Kāshif Al-Ghiṭā' states: "Prohibition of excessive use of rhymed prose does not necessarily follow that it was not used at that time, nor does it contradict the eloquence of the speech if it is used without overburdening."<sup>39</sup> Kāshif emphasizes, "There is no doubt that rhymed prose does not contradict eloquence, rather it is regarded as a good attribute of the speech. What is called rhymed prose in *Nahj al-Balāghah* exists in the words of pre-Islamic Arabs as well as in the *Qur'ān*, even though some do not see it appropriate to call it rhymed prose for respect of the word of God."<sup>40</sup> Rhymed prose also can be found in the word of the Prophet and his companions.<sup>41</sup>

According to Zakī Mubārak, the art of eloquence made great strides in its development with the appearance of Islam. Certainly the *Qur'ān* itself with its beautiful language and the Prophet Muḥammad who was known as *Afṣaḥ al-'Arab* (the most eloquent of the Arabs), had a great influence in introducing the Arabs to a new face of their language, previously unknown to them. The need to defend the rightfulness of this new religion, and the need to authenticate each party's claim to superiority after the death of the Prophet, were the main reasons for the growing importance of writing and speech. Mubārak states:

The first manifestation of the power of speech and writing was in the strong competition to gain the leadership of the Islamic community in which every party of *al-Muḥājirūn* and *al-Anṣār* were inviting people to their own party. Later, in the challenge between `Alī and Mu`āwiyah the strong need of both

<sup>39</sup> Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', *Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 5, p. 41. See also Abū Hilāl al-Askarī, *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Bajāwī & Muḥammad Abū al-Fadl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Muṣṭafā Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1971), p. 199, and Dīyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Athīr, *al-Muthul al-Sā'ir fī Adab al-Kātib wa al-Shā'ir*, ed. Aḥmad al-Hūfī (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Nahḍah al-Miṣr, 1959), v. 1, p. 271f for more information on the use of rhymed prose.

parties for the power of eloquence to publicize their own claims in different places was felt.<sup>42</sup>

After a comprehensive discussion Mubārak concludes that *saġ* (rhymed prose) was not created all of a sudden in the fourth century, "It was rather an old ornament of language used widely by the writers of the fourth century."<sup>43</sup> The same is true about including verses of poetry in the letters, speeches and documents, as can be found in the speech of `Uthmān the caliph and in some sermons of `Alī ibn Abī Tālib.<sup>44</sup>

Mubārak provides many examples to establish that *saġ* and other linguistic arts were used in the early Islamic era.<sup>45</sup> He says:

It is clear that the suspicions of people who disliked rhymed prose are not valid because the *Qur'ān* used rhythm, and we do not think that the Prophet avoided the method of pre-Islamic priests. Yet priests did not create rhymed prose, rather it was an old ornament in the Arabic language with a strong quality, for those who address to the hearts. And for this quality, priests used this art in the time of *jāhiliyah*; the *Qur'ān* confirmed it, the Prophet was influenced by it, and up to now it is an effective instrument used by the public speakers in mosques. Indeed, it is the basis of the eloquence among the men of religion.<sup>46</sup>

Mubārak concludes: "Even if we assume that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is not authentic, it does not necessarily follow that rhymed prose was not one of the characteristics of `Alī's sayings. For a person who imitates someone is very eager to simulate his method of presentation."<sup>47</sup>

Characteristics found in the writings of the fourth century could not have

<sup>42</sup> Zakī Mubārak, *al-Nathr al-Fannī fī al-Qarn al-Rābi`* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyah al-Kubrā, 1934), v. 1, p. 57.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>44</sup> See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon: 3, p. 17; 25, p. 21; 33, p. 23; 35, p. 23; 162, p. 56; and letters: 28, p. 89; 36, p. 94 and more, for the use of poetry in sermons or letters.

<sup>45</sup> See Zakī Mubārak, *Al-Nathr al-Fannī fī Qarn al-Rābi`*, pp. 64-101.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

become a distinct feature of that century over night. They rather developed during a long period of time until they reached the climax in the fourth/tenth century. Giving a number of examples of the use of rhymed prose from the pre-Islamic and early Islamic era and sayings of the Prophet and caliphs, al-Jāhiz states: "Preachers used to speak in the presence of Rāshidūn Caliphs, and in their speech they used a lot of rhymed prose which the caliphs did not prohibit."<sup>48</sup> Al-Jāhiz made important comments on this issue, from which the following conclusions can be derived.

1. Rhymed prose is a noble element in the eloquence of the Arabic language.
2. The reason for which rhymed prose was disliked in the first and second centuries, was that it was a reminder of the pre-Islamic priests, not because it disturbed the eloquence of the language.
3. Most of the preachers and public speakers used rhymed prose and the caliphs did not dislike it.<sup>49</sup>

A look at the many examples given by al-Jāhiz from various sayings of well known orators of pre-Islamic and Islamic period leaves no doubt that *saḥf* was significantly used in the Arabic language. Therefore, the objections regarding the use of *saḥf* in *Nahj al-Balāghah* cannot be taken as a reason to prove that it is not `Alī's saying because the assumption on which this idea is based seems to be a wrong one.

Moreover, al-Jāhiz clearly states that sayings of `Alī, `Umar and `Uthmān were collected in compendia.<sup>50</sup> This means that they were known long before Raḍī was born. Furthermore, Jāhiz himself used rhymed prose in his own writing about two

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<sup>48</sup> `Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, ed. `Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maktabah al-Khānjī, 1985), v. 1, p. 290.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., v. 1, pp. 284-290.

<sup>50</sup> Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, V. 1, p. 201.

centuries before Raḍī.<sup>51</sup> It should not be dismissed that as a great man of literature, Raḍī himself should be considered a reliable source who knew the style of Arab writers very well. And as noted by Zakī Mubārak, even if we assume that Raḍī did not report `Alī's sayings, at least he knew what *could* be attributed to `Alī. This is apart from the fact that Raḍī himself is considered to be an authoritative source in literature whose word can be taken as a criterion to evaluate the Arabic speech.<sup>52</sup> It is surprising that though Mubārak promotes Raḍī to a higher level than al-Mutanabbī in his book *`Abqariyat al-Sharīf al-Raḍī*,<sup>53</sup> yet he evaluates him by relying on al-Jāhiz rather than on Raḍī himself.<sup>54</sup>

One can justify the extensive use of rhymed prose in *Nahj al-Balāghah* in two ways: First the fourth century marked the climax in the use of linguistic arts and among them rhymed prose was significantly appreciated by men of letters and regarded as one of the fundamental elements of eloquence. Therefore, when Raḍī states that he had chosen the most eloquent of `Alī's words in his compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, perhaps those parts with rhymed prose seemed more eloquent and interesting to him. Secondly, rhymed words were much easier to be memorised and recorded later on; therefore, one can say that basically most of `Alī's words which were memorised and survived until the time of the compiler, were in rhyme. Jāhiz states:

`Abd al-Ṣamad ibn al-Faḍl ibn `Tsā al-Raḡāshī was asked why he preferred the rhymed prose to ordinary ones and forced himself to take care of rhythm and rhyme. He answered, "If I wished my words to be heard only by the present

<sup>51</sup> See his introduction to the second volume of *al-Bayān*, v. 2, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> Kāshif says: Raḍī's narration is not less reliable than some linguists such as Imra' al-Qays and others.

<sup>53</sup> Zakī Mubārak, *`Abqariyat al-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Hijāzī, 1952), p. 10.

<sup>54</sup> See Zakī Mubārak, *al-Nathr al-Fannī*, p. 69.

people, I would probably agree with you. But I want the absent and the present, the lasting and the passing to hear my words; memorizing them is easier, and ears are much eager to hear them. Whatever the Arab has produced in good prose was not less than what they produced in rhymed prose, yet one tenth of the prose is not saved and one tenth of rhymed words is not lost.<sup>55</sup>

With respect to linguistic objections on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, there are some minor points regarding which similar arguments have been made. Using some words and expressions unfamiliar in the Arabic language (creating words), sublimity of thought and expression, precise and delicate descriptions, thoughtful and insightful political and social ideas, numeric categorization of the subjects, philosophical method which is claimed to have become known to the Arabs only after the introduction of Greek philosophy, are some of these minor points.

Among the reasons for which Aḥmad Amīn doubts the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is the employment of linguistic arts which are thought to be unknown to the Arabs of the time. One can shed light on this issue by glancing at the examples he provides: "Respect your relatives, for they are your wings by which you fly and your origin to which you will return."<sup>56</sup> or "*Istighfār* (asking for forgiveness) is of six kinds."<sup>57</sup> or belief "*(Imān)* is based on four props,"<sup>58</sup> and what `Alī says in describing

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<sup>55</sup> See Jāhiz, *al-Bayān*, p. 287.

<sup>56</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter: 31, p. 93.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, h. 417, p. 123.

<sup>58</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, h. 31, p. 107. Raḍī mentioned at the end of this sermon that he did not report the whole sermon and left some parts out. The text reported by Ibn Shu`bah al-Harrānī in *Tuḥaf al-Uqūl* confirms Raḍī's statement. The former reports the sermon in a much more extensive way. Some textual differences between *Nahj al-Balāghah* and *Tuḥaf* shows that their authors used different sources. Therefore, in case of this sermon, Raḍī cannot be blamed because we have access to an earlier source in which this sermon is reported before *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled. See Ibn ṣahābah al-Harrānī, *Tuḥaf al-Uqūl* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-A`lamī li al-Maṭbū`āt, 1974), pp. 114-118.

<sup>59</sup> This sermon is addressed to one of `Alī's companions, Shurayh al-Qādī, in which `Alī blames him for buying an expensive house, saying that if `Alī had written the

a house and its four borders<sup>59</sup> or in describing a peacock.<sup>60</sup> Amīn says, "In these phrases there are delicate meanings and methods of descriptions which were not known to the Arabs until the `Abbāsīd period."<sup>61</sup>

Kāshif criticized Aḥmad Amīn for not providing any logical evidence for his claim. For him, it is not necessary for all the writers of a certain period to have exactly the same method of writing, nor is it impossible for the people of the early period to be acquainted with Greek philosophy with which `Alī also could have possibly been familiar. Yet, as already mentioned, the idea of the transmission of science from Greece to the Arab world is rather questionable. Furthermore, the similarity between the two texts does not necessarily mean that one is taken from the other. Some Shī`ī scholars, however, answered this objection by resorting to the *Qur'ān*, the sayings of the Prophet and the early caliphs (Abū Bakr, `Umar and `Uthmān) in which the same categorizations and expressions are used.<sup>62</sup>

It should be noted that in the examples mentioned by Aḥmad Amīn there is nothing extra-ordinary which cannot be found in Arabic literature either before or after the appearance of Islam. Moreover, nobody can deny that Islam, the *Qur'ān*, and the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet unquestionably influenced Arabic literature. `Alī as the most eloquent of the Arabs<sup>63</sup> after the Prophet, - as confirmed by al-Jāḥiẓ and even by many

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document, he would have described the house as such and such. See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter. 3, p. 84.

<sup>60</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 165, p. 57.

<sup>61</sup> Aḥmad Amīn, *Fajr al-Islam*, P. 149.

<sup>62</sup> See al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asāniduh*, v. 1, pp. 159-164.

<sup>63</sup> Jāḥiẓ states: "Abū Bakr was an eloquent speaker, `Umar was an eloquent speaker, `Uthmān was an eloquent speaker, `Alī was the most eloquent of them." See *al-Bayān*, v. 1, p. 353. Another proof for Jāḥiẓ's statement can indirectly be derived from his book *al-Bayān*. He devotes nine pages to `Alī's sayings versus one to two pages to Abū Bakr, `Umar and `Uthmān. See *al-Bayān*, v. 2, pp. 50-59.

of those who questioned *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s - authenticity<sup>64</sup> must have some special qualities in order to be entitled to be called the most eloquent. Furthermore, the same characteristic for which objections levelled against *Nahj al-Balāghah* can be found in other sayings of `Alī recorded by authoritative scholars with the chains of transmissions hundred years older than the time when Raḍī was born.<sup>65</sup>

### 3. Miracles and Divine Knowledge in Nahj al-Balāghah

There are about 75 prophecies in *Nahj al-Balāghah* most of which have taken place according to the interpretation of its believers.<sup>66</sup> For the Shī'īs, these prophecies confirm `Alī's supernatural knowledge. On the other hand, some objections are levelled against *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s authenticity because of these prophecies from which `Alī's claim to secret knowledge of the divine is understood. Aḥmad Amīn for instance states: "The Shī'ah reported miracles from `Alī and his possession of divine knowledge. They said that he knew everything and put in his mouth what is written in *Nahj al-Balāghah*."<sup>67</sup> al-`Aqqād says: "These prophecies in *Nahj al-Balāghah* about al-Ḥajjāj and the infatuation of Zanj, and the attack of the Tatars, are addition made by scribes after these events took place."<sup>68</sup>

Shī'īs, of course, interpret `Alī's being informed of the divine secret in a different way. Amīnī, for instance, defined *al-ilm bi al-ghayb* in the following words: "*Al-ilm bi al-ghayb* means being acquainted with that which is invisible in present,

<sup>64</sup> See Zakī Bāshā, *Tarjamat `Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 132.

<sup>65</sup> Some earlier sources of *Nahj al-Balāghah* will be surveyed in the next chapter.

<sup>66</sup> This number is given by Ja'far Subḥānī in his article, "*Nahj al-Balāghah va Agāhī az Ghayb*" in *Yādnāmeḥ-i Kungereh-i Hezāreh-i Nahj al-Balāghah*, 1401/1981 (Tehran: Bunyād Nahj al-Balāghah, 1981), p. 163.

<sup>67</sup> Aḥmad Amīn, *Fajr al-Islam*, p. 270; see also *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 93, p. 36.

<sup>68</sup> `Abbās al-`Aqqād, *Abqariyat al-Imām `Alī* (Cairo: Dār al-Hilāl, 1961), p. 177.

the past and the future."<sup>69</sup> According to him human beings are able to have access to some levels of this knowledge through certain channels or by other logical means. For the Prophets, there are other exclusive resources in addition to what is accessible to the people. There are certain levels of *`ilm al-ghayb*, however, which are beyond the reach of a created being's perception. "With Him are the keys of *al-ghayb*; no one knows them but He."<sup>70</sup> Therefore, if *`ilm al-ghayb* is accessible to some created beings in any degree, it must be through the prophet's knowledge who is taught by God. Mūsā al-Kāzīm, the seventh Shī'ī Imam, was asked if he had divine knowledge. He answered "No, by God, it is nothing but what I inherited<sup>71</sup> from the Prophet."<sup>72</sup>

Examining the possibility of possession of supernatural knowledge, Ja'far Subhānī divides the methods of gaining knowledge into three major ways of experimental, reasoning and inspiration. (*ilhām* and *ishrāq*).<sup>73</sup> He argues that there is no way to deny being acquainted by inspiration. Subhānī divides *`ilm al-ghayb* into two categories of (*dhātī*) which belongs only to God. The second way which is accessible to human being is also by God's permission and through his Prophet.<sup>74</sup>

With respect to some passages of *Nahj al-Balāghah* from which 'Alī's performing miracles, foretelling the future or possessing divine knowledge is understood, Maytham al-Bahrānī believes that these are things the Prophet informed

<sup>69</sup> See 'Abd al-Husayn Amīnī, *al-Ghadir* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1372, A.H.), v. 5, p. 52.

<sup>70</sup> *The Qur'ān*, 6: 59.

<sup>71</sup> Inheritance here is to be interpreted as learning from his father from his grandfather, and all the way back to the Prophet.

<sup>72</sup> Al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asānīduh*, p. 169, quoted from *Amālī* of al-Mufīd.

<sup>73</sup> Ja'far Subhānī, *Nahj al-Balāghah va Agāhī az Ghayb* in *Yādnāmeḥ-i Kungereh-i Hezāreh-i Nahj al-Balāghah*, 1401/1981, p. 165.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.



`Alī about, and in this case there is no difference between him and others.<sup>75</sup> In other words, anyone who had learnt something from the Prophet could have talked about what he had learnt.

However, *Nahj al-Balāghah* itself provides an answer to this objection. While describing the Turks, a companion of `Alī asked if he was telling *`ilm al-ghayb*. `Alī answered, "O brother of Kalb,<sup>76</sup> this is not *`ilm al-ghayb*, rather it is learnt from a learned one (the Prophet). But *`ilm al-ghayb* is the knowledge of the day of judgement of which no one is aware but God."<sup>77</sup>

Given that some of the prophecies in *Nahj al-Balāghah* have already taken place, proponents of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* take them as confirming `Alī's extraordinary knowledge and an authentication of what was reported by Raḍī in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. The question, however, is whether or not these passages were added to *Nahj al-Balāghah* after the events took place. The answer provided by the proponents of *Nahj al-Balāghah's* authenticity is that there existed and exist manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* belonging to Raḍī's time. Furthermore, Ibn Abī al-Hadīd reports having seen copies of *Nahj al-Balāghah* written in Raḍī's life time and adds that some of prophecies were fulfilled in his own life time.<sup>78</sup> In library catalogues we can find manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in Iran, Iraq and other countries, going back to the period of Raḍī.

According to al-Khaṭīb, even if one presumes that the prophecies about Ḥajjāj and the Zanj were redactions by scribes, one can hardly doubt the prophecies about

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>76</sup> The man was from the tribe of Kalb.

<sup>77</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 128, p. 47.

<sup>78</sup> Ibn Abī al-Hadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 12, p. 4, also al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asāniduh*, p. 173.

those events which happened after many authors had written their commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, such as al-Rāwandī who is mentioned by Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd. He reports that there are manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the libraries which date to 556/1160, i.e. more than 60 years before the attack of Jankīz Khān and the capture of Baghdad by Hulākū (616-656/1219/1258).<sup>79</sup>

#### 4. Wasy and Waṣīyah

Another reason why *Nahj al-Balāghah* is criticised, is that it contains utterances in which *wasy* and *waṣīyah* are mentioned.<sup>80</sup>

Opponents of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* have argued that the *waṣīyah* in *Nahj al-Balāghah* makes its authenticity questionable. Proponents, on the other hand, provide evidence in which the word *wasy* was used for `Alī before *Nahj al-Balāghah*. However, it seems that the use of the term is not objectionable because there are hundreds of sources in which these phrases (*wasy* and *waṣīyah*) are used for `Alī.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, there is no doubt that *Nahj al-Balāghah* did not invent these words

<sup>79</sup> The attack of Tātār took place in Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd's life time and he mentioned it in his commentary.

<sup>80</sup> *Waṣīyah* means testament or last will and is the technical term Shī'īs use for `Alī's appointment by the Prophet as his successor. The main dispute between Shī'īs and Sunnīs regarding *waṣīyah* is that Shī'īs believe that the Prophet had appointed `Alī as his successor before his death, while the Sunnīs argue that there was no such appointment. Both sides have their own arguments with respect to the problem of *waṣīyah*. `Allāmah Amīnī, a Shī'ī scholar, has written 12 volumes only about the event of Ghadīr al-Khumm, the place at which the Prophet is said to have made his testament. The text of the Prophet's speech on this occasion and the details of the event, as recorded by both Sunnīs and Shī'īs, is almost exactly the same. Nevertheless, they interpret the Prophet's sayings in different ways. Sunnīs believe that he simply wanted to tell the people that he liked `Alī and considered him as his brother or gave him some responsibilities concerning his family affairs, but not the whole community. Shī'īs, on the other hand, do not regard it to be logical for the Prophet to stop thousands of Muslims on their way back from pilgrimage to tell them about very simple, minor and self-evident matters. For the Shī'ah, there is no point in telling people that he liked `Alī because this was something that everybody already knew. `Alī was his son-in-law and probably the person loved most by him.

<sup>81</sup> See al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asāniduh*, pp. 121-152, for the

for the first time and the only possible way to resolve the problem would be by interpreting the *ḥadīths* and reports, which is not our concern here.

## 5. Texts Common With Other Books

*Nahj al-Balāghah* is criticised for having some texts which are attributed to some other writers as well. It appears, however, that the number of such instances is very few in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Nor is it very strange because this phenomenon is also observable in many other texts, which too are attributed to more than one person. Further, the fact that certain texts are also found elsewhere is not in itself an argument for inauthenticity, until it is proven that one was taken from the other. However, there are ways to come to some degree of certainty about these kinds of problems.

Raḍī himself seems to be very careful in his narration (*riwāyah*). For instance, on one occasion, he narrates a sermon of `Alī and notes that this sermon is also attributed to Mu`āwiyah.<sup>82</sup> Quoting from al-Jāhiz, Raḍī supports the latter's opinion that the sermon cannot be from Mu`āwiyah.<sup>83</sup> According to al-Jāhiz, the incident given for this narration does not support its attribution to Mu`āwiyah. The style of the speech resembles that of `Alī rather than Mu`āwiyah. Both the content and the context support its attribution to `Alī because there are no indications suggesting that

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evidence provided for the use of "*waṣy*" and "*waṣīyah*" before *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Making a comparison between Abū Bakr, `Umar and Mu`āwiyah - who saw it necessary to appoint their successors - and the Prophet - who did not - and quoting traditions about the necessity of *waṣīyah*, the author argued that it is not logically possible for the Prophet to leave the community without a leader. Then he gives evidence according to which the Prophet appointed `Alī as his successor. He includes 80 quotations from the early Islamic literature according to which `Alī was called *al-waṣy*. Moreover, he adduces 17 titles of books written exclusively on *waṣīyah* before *Nahj al-Balāghah*. See also Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, v. 4, p. 4 and `Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Dīn, *al-Murāja`āt* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A`lamī lil-Maṭbū`āt, 1983), p. 118, for more detailed information on *waṣīyah*.

<sup>82</sup> See, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 32, p. 22.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

Mu'āwiyah ever employed the style of ascetic people and faithful devotees.<sup>84</sup>

Among the mentioned examples by critics, is a short saying about friendship in *Nahj al-Balāghah* which can be found with minor variation in *al-Adab al-Kabīr wa al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr* of Ibn Muqaffa'.<sup>85</sup> The similarities between the aforementioned saying of 'Alī in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and *al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr* does not mean that it was taken from Ibn Muqaffa', because most of the latter's material is in any case taken from other sources. Hannā al-Fākhūrī states: "Except for his book *Risālah al-ṣaḥābah* and some other books, Ibn al-Muqaffa' had always been a narrator, translator, and compiler of discourses uttered by other scholars."<sup>86</sup>

In his introduction to *al-Adab al-Kabīr wa al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr*, Ibn al-Muqaffa' himself confirms that he had taken the material for his books from different sources.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, the possibility that the aforementioned part could have been taken from 'Alī's saying becomes stronger, particularly when we see that Ibn al-Muqaffa' paid great attention to philosophical and moral dicta.

There also are certain sections in *Nahj al-Balāghah* which, it is claimed, should be attributed to a famous Arab orator, Saḥbān al-Wā'il. Over all, however, the number of such phrases is very small. Moreover, these kinds of similarities are not peculiar to *Nahj al-Balāghah*; it is the problem which afflicts much of the classical and medieval Islamic and non-Islamic literary heritage.

<sup>84</sup> See *al-Bayān*, v. 2, p. 61. See also *ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 117, h. 281, and *al-Adab al-Kabīr wa al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādīr, no date), p. 133.

<sup>86</sup> Hannā al-Fākhūrī, *Ibn al-Muqaffa'*, trans. 'Abd al-Hādī Ḥā'irī (Mashhad: Intishārāt-e Kitāb Zuvvār, 1341, A.H.), p. 21.

<sup>87</sup> Ibn al-Muqaffa', *al-Adab al-Kabīr wa al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr*, p. 15 & 64.

## CHAPTER II

### PART II

### THE TESTAMENT OF ASHTAR

Opponents of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* have questioned it for its short and pithy maxims on the one hand, and very detailed and elaborate sermons on the other. There is not much criticism of the use of laconical discourse because it is considered to be one of the distinct characteristics of the early period of Islam. But about detailed letters and sermons, some questions have been raised. Yet, even about laconicism and brevity, the question remains whether concise and terse sayings are to be attributed to `Alī or lengthy and detailed speeches.

Most of the famous public speakers are known for either their short sayings or long speeches, but there indeed are also those Arab speakers who are well known for both laconic and long speeches. However, there is no claim by the men of letters that one has to follow either this or that, nor do they prefer one of these styles to the other. Generally, to invoke these two different approaches is due to the circumstances in which one may deliver his speech or in which one writes. Therefore, certain conditions may require a preacher to prolong his speech for hours to elaborate every aspect of his defined points while he might prefer to express himself in a few words under other conditions. In fact, to recognize which approach would be appropriate under certain conditions is a delicate art of which a public speaker or writer must be aware.

The answer to the question whether early Muslim speakers delivered long speeches is certainly positive. Perhaps, the best representative of the orators who invoked both long sermons and expressive laconic, who is also a contemporary of

Alī, was Saḥbān al-Wā'il, a very well known Arab orator, who owes his popularity to his long sermons.<sup>1</sup> Once he spoke from the midday until the time of afternoon prayer in the presence of Mu'āwiyah without any mumbling or stopping. Mu'āwiyah gave him a hint to stop. Yet he asked Mu'āwiyah to let him continue. Mu'āwiyah said: "It is time for praying." Saḥbān replied: "It is in front of you, we are in prayer,"<sup>2</sup> Then Mu'āwiyah said: "You are the best of the Arab orators." Thereupon Saḥbān: "and non-Arabs, *jinn* and mankind" (*wa al-ʿAjam wa al-jinn wa al-ins.*) This anecdote shows that orators would not limit themselves into a certain determined approach. Rather they would employ verbosity or laconism depending on circumstances. Saḥbān who is found of his long sermons delicately shifts to terse sentences while addressing Mu'āwiyah because Mu'āwiyah himself is an eloquent speaker and in the position of power.<sup>3</sup>

The point one may argue is not whether people could or did deliver long speeches, but rather how such long speeches could have been remembered and correctly transmitted. This objection is not valid against written documents. Nevertheless, because memorizing was one of the few elements for the survivor of the sayings of the eloquent speakers, it was greatly used by the ancient people particularly by those who themselves were orators in order to use them in their own speeches.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Aṣma'ī describes him in the following words: "Whenever he delivered a speech, he would shed drops of sweat and would not repeat a word twice, he would not stop or sit until he had finished." Ibn Nubātah, *Sharḥ al-ʿUyūn fī Sharḥ Riṣālat Ibn Zaydūn*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1964), p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> He means that his speech too is a kind of prayer.

<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of his speech, Saḥbān asks for a stick (to lean on it). When he is asked what he wants to do with that in the presence of the caliph (Mu'āwiyah), he replies, "What Moses did with his rod while talking to his Lord." The answer is so convincing that leaves no room for further questioning. In the last sentence when Mu'āwiyah praises him by saying "*anta akḥṭab al-Arab*" he even does not initiate a new sentence, rather continues his sentence saying "*wa al-ʿAjam wa al-jinn wa al-ins.*" See Ibid., for detailed information.

Moreover, even some people would write the speeches of eloquent speakers at the time it was being delivered.<sup>4</sup>

Writing long documents also is not absent in the history of early Islam. `Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Yahyā al-Kātib<sup>5</sup> a scribe of Marwān ibn Muḥammad, the Umayyad caliph, wrote a political document to Marwān's son, `Abdallāh, which is twice longer than `Alī's *`ahd* to Mālik al-Ashtar.<sup>6</sup> It is also said that `Abd al-Ḥamīd wrote another letter to Abū Muslim of Khorāsān, which is said to have been carried on the camel because of its size!<sup>7</sup>

`Alī's letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, known as *`ahd al-Ashtar*,<sup>8</sup> is the longest passage<sup>9</sup> of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which is objected not only for its length, but also for some other reasons, such as its unique political ideas concerning the issue of polity and state and for being "extremely organized".<sup>10</sup> In an anonymous article in *Majallat*

<sup>4</sup> Kulaynī, *Uṣūl Kāfī* (Tehran: Daftar-e Nashr-e Farhang-e Ahl-e Bayt, 1966), v. 1, p. 192, no: 7.

<sup>5</sup> This document was written about the year 127/774 namely 90 years after `Alī's *`ahd* to Mālik. For the text of this document, see Aḥmad ibn `Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A`shā fī Ṣinā`at al-Inshā*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyah, 1987), v. 10, pp. 198-241.

<sup>6</sup> It is noteworthy to mention that `Abd al-Ḥamīd himself admitted that he owed his eloquence to memorizing `Alī's sermons. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-`Arabīyah, 1959-1963), v. 1, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., v. 3, p. 279.

<sup>8</sup> Hereafter *`ahd*.

<sup>9</sup> The second long utterance in *Nahj al-Balāghah* is `Alī's advice to his elder son al-Ḥasan, which is not questioned, perhaps because it is well documented in other historical sources.

<sup>10</sup> Since there are some important discussions about this letter by both opponents and proponents, a separate section will be devoted to this letter together with some other controversial utterances where their sources are under discussion. However, some common objections raised against this letter are examined in their

*al-Muqtataf*,<sup>11</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s recension of the *`ahd* is compared to a manuscript of the *`ahd* dated 858/1454 and belonging to Sulṭān Bāyazīd II (886-918/1481-1512).<sup>12</sup> In this manuscript, the writer finds the *`ahd* an abridged version of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. He states that, "This *`ahd* is reported in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and *Nahj al-Balāghah* --all of it-- is suspicious in its attribution to Imām `Alī. It is said that it is from the forgeries of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī."<sup>13</sup> Amazed at the beauty of its calligraphy and originality, the author surprisingly concludes that some additions have appeared in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Probably, he was not aware of hundreds of original manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* belonging to earlier dates in which the whole text of the *`ahd* can be found without any difference with the printed copies of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>14</sup> Only one example should suffice to show how far the writer is from the facts about *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>15</sup> His manuscript was written more than 450 years after *Nahj al-Balāghah*, and more than two centuries after Ibn Abī al-Hadīd had written his comprehensive commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>16</sup>

Examining the last sentence of the article mentioned above, one may get the impression that the writer did not know that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled before the date of the manuscript he discussed, viz. 858/1454. He writes, "Whether the *`ahd*

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appropriate sections in this chapter.

<sup>11</sup> Anon., "'Ahd al-Imām `Alī", *al-Muqtataf* (Cairo: March 1913), v. 42, no: 3, pp. 246-252.

<sup>12</sup> For more information on Bāyazīd, see *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2), s.v, "Bāyazīd" (V. J. Parry, London, 1960-).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>14</sup> See the last chapter of this thesis for references to some earlier manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

<sup>15</sup> There are manuscripts available to us belonging to Raḍī's own period and some of them will be introduced in this thesis.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Abī al-Hadīd's commentary was completed in 649/1251 and its author passed away in 655/1257.



was originally written short and later was expanded until it became as it is in *Nahj al-Balāghah* or not, the advice given in it is the most eloquent wisdom of its kind ever written by philosophers and wise men."<sup>17</sup>

A careful examination of the manuscript and *Nahj al-Balāghah's* recension of the *`ahd* leads to the following conclusions:

a. "Almost every single word in the manuscript is identical with *Nahj al-Balāghah's* version without significant textual differences, except for some omissions in the manuscript which are present in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

b. In this manuscript there are sudden changes in the tenses, pronouns and verbs which disturb the smoothness of the Arabic text. For example, just at the very beginning in the second paragraph, there is a very unusual change in the subject of the sentence from the third to the second person.<sup>18</sup> It reads, "This is what Allāh's servant `Alī Amīr al-Mu'minīn has ordered Mālik ibn al-Ashtar, when he appointed him as the governor of Egypt. He has ordered him to fear Allāh, to prefer obedience to Him and to help Him with his hands, heart and tongue. Control your passion in whatever you like and dislike."<sup>19</sup>

c. As the *`ahd* follows, the differences remain only in a few words, such as: *Ridā* and *rakhā*; *lahum* and *ilayhim*; and *`anhum* and *`anka*, which are very usual in different editions of manuscripts and even printed books.<sup>20</sup> The omissions toward the end of the manuscript are less frequent than they are at the beginning.

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<sup>17</sup> Anon., "'Ahd al-Imām `Alī", p. 252.

<sup>18</sup> These kinds of changes [i.e. a sudden shift from indirect to direct speech], although permitted in the Arabic language under certain conditions, can hardly be accepted at the price of destroying the smoothness and structure of the sentence.

<sup>19</sup> "'Ahd al-Imām `Alī", p. 248.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 250.

Moreover, the writer has not published the entire *`ahd* in his article, which gives the impression that he could not find any textual differences with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, nor does he mention any differences in the part that he did not publish. Indeed, after the third paragraph, there is no omission in the manuscript under discussion, except those minor points mentioned above which are essentially concerned with the pronunciation of the words, while there is no difference in phrases and sentences.

Therefore, one may suggest that the manuscript is taken from *Nahj al-Balāghah* or other sources containing the *`ahd* and has been reproduced for Bāyazīd with some omissions. It is, however, very strange that one does not doubt a manuscript of the ninth/15th century, but doubts *Nahj al-Balāghah* which was compiled 450 years earlier than the mentioned manuscript.

### **An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document or a Document of 38 A.H.?**

Most of the declarations of the opponents of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, particularly concerning the famous *`ahd* of `Alī to Mālik al-Ashtar, are very brief and often quite superficial. One can hardly find a scholar who has devoted a detailed study to the authenticity of the aforementioned *`ahd* and goes beyond general statements, such as "it is very long and very organized to be attributed to `Alī", "it has here a coloration of translated material into Arabic language", "It is too comprehensive and well presented." It is in this context that Wadad al-Qadi's article, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document" finds its significance. Perhaps she is the first and only scholar who provides a detailed and analytical discussion of the *`ahd*. Her article, therefore, deserves a detailed examination, to which the following pages will be devoted. Although al-Qadi studies only the *`ahd*, yet she deals with some general ideas which are also applicable to the other parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. In this article, al-Qāḍī develops some important arguments against the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*,

aiming to place the *`ahd* in its "correct context" and to discover its real author. Although al-Qadi's article is much wider in scope, her arguments will be examined here only in so far as they relate directly and specifically to the question of *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s authenticity.

Placing the *`ahd* in its "correct context", the author finally comes to the conclusion that it is not *`Alī*'s work, but rather was written in the Fātimīd Maghrib. In reaching this conclusion, she makes a comparison between a recension of the *`ahd* in *Da`ā'im al-Islām* of Nu`mān ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥayyūn (d. 363/974) and another recension in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. She seeks to show, first, that the version in *Da`ā'im* is the original one and the *Nahj* version must have been taken from it. Secondly, she examines these two recensions both internally and externally to find out their similarities and differences. This examination leads her to the conclusion that some omissions and additions have taken place in the *Nahj* recension of the *`ahd* in the interest of the "islamization of the *`ahd*", so as to make its attribution to *`Alī* possible.

Through a comparison between the *`ahd* and similar testaments of Persian and Greek authors, al-Qadi makes it clear that the *`ahd* could not have been taken from the material translated from Greek and Persian sources.<sup>21</sup> She believes that the *`ahd* is rooted in the letter of Tāhir ibn Ḥusayn (d. 207/822) to his son. She examines the similarities and differences between the *`ahd* and this letter. Although she admits that Tāhir's letter is less than half of the *`ahd* and very disorganized, she does not make clear how and who prolonged the *`ahd* and gave it such an organization.

Al-Qadi suggests that the *`ahd* was probably written by one of the scribes of al-Mahdī (d. 322/933), the first Fātimīd caliph, who engaged in a power struggle with

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<sup>21</sup> This part of her argument, apart from the whole discussion, works in favour of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* against the claim that there are parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* which are taken from translated sources from Greek and Persian.

the chief *Dā'ī* Abū `Abdallāh al-Shī`ī. It was written according to the "prototype" of Tāhir's letter and al-Mahdī later inserted the name of `Alī or the Prophet in it; another person distributed it widely, al-Nu`mān later recorded it in his book *Da`ā'im al-Islām*, and finally al-Sharīf al-Raḍī took the *Da`ā'im* recension of the `ahd and recorded it in *Nahj al-Balāghah* after making certain changes.<sup>22</sup>

The first point al-Qadi notes is about the organization of the *Da`ā'im al-Islām*. In this book The subject matter was treated very systematically and chapters were divided into sections; "only in one place in this huge book does al-Nu`mān depart from this consistency, namely the *Kitāb al-Jihād*, where he inserts towards the middle, a political testament (*`ahd*) that has absolutely no relation with the topic of *jihād*, nor has it anything to do with legal questions as such."<sup>23</sup> This statement will help the author in her later arguments to the effect that al-Nu`mān was forced to do so, or he did it because of his extreme obedience to the Fātimīd caliph.<sup>24</sup> She does not seem to be very clear in this respect and one is confused whether al-Nu`mān did this for the sake of the caliph or the caliph's enemy. Towards the end of her article, she writes, "The only man for whose sake al-Nu`mān is ready to reproduce the whole `ahd in his *Da`ā'im al-Islām*, even if it has to interrupt the consistency of his *fiqh* book, is Abū `Abdallāh al-Shī`ī."<sup>25</sup>

The case is not as al-Qadi thinks, because a large portion of the `ahd is devoted to the issue of *jihād* and the affairs of the army. This is very well justified if one puts it

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<sup>22</sup> It should be mentioned that in most of the cases, the writer is not explicit. She even sometimes fails to make a relevance in transformation from one stage to another.

<sup>23</sup> Wadad al-Qadi, "An Early Fātimīd Political Document" *Studia Islamica*, (1978), v. 48, p. 72.

<sup>24</sup> She does not clearly state this, but it is deducible from the implications.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

in the context of the appointment of Mālik as the governor of Egypt. In fact, Mālik was appointed for *jihād* more than for anything else. The previous governor, Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr (d. 37/657), was threatened by Mu'āwiyah's attack and some internal problems. Therefore, 'Alī did not consider him able to control the situation anymore. 'Alī called Mālik from his position in another city and sent him to Egypt primarily, perhaps, because he was a great warrior. Mālik was poisoned by a farmer with Mu'āwiyah's conspiracy before he reached Egypt; and immediately Mu'āwiyah attacked Egypt, Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr was killed, and Egypt was taken over by Mu'āwiyah.

The evidence mentioned above suggests that if the *'ahd* had been written by 'Alī, it probably would have dealt with *jihād* more than anything else. In this context even other parts of the *'ahd* relate to the issue of *jihād* as well. For example, the appointment of the *Kuttāb*, dealing with the issue of *kharaj*, supporting the families of the members of the army, and many other issues introduced in the *'ahd* are all related to *jihād*.

There are further reasons which justify the inclusion of the *'ahd* in *Kitāb al-Jihād*. At the very beginning of the *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s recension of the *'ahd*, the responsibilities of its addressee are limited to four important issues, one of which is *jihād*.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it seems somewhat unrealistic to say that "the *'ahd* has absolutely no relation with the topic of *jihād*." Salinger who wrote his Ph.D dissertation on the *Kitāb al-Jihād* of al-Nu'mān, and indeed only about the *'ahd* under consideration here, considers it a "quite usual part of the treatment of *jihād*" saying that "al-Māwardī in his *al-Aḥkām al-Sultānīyah* has a chapter on this question."<sup>27</sup> Perhaps, the reason for

<sup>26</sup> See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter 53, p. 99.

<sup>27</sup> Gerard G. Salinger, *Kitāb al-Jihād from Qādī al-Nu'mān's Da'ā'im al-Islām*, Ph.D Dissertation (Columbia University, 1959), p. viii. It is to be mentioned that al-Qadi simply dismissed this point saying that "*Da'ā'im* is not the same kind of

which al-Nu`mān includes the whole *`ahd* in "*kitab al-Jihād*" of his book is that he observes it to have a close connection with the topic of *jihād* or he does not want to drop parts of the document, which was narrated as a unit.<sup>28</sup>

The second point raised by al-Qadi is that "The authorship of the *`ahd* is not certain."<sup>29</sup> But she comes to this conclusion without giving any solid argument in support. The only reason she gives here is that "When al-Majdū` comes to describe this section of the *`ahd* in the *Da`ā'im*, he did not attribute it at all neither to `Alī nor the Prophet." (sic).<sup>30</sup> It is, however, very strange to expect a bio-bibliographer, who introduces a book briefly, to talk about the authenticity of the content of the book, section by section. One may raise the question if al-Majdū` ever talked about the attribution of hundreds of other *ḥadīths* reported in *Da`ā'im al-Islām*. In fact, al-Majdū` simply introduces the book and gives the outlines of its chapters not talking about its content at all.<sup>31</sup> It is important to mention that there was no doubt for al-Nu`mān that it was narrated by `Alī. The only possible uncertainty is whether it conspires `Alī's own word or of the Prophet,<sup>32</sup> but there is no third alternative. Furthermore, the person who narrates the *`ahd* for al-Nu`mān regards it as `Alī's own

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book as al-Aḥkām al-Sultānīyah" (p. 72).

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Ḥamdūn, for instance, although writes a pure literary book, includes the entire *`ahd* in his book to show the methods of writing the testaments in the early period of Islam while al-Qalqashandī quotes only some passages from the *`ahd*. See Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥamdūn, *al-Tadhkirah al-Ḥamdūnīyah*, ed. Iḥsān `Abbās (Beirut: Ma`had al-Inmā' al-`Arabī, 1983), v. 1, p. 309; Aḥmad ibn `Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A`shā fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā*, pp. 12-19.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 74.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>31</sup> Shaykh Ismā'īl al-Majdū`, *Fihrist al-Kutub wa al-Rasā'il*, ed. `Alī Naqī Munzawī (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1344/1966), pp. 20-31.

<sup>32</sup> According to al-Qadi, the composition of the *`ahd* by the Prophet "can easily be discarded." p. 76. She does not give any reason for this statement and this thesis will discuss this issue in concluding this section.

words.<sup>33</sup> However, it is to be added that this uncertainty, if there is any, can only be found in the *Daʿā'im* recension. Any other source that reported this *ʿahd* has no hesitation in attributing it to ʿAlī.<sup>34</sup>

The *ʿahd* in *Nahj al-Balāghah* is addressed to a specific person (Mālik ibn al-Hārith al-Ashtar al-Nakhaʿī) and at a date which can be historically ascertained. Al-Qadi asks whether the appointment of al-Ashtar and giving him such an advice in that occasion by ʿAlī is confirmed by historical sources. She concludes that "such references, however, are not found, even though most of the historical works were written by Shīʿīs."<sup>35</sup>

Certainly, there is absolutely no way to deny Ashtar's appointment as the governor of Egypt, since it is well documented in almost any historical source. For instance, al-Thaqafī (d. 283/896)<sup>36</sup> in his book *al-Ghārāt* devoted a long section to the issue of the appointment of al-Ashtar. He gives a very detailed history of the issue, such as ʿAlī's recalling Mālik from his duty in another place, discussing the position of Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr and the importance of Egypt with him, Muʿāwiyah's learning of the appointment and seeking the advice of his people about the danger of

<sup>33</sup> Nuʿmān ibn Muḥammad, *Daʿā'im al-Islām*, ed. A.A.A. Fyze (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1963), p. 350. In the next chapter, this thesis will introduce more sources that attribute it to ʿAlī.

<sup>34</sup> About the supposed prototype of Ṭāhir, a detailed discussion will be given in the following pages.

<sup>35</sup> It does not seem to be correct to say that most of the historical works were written by Shīʿīs. Even among the examples she gives only Ibn Aʿtham is a Shīʿī for certain and Yaʿqūbī is doubted by some scholars to be a Shīʿī. Two other sources she mentioned are al-Ṭabarī and al-Masʿūdī, who are Sunnīs. Being a Sunnī or Shīʿī, however, does not seem to have much significance, nor is it our concern here.

<sup>36</sup> He is Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Thaqafī al-Kūfī and his book *al-Ghārāt* is one of the most authoritative and earliest historical sources. This source is used here as an example because it is earlier than any source used by al-Qadi in connection with al-Ashtar.

Mālik and eventually his conspiracy to kill Ashtar on his way. Thaqaḥfī provides the full text of `Alī's letter to Mālik when he recalled him,<sup>37</sup> his oral advice,<sup>38</sup> his letter to the people of Egypt,<sup>39</sup> Mu`āwiyah's discussion with his advisors,<sup>40</sup> his reaction after Mālik had been killed,<sup>41</sup> `Alī's sorrow for Ashtar's death and his public speech,<sup>42</sup> `Alī's letter to Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr to reconfirm his governorship of Egypt,<sup>43</sup> and finally Muḥammad's answer<sup>44</sup> to `Alī. All of `Alī's sayings and letters in this respect are recorded in *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*<sup>45</sup> and with the exception of his short oral advice to Mālik<sup>46</sup> in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>47</sup>

According to some historical sources, `Alī gives a short oral advice to Ashtar when he appoints him as the governor of Egypt. The *riwāyah* says that `Alī explained to him the situation in Egypt and informed him of its news and said: "There is no one for it (Egypt) but you; go there; if I do not give you an advice, it is because I am satisfied with your judgment."<sup>48</sup> Al-Qadi takes the content of this oral advice for

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<sup>37</sup> Al-Thaqaḥfī, *al-Ghārāt* (Tehran: Anjuman-e Athār-e Millī, 1355, A.H.), p. 257.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 258-9.

<sup>41</sup> After Mu`āwiyah was informed that Ashtar was killed by his agents, he expressed his extreme happiness in a public speech. He said: "`Alī had two right hands, I cut one in the battle of Ṣiffīn, viz. `Ammār ibn Yāsir and the second one today, viz. Mālik al-Ashtar." See *ibid.*, pp. 263-4.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 268.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>45</sup> See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Ma`ārif, 1977), v. 5, pp. 94-110.

<sup>46</sup> This thesis will discuss the short oral advice because that is a matter of concern in al-Qadi's article.



granted<sup>49</sup> and concludes that, "He (ʿAlī) only advised a general line of policy. This definitely means that ʿAlī did not address to al-Ashtar the *ʿahd* under discussion."<sup>50</sup> She adds, "For that reason, in all probability, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī did not record this oral testament in the *Nahj* although he surely knew it and was keen on recording all of ʿAlī's saying in his book."<sup>51</sup>

In the quotations above, one can find many weak points used in al-Qaḍī's argument. For example, it is possible to argue that ʿAlī intentionally states that he did not give any advice to Ashtar because he was aware of Muʿāwiyah's espionage activities; and therefore, ʿAlī wanted to protect Ashtar from being followed by Muʿāwiyah's agents who might possibly find the *ʿahd*.<sup>52</sup> This is confirmed by later events which took place immediately after Ashtar's appointment. Al-Ṭabarī writes, "Ashtar prepared to leave for Egypt, the spies of Muʿāwiyah came to him and informed him of his (Ashtar's) appointment and it was distressing for Muʿāwiyah."<sup>53</sup> Reading the whole passage in al-Ṭabarī's history gives the reader the impression that Ashtar's appointment was a cause for concern to Muʿāwiyah; therefore, he was being

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<sup>47</sup> In the proceeding chapter, it will be examined whether al-Thaqaḥī writes anything in connection with the *ʿahd* or not.

<sup>48</sup> See al-Thaqaḥī, *al-Ghārāt*, p. 285. The text in *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* is verbatim. See v. 5, p. 95.

<sup>49</sup> She writes, "There is no need to doubt this *riwāyah* for Abū Mikhnaf was not without Shīʿī tendencies." See al-Qaḍī, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 79. It is quite evident that having a tendency towards a sect is not a criterion to make a *riwāyah* acceptable or not. Even if Abū Mikhnaf is a Shīʿī, there is still room to doubt his *riwāyah* unless it is acceptable according to certain criteria.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> As will be mentioned in this chapter, there are evidence that ʿAlī would have regretted if the *ʿahd* had fallen in Muʿāwiyah's hands. See al-Thaqaḥī, *al-Ghārāt*, v. 1, pp. 253-4.

<sup>53</sup> *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v. 5, p. 95, also in *al-Ghārāt*, p. 258.

followed step by step and was poisoned by Mu`āwiyah's agents before he reached Egypt.<sup>54</sup> Another possibility is that by saying "I am satisfied with your judgment", `Alī wants to increase Ashtar's esteem in the eyes of people so they will not disobey him.

The second problem in al-Qadi's statement is that it is not easy to conclude from `Alī's oral advice that he definitely did not give him any other advice. Al-Thaqafī<sup>55</sup> and al-Ṭabarī<sup>56</sup> both write that `Alī gave him another letter addressed to the Egyptians.<sup>57</sup> It is very significant that in `Alī's letter to the Egyptians, there are statements suggesting that `Alī had probably given a detailed guideline to Ashtar. In this letter, after `Alī invites the Egyptians to follow his governor in every aspect he says, "He (Ashtar) would not take a single step forward or backward and would not commit anything except by my order."<sup>58</sup> With respect to the distance between Egypt and Kūfa and the lack of fast communication facilities, this statement indicates that `Alī had probably given a detailed prescription to Ashtar to follow.

The next problem is that al-Qadi assumes that "Raḍī did not record this oral advice, although he surely knew it and was keen on recording all of `Alī's sayings in his book."<sup>59</sup> To express such a strong statement, one certainly has to give some reasons or sources. Reading Raḍī's introduction to *Nahj al-Balāghah* leads to a very different conclusion. Raḍī was not keen at all to record all of `Alī's sayings, rather as mentioned earlier in this thesis, he was only interested in the most eloquent parts of

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<sup>54</sup> *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v. 5, p. 96.

<sup>55</sup> al-Thaqafī *al-Ghārāt*, v. 1, pp. 260-261.

<sup>56</sup> *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v. 5, p. 96.

<sup>57</sup> This is confirmed by al-Qadi herself. See al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 78.

<sup>58</sup> See *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v. 5, p. 96; *al-Ghārāt*, v. 1, pp. 260-261; and *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter 38, p. 94.

<sup>59</sup> See the full quotation above.

`Alī's sayings.<sup>60</sup> Out of more than 480 sermons of `Alī as reported by al-Mas`ūdī<sup>61</sup> Raḍī only records 242 of them. Therefore, one may wonder where al-Qadi got this idea from, or whether she ever read Raḍī's introduction to *Nahj al-Balāghah*. It is, however, very interesting that the author refers to her own problematic argument in the previous page as proof for her claim (n. 4). Referring to `Alī's letter (letter 38 of *Nahj al-Balāghah*) to the people of Egypt, she writes, "This letter was recorded in a longer and more elaborate recension by al-Ṭabarī and later was taken over by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī and recorded in *Nahj al-Balāghah*."<sup>62</sup> Perhaps, this is because of her presumption that al-Ṭabarī was the only source to record this letter as it is in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, not knowing that some other authors had recorded this letter before al-Ṭabarī did. For instance, the same letter is preserved verbatim in *al-Ghārāt* of al-Thaqafī<sup>63</sup> and Raḍī could have taken it from this or any other source.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, even if Raḍī knew about this advice,<sup>65</sup> it is possible to argue that either it did not attract his attention,<sup>66</sup> or he did not consider it as a correct *riwāyah*.

Searching for more external evidence, al-Qadi writes, "There is not a single book that has come down to us in this genre, of which I am aware, that has reproduced

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<sup>60</sup> See Raḍī's introduction to *Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ (Qum: Dār al-Hijrah, 1980), p. 35, 36 also the arguments on *saḥ* in this thesis.

<sup>61</sup> `Alī ibn al-Husayn Mas`ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1958), v. 2, p. 431.

<sup>62</sup> See al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 78.

<sup>63</sup> al-Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, v. 1, pp. 260-261.

<sup>64</sup> It worth mentioning that Raḍī did not refer to any source for this letter.

<sup>65</sup> There is a strong possibility that Raḍī knew about the mentioned advice because of his good knowledge of `Alī's sayings; therefore, one of the following suggestions could possibly be the case.

<sup>66</sup> This suggestion seems to be stronger than the next one because the short oral advice has nothing to serve Raḍī's literary purposes. For Raḍī's criteria in choosing `Alī's sayings for his book, see his introduction to *Nahj al-Balāghah*, pp. 33-36.

the *`ahd*, presented quotations from it or even referred to it, unless of course the work was compiled at about the same time as *Nahj al-Balāghah* or after it."<sup>67</sup> It is very easy to disprove this statement for there are sources available to us in which one can find the full text or quotations from the *`ahd* as it is in *Nahj al-Balāghah* written not only before *Nahj al-Balāghah*, but also before *Da`ā'im al-Islām*.<sup>68</sup> If so, the whole argument of al-Qadi in her article will collapse.

It is interesting that al-Qadi herself makes a mention of al-`Amirī's book, *al-Sa`ādah wa al-Is`ād*. Certainly, Raḍī could not have taken the *`ahd* from al-`Amirī because al-`Amirī only produces some quotations from the *`ahd* for different purposes.<sup>69</sup> Could, however, `Amirī have taken it from either Raḍī or al-Nu`mān? al-Qadi admits that "the wording of these quotations are closer to the wording of the *Nahj* than to the *Da`ā'im* one"<sup>70</sup> and one of them is not found in *Da`ā'im* at all.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, `Amirī could not have taken his quotations from al-Nu`mān. Moreover, `Amirī died at 381/992 and *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by the year 400/1008. Accordingly, `Amirī must have taken his quotations from another source which existed before the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. This source must be similar to *Nahj* version rather than that of the *Da`ā'im*. Indeed, al-Qadi confirms that the *Nahj* recension of the *`ahd* "was in existence" in a unique form or possibly in several forms before the year 381/992.<sup>72</sup> Since we are sure that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was not compiled

<sup>67</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 79.

<sup>68</sup> These sources will be introduced in the next chapter as well as sources for other controversial parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and general sources of the whole book.

<sup>69</sup> See al-`Amirī, *al-Sa`ādah wa al-Is`ād fī al-sīrah al-Insānīyah*, ed. Muṭabā Mīnovī (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1957-8), p. 166, 246, 283, 284, 285, 286, 292, 295, 297, 308, 314, 315, 316, 326, 398, 429, 440, 442.

<sup>70</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", pp. 75-76.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

before the year 400; therefore, Raḍī himself must have taken the *`ahd* from another source. This in fact contradicts al-Qaḍī's later argument that Raḍī was the person who made the changes in order to islamize the *`ahd* and authenticate its attribution to `Alī.<sup>73</sup>

Another external evidence for al-Qaḍī is that she could not find the *`ahd* within "the technical sources which record the various testaments of Muslim caliphs and kings";<sup>74</sup> and whenever she finds it, she does not see it in its appropriate place. The example she gives is al-Qalqashandī's (d. 821/1418) *Ṣubḥ al-A`shā fī Ṣinā`at al-Inshā*. According to her, al-Qalqashandī "does not mention the *`ahd* among the testaments of the Rāshidūn caliphs but quotes its introductory sections as a method of writing."<sup>75</sup> Using this weak point, al-Qaḍī does not mention where al-Qalqashandī locates this *`ahd* in his book. The *`ahd* appears under the title of "*Tarīqat al-Mutaqaddimīn*."<sup>76</sup> in which the author first quotes one of the Prophet's testaments and then the *`ahd* of `Alī to Mālik al-Ashtar.<sup>77</sup> After locating the *`ahd* in this very appropriate place, in my opinion, there seems to be no reason for al-Qalqashandī to repeat the *`ahd* under the testaments of the caliphs. Yet, there is one more indication here that makes the *`ahd* even more authentic. Perhaps, the reason that al-Qalqashandī writes the *`ahd* immediately after the Prophet's *`ahd* is that he considered it more valuable and even more authentic because in his vision the style of the *`ahd* is like that of *al-Mutaqaddimūn*. It is to be added that with respect to al-Qalqashandī's great

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 94-95.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>76</sup> The main title is "*Mā Yuktabu fī Matn al-`Uhūd*" which is divided into three *madhhabs*, the first of which is also divided into different *tarīqahs*, and the first *Tarīqah* is "*al-Tarīqat al-Mutaqaddimīn*". See v. 10, pp. 12-19.

<sup>77</sup> Aḥmad ibn `Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A`shā fī Ṣinā`at al-Inshā*, pp. 12-19.

knowledge of literature, his judgment is valuable for the men of letters.

Being so careful about where this *`ahd* is located in the earlier books, perhaps it was appropriate for al-Qadi to glance at *al-Tadhkirah al-Hamdūnīyah* of Ibn Hamdūn (d. 562/1166) on whose authority al-Qalqashandī reports the *`ahd*. Ibn Hamdūn placed the *`ahd* among the testaments of the kings and the caliphs exactly as al-Qadi wished. His introductory note, however, seems to be very significant to be mentioned here. He writes,

`Alī wrote a testament to Mālik al-Ashtar al-Nakha`ī when he appointed him as his governor of Egypt. I found this testament so comprehensive that frees one from need to most of the sayings of the wise men (*al-Hukamā*) and the ancient people. Although very long, it is not boring because it is a mean between the high eloquence and glorious meanings. If it were not that people are interested in variety of styles and wordings, I would be satisfied by quoting this *`ahd* instead of all of the others.<sup>78</sup>

The last point al-Qadi argued for her external evidence is that "Within the *Nahj al-Balāghah* itself, the *`ahd* stands out very conspicuously".<sup>79</sup> Al-Qadi argues that "The only testament which is both lengthy and theoretical at the same time is `Alī's testament to his son al-Hasan which lacks organization and comprehensiveness"<sup>80</sup> this is, however, al-Qadi's own opinion. In the introduction we have quoted enough material from very distinguished scholars about *Nahj al-Balāghah's* literary value. Certainly, *Nahj al-Balāghah* was not admired only for the *`ahd* under discussion, nor was it questioned because of that. Many scholars believe that the entire book is full of eloquent utterances which enjoy categorization of the topics, systematic approach to the subject, and unique socio-political ideas and much more. There are tens of long sermons which articulate philosophical and theological ideas in a very deliberate

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<sup>78</sup> Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Hamdūn, *al-Tadhkirah al-Hamdūnīyah*, v. 1, p. 309.

<sup>79</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 80.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

way.<sup>81</sup>

Al-Qadi then turns to an examination of internal evidence. Focusing on the differences between the two recensions of the *`ahd*, she presents what she calls the "omissions and additions" of the *Nahj* recension in a way that enables her to eventually conclude that these "omissions and additions" were done for certain definite purposes.

Let us first make clear at the outset that all this argument of omissions and additions is based on the assumption that the *Nahj* recension was later than that of *Da`ā'im*. Therefore, since this thesis will introduce sources earlier than *Da`ā'im*, which contain the *`ahd* as it is in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, al-Qadi's argument is rendered untenable. Yet, it is worth while examining some important parts of al-Qadi's argument.

Al-Qadi exaggerates in representing some of the differences which serve her purpose,<sup>82</sup> while she ignores some others which could possibly be interpreted in a way which would lead her discussion into exactly the opposite direction. In some cases, she repeats one single point in different ways.<sup>83</sup> Al-Qadi points out some differences

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<sup>81</sup> For more information in this respect, see the introduction of this thesis.

<sup>82</sup> She writes, "The *Nahj* recension has numerous quotations from the *Quran* and the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet where as the *Da`ā'im* recension includes no such references." (p. 81). The fact is that in the *Nahj* only two Quranic verses and two prophetic *ḥadīth* are used. Therefore, with respect to the length of the *`ahd*, the term "numerous" does not seem to be accurate. One should also keep in mind that these kinds of references are very common in `Alī's sayings. In *Nahj al-Balāghah*, there are at least 111 references to *Qur'ān* and more than 40 references to the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet in addition to the references to the act of the Prophet.

<sup>83</sup> For instance, she refers to a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet gives an advice about how to lead the people in prayer. Al-Qadi mentions this once as a reference to *ḥadīth* (p. 81), the second time she writes, "Some Islamic legal terminologies and questions are added too, such as the conditions that the imam should observe in leading the people in prayer" (p. 82) The third time she refers to the same *ḥadīth* as incidents in the life of `Alī (p. 82).

between the two recensions which do not really exist; they are some minor textual differences which do not disturb the content at all. She mentions three examples of ideas which were omitted in *Nahj al-Balāghah* for certain purposes; but all of these are in fact present in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. The first case which she calls "the most striking omission in the *Nahj*"<sup>84</sup> is the idea of postponement of the land tax (*al-kharāj*). According to her, this part was omitted because, "it indicates that the *`ahd* was not *`Alī's*".<sup>85</sup> This part in fact exists in the *`ahd* in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and it reads as follows: "If the tax payers complain about any undue burden (i.e. heavy taxation) or an obstacle or dearth of water, or rainfall, or the deterioration of any land which has been submerged by flood water or stricken by drought you should remit the revenue to the extent that you hope would improve their position."<sup>86</sup> The only difference is that in *Da`ā'im al-Islām* the term of the postponement is specified "one year"<sup>87</sup> while in *Nahj al-Balāghah* this period is not determined.<sup>88</sup>

There remains the question whether mentioning this postponement of the tax in the *`ahd* contradicts its attribution to *`Alī*. First, as al-Qadi herself notes, this is a theoretical testament rather than a practical one; therefore, this question does not necessarily have to be an issue in *`Alī's* time. Secondly, there is no indication to suggest that it was not an issue at that time.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, if the postponement of the land tax took place for the first time at the year 95, certainly, the need for such a

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<sup>84</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fātimīd Political Document", p. 83.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter 53, pp. 99-100.

<sup>87</sup> Nu`mān ibn Muḥammad, *Da`ā'im al-Islām*, p. 363.

<sup>88</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter 53, pp. 99-100.

<sup>89</sup> Al-Qadi mentions that the first reference in our sources to this question dates from the year 95, but as the logical rule says, "approval of something does not mean disapproval of the other." This means the first reference in the sources is not necessarily the first instance of an issue.



postponement was not a new issue. Historical sources suggest that the postponement of the tax was an earlier issue of concern. "The governors of `Umar in Hims and Egypt postponed the collection of the land tax in spite of his order and they were reprimanded by `Umar."<sup>90</sup> The tax regulations practiced in the caliphate period were greatly influenced by the regulations of the conquered lands<sup>91</sup> and each country had its own regulations. In Egypt there was a system that did not allow postponement of the land tax while, as al-Qadi herself admits, the Iranian system did allow for such a postponement.<sup>92</sup> On the other hand, there is no doubt that `Alī was closely watching these different tax regulations practiced in two different areas of the Islamic empire, and he was critical of the policies of the earlier caliphs in this regard. Therefore, it is possible for `Alī to prefer the Sāsānīd tax regulation which allows for the postponement of the tax, to that of the Egyptian's and permits his governor to postpone the tax collection under certain conditions.

The second example al-Qadi provides for the omissions is to be treated in the same way. The idea of classification of *Kuttāb* exists in *Nahj al-Balāghah* as well;<sup>93</sup> therefore, the purpose for which al-Qadi thinks it was omitted is not valid.

The third example al-Qadi mentions in relation with the omissions and additions is the idea according to which "differing opinions of the various judges (*quḍāt*) of the

<sup>90</sup> Hossein Modarressi, *Zamīn dar Fiqh-i Islāmī* (Tehran: Daftar-i Nashr-i Farhang-i Islāmī, 1983), v. 2, p. 61. Modarressi referred to *Kanz al-Ummāl* by al-Muttaqī; *Murūj al-Dhahab* by Mas'ūdī, *Futūḥ Miṣr* by Abū al-Qāsim `Abd al-Rahmān al-Hakam (d. 257/870).

<sup>91</sup> See *ibid.*, v. 2, p. 48. He writes, "Particularly concerning the land tax, Islamic sources clearly say that the caliphate institution at the beginning followed the regulation of the conquered lands."

<sup>92</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 84. She writes, "This whole question (The question of the postponement of the land tax) had a persian precedent." See also the same page note (2).

<sup>93</sup> See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter 53, p. 100, in which the *Kuttāb* are classified into *al-`āmmah* and *al-khāṣṣah*.

state concerning specific legal questions should be brought for decision to the imam (i.e. the caliph) who would have the final say."<sup>94</sup> For her, this issue "was not known during the time of `Alī" and for the first time was suggested by Ibn al-Muqaffa'.<sup>95</sup> It is true that this idea does not appear in the *Nahj* recension of the `ahd. Nevertheless, the idea itself although not exactly in the same context, is a Quranic one. Concerning the notion of *Shūrā*, the *Qur'ān* orders the Prophet to consult with people, yet at the stage of making decision, the Prophet is the one who has the final word.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, one should keep in mind that the imam in the Shī'ī thought, as well as according to the Ismā'īlīs, is the supreme and divine leader and in fact, has the final say concerning every aspect of their life. Therefore, the example mentioned above is not the only case that this authority is given to `Alī, rather one may find many other cases that give the same kind of authority to the imams.<sup>97</sup>

Dealing with the usage of some technical terms, in the *Nahj* recension of the `ahd, al-Qadi believes that although the omissions and additions were undertaken very carefully and systematically, "The writer of the *Nahj* recension committed one basic slip for not omitting the word *wuzarā'*"<sup>98</sup> Since the institution of *wizārah* was not known during `Alī's time, according to al-Qadi, the author of the *Nahj* recension must have mistaken the word "*wuzarā'*", "as a technical term in the context for the same word with its mere lexical meaning."<sup>99</sup> This argument suffers from a two fold

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<sup>94</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 85.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> *Quran*, 3: 159.

<sup>97</sup> With respect to the originality of Ibn Muqaffa's works, indeed, he himself admits that he is using the argument of others in most of his books and there is no need to repeat it.

<sup>98</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 85.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

problem: first, there is no way to question the originality of the term "*wizārah*" since it is used both in *Qur'ān*<sup>100</sup> and the historical incident of the *Saqīfah*<sup>101</sup> as well as in the famous *ḥadīth* of *Ghadīr al-Khum*, in which the Prophet refers to the above mentioned Quranic verse.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, there is no reason that the term "*wuzarā*" in the *`ahd* is a reference to the institution of *wizārah*. Certainly, if the usage of the term in the incident of the *Saqīfah* is interpreted as a reference to an institution then it is applicable to *`Alī*'s time as well. And if it was used merely for consultation, in the same way it can be justified in the *`ahd*.<sup>103</sup> In addition, if the author of *Nahj* was attempting to avoid using the term as al-Qadi mentions,<sup>104</sup> why should he take this risk and use it in one case? Is it because he was not able to distinguish this difference in using the term?<sup>105</sup>

With respect to the omission of technical terms in the *Nahj* recension, al-Qadi gives another example which is even more surprising. According to her, "Whenever the words *Mulūk* (kings) or *`Umarā*' (princes, rulers),<sup>106</sup> (both in singular and plural) are used in the *Da`ā'im*, they are either omitted or changed in the *Nahj* to *anta* (you) or to *wulāt*."<sup>107</sup> In support, al-Qadi mentions five examples none of which works in

<sup>100</sup> *Qur'ān*, 29: 20, 25: 35.

<sup>101</sup> See *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v. 3, p. 218, 219, 220.

<sup>102</sup> All of these three cases are mentioned by al-Qadi herself. See p. 85.

<sup>103</sup> There is no doubt, however, from the very beginning of the caliphate period the division of the responsibilities started very seriously and by the time of *`Umar* it was more or less institutionalized. Therefore, whatever the term one uses, there were certain responsibilities which required certain qualities might be referred to by the term "*wuzarā*".

<sup>104</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 85.

<sup>105</sup> This in fact contradicts the qualities that al-Qadi regards for that smart author who made changes in the *Da`ā'im* recension as it turned to be the *Nahj* one.

<sup>106</sup> Princes does not seem to be an accurate translation for the word *`Umarā*' in old texts.

favour of her claim.<sup>108</sup>

Al-Qadi questions the authenticity of the *Nahj* for containing some "political ideas which are very sophisticated and point out to a political experience quite different from that of `Alī's and hence their being omitted in some instances."<sup>109</sup> The examples she mentions are rather very common practices of the human being if not very simple ones like, "sending people to spy"<sup>110</sup> or the ideas of "the great power latent in the common people."<sup>111</sup> In fact, sending spies was commonly practised by the Arabs even before Islam, and the Prophet used to send spies in most of his battles. Ashtar himself was not able to reach Egypt when he was appointed as the governor because of Mu`āwiyah's spies. About the second idea, `Alī himself was a witness to that great power of the common people who made up a huge empire in a very short time and whereby the super powers of the time were taken over by Muslims. `Alī witnessed the common people rise against `Uthmān and finally transfer the power to

<sup>107</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fātimīd Political Document", p. 85.

<sup>108</sup> The first example is just at the beginning of the *`ahd* (p. 350 of *Da`ā'im*). It starts with the phrase *ayyuhā malik al-mamlūk*. The term *malik* here, as pointed out by the editor \_in the same edition al-Qadi used\_ was written *Mumallak* in another manuscript which is one of the most important and oldest manuscripts used by the editor (*Da`ā'im*, p. 12). This, certainly, was a mistake by the transcribers because in any case the addressee of the *`ahd* was not a king neither according to *Nahj al-Balāghah*, nor according to the speculations of al-Qadi. This comes clear if one takes a careful look at the *Da`ā'im*. In the same edition, the same phrase is used at least one more time where the word is *mumallak* (p. 351). The second example is in (p. 353) to which al-Qadi refers twice (n. 3, p. 85), but only once the term *mulūk* is used which is again out of the context al-Qadi talks about because it is not a reference to the addressee of the *`ahd*, rather it is a general statement to have the addressee remind the unjust rulers of the past times without any specific reference to any one. It says, "*ayna al-mulūk?*" (where are the kings?) The third example is referred to p. 355 in which the term *Mulūk* or *umarā'* is not used neither in plural nor singular form. In this page once the term *sultān* is used which most probably can be taken as an infinitive meaning sovereignty rather than a noun in meaning of king. Again even if one takes it as a noun, it is not a reference to the addressee, but a general statement. However, it has already been mentioned that there is nothing wrong with using the term *amīr* as it was used in the incident of *Saqīfah* and was very common in the caliphate period. In the last example again the term *Amīr* is used in a general statement which also can be taken simply for its literary meaning. The term

`Alī. Al-Qadi's next example is even more shaky, "The idea that the purpose for paying the soldiers, the judges and the governors is that they should not be dependent on any other than the ruler and so become corrupted."<sup>112</sup> Indeed, this was one of the biggest problems of `Alī's time, he was witnessing many Muslim fled under Mu`āwiyah's banner just because of the economic reasons and because he was paying more."<sup>113</sup> Therefore, it does not seem very strange if `Alī is particularly concerned about the soldiers and government officials by asking his governor to pay them enough salary.

The first part of the article aims to argue, first, that the *Da`ā'im* recension of the `ahd is the original one; and second, that there was a systematic attempt by the author of the *Nahj* recension, namely al-Sharīf al-Raḍī as al-Qadi points out later,<sup>114</sup> to "islamize" the `ahd as much as possible in order to authenticate its attribution to `Alī. In the second part, al-Qadi tries to "place the `ahd in its correct context."<sup>115</sup> To do so, a few steps had to be taken. First, where did al-Nu`mān take his copy of the `ahd from?

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"*umarā*" and "*mulūk*" can be found in the sayings of the Prophet and early Muslims such as `Umar, `Ali, and other companions of the Prophet. See, for instance a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet and a saying of Mu`āwiyah in *al-Tadhkirah al-Ḥamdūniyah*, v. 1, p. 286, no: 780; p. 304, no: 828. See also Ibn Hishām *al-sīrah al-Nabawīyah*, ed. `Umar `Abd al-Salām (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, 1987), v. 4, p. 288; Nu`aym ibn Ḥammād al-Marwazī, *al-Fitan* (London: Microfilm from British library manuscript oriental no: 9449). This manuscript is copied in the year 760/1358 by Muḥammad ibn `Alī al-Sīrafī al-Anṣārī). p. 22, 23.

<sup>109</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 86.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 86-87.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>113</sup> The discussion of `Amr ibn al-`Aṣ with his two sons about joining Mu`āwiyah is very interesting in this respect. See *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.4, pp. 560-61.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

She starts with the letter of Tāhir ibn al-Husayn (d. 207/822) which was produced about 206/821. For her, Tāhir's letter is one of the earliest complete original specimens of the genre "mirrors for princes",<sup>116</sup> the same category in which the *`ahd* under discussion fits as well.<sup>117</sup> She makes a comparison between the *`ahd* and the letter of Tāhir, and this leads her to the following conclusion. "All in all, the *`ahd* seems to be an improvement both sophisticated and conscious, on the Tāhir's testament, the similarities between the two are too numerous to be attributed to mere coincidence. Thus we can safely say that the writer of the *`ahd* knew Tāhir's testament and used it as prototype to write his own."<sup>118</sup>

Let us first make clear that one certainly can find in the *`ahd* some ideas which have a counterpart in Tāhir's letter, but for the following reasons there is absolutely no way to take these similarities as the basis for arguing that the *`ahd* is taken from Tāhir's letter or the letter was used as a prototype to produce the *`ahd*.

a. Al-Qadi has made the best possible attempt to find out all the similarities between these two testaments.<sup>119</sup> None of the similarities she mentions seem to be significant. Indeed, some of them are very general statements and concentrated into such broad points which can be found in almost any other similar testament, such as justice, piety, righteousness and trust in God, duties of Muslims, rituals.<sup>120</sup>

b. The differences between the *`ahd* and Tāhir's latter are much more significant

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 87, 89.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. She states that "ideas enumerated above (p. 92) represent almost all of its major ideas." See p. 93.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., pp. 91-92. For an example of such testament, see the Prophet's testament in Aḥmad ibn `Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A`shā fī Ṣinā`at al-Inshā*, v. 10, pp. 7-8.

than the similarities. As al-Qadi herself admits, "Tāhir's testament is just about half the size of the *`ahd*."<sup>121</sup> Yet this is about the quantity of the *`ahd* of Tāhir; in quality, with so much repetition of ideas in different ways, it is not even one third of the *`ahd*.

c. Moreover, again borrowing al-Qadi's own words, "Whereas the *`ahd* is sophisticated and conscious and extremely well organized in the presentation of its material, the Tāhir testament is absolutely lacking in organization and its ideas follow no order what so ever."<sup>122</sup>

d. It is to be added that there are no significant similarities in the structure of the sentences and phrases and certainly, the style of writing is totally different. It is possible to argue that if the writer of the *`ahd* had that great ability to develop a very disorganized prototype (Tāhir's testament) into a very organized and sophisticated one and at the same time add more than half of the ideas from himself, he certainly had no need to use those insignificant disorganized ideas which certainly would disturb his own thought and organization.<sup>123</sup>

Now, back to the previous question: who is the original author of the *`ahd*? To find that out, al-Qadi portrays an image of the addressee of the *`ahd* in *Da`ā'im* and concludes that this image is only applicable to Abū `Abdallāh al-Shī`ī (d. 298/911).<sup>124</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. It is to be mentioned that the differences between the *`ahd* and Tāhir's letter are much more than this, which deserve a separate study and cannot be discussed here in detail.

<sup>123</sup> However, if it is proved that the *`ahd* was `Alī's, the similarities between that and Tāhir's letter can easily be justified by saying that its author possibly, but not necessarily, had heard some scattered ideas of `Alī's *`ahd* and used them in his own.

<sup>124</sup> He is Aḥmad ibn al-Husayn, the *Dā`ī* (missionary) of the Ismā`īlīs in the Maghrib, who founded for the Fātimīds their dynasty there. Al-Shī`ī later was assassinated by al-Mahdī, the first Fātimīd caliph, during a power straggle. For more information on him, see al-Qadi, "An Early Fātimīd Political Document", pp. 93-97, in which she introduces more sources as well.

Unlike al-Qadi's claim that she derived this image from the introductory sections of the *`ahd*, many of the portrayed pictures cannot be found in the *`ahd*. Rather, they are based on the writer's own speculations.<sup>125</sup> It is not clear why she is searching for the addressee of the *`ahd* "in the Maghrib in the third/ninth century",<sup>126</sup> nor does she clarify why al-Nu'mān is "ready to reproduce the whole *`ahd* in *Da'ā'im al-Islam* even if it has to disturb the consistency of his *fiqh* book"<sup>127</sup> for al-Shī'ī's sake although he is at the service of the caliph, who murdered al-Shī'ī.

Al-Qadi fails to identify the addressee of the *`ahd* and its supposed author in the context of the power struggle between al-Mahdī and al-Shī'ī. Assuming al-Mahdī to be the writer and al-Shī'ī the addressee, she devotes a long section to apply the introductory part of the *`ahd* to al-Shī'ī.<sup>128</sup> On the other hand, where she thinks there is a tendency in the *`ahd* towards expressing "complete centralization of power in the state in the hands of the ruler,"<sup>129</sup> she applies the *`ahd* to al-Mahdī as its addressee, not as the imam who writes the *`ahd* to another ruler. It is very clear in the *`ahd* that there

<sup>125</sup> These speculations are very carefully mixed with some facts which make their distinction difficult for the reader. For example, there is nothing, in my view, in the *`ahd* to show that "the addressee was of humble origin"; nor should being reminded about the past and what the addressee was expecting the previous rulers to do and warning about his own actions be taken to mean that the man is not doing his responsibility well. Particularly, with respect to the fact that one can find these kinds of advice in most of the testaments which were given to people before they started their duty; it does not necessarily follow from this advice that there was any shortcoming from the side of the candidate for a duty. Moreover, these kinds of advice can be found in most of 'Alī's testaments. Therefore, it seems that al-Qadi rather applies her own information of al-Shī'ī to the *`ahd* to create its addressee.

<sup>126</sup> See al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 97.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., pp. 97-100.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 103. See also the argument on pp. 100-103. All the information on p. 103 is applied to al-Mahdī himself by al-Qadi; therefore, al-Mahdī must be the addressee of the *`ahd* because all these addressed to the addressee (see *Da'ā'im*, pp. 358-359) and this contradicts with the writer's attempt to establish the point that al-Shī'ī is the addressee.



is a higher authority (imam) who writes the *`ahd* and an addressee (ruler) who is in a lower position. It is also evident that all the authority given in the *`ahd* is addressed to the ruler. Therefore, the addressee is given excessive authority by the imam, which makes him very powerful, independent, and parallel to the imam, which is exactly what al-Mahdī tries to avoid according to al-Qadi. As she states: "His (al-Mahdī's) experience had shown him that cooperation between equals in matters pertaining to the rule of the state, was not possible."<sup>130</sup>

Moreover, al-Qadi's argument is not convincing as regards the way in which the writing of this *`ahd* could help al-Mahdī to "solidify his position against that of al-Shī'ī's"<sup>131</sup> to appeal to the people "through stressing almost incessantly the idea that the primary duty of the ruler is to serve the people."<sup>132</sup> Certainly, al-Mahdī's action in killing his opponents especially those who released him from prison and willingly handed the power to him is in contradiction with whatever the *`ahd* says. Therefore, writing the *`ahd* and attributing it to `Alī not only does not represent him as a follower of `Alī, but rather a man who is against humanitarian ideas ascribed to `Alī in the *`ahd*. On the other hand, there is no indication to show that al-Shī'ī ever committed something against common people. So that attributing those ideas to `Alī would portray him against `Alī or decrease his respect in the peoples's eyes. Furthermore, if the aim is to "appeal to the common people and please them,"<sup>133</sup> why al-Mahdī does not attribute the *`ahd* to himself to show how great his "humanitarian" ideas are! Particularly, according to the Shī'ah as well as Ismā'īlīs, all the imams including al-

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. With respect to the following explanation, the two reasons she provides in pp. 101-102 lose their function.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

Mahdī for Ismā'īlīs have almost the same significance for their followers.<sup>134</sup>

Al-Qadi, however, fails to identify the author of the *`ahd*. She admits that no literary activities are ascribed to al-Mahdī.<sup>135</sup> Al-Nu'mān also could not be the author of the *`ahd* because "He entered the service of al-Mahdī for the first time in 313/925."<sup>136</sup> Moreover, his book, *Da`ā'im al-Islām*, was not compiled before the time of al-Mu'izz li Dīn Allāh, as he states in the introduction of his book.<sup>137</sup> Nor is it the work of Aflah<sup>138</sup> because he has been portrayed as a mere believer of al-Mahdī, and is not claimed to be more than a circulator of the *`ahd* by al-Qadi and even that much is not certain. Al-Qadi finally is satisfied by attributing the compilation of the *`ahd* -- which has amazed the scholars since its appearance including al-Qadi herself with its great political ideas and organization-- to an unknown scribe of al-Mahdī.<sup>139</sup> It is very surprising and at the same time very interesting that we do not have an indication of this great author's name, who also in spite of all his abilities did not produce even a single sentence except the *`ahd* under discussion.<sup>140</sup> According to al-Qadi, for the

<sup>134</sup> Al-Qadi herself states that the lineage Prophet-`Alī-al-Mahdī was a straight lineage in the Ismā'īlī propaganda of the time (p. 104).

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> As stated by al-Qadi, it was compiled in 347/957. See al-Qadi, "An Early Fātimīd Political Document", p. 71.

<sup>138</sup> He is Aflah ibn Hārūn al-Mallūsī, the *Qādī* of Raqādah. Al-Qadi has devoted a very long section to describe his abilities and significance in his possible circulation of the *`ahd* and finally comes to the conclusion that he had compiled a book containing `Alī's speeches. However, even if he compiled such a book, there is absolutely no indication that the *`ahd* also was in it.

<sup>139</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fātimīd Political Document", p. 105.

<sup>140</sup> If there was any other work by the supposed author of the *`ahd*, it must have been a work of great value of religious and political literature that could not have been dismissed by historians and biography writers. Historical sources give no indication of any significant author or work at the time of al-Mahdī. See al-Dā'ī Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā' al-Fātimīyīn min Kitāb 'Uyūn al-Akhhār*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ya'lawī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1985), pp.

author of the *`ahd* even the context in which he wrote the *`ahd* is missing. He is only "ordered to write a political testament fitting the situation in the Maghrib."<sup>141</sup>

It is not only the content of al-Qadi's article which makes one hesitate to accept her ideas; the method she used in this article is too speculative. Without any doubt, speculation is sometimes helpful in better understanding history, but it should be undertaken together with the historical facts in order to lead to a better result and to shed light on some hidden spots of the history. To put it in other words, one can analyze and speculate about history, but cannot recreate it. What al-Qadi has undertaken in her article, in the view of the present writer, is recreation of the history of exactly two centuries.<sup>142</sup>

The least disadvantage of this kind of speculation is that using the same data, different people may come to different or exactly contradictory conclusions.<sup>143</sup> Her speculations, although sometimes based on certain facts, lead her to a very general conclusion, which can be easily replaced with any other conclusion without influencing the main plot of the argument.<sup>144</sup> Perhaps, the concluding paragraph of her

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83-241; Abū `Abdallāh ibn Hammād, *Akhbār Mulūk Banī `Ubayd wa Sīratuhum*, ed. Aḥmad al-Badawī (al-Jazā'ir: al-Mu'assasah al-Waṭanīyah li al-Kitāb, 1984), pp. 17-29; `Abd al-`Azīz Sālim, *Tārīkh al-Maghrib al-Kabīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍat al-`Arabīyah, 1981), pp. 593-630; al-Nu`mān, *Ta'wīl al-Da`ā'im*, ed. Muḥammad Hasan A`zamī (Cairo: Dār al-Ma`ārif, n.d.), see editor's notes, pp. 12-13. Indeed al-Nu`mān is the most distinguished scholar of the time who "served under the first four Fāṭimīd caliphs." See Gerard G. Salinger, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, p. v.

<sup>141</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document", p. 105.

<sup>142</sup> From 206 to 400 i.e., from the time Ṭāhir wrote his letter to his son until the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

<sup>143</sup> Slinger and the writer of this thesis, for example, have come to completely different conclusions with that of al-Qadi. See Gerard G. Salinger, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, p. xiii.

<sup>144</sup> One may find similar speculations in concluding section of the present writer's argument. This is done deliberately to show that al-Qadi's argument is so speculative that one can reach to a completely opposite conclusion using the

article is the best representative to manifest a portrait of her speculation in the whole article.

Al-Mahdī who wanted desperately to consolidate his position against that of Abū `Abdallāh's supporters, *may have conceived* of the idea of a *`ahd* which would depict his ideas. Al-Mahdī *may have called upon* his obedient and learned Mallūsī judge, who had indirectly criticized Abū `Abdallāh by his statement about placing trust in a ruler, and *may have given him* the testament his scribe had written for him, *told him* he had found it among the *`Ilm* books that he had inherited from his ancestors, the Imāms, and that it was of `Alī's composition or of the Prophets. He *may have* also asked him to incorporate this *`ahd* in the book in which he collected the speeches of `Alī, and *may have further asked him* to circulate it widely in his propaganda. All this Aflaḥ *would have done* only too willingly and obediently. Al-Mahdī *would have certainly found* no better man for this job than Aflaḥ. Later, when al-Nu`mān entered the service of al-Mahdī, this *`ahd could have become* a highly authoritative testament, both orally and in writing. Hence he incorporated it in his *Dā`im al-Islām*.<sup>145</sup>

Our discussion of al-Qadi's article may now be concluded as follows:

1. There is no indication in the sources that al-Mahdī ever wrote such a testament to Abū `Abdallāh al-Shī`ī or anyone else or he "conceived" the idea of the *`ahd*.
2. Al-Mahdī, according to al-Qadi's speculation, himself attributes the *`ahd* to `Alī.
3. There is no clue in the sources that Aflaḥ had recorded the *`ahd* in his collection of `Alī's sermons. The book itself is not mentioned by distinguished scholars who dealt with `Alī's sayings. Even if he recorded the *`ahd* in his book, again according to al-Qadi, he attributed it to `Alī as well.
4. There is no source to tell us that al-Nu`mān ever saw Aflaḥ's supposed book,

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same data. This chapter, however, has provided enough historical evidence to support the argument.

<sup>145</sup> al-Qadi, "An Early Fātimīd Political Document", p.107. The phrases in italic letters are highlighted by the present writer.

if it really existed, and copied the *`ahd* from his book.<sup>146</sup>

5. The supposed writer of the *`ahd* is not identified in al-Qadi's article. Therefore, because we know that Aflah, who is the most famous of al-Mahdī's scribes, could not have written the *`ahd*, no one else among his unpopular scribes could have written.

6. There is no indication that al-Mahdī had ever given anything to Aflah to "include" in his book or "circulate" it.

7. There is no evidence that Raḍī had ever seen *Da`ā'im al-Islam* of al-Nu`mān or a copy of the *`ahd* according to the *Da`ā'im* version. Rather because Raḍī and al-Nu`mān were contemporaries, and with respect to the difficulties in publication and circulation of the books at that time,<sup>147</sup> it seems almost impossible for Raḍī to have a copy of al-Nu`mān's book. Moreover, Raḍī would not possibly rely on an Ismā'īlī source to copy a saying of `Alī.

8. It is questionable that, according to al-Qadi's speculations, al-Mahdī made such a hard attempt to fabricate a political testament, and yet we do not see any indication of it until the time of the caliph al-Mu`izz in which al-Nu`mān compiled his *Da`ā'im*.

9. The compilation of *Da`ā'im* was not started at the time of al-Mahdī. According to the sources *Daaim* is the last book of al-Nu`mān<sup>148</sup> and even the indication on its compilation was given by al-Mu`izz who asked al-Nu`mān to compile

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<sup>146</sup> al-Nu`mān probably would have mentioned if he had taken it from Aflah's book because Aflah was his predecessor.

<sup>147</sup> Most of the books written in that period would remain the only copy in the hands of their authors for a long time.

<sup>148</sup> See Shaykh Ismā'īl al-Majdū', *Fihrist al-Kutub wa al-Rasā'il*, p. 34.

such a book and set all the outlines for the book.<sup>149</sup> Salinger states that *Da'ā'im* was composed "under the immediate supervision of al-Mu'izz."<sup>150</sup>

10. There is no one among the early Muslim scholars, even those who doubt *Nahj al-Balāghah*, who ever questioned the authenticity of the *`ahd* in specific. While earlier Sunnī scholars, such as al-Dhahabī and al-'Asqalānī, doubted some sermons among them *al-Shiqshiqīyah*.

11. Raḍī's strong ability in literature has made many contemporary scholars accuse him for fabricating *Nahj al-Balāghah* in general and the *`ahd* in particular. This thesis will introduce sources which have recorded the *`ahd* before *Nahj al-Balāghah* as it is in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, so that the whole argument of al-Qaḍī will be questioned. If it is proved that Raḍī was not the composer of the *`ahd*, there will be no alternative among the Shī'ī scholars to be accused for fabrication of the *`ahd* because of the lack of such ability that Raḍī had.

12. It should not be forgotten that most of the books as written volumes appeared during the third century, and before that most of the books of *ḥadīth* had been transmitted orally. Therefore, if we cannot find a certain *ḥadīth* in a written form before a particular date, it cannot be a reason to doubt its authenticity unless one has good reasons to do so.

The following are alternative suggestions to resolve the problem of the differences between the two versions of the *`ahd*.

A. Since there are a significant number of sources telling us about 'Alī's *`ahd* to

<sup>149</sup> See al-Dā'ī Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā' al-Fāṭimīyīn min Kitāb 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār*, pp. 560-561; al-Majdū', *Fihrist al-Kutub wa al-Rasā'il*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>150</sup> Salinger, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, p. iii.

Mālik on one hand, and we see the *Nahj* recension fits `Alī's time better than the *Da`ā'im*'s recension which fits into Fātimīd crises,<sup>151</sup> why not to say that al-Mahdī took the *`ahd* which already existed and made some changes and added the introductory and concluding parts, which al-Qadi talks about, in order to make it fit to the context he wanted. With this suggestion four major problems will be solved.

1. One will not have to deny tens of historical sources which talk about the *`ahd* of `Alī and provide us with it.

2. There will be no need to search for a smart, knowledgeable, unknown and mysterious character to make those very significant changes in Tāhir's letter and add more than half of the ideas to it, and organize it in a way which has amazed all the scholars. This person, however, is ready to sacrifice himself and attribute this great masterpiece to someone else and even is ready not to produce any other work.

3. Al-Nu`mān as a trusted Muslim scholar will not have to record a very long saying of `Alī, who is his first Imam and attribution of a single word is a great sin in the eyes of his followers, relying only on one single contemporary source (Aflah) without seeing or hearing of it in any other source.

4. One will not have to accuse Raḍī, from whom we know nothing of wrong doing, for fabricating and attributing something to his imam.

B. As al-Nu`mān mentions at the beginning of the *`ahd*, his version of the *`ahd*, which is in the present writer's view significantly different from that of the *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s, particularly in the wording and structure of the sentences, could be an *`ahd* that `Alī heard from the Prophet and narrated to the people. Then writing his own *`ahd*, he made an excessive use of the Prophet's *`ahd* or even wrote the whole idea in

<sup>151</sup> This is if one agrees with al-Qadi's argument in placing the *`ahd* in the context of the Fātimīd Maghrib.

his own words.<sup>152</sup> In this theory, again the references to Quranic verses and the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet in *Nahj* recension and their absence in *Daʿā'im* is well justified because there is no need for the Prophet to refer to his own sayings in his *ʿahd*, neither would the Prophet refer to Quranic verses during his speeches in order to avoid the confusion between the Quranic verses and his own sayings. In *Nahj* recension, however, since ʿAlī is the writer, he refers to Quranic verses as well as the Prophet's sayings and actions.<sup>153</sup>

C. The *ʿahd* in *Daʿā'im* version also could be a different letter which ʿAlī might have possibly written to another person among his officials and governors either in Egypt or somewhere else.

D. The *ʿAhd* could simply be another *riwayah* of the same *ʿahd* to Ashtar.<sup>154</sup> In this case, however, in the present writer's view, the *Daʿā'im* recension of the *ʿahd* is probably an oral narration of the *ʿahd*, whose narrator was not very careful of its wording and the structure of the sentences, and tried only to narrate the ideas expressed in the *ʿahd*.

<sup>152</sup> Indeed, there is no claim that whatever was told by ʿAlī was completely original. Rather, it is the opposite and whatever he told is related to the Prophet and the Quranic ideas in one way or another because he had grown up under the supervision of the Prophet from his very childhood and accompanied him until the last moment of the Prophet's departure.

<sup>153</sup> ʿAlī's references to *Qurʾān* and *ḥadīth* of the Prophet are easily justifiable as it was mentioned earlier. For instance, in *Daʿā'im* itself most of the *ḥadīth* narrated from ʿAlī is referred to the Prophet. See for example, pp. 347-349, 368-374. It is also significant that in *Tuhaf al-Uqūl* of Ibn Shuʿbah al-Harrānī which is earlier than both *Daʿā'im* and *Nahj al-Balāghah*, and will be introduced in the next chapter, the number of references to *Qurʾān* and *ḥadīth* is more than *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s. There are at least six references to *Qurʾān* (p. 95 two times), (p. 101 twice) and (p. 103 twice) and ten references to the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet p. 90, 95, 96, 99, 100, 101, 104 twice.

<sup>154</sup> As Raḍī himself indicates, he found various *riwāyahs* of ʿAlī's sayings which in many cases differed one from another. See Raḍī's introduction to *Nahj al-Balāghah*. p. 36.



## CHAPTER III

### SOURCES OF NAHJ AL-BALAGHAH

This chapter briefly reviews *Nahj al-Balāghah's* sources. Sources mentioned by Raḍī himself, some works of his contemporaries, and earlier sources containing sayings of `Alī ibn Abī Tālib will be examined. Later sources which contain some sayings of `Alī will be mentioned only while discussing the sources of some controversial passages of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>1</sup>

Given its voluminous character, it would be impossible to go into detail of all the sources of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Therefore, the elaborate discussion of the sources would be limited only to the controversial passages while for the rest of the book only names of the authors and titles of the sources would be mentioned. This means that in each source introduced in this chapter one may find a significant number of *Nahj al-Balāghah's* passages or just a few of them. In some of these books only quotations from `Alī's sayings are available, which are identical with those cited in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Some of these sources give the chains of transmission and some others record the sayings without relating them to any authority.

In this chapter, many of the mentioned sources are carefully examined and an effort is made to find a significant number of `Alī's sayings in them. Discussion of these sources would serve to establish two main points: Firstly that `Alī's sayings were being recorded by early scholars. Secondly, some of these sayings are traceable in

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<sup>1</sup> For some reasons given in this chapter al-Mufīd's (Raḍī's teacher) books will be exceptionally included to the earlier sources.

*Nahj al-Balāghah*. Therefore, the references to `Alī's sayings in these books do not necessarily mean that they are present in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, unless they are referred by the phrase "compare with *Nahj al-Balāghah*". Nor does it mean that they are not present in *Nahj al-Balāghah*; rather it shows that we did compare all of them with *Nahj al-Balāghah*. However, we have tried to identify a few passages (at least one saying) in many of these books. Before tackling the discussion, a brief explanation about the Islamic literary heritage is necessary.

### **Sources Available to The Compiler of Nahj al-Balāghah**

The compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah* had access to thousands of invaluable original Islamic sources most of which are no longer available. The period he lived represents the time of great expansion of learning and scholarship in the history of Muslim civilization. Muslim lands had not yet faced the attacks of Mongols and crusaders, and political conflicts between the Shī'īs and the Sunnīs had not yet taken shape. In Baghdad, where Raḍī lived, there were huge libraries which would offer a gigantic wealth of original sources to the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. We learn from the historians that Raḍī's Dār al-`Ilm, which later was supervised by his brother Murtaḍā, had 80,000 books.<sup>2</sup> Similarly Bayt al-Hikmah, a public library which was established in 381/991 by Abū Naṣr Shāpūr ibn Ardashīr (d. 416/1025) had 10,000 books in different languages and gradually grew to become the richest library of Baghdad.<sup>3</sup> Dār al-Hikmah, another public library, founded during the rule of `Abbāsīd caliph Hārūn al-Rāshid (ruled 170-193/786- 809) and was strengthened by later caliphs, contained a large number of Arabic books and translations from other

<sup>2</sup> See Shaykh `Abbās al-Qummī, *al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb*. (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Haydarīyah, 1956), v. 2, p. 448.

<sup>3</sup> Kurkis `Awwād, *Khazā'in al-Kutub al-Qadīmah fī al-`Irāq* (Beirut: Dār al-Rā'id al-`Arabī, 1986), p. 141.

languages.<sup>4</sup> The library of Cordoba in Spain, founded by Ḥakam ibn Nāṣīr, (ruled 335-366/960-977) had about 400,000 books with a subject-wise catalogue. Khizānat al-Kutub, a public library in Egypt, established during the rule of the second Fātimīd caliph al-ʿAzīz Billāh, had 1,600,000 books. These are apart from huge private collections of scholars like that of Sāhib ibn ʿUbād's with 40,000 books and a collection of Ibn Abī Baʿrah, who is told to have the original *ʿahd* of ʿAlī to Mālik al-Ashtar and some of his other letters as well as writings of ʿAlī's sons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. These evidences can give one some idea of the Islamic literary wealth at the time of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

### **Destruction of The Sources**

Countless invaluable Islamic sources have been renegade through the course of the events of the history. Mongols are supposed to have destroyed hundreds of libraries in Baghdad and other Muslim territories. It is reported that when Hulākū Khān, the Mongol, raided Baghdad (656/1258), he made a bridge over the Tigris made out of books, over which his troops crossed ordering the left-over to be burnt.<sup>5</sup> If this story is true, millions of books must have been destroyed. Even if making the bridge is an exaggeration, it still shows how aggressively these sources were being destroyed. We are also told by the historians that when the Christian crusaders attacked the Syrian city of Tripoli (now in Lebanon) they burnt three million books.

Apart from the stories of destruction and burning of libraries by Mongols as mentioned above, political and religious conflicts among the Muslims themselves resulted in destruction of libraries.<sup>6</sup> Karkh, the area where Shīʿīs lived in Baghdad,

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-112.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 33. See also Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1957), v. 3, p. 1106.

<sup>6</sup> Kurkis ʿAwwād, *Khazāʾin al-Kutub al-Qadīmah fī al-ʿIrāq*, p. 30.

was attacked by the Sunnīs many times during the years of 408/1017, 417/1026, 420/1029, 422/1030 in which the houses and libraries of distinguished Shī'ī scholars, such as al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā and al-Tūsī, were the first target.<sup>7</sup> In the 10th of Muḥarram of the year 440/1048 and the month of Ṣafar of the year 443/1051 and 445/1053 bloody events took place and many people were killed and the property of the Shī'īs were stolen.<sup>8</sup> The most painful of these conflicts took place in the year 448/1056 which forced al-Tūsī, the greatest Shī'ī scholar of the time and the leader of the Shī'ī community, to leave Baghdad to Najaf.<sup>9</sup> This conflict was following the raid of Tughrul of Saljūq in which he took over Baghdad and the Shī'ī rule of Buwayhids was collapsed. A group of Sunnīs took this opportunity and attacked the Shī'ī populated areas. Al-Tūsī and some other scholars escaped to Najaf. Many libraries, including Dār al-'Ilm,<sup>10</sup> supervised by al-Tūsī, along with his house and private collections, and many of his own works burnt into the flames.<sup>11</sup>

### **Radī's Sources mentioned in Nahj al-Balāghah**

Radī's interest in 'Alī's utterances appears to be on literary grounds, namely the eloquence of the phrases and the beauty of the language. Therefore, his method of writing differs from theologians and traditionists. Unlike the common way of narrating

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Hajar 'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-Mīzān* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lamī li al-Maṭbū'āt, 1971), v. 5, p. 135. See also Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntazam* (Haydarābād al-Dekan: Maṭba'at Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmānīyah, 1358-9, A.H.), v. 8, p. 136; pp. 140-143.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntazam*, v. 8, p. 148-150; pp. 154.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 172-3.

<sup>10</sup> It has been noted in the introduction of this thesis that Dār al-'Ilm was built by al-Sharīf al-Radī, for some time, supervised by al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā until al-Tūsī took over.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 179; 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādīr, 1965-7), v. 9, p. 637. For more information see also 'Alī Davānī, *Hizāreh-e Shaykh Tūsī* (Tehran: Ufuq, 1349 H.Sh.), v. 2, pp. 62-4.

the tradition by giving the chains of transmissions, he selects the most eloquent of `Alī's sayings. In his introduction to *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Radī states: "I am only collecting the most brilliant utterances and do not aim at arrangement and organization."<sup>12</sup> This statement, however, does not suggest that he was not concerned with the authenticity of traditions. Rather his being so selective indicates that he only recorded those traditions whose attribution to `Alī was well established.

Radī mentions some of his sources in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. However, he does not give a complete chain of transmission. His occasional comments imply that he only provided sources whenever he was not sure or found different narrations or when a certain saying was attributed to more than one person. In the rest of the work, he appears to be sure that he was reporting `Alī's word. However, the sources mentioned by Radī seem to be secondary sources, which he used to support the utterances taken from his original sources. This could mean whenever he did not give a source the saying was very popular that he did not feel the need for mentioning the sources.<sup>13</sup>

Some of Radī's sources mentioned in *Nahj al-Balāghah* are as follows:

1. Al-Jāhiz (255/868) in *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*<sup>14</sup>
2. Al-Wāqīdī (207/832) in *al-Jamal*<sup>15</sup>
3. Abū Ja`far al-Iskāfī (240/854) in *Al-Maqāmāt fī Manāqib Amīr al-Mu'minīn*<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ (Qum: Dār al-Hijrah, 1980), introduction by Radī, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 32, p. 22, where he mentions al-Jāhiz.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., kh: 32, p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., kh: 231, p. 83; k: 75, p. 105.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., k: 54, p. 102.

4. Hishām ibn al-Kalbī (204/819)<sup>17</sup>
5. Sa`īd ibn Yahyā al-Umawī (249/863) in *al-Maghāzī*<sup>18</sup>
6. Abū `Ubaid al-Qāsim ibn Salām (224/838)<sup>19</sup>
7. Ṭabarī (310/923) in *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk*<sup>20</sup>
8. Narration of Tha`ālibī (291/904) from ibn al-A`rābī (230/844)<sup>21</sup>
9. al-Mubarrad (285/898) in *al-Muqtaḍab*<sup>22</sup>
10. Narration of Muḥammad ibn `Alī al-Bāqir, the fifth Shī`ī Imām<sup>23</sup>
11. Narration of Ḍurār al-Ḍabā`ī<sup>24</sup>
12. Narration of Abī Juḥayfah<sup>25</sup>
13. Narration of Kumayl ibn Zīyād al-Nakha`ī<sup>26</sup>
14. Narration of Mas`adah ibn Sadaqah from Ja`far al-Ṣādiq, the sixth Shī`ī Imam<sup>27</sup>
15. Narration of Nawf al-Bakālī<sup>28</sup>
16. Narration of Dhī`lab al-Yamānī from Ibn Qutaybah from `Abdallāh ibn

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., k: 74, p. 105.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., k:78, p. 106.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., gh: 4, p. 116.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., gh: 373, p. 121.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., gh: 343, p. 123.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., gh: 466, p. 124.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., h: 88, p. 109.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., h: 77, p. 108.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., gh: 375, p. 121.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., h: 147, p. 112.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., kh: 91, p. 33.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., kh: 182, p. 63.

Yazīd from Mālik ibn Dihyah<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, Raḍī gives the instances in which a certain sermon was delivered or a letter was written on numerous occasions.<sup>30</sup>

### Other Sources of Nahj al-Balāghah

Ever since Ibn Khallikān raised the question of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, proponents of *Nahj al-Balāghah* started to search for the sources from which its contents were derived. Among the latest works, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah* by al-Khaṭīb, *Istinād Nahj al-Balāghah* by `Arshī and *Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah* by Kāshif al-Ghitā', *Ravishhā-e Taḥqīq Dar Asnād wa Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah*, by Muḥammad Dashṭī are the most outstanding books in this respect. As the most outstanding of these works, al-Khaṭīb's *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah* gives a list of 114 authors and their works from both extant and extinct sources. He goes on by introducing 48 books exclusively written on `Alī's utterances 22 of them before, and 26 after *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>31</sup>

Muḥammad Dashtī, a contemporary scholar in *Ravishhā-e Taḥqīq Dar Asnād wa Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah*, provided sources for each and every passage of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., kh: 234, p. 83.

<sup>30</sup> These instances usually are mentioned in the heading of the passages.

<sup>31</sup> See al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asāniduh* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lamī li al-Maṭbū'āt, 1975), pp. 51-86.

<sup>32</sup> Dashtī's work, although it offers at least one source for each saying of `Alī in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, suffers from some deficiencies. He includes some sources which appear much later. He does not give the bibliographical information of the sources, which makes the book less useful than expected. He even seems to be relying on secondary sources and whatever is mentioned by other authors who sometimes did not produce accurate information. As it is pointed out in different places in this thesis, he gives some sources for some parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in which one cannot find those parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. For instance, he

## 1. Sources of Controversial Utterances in Nahj al-Balāghah

### i. Sources of "Ahd al-Ashtar"

The *`ahd* is one of the most controversial letters of `Alī in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Almost half of the second chapter is devoted to the study of this *`ahd* with a particular attention to Wadad al-Qadi's article. The whole idea of her article was based on the assumption that the *Nahj* version of the *`ahd* was a later version and, therefore, it must have been taken from the *Da`ā'im* version which itself is not a genuine one. Here are sources containing the *`ahd* as a whole or in parts, quotations from it, or sources with information about the *`ahd* which can help to decide its authenticity. These source are divided into two categories: sources compiled before *Nahj al-Balāghah* or at about the same time which could not have been taken from *Nahj al-Balāghah*; and sources compiled after it having indications suggesting that they have been taken from sources other than *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

1. Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn `Alī ibn Shu`bah al-Harrānī (d. 332/943)<sup>33</sup> in his authoritative work, *Tuhaf al-Uqūl*<sup>34</sup> reports a complete text of the *`ahd* as it is in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>35</sup> There are very few textual differences between the *`ahd* in *Nahj*

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mentions *Awā'il* of `Askarī as an earlier sources of the sermon *al-Shiqshiqīyah*, in which the present writer could not find a single word from this sermon.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Shu`bah is regarded one of the most eminent Shī`ī theologians and traditionists. Most of the biographical sources are silent about the exact date of his death. What has been usually told about him is that he was a contemporary of al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq and most probably earlier than him. This date, however, is given by `Abd al-Zahrā al-Husaynī in his book, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asāniduh*. See p. 430. For this date, also see S. Husain Jafri, "Conduct of Rule in Islam" *Hamdard Islamicus*, (Karachi: 1979), v. 11, number: 1, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> For the significance of this book for the Shī`īs, see ʿĪjāz Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Qulī Kantūrī, *Kashf al-Hujub* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1330, A.H.), p. 102, no: 467; Shaykh Aghā Buzurk Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Adwā', 1983), v. 3, p. 400, no: 1435.



*al-Balāghah* and *Tuhaf* which is common almost in any different copies of manuscripts. Having the *`ahd* in this source disproves al-Qadi's claim that Raḍī made omissions and additions in the *Da`ā'im* recension of the *`ahd* in order to "islamize and authenticate its attribution to `Alī" because Harrānī had already died about 30 years before Raḍī was born. Harrānī's death is also much earlier than the date of compilation of *Da`ā'im al-Islām* (347/957).<sup>36</sup> However, whatever the date of *Da`ā'im* is, it could not be earlier than 341 the year the Fāṭimīd caliph al-Mu`izz (341-365/ 952-975) came in power.<sup>37</sup>

2. Muḥammad ibn Nu`mān (d. 363/973), a famous scholar of the Fāṭimīd period, gives the full text of the *`ahd* in his book *Da`ā'im al-Islām*.<sup>38</sup> Although there are significant differences between the *Nahj* recension of the *`ahd* and that of *Da`ā'im*, yet because of its precedence to *Nahj al-Balāghah* it can be seen as an earlier source for the *`ahd*.

3. Abū al-Hasan al-`Amirī (d. 381/992) provides about twenty citations from the *`ahd*, all of which are started by the phrase "`Alī said to al-Ashtar", and in one instance adds "when he sent him to Egypt."<sup>39</sup> It is very significant to mention that the wording for these citations are almost exactly the same as *Nahj al-Balāghah*, yet three

<sup>35</sup> `Alī Ibn Shu`bah al-Harrānī, *Tuhaf al-Uqūl* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-A`lamī li al-Maṭbū`āt, 1974), pp. 90-104.

<sup>36</sup> This date is suggested by al-Qadi. Wadad al-Qadi, "An Early Fāṭimīd Political Document" *Studia Islamica* (1978), v. 48, p. 72.

<sup>37</sup> We are sure that Nu`mān wrote this book by the indication of the caliph al-Mu`izz and perhaps as Salinger states "under the personal supervision" of him. See Gerard G. Salinger, *The Kitāb al-Jihād* From Qāḍī Nu`mān's *Da`ā'im al-Islām*, Ph.D thesis (Columbia University, 1953), p. III.

<sup>38</sup> By giving sources we do not mean that Raḍī had necessarily used them in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, rather we are introducing any source which provided `Alī's sayings even with some differences with *Nahj al-Balāghah*. There is no need to mention about the variety of narrations of the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet and Shī`ī imams.

<sup>39</sup> The reference to all these citations are given in the previous chapter.

of them are not found neither in *Nahj al-Balāghah* nor in *Daʿā'im* at all and one of them is not found in *Daʿā'im* but appears in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Certainly, al-ʿAmirī could not have taken these citations from *Nahj al-Balāghah* for two reasons: first, he died about 20 year before the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*,<sup>40</sup> when Radī was too young, and secondly because of the above mentioned differences. He also could not have taken it from *Daʿā'im* for the absence of four of his quotations in *Daʿā'im* and of course for the very significant textual differences between the two versions. This means that al-ʿAmirī received or copied the *ʾahd* from a different source than that of Radī and Nuʿmān, which goes strongly in favour of the authenticity of the *ʾahd*.

4. In his book *al-Ghārāt*, al-Thaqafī (d. 283/896) records a very long testament of ʿAlī to Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr.<sup>41</sup> In his introductory note, al-Thaqafī writes that this letter was so comprehensive and dealt with variety of topics. The writer mentions about 20 topics among them leadership and the issue of judgment (*al-Qadāʾ*), yet he points out that he had only received some parts of this testament. Al-Thaqafī writes, "In this letter ʿAlī wrote on many topics which have not come down to me except those mentioned parts." this document is still about the same size of the *ʾahd* of Ashtar and occupies about 27 pages of *al-Ghārāt*. Al-Thaqafī writes that when Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr was killed, this letter was sent to Muʿāwiyah by ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAṣ and Muʿāwiyah was so amazed with this letter. He used to read and refer to this letter time and again.<sup>42</sup> The writer includes some traditions according to which ʿAlī was feeling

<sup>40</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah* was completed in the year 400/1008.

<sup>41</sup> al-Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt* (Tehran: Anjuman-e Athār-e Millī, 1355 A.H.), v. 1, pp. 227-254.

<sup>42</sup> al-Thaqafī adds that Walīd ibn ʿAqabah, one of Muʿāwiyah's advisors, criticized him for referring to ʿAlī's letter and suggested that it had to be burnt because if people come to know that Muʿāwiyah was referring to ʿAlī's writing, that would be dangerous for his caliphate. Muʿāwiyah answered that he would never destroy such a knowledge; rather he would tell the people that they were the *ḥadīth* of Abū Bakr that was being held by his son Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr. Al-Thaqafī says this letter was being kept in the treasury of the Ummayyids in secret until

so regret that this letter had reached Mu`āwiyah.<sup>43</sup> Commenting on the *riwāyah* mentioned above, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd states, "I would say that the letter which `Alī regretted being handed to Mu`āwiyah must have been that of the *`ahd* of Ashtar."<sup>44</sup> One may suggest the letter al-Thaqafī mentions as `Alī's letter to Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr is probably the same *`ahd* of Ashtar or a similar one. No matter if they are two different letters or the same and no matter to whom they were addressed. Mentioning such an important letter by al-Thaqafī, who died about 120 years before Raḍī, gives some indications which strongly support the authenticity of the *`ahd*.

5. Ibn Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) produced some quotations from the *`ahd* in his *al-Hikmah al-Khālīdah*,<sup>45</sup> Although Ibn Miskawayh died after Raḍī, he was at least 30 years older than Raḍī.<sup>46</sup> However, with slight textual differences his quotations are identical with the *Nahj* version of the *`ahd* rather than that of *Da`ā'im*.

6. Muḥammad ibn Salāmah al-Qudā`ī (d. 454/1062) produced quotations from the *`ahd* attributing it to `Alī. There are some textual differences between the *`ahd* in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and his quotations suggesting that its author received the *`ahd* through channels different from that of Raḍī.<sup>47</sup>

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`Umar ibn `Abd al-`Azīz publicized that it was `Alī's writing. See *al-Ghārāt*, v. 1, pp. 252-253.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 253-254. Al-Thaqafī reports the story mentioned above according to different *riwāyahs* which hardly leaves any room to doubt it.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-`Arabīyah, 1959-1963), v. 6, pp. 72-73.

<sup>45</sup> Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Miskawayh, *al-Hikmah al-Khālīdah*, ed. `Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Naḥḍah al-Miṣrīyah, 1952), p. 110.

<sup>46</sup> Badawī in his introduction argues that Ibn Miskawayh was born before the year 320/932. See *ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> See Muḥammad ibn Salāmah al-Qudā`ī, *Dustūr Ma`ālim al-Hikmah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, 1981), pp. 118-120. It is to be mentioned that the entire book is a collection of `Alī's sayings.

7. Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn `Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143), the famous Sunnī scholar reproduced many long quotations from the *`ahd* attributing it to `Alī. At least in two places he added, "'Alī said to al-Ashtar when he appointed him governor of Egypt." It is significant to mention that although his quotations are in accordance with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, yet have some significant differences with it. There are even full sentences and phrases in his quotations which cannot be found in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. These differences together with his being a Sunnī scholar suggest that he received the *`ahd* through other sources than Raḍī.<sup>48</sup>

8. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī, known as Ibn Ḥamdūn (d. 562/1166), in *al-Tadhkirah al-Ḥamdūnīyah* also preserves the *`ahd* with some small textual differences with *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>49</sup>

9. Shahāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn `Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī (d. 722/1331) in *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* records the *`ahd* in full.<sup>50</sup>

10. al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) in his book *Subḥ al-A`shā fī Sinā`at al-Inshā* quotes a few pages from the beginning of the *`ahd* as a method of writing testaments in early Islamic period after a testament of the Prophet.<sup>51</sup> These three sources mentioned above, though are quite later, the importance of them can hardly be dismissed as they represent the typical classical literature of the Arabic language. All

<sup>48</sup> Ibn `Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabī` al-Abrār*, ed. `Abd al-Amīr Muḥannā (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A`lamī li al-Maṭbū`āt, 1992). See, for instance, v. 3, p. 199, 296; v. 4, p. 133; v. 5, p. 189, 191, 192.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Ḥamdūn, *al-Tadhkirah al-Ḥamdūnīyah*, ed. Iḥsān `Abbās (Beirut: Ma`had al-Inmā' al-`Arabī, 1983), v. 1, pp. 309-321.

<sup>50</sup> Shahāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn `Abd al-Wahhāb Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Cairo: Maṭba`at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, 1931), v. 6, pp. 19-32.

<sup>51</sup> al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-A`shā fī Sinā`at al-Inshā*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmīyah, 1987), v. 10, pp. 9-13.

these three have reported the *`ahd* for pure literary purposes. Ibn Hamdūn and al-Nuwayrī both write very appreciative introductory notes which are very significant for the purpose of this discussion. Al-Nuwayrī, for instance, writes:

No testament has ever come down to us from any king or ruler being so rich in meaning, purposefulness, comprehensive and universal in applicability as that of `Alī ibn Abī Tālib's *`ahd* to Mālik ibn Hārith al-Ashtar in the occasion of the appointment of him his governor of Egypt. Although it is very lengthy, I would prefer to record it in full because such an *`ahd* cannot be left out or omitted for no one should be remain ignorant of its excellence.<sup>52</sup>

The significance of mentioning these later sources lies in the fact that first, they incorporated the *`ahd* in their purely literary works. Secondly, the *`ahd* as recorded by Raḍī as well as the writers before him has many varieties and differences in reading and sometimes even in phrases. These differences suggest that all of these writers received the *`ahd* from different sources and authorities. As Muḥammad Jafri puts it, "These differences go strongly in favour of the authenticity of the document (*`ahd*) suggesting that it must have been widely in circulation and copied by various writers from time to time."<sup>53</sup>

11. al-Najāshī (370/1982--450/1058) in his *al-Rijāl* mentions the *`ahd* while writing the biography of al-Aṣbagh ibn Nubātah. He writes, "He (Aṣbagh) was one of the closest companions (al-Khaṣṣah) of `Alī and lived long enough after him and transmitted `Alī's *`ahd* to Mālik and also `Alī's letter to his son Muḥammad al-Ḥanafīyah."<sup>54</sup> Al-Najāshī gives a complete chain of transmitters, through whom the *`ahd* had been transmitted to him as follows: "I have learned of the *`ahd* from Ibn al-Jundī from `Alī ibn Hammām from al-Ḥimyarī from Hārūn ibn Muslim from al-Hasan

<sup>52</sup> Shahāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn `Abd al-Wahhāb Nuwayrī, *Nahāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, v. 6, p. 19.

<sup>53</sup> S. Husain Jafri, "Conduct of Rule in Islam" *Hamdard Islamicus*, v. II, number. 1, p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> Aḥmad ibn `Alī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, (Qum: Jāmi`at al-Mudarrisīn, 1986), p. 8.

`Ulwān from Sa`īd ibn Ṭarīf from al-Aṣḥab ibn Nubātah from `Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib."<sup>55</sup>

12. In his book *al-Fihrist*, al-Ṭūsī (385/995--460/1067) also refers to the *`ahd* in the biography of Aṣḥab ibn Nubātah.<sup>56</sup> Al-Ṭūsī gives a slightly different chains of transmissions for the *`ahd* as follows: "Ibn Abī Jayyid informed us from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan from Ḥimyarī from Hārūn ibn Muslim and al-Ḥasan ibn Ṭarīf all of them from Ḥusayn ibn `Ulwān al-Kulayni from Sa`d ibn Ṭarīf from Aṣḥab ibn Nubātah."<sup>57</sup>

13. In *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, Ibn `Asākir (499/1105--571/1179) refers to the *`ahd* and gives almost the same *isnād* as those of al-Najāshī and Ṭūsī with a slight difference. Ibn `Asākir's chain of transmitters goes back to Muhājir ibn `Umayr.<sup>58</sup> It may be useful to mention that these three important sources from both Sunnī and Shī`ī sources gave the chain of transmission very close to each other which make one believe that the *`ahd* was transmitted through reliable channels.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> al-Najāshī, and al-Ṭūsī, however, are not expected to record the text of the *`ahd* because they deal with the biographical data of Muslim scholars and early personalities with only references to their works and traditions transmitted by them.

<sup>57</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist* (Mashhad: Mashhad University Press, 1972), pp. 62-63. In the biography of al-Aṣḥab, Ṭūsī adds Aṣḥab transmitted the *`ahd* of `Alī to Mālik when he (`Alī) appointed him (Ashtar) his governor of Egypt.

<sup>58</sup> The present writer did not have the chance to find the relevant volume of Ibn `Asākir's work. This source is given by `Abd al-Zahrā Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb in *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asāniduh*, v. 3, p. 431; and S. Husain Jafri, "Conduct of Rule in Islam" v. 11, no:1, p. 10. In al-Ḥusaynī's book the last transmitter is Muhājir al-`Amirī.

<sup>59</sup> Although Aṣḥab ibn Nubātah is an authoritative transmitter according to the Shī`ah and some other sources, such as Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalānī's *al-Isābah fī Tamyīz al-ṣaḥābah*, ed. `Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992), v. 1, p. 205, some other Sunnī scholars like al-Dhahabī in his *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1963), v. 1, p. 271, no: 1014, accused him of being a very fanatic companion of `Alī and; therefore, not reliable. This thesis has already discussed the problem between Shī`īs and Sunnīs in authorizing each other's sources. However, in Ibn `Asākir's chain, Aṣḥab is replaced by another

14. In *al-Dharī'ah il' Taṣānīf al-Shī'ah*, Shaykh Aghā Buzurk Tehrānī mentions the *`ahd* as a compilation of Aṣḥab ibn Nubātah. He also mentions that a manuscript of the *`ahd* is being held in the library of al-Khadīwīyah in Cairo which was transcribed in 680/1281 by Yāqūt al-Muṣṭa'ṣamī.<sup>60</sup>

12. Authoritative scholars such as al-Rāwandī, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd and Bahrānī who wrote voluminous commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāghah* should not be forgotten because in addition to their great knowledge,<sup>61</sup> they had access to thousands of invaluable sources of early history of Islam which are not be found anymore.<sup>62</sup>

## ii. Sources of the Sermon al-Shiqshiqīyah

1. It is said that Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Barqī (d. 274/887) a companion of both `Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā and Muḥammad ibn `Alī al-Taḳī, the eighth and ninth Shī'ī Imams, has produced the sermon in full in *al-Maḥāsin wa al-Adāb*.<sup>63</sup>

transmitter probably more reliable according to the Sunnīs.

<sup>60</sup> Shaykh Aghā Buzurk Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī'ah*, v. 15, p. 362, no. 2302.

<sup>61</sup> It is said that Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd had an encyclopaedic knowledge possessed by very few persons in Islam. See S. Husain Jafri, "Conduct of Rule in Islam", p. 10.

<sup>62</sup> Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd's death occurred in the year of Hulākū's invasion of Baghdād (656/1258) in which his personal library as well as tens of other important libraries with hundreds of thousands of books were given over to the plunder of the flames. Muḥammad Dashtī referred to three of al-Ṣadūq's books *al-Khiṣāl*, *Ilal al-Sharā'ī*, *Man lā Yahduruh al-Fiqh* and v. 5 of al-Kulaynī's *Furū' al-Kāfi* as sources of the *`ahd* without giving the bibliographical information of these books. The present writer scanned all editions of these books at McGill university's library and was not able to find the *`ahd* in these books. See Muḥammad Dashtī, *Ravishhā-e Taḥqīq dar Asnād va Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah* (Qum: Nashr Imām `Alī, 1368 H.Sh.), p. 232.

<sup>63</sup> In the published version of *al-Maḥāsin*, the sermon under discussion does not exist. Jalāl al-Dīn Urmawī, the editor of *al-Maḥāsin*, considered `Arshī's claim an error. Nevertheless, since he adds only 13 volumes out of 100 volumes of al-Muḥsin came down to us, there is a possibility that `Arshī's manuscript of *al-Maḥāsin* was a more complete one. However, Barqī is very likely to record *al-*

2. Abū `Alī Muḥammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jubā'ī al-Baṣrī al-Mu'tazilī (d. 303/915-16) narrated the sermon.<sup>64</sup>

3. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn `Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Qubbah al-Rāzī<sup>65</sup> quoted the sermon in his book, *al-Inṣāf*.<sup>66</sup>

4. Abū al-Qāsim `Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd al-Ka'bī al-Balkhī al-Mu'tazilī (d. 317-19/929-31) recorded this sermon in *al-Inṣāf*.<sup>67</sup>

5. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn `Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Mūsā ibn Bābwayh al-Qummī, known as al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 318/930) has recorded the sermon in two of his books *ʿIlal al-Sharāʾiʿ* and *Maʿānī al-Akḥbār* in full, according to two different chains of transmission.<sup>68</sup>

6. Abū `Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-Nu'mān known as al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d.

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*Shiqshiqīyah* because al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991) records the full text of the sermon on his authority (*ʿIlal al-Sharāʾiʿ*, p. 150) and there are too many references to his book by earlier scholars as a source of *al-Shiqshiqīyah*. Al-Shahrastānī copies Barqī's version of the sermon on the authority of al-Ṣadūq, as well as a few other versions, in full. See al-Shahrastānī, *Mā Huwa Nahj al-Balāghah* (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-Nu'mān, 1979), p. 30.

<sup>64</sup> Shahrastānī writes that Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Qatīfī reproduced this book in his *al-Firaq al-Nājīyah* on al-Jubā'ī's authority. See *Mā Huwa Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 39.

<sup>65</sup> He was a teacher of al-Mufīd and a pupil of Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī, and died long before Raḍī was born at the time of the `Abbāsīd caliph al-Muqtadir.

<sup>66</sup> Ibn Nadīm mentions his book *al-Inṣāf* and Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd adds that Ibn Qubbah recorded some of `Alī's sermons in his book and Ibn Maytham quotes from his book. See Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Maytham, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (Tehran: Mu'assasat al-Naṣr, 1378-1384 A.H.), v. 1, p. 252; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 1, p. 206; `Arshī *Istinād Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Murtaḍā Shīrāzī (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1363 H.Sh.), p. 39, note. 1.

<sup>67</sup> See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 1, p. 206.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Ṣadūq's chain of transmission in *ʿIlal al-Sharāʾiʿ* and *Maʿānī al-Akḥbār* is as follows:

a. "Narrated to us, Muḥammad ibn `Alī Mājīlawayh from his uncle



413/1022) recorded the sermon in his *Kitāb al-Irshād*.<sup>69</sup>

7. In his *al-Amālī*, al-Tūsī records the sermon in full according to two different chains of transmissions.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the sources mentioned above, there are other indications which support the idea that `Alī had delivered the sermon *al-Shiqshiqīyah*.

8. Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Thaqafī al-Kūfī (d. 283/896) records a long letter of `Alī to one of his companions in *al-Ghārāt*, which is very close to the sermon under discussion in its content and wording.<sup>71</sup>

9. Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī reports having seen a manuscript of the sermon in which he found a note written by Abū al-Hasan `Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Furāt (d. 312/925), the minister of al-Muqtadir, the `Abbāsīd caliph who died about 50 years before Raḍī was born. He adds that the manuscript itself was written years before Ibn

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Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Qāsim from Aḥmad ibn Abī `Abd Allāh al-Barqī from his father from ibn Abī `Umayr from Abān ibn `Uthmān from Abān ibn Taghlīb from `Ikrimah from Ibn al-`Abbās (Abdallāh) from `Alī". See *Ilal al-Sharā'i*, p. 150; *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, ed. `Alī Akbar Ghaffārī (Tehran: Maktabat al-Ṣadūq, 1379, A.H.), p. 361.

b. al-Ṣadūq gives another chain of transmission as follows: "Narrated to us, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq al-Tāliqānī from `Abd al-`Azīz ibn Yahyā al-Jallūdī from Abū `Abd Allāh Aḥmad ibn `Ammār ibn Khālīd from Yahyā ibn `Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥammānī from `Isā ibn Rāshid from `Alī ibn Khuzaymah from `Ikrimah from ibn al-`Abbās from `Alī." See *Ilal al-Sharā'i*, p. 153; *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, p. 360.

<sup>69</sup> al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād* (Najaf: Maktabat al-Haydarīyah, 1962), p. 152. It is to be mentioned that although al-Mufīd died in 413/1022, namely seven years later than Raḍī, but he was Raḍī's teacher and much older than him. Therefore, it is impossible for him to narrate the sermon of *al-Shiqshiqīyah* on the authority of his student because it is not customary among the Muslim scholars to do so. This absolutely means that he copies the sermon from another source or the same source Raḍī had received it. Moreover, al-Mufīd gives the incident and the *isnād* of the sermon and there are textual differences between his version of the sermon and that of the *Nahj* suggesting that al-Mufīd could not have taken the sermon from *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Al-Mufīd also could not have taken the sermon from al-Ṣadūq because the latter does not give such an incident for the sermon.

<sup>70</sup> See al-Tūsī, *al-Amālī* (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Nu'mān, 1384, A.H.), v. 1, p. 329.

al-Furāt.<sup>72</sup>

10. Majlisī refers to the fourth volume of *ʿIqd al-Farīd* (d. 328/939) as a source of the sermon in his *Bihār al-Anwār*.<sup>73</sup> It is, however, surprising that one cannot find this sermon in printed editions of *ʿIqd al-Farīd*. According to some Shīʿī scholars, this sermon may have been intentionally omitted from the mentioned book either during printing or transcription.<sup>74</sup>

11. Al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991) reports of a commentary of the sermon by Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAskarī.<sup>75</sup>

There are some other authors who recorded the sermon in full or quotations from it. These authors although are later than Raḍī, they either gave the *isnād* of the sermon or there are some deference between the sermon as recorded by them and as it is in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which indicates that they have received the sermon through different channels.

12. Al-Qaḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Muʿtazilī (d. 415/1024) in his *al-Mughnī* gives the interpretation of some parts of the sermon.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>71</sup> al-Thaqafī, *al-Gharat*, v. 1, pp. 302-322. ʿArshī refers to *al-Ghārāt* as a source which records the sermon. It seems that he has referred to the same letter mentioned above. As Jalāl al-Dīn Urmawī points out, earlier scholars, among them Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd and Majlisī, did not refer to *al-Ghārāt* as a source of *al-Shiqshiqīyah*.

<sup>72</sup> See Kamāl al-Dīn Maytham al-Bahrānī, *Ikhtiyār Miṣbāḥ al-Sālikīn*, ed. Muhammad Hādī Amīnī (Mashhad: Majmaʿ al-Buḥūth al-Islāmīyah, 1408, A.H.), p. 91; See also idem., *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 1, p. 253. The date for Ibn Furāt's death is given by Shahrastānī, see *Ma Huwa Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 38.

<sup>73</sup> Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, v. 8, p. 160.

<sup>74</sup> However, it would be interesting if modern scholars search for this sermon in the earlier manuscripts of *Iqd al-Farīd* because Majlisī seems to be very sure of what he was writing.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal al-Sharāʿī*, pp. 151-153; Idem., *Maʿānī al-Akhbār*, p. 362.

13. Abū Sa'īd al-Abī (d. 421-2/1030-1) in two of his books *Nathr al-Durar* and *Nuzhat al-Adīb*.<sup>77</sup>

14. al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā mentions a few quotations from the sermon in his book *al-Shāfi*. In this book Murtaḍā argues against `Abd al-Jabbār al-Mu'tazilī al-Shāfi'ī who tried to justify `Alī's saying in *al-Shiqshiqīyah*, which means that `Abd al-Jabbār did not question the authenticity of the sermon at that time, but rather tried to justify it in a way which would not contradict his Mu'tazilī view of the caliphate.<sup>78</sup> Murtaḍā also has written a separate volume as a commentary of the sermon.

15. In his commentary of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, al-Rāwandī (d. 573/1177) gives the *isnād* of the sermon according to two different chains of transmissions and records it in full.<sup>79</sup>

16. In his book *Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣṣ*, Ibn al-Jawzī al-Hanafī (d. 654/1256) records the sermon in full mentioning the variety of wording in different narrations. He writes, "This is a sermon of `Alī known to *al-Shiqshiqīyah*, which was partly recorded by the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. I record the sermon in full on the authority of our teacher Abū al-Qāsim al-Nafīs al-Anbārī who relates it to Ibn

<sup>76</sup> `Abd al-Jabbār al-Mu'tazilī, *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawhīd*, ed. Tāhā Ḥusayn and others (Cairo: Dār al-Miṣrīyah li al-Ta'līf, 1958), v. 20:1, p. 295. There is a strong possibility to suggest that al-Mughnī was compiled before *Nahj al-Balāghah*. `Abd al-Jabbār, although died after Raḍī, was much older than him. Moreover, his book was very well known thus Murtaḍā wrote his *al-Shāfi* in response to `Abd al-Jabbār's book.

<sup>77</sup> Abū Sa'īd Abī, *Nathr al-Durar* (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-`Ammah li al-Kitāb, 1981), v. 1, p. 274.

<sup>78</sup> al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Shāfi fī al-Imāmah*, ed. `Abd al-Zahrā al-Khaṭīb (Tehran: Mu'assasat al-Ṣādiq, 1989), v. 3, pp. 267-9.

<sup>79</sup> Sa'īd ibn Hibatullāh Rāwandī, *Minhāj al-Barā'ah fī Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (Qum: Maktabat Ayat Allāh al-Mar'ashī, 1406/1986), v. 1, pp. 131-134.

al-`Abbās.<sup>80</sup>

17. There are also references to *al-Shiqshiqīyah* in some significant books of literature and dictionaries, some of which are as follows:

a. Maydānī (d. 518/1124) refers to this sermon with a reference to the instance that it was delivered in his *Majma` al-Amthāl*.<sup>81</sup>

b. In *al-Nihāyah*, Ibn al-Athīr (d. 606/1209) provides many citations from this sermon while explaining some difficult vocabularies of it.<sup>82</sup> It is to be mentioned again that some textual differences suggest that Ibn al-Athīr might have received the sermon through channels different from those of Raḍī.

c. In *Lisān al-`Arab*, Ibn Maḍḍūr refers to the sermon while describing the word *Shiqshiqah*.<sup>83</sup>

d. In *al-Qāmūs*, Fīrūzābādī mentions *al-Shiqshiqīyah*.<sup>84</sup>

## 2. General Sources of Nahj al-Balāghah

Following are listed some books compiled before *Nahj al-Balāghah* most of which are exclusively devoted to record the utterances of `Alī. A few of these books

<sup>80</sup> Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣṣ* (Najaf: Maktabat al-Haydarīyah, 1964), p. 129.

<sup>81</sup> Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maydānī, *Majma` al-Amthāl*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥy al-Dīn `Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1972), v. 1, p. 639, no: 1987.

<sup>82</sup> Majd al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo: Mustafā Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1963) see, for instance, under the words: *jadhah*, v. 1, p. 250; *ḥalā*, v. 1, p. 435; *shiqshiqah*, v. 2, p. 490; *rabadah*, v. 2, p. 185; *zibrij*, v. 2, p. 294; *shanaqa*, v. 2, p. 506 and *afata*, v. 3, p. 264, *khadm*, v. 2, p. 44.

<sup>83</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-`Arab* (Beirut: Dār Lisān al-`Arab, 1988), v. 3, p. 343.

<sup>84</sup> Majd al-Dīn Fīrūzābādī, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīt* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1950-), v. 3, p. 251.

contain some other materials as well, but a large portion of them are `Alī's sayings. Some of these books are not available to us and we know of their content only through the description of bibliographical sources or citations provided from them by later scholars.<sup>85</sup>

In introducing the sources of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the present study differs from previous studies in following ways.

A. In most cases, the previous studies just listed the books without giving any source. Furthermore, whenever they cited a source, they did not provide the bibliographical information on it.

B. Some of the previous studies relied on the secondary sources that sometimes give a source in which one cannot find a certain saying of `Alī that they have addressed.

C. Previous studies included many later works into the sources of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. These works although very authoritative for the Shī'īs, hardly can be accepted by Sunnīs and Western scholarship as sources of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

D. Muḥammad Dashtī's work *Ravishhā-e Taḥqīq dar Asnād va Madārik Nahj*

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<sup>85</sup> Some of these sources are being introduced for the first time by present writer for which the bibliographical information is given in the footnotes. The rest, for which no citation is given, are combination of the sources given in the following works. `Abd al-Zahrā al-Husaynī al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asāniduh*, v. 1, pp. 29-86. al-Shahrastānī, *Mā Huwa Nahj al-Balāghah*, pp. 41-48; Hādī Kāshif al-Ghitā', *Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah* (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Rā'ī, 1354, A.H.), p. 66-112; Imtiyāz `Alī `Arshī, *Istinād Nahj al-Balāghah*, pp. 103-108; `Alī Davānī, *Sayyid Raḍī Mu'allif-e Nahj al-Balāghah* (Tehran: Bunyād-e Nahj al-Balāghah, 1359, A.H.), pp. 107-108; Waheed Akhtar, *Early Shī'ite Imāmiyah Thinkers* (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1988), pp. 146-152. Muḥammad Dashtī, *Ravishhā-e Taḥqīq dar Asnād va Madārik Nahj al-Balāghah*; `Azīz Allāh `Utārudī, "Girdāwarandegān-e Sukhanān-e Imām Amīr al-Mu'minīn Qabl az `Allāmah al-Sharīf al-Raḍī", *Yādnāmeḥ-i Kungereh-i Hezāreh-i Nahj al-Balāghah*, 1401/1981 (Tehran: Bunyād Nahj al-Balāghah, 1981), pp. 293-320. Except Akhtar, each one of the above works added some new sources. The present writer has added some new sources, too.

*al-Balāghah* although claimed to be the most comprehensive of all the studies on *Nahj al-Balāghah's* sources, is the most misleading. He does not rely on original sources and for that reason, very often, gives sources in which one cannot find certain passages of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. In this study we have mentioned some of such instances. Even though sometimes he provides the number of the pages of the sources for a certain saying of `Alī, he does not give bibliographical information.

E. The main reliance of this study is on the original sources. Secondary sources, however, are used in case the original sources were not available to the present writer or are completely lost.

F. Some new sources are being introduced for the first time by the present writer. Whenever we are introducing a source which has already been mentioned by the previous studies, it is an update on the earlier works in giving the exact address for `Alī's saying, while the previous works simply mention the sources.<sup>86</sup>

G. This study, to my knowledge, is the first elaborate study on the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in English.

#### **i. Books Written Before Nahj al-Balāghah Containing the Utterances of `Alī**

1. *khutab Amīr al-Mu'minīn `alā al-Manābir fī al-Jumā` wa al-A`yād wa Ghayrihimā* by Zayd ibn Wahab al-Juhanī al-Kūfī (d. 96/714-15) a companion of `Alī. This book was available till the fifth/11th century, and al-Ṭūsī has quoted from this book in his writings.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> While I have to acknowledge the help I got from these sources, it was very difficult to find `Alī's sayings in them, most of which have no indexes. Therefore, to find `Alī's sayings in these books very often I had to scan through the entire book or even read it from the first page to the last.

<sup>87</sup> See al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, p. 148; and Kantūrī, *Kashf al-Hujub*, p. 206. no: 1054.

2. *Kitāb khutab Amīr al-Mu'minīn* by Abū Ya'qūb Ismā'īl ibn Mihrān ibn Muḥammad al-Sakūnī al-Kūfī (d. 148/765). This book also was available until fifth/11th century and al-Najāshī has quoted from it.<sup>88</sup>

3. Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā al-Azdī al-Ghāmīdī (d. 157-8/773-4), known to Abū Mikhnaḥ, has quoted 'Alī's utterances in his following works:<sup>89</sup>

- a. *Kitāb al-Jamal*
- b. *Ṣiffīn*
- c. *Kitāb al-Nahrawān*
- d. *Kitāb al-Khawārij*
- e. *Kitāb al-Ghārāt*
- f. *Kitāb Maqṭal 'Alī*
- g. *Kitāb Maqṭal Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr wa al-Ashtar wa Muḥammad ibn Abī Hudhayfah*
- h. *Kitāb al-Shūrā wa Maqṭal 'Uthmān*
- i. *Kitāb al-khutbah al-Zahrā li Amīr al-Mu'minīn*

4. *Kitāb khutab Amīr al-Mu'minīn* by Abū Muḥammad Mas'adah ibn Ṣadaqah al-'Abdī al-Kūfī (d. 183/799) who was a companion and pupil of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and Mūsā al-Kāzim, the six and seventh Shī'ī imams. Al-Najāshī says: "Ibn Shādhān narrated this book to us on his own authority." This book seems to be available till the time of Sayyid Hāshim al-Bahrānī (d. 1107-9/1695-7) who quoted significantly from this book in his *Tafsīr al-Burhān*.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 26, no: 49.

<sup>89</sup> al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 320, no: 875; Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 157.

<sup>90</sup> 'Abd al-Zahrā al-Husaynī al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah*, pp. 52-53. Some scholars recorded another book titled *khutab Amīr al-Mu'minīn al-Marwīyah 'an al-Imām al-Ṣādiq* for Abū Rūh ibn Farwah on the authority of Mas'adah mentioned, above which seems to be the same book.

5. *Kitāb khuṭab `Alī* by Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-Hakam ibn Zuhayr al-Fazārī al-Kūfī (d. late second/eighth century).<sup>91</sup> Al-Najāshī narrates from this book on his authority.<sup>92</sup>

6. *khuṭab Amīr al-Mu'minīn* by Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Sulaymān ibn `Ubayd Allāh ibn Khālīd al-Khazzāz al-Kūfī al-Nahmī (d. late third/ninth century)<sup>93</sup>

7. *Kitāb Maqṭal Amīr al-Mu'minīn* by al-Nahmī (mentioned above). Al-Tūsī narrates his books on his own authority.<sup>94</sup>

8. Abū al-Mundhir Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī (d. 206/821) in his following books records some of `Alī's utterances.<sup>95</sup>

a. *khuṭab `Alī Karram Allāh Wajhah*

b. *Kitāb Maqṭal `Uthmān*

c. *Kitāb al-Jamal*

d. *Kitāb al-Ṣiffīn*

e. *Kitāb al-Nahrawān*

f. *Kitāb al-Ghārāt*

g. *Kitāb Maqṭal Amīr al-Mu'minīn*

9. Abū `Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn `Umar al-Wāqīdī (d. 207/823) in his following books narrated some of `Alī's sayings.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>91</sup> See Shaykh Aghā Buzurk Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī'ah*, v. 7, p. 191, no: 972.

<sup>92</sup> al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 11; Kantūrī, *Kashf al-Hujub*, p. 206, no: 1055; Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'ah*, v. 7, p. 186, no: 963.

<sup>93</sup> Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'ah*, v. 7, p. 188, no: 963; al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 18, no: 20.

<sup>94</sup> al-Tūsī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 13; al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 18, no: 20.

<sup>95</sup> al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 434, no: 1166.

<sup>96</sup> Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 164. Raḍī himself mentions al-Wāqīdī's *al-Jamal* in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, kh: 231, p. 83; k: 75, p. 105.



- a. *al-Shūrā*
- b. *al-Jamal*
- c. *al-Siffīn*

10. *al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā`ah wa Dhamm al-Hawā wa Tark al-Khawārij fī al-Fitan*.

11. Abū al-Faḍl Naṣr ibn Muzāhim al-Minqirī al-Kūfī (d. early second/eighth century) quotes `Alī's sayings in most of his books. The followings are some of his books which were studied by al-Najāshī. All these books contain `Alī's utterances.<sup>97</sup>

- a. *Kitāb al-Siffīn*
- b. *Kitāb al-Jamal*
- c. *Kitāb al-Nahrawān*
- d. *Kitāb al-Ghārāt*
- e. *khutab `Alī*
- f. *Kitāb al-Manāqib*

12. *Al-Jamal* by Qāsim ibn al-Hakam al-`Uranī (d. 208/823)<sup>98</sup>

13. *Kitāb khutab Amīr al-Mu'minīn* by Abū al-Khayr Ṣāliḥ ibn Abī Hammād al-Rāzī (d. 214/829), a companion of al-Ḥasan al-`Askarī the 11th Shī`ī Imām.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>97</sup> al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 428, no: 1148; Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 158. Kantūrī, *Kashf al-Hujub*, p. 432, no: 2399, 2516.

<sup>98</sup> This book is mentioned by Dashtī (*Ravish*, p. 464). Ibn al-Nadīm, al-Najāshī, Tūsī, Kantūrī, Muntajab al-Dīn ibn Bābwayh, Kahhālāh and Yāqūt do not make a mention of al-`Uranī. I could not find this book in al-`Uranī's biography in the following sources. Khayr al-Dīn Zirīklī, *al-A`lām* (Beirut: Dār al-`Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1980), v. 5, p. 175; Ibn Hajar `Asqalānī, *Lisān al-Mīzān*, v. 7, p. 338, no: 4390; al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-Ḥidāyah*, v. 3, p. 370, no: 6801; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, ed. `Umar `Abd al-Salām (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, 1987), v. 14, p. 297, no: 315; Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā' al-Rijāl*, ed. Bashshār `Awwād (Beirut: Mu`assasat al-Risālah, 1980), v. 23, p. 342, no: 4785. Tehrānī also did not record any book titled al-Jamal for `Uranī in *al-Dharī`ah*, v. 5, pp. 141-2.

<sup>99</sup> al-Najāshī *al-Rijāl*, p. 198, no: 526.

14. Abū al-Ḥasan `Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Madā'inī (d. 224-5/839-10) in his following books quotes `Alī's sayings:<sup>100</sup>

- a. *Kitāb khutab `Alī wa Kutubuhu ilā Ummāliḥ*
- b. *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'*
- c. *Kitāb man Qutila min al-Tālibīyīn*
- d. *al-Futūḥ*
- e. *al-Jamal*
- f. *Ṣiffīn*
- g. *al-Khawarij*
- h. *khutab Amīr al-Mu'minīn wa Kutubuh ilā Ummāliḥ*

15. *Kitāb khutab `Alī* by Abū al-Qāsim `Abd al-Azīm ibn `Abdallāh al-Ḥasanī (d. 250/864).<sup>101</sup>

16. *Mī'at Kalimah li Amīr al-Mu'minīn `Alī ibn Abī Tālib* by great Muslim scholar Abū `Uthmān `Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) who was greatly fond of this book.<sup>102</sup>

17. *Maqṭal Amīr al-Mu'minīn* by Ibn Abī Dunyā (d. 281/894)

18. *Ṣiffīn* by Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥusayn ibn Dīzīl al-Muḥaddith (d. 281/894)

19. al-Thaqafī (d. 283/896) in his following books narrated a significant number of `Alī's utterances.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, pp. 168-173.

<sup>101</sup> al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 247, no: 653.

<sup>102</sup> See al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Mu'ayyad al-Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Bakrī al-Ḥanafī, *al-Manāqib* (Najaf: Matba'at al-Ḥaydarīyah, 1358 A.H.), p. 271. Al-Bakrī records the full text of the book on the authority of al-Jāḥiẓ giving the chain of the transmission.

- a. *al-Ghārāt*
- b. *Rasā'il `Alī (Rasā'il Amīr al-Mu'minīn wa Akhbāruh wa Hurūbuh)*
- c. *Kalām `Alī fī al-Shūrā*
- d. *al-khuṭab al-Mu`arabāt*
- e. *al-Saqīfah*
- f. *Maqtal `Uthmān*
- g. *Bay`at Amīr al-Mu'minīn*
- h. *al-Jamal*
- i. *al-Hakamayn*
- j. *al-Nahrawān*
- k. *Maqtal Amīr al-Mu'minīn*

20. *Zuhd Amīr al-Mu'minīn* by Abī al-Naḍr Muḥammad ibn Mas`ūd ibn Muḥammad ibn Ayyāsh al-Silmī al-Samarqndī (d. third/ninth century)<sup>104</sup>

21. Abū Ja`far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Rustam al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923)<sup>105</sup> collected `Alī's sayings and sermons and letters in his books:<sup>106</sup>

- a. *al-Mustarshid fī al-Imāmah*
- b. *al-Ruwāt `an Ahl al-Bayt*
- c. *Kitāb al-Siffīn*

22. Abū Ja`far Muḥammad ibn Ya`qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 328/939) quoted some of `Alī's utterances in his following books.

<sup>103</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, pp. 16-18, no: 26. al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, p. 16; Yāqūt, *Mu`jam al-ʿUdabā'*, v. 1, p. 232.

<sup>104</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, pp. 317-318, no: 690.

<sup>105</sup> He is not the famous historian al-Ṭabarī, but a contemporary of his.

<sup>106</sup> Ibn Hajar `Asqalānī, *Lisān al-Mīzān*, v. 5, p. 103; al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl* p. 376, no: 1024.

- a. *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*
- b. *Furu' al-Kāfī*
- c. *Rawḍāt al-Kāfī*
- d. *Rasā'il al-A'immah*

23. Abū Aḥmad `Abd al-`Azīz ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn `Tsā al-Jallūdī (d. 332/941) in the following works records `Alī's sayings. Some of these books are exclusively devoted to `Alī's utterances.<sup>107</sup>

- a. *Kitāb al-Jamal*
- b. *Kitāb al-Siffīn*
- c. *Kitāb al-Ḥakamayn*
- d. *Kitāb al-Ghārāt*
- e. *Kitāb al-Khawārij*
- f. *Kitāb Hurūb `Alī*
- g. *Kitāb Khutab `Alī*
- h. *Kitāb Shī'r `Alī*<sup>108</sup>
- i. *Kitāb Rasā'il `Alī*
- j. *Kitāb Mawā'iz `Alī*
- k. *Kitāb Dhikr Kalām `Alī fī al-Malāḥim*<sup>109</sup>
- l. *Kitāb Qawl `Alī fī al-Shūrā*
- m. *Kitāb Mā Kān Bayn `Alī wa `Uthmān min al-Kalām*
- n. *Kitāb Qadā' `Alī*
- o. *Kitāb al-Du'ā' `an `Alī*

<sup>107</sup> al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl* p. 240, no: 640; Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'ah*, v. 5, p. 141, no: 588; Idem., *Tabaqāt A'lām al-Shī'ah fī Rābi'at al-Miat*, ed. `Alī Naqī Munzawī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, 1971), v. 1, p. 150.

<sup>108</sup> Kantūrī credited al-Fankajardī with this book. See p. 216, no: 1103.

<sup>109</sup> Muḥammad Dashtī mentions a book titled *al-Malāḥim* which seems to be the same book of *Kitāb Dhikr Kalām `Alī fī al-Malāḥim*.

p. *Kitāb al-Adab `an `Alī*

q. *Kitāb Musnad Amīr al-Mu'minīn*

24. Abū al-Hasan `Alī ibn al-Husayn ibn `Alī al-Mas`ūdī (d. 346/957) has collected numerous sayings of `Alī in his following books:<sup>110</sup>

a. *Hadā'iq al-Adhhān fī Akhbār Al Muḥammad*

b. *Mazāhir al-Akhhār wa Zarā'if al-Athār*

c. *Murūj al-Dhahab al-Dhahab*

d. *al-Ṣafwah fī al-Imāmah*

e. *Ithbāt al-Waṣīyah*

f. *al-Khawārij*

25. Abū Ṭālib `Ubayd Allāh ibn Abū Zayd Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Anbārī (d. 356/967) in his book *Ad'iyat al-A'imma* collects supplication narrated by `Alī as well as other Shī'ī Imams. He also compiled another book titled *Fadak* in which he probably recorded some of `Alī's sayings.<sup>111</sup>

26. Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Abū Rāfi' al-Kūfī al-Baghdādī, a teacher of al-Mufīd, recorded some of `Alī's discourses in his following books.<sup>112</sup>

a. *al-Kashf fī Mā Yata`allaq bi al-Saqīfah*

b. *al-Dīyā' (al-Ṣafā') fī Tārīkh al-A'imma*<sup>113</sup>

<sup>110</sup> al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 254, no: 665; Muḥammad ibn Shākīr al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, ed. Iḥsān `Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādīr, 1973), v. 3, p. 13, no: 336; `Asqalānī, *Lisān al-Mīzān*, v. 4, p. 224; `Alī ibn al-Husayn Mas`ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1958), v. 1, pp. 4-5.

<sup>111</sup> al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, pp. 232-3, no: 617.

<sup>112</sup> al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 84, no: 203; al-Tūsī, *al-Fihrist*, p. 19-20, no: 35. Al-Tūsī says that he was introduced to the works of this author through al-Mufīd and al-Husayn ibn `Ubayd Allāh, Aḥmad ibn `Abdūn and other scholars.

<sup>113</sup> al-Tūsī, *al-Fihrist*, pp. 19-20, no: 35.

27. *khutab Amīr al-Mu'minīn* by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Nu'mān.

28. *al-Shūrā* by Abū `Amir al-Sha`bī

29. Aḥmad ibn `Abd al-`Azīz al-Jawharī (d. 393/1002) in his books:

a. *al-Saqīfah*

b. *al-Sihāh*

Books mentioned above are some of the earliest sources containing `Alī's utterances. As their titles indicate, most of them are exclusively devoted to `Alī's sayings. Among Raḍī's contemporaries, there are outstanding scholars, such as Ibn Nadīm (d. 385/995), al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058) and al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) who provide us all the information about these books, asserting that they have seen or studied these books or have learned about them through reliable sources. Therefore, one can safely say that all of these books were available to Raḍī as well. This is apart from the fact that it was Raḍī and his brother Murtaḍā's huge libraries that facilitated the research for the scholars of the time, among them al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī. All in all, for the above mentioned reasons, it does not seem to be difficult for Raḍī to collect the content of *Nahj al-Balāghah* from these many sources and certainly many other works which may be found in bibliographical sources with more careful research. Not to mention those many other works that have been lost or destroyed and their titles and authors are unknown to us. Mas`ūdī writes that people had memorized more than 480 sermons of `Alī while Raḍī only selected 241 sermons in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>114</sup>

Several Muslim scholars, however, have sought to trace back the sources of `Alī's utterances collected in *Nahj al-Balāghah* to the works compiled centuries before the compilation of the book. The method followed by those scholars involves

<sup>114</sup> In his introduction to *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Raḍī states those sayings of `Alī which he did not record or did not become aware of, might have been more than those he recorded in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

searching for the sources of each sermon, letter or short saying which does not fall under the scope of this study. In this connection, we will introduce the most common works containing passages from *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Unlike some of the scholars who included later works into the sources of *Nahj al-Balāghah* for different reasons, this study will not deal with sources compiled after *Nahj al-Balāghah*, unless we are sure they have not been taken from *Nahj al-Balāghah* for the reasons which will be provided during the relevant sections. In general, if there will be any work introduced as *Nahj al-Balāghah's* sources, it is either very close to Raḍī's time or it is a very important source which is considered significantly reliable by Muslim scholars. In addition, we are sure that for some reasons, `Alī's saying in these sources are not taken from *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

## ii. Earlier Sources Having Common Texts With Nahj al-Balāghah

Following are the books compiled before *Nahj al-Balāghah* containing material in common with it. Most of these books are available to us either in published form or as manuscripts in different libraries. Some scholars have traced back *Nahj al-Balāghah's* content to some of those books. It is necessary to mention that passages of *Nahj al-Balāghah* can be found in these books either in part or in its entirety. There may be also some textual differences between `Alī's sayings as they are reported in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and as they are reported in these books. These minor differences, as mentioned earlier, work in favour of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, suggesting that they have been taken from sources other than those of Raḍī's, which indicate that `Alī's sayings had been widely in circulation before the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Some names mentioned in the previous section may be repeated in this section as well. These repetitions were unavoidable because in this chapter sources are divided into two categories: sources that are exclusively devoted to `Alī's sayings and those which contain some parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Therefore, an author may have

books falling into both categories in which case his name is repeated in both sections.

1. *Kitāb Salīm ibn Qays*, also known as *al-Saqīfah*, by Salīm ibn Qays al-Hilālī (d. 90/708). This book is printed and contains a significant number of `Alī's utterances.<sup>115</sup>

2. Husayn ibn Sa`īd al-Ahwāzī (d. 95/713) in the following books:<sup>116</sup>

a. *al-Zuhd*

b. *al-Du`ā' wa al-Dhikr*

3. *Kitāb Ibn Da'b* by `Isā ibn Yazīd ibn Bakr ibn Da'b (d. 158/774). He mentions 70 characteristics of `Alī in his book from which al-Mufīd quotes in his book *Ikhtisās* on the authority of Ibn Da'b and so does al-Majlisī in the ninth volume of his book *Biḥār al-Anwār*.<sup>117</sup>

*Kitāb al-Zuhd* by `Abdallāh ibn Mubārak al-Marwazī (d. 181/798)<sup>118</sup>

5. *Kitāb Ḥadhf min Nasab Quraysh* by Muwarraj ibn `Amr al-Sudūsī (d. 195/810)<sup>119</sup>

<sup>115</sup> See al-Kūfī, Salīm ibn Qays, *Kitāb Salīm ibn Qays al-Kūfī* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1970). Compare, for instance, the famous sermon of "al-Muttaqīn", p. 238-242 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 73, sermon 193. For sources in which this book is mentioned, see the editor's introduction, pp. 3-61.

<sup>116</sup> This book is mentioned by al-Ṣadūq, al-Kulaynī, al-Tūsī and other early Shī`ī scholars. See Husayn ibn Sa`īd al-Ahwāzī, *al-Zuhd* (Qum: Maṭba`at al-A`lamī, 1399 A.H.), compare for instance the *ḥadīth* in p. 23 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 37, sermon. 97.

<sup>117</sup> Al-Mufīd quotes from Ibn Da'b in many places in his book *al-Ikhtisās*. See al-Mufīd, *al-Ikhtisās*, ed. `Alī Akbar Ghaffārī (Tehran: Maktabat al-Ṣadūq, 1379 A.H.), see, for instance, pp. 144-160. Muḥammad Dashtī mentions a book titled *Ikhtisās* for Ibn Da'b which seems to be a mistake; it could, however, be another book of this author.

<sup>118</sup> See `Abdallāh ibn Mubārak al-Marwazī, *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa al-Rqāiq* ed. Ḥabīb al-Rahmān al-A`zamī (Mālīgā'un: Majlis Ihyā' al-Ma`ārif, 1960). Compare p. 86 with *Nahj al-Balāghah* p. 22, kh:22; p. 24, kh:41. See also p. 114, 142, 251, 261, 358, 403, 425, 436, 504, 509, 523. Also see additions by Nu`aim ibn Ḥammād in the same volume p. 11, 38, 85, 106.

<sup>119</sup> Muwarraj ibn `Amr al-Sudūsī, *Kitāb Ḥadhf min Nasab Quraysh*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munjid (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-`Urubah, 1960). See p. 36.



6. *Kitāb al-Umm* by Muḥammad Ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/819)<sup>120</sup>
7. *Jamharat al-Ansāb* by Abī Mundhir Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī (d. 204-6/819-21)<sup>121</sup>
8. *al-sīrah al-Nabawīyah* by Ibn Hishām (d. 213/828)<sup>122</sup>
9. Abū 'Ubayd Qāsim ibn Salām (d. 223-5/837-9) in his following books:
  - a. *Gharīb al-Hadīth*<sup>123</sup>
  - b. *al-Amwāl*<sup>124</sup>
10. *al-Fitan* by Nu'aim ibn Ḥammād (d. 228/842)<sup>125</sup>
11. Ḥākim al-Nishābūrī (d. 404-5/1013-4) in his following books:<sup>126</sup>
  - a. *Ma'rifat 'Ulūm al-Hadīth*

<sup>120</sup> Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, *Kitāb al-Umm* (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-ʿāmmah li al-Kitāb, 1987). See, for instance, v. 6, p. 123, 177.

<sup>121</sup> This book is mentioned by 'Abd al-Zahrā al-Ḥusaynī as a source containing 'Alī's sayings. See *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 1, p. 34. Only the first volume of *Jamharah* was available to the present writer in which the author mentions 'Alī's name in numerous instances, but does not provide any of his sayings. There are, however, quotations from earlier sources, such as al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) in the editor's notes. See for instance, Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-Ansāb* (Kuwayt: Wizārat al-ʿIlām, 1983), pp. 170-171. See al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 343, no: 1160 for al-Kalbī's other books.

<sup>122</sup> See Ibn Hishām, *al-sīrah al-Nabawīyah*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1987). Compare, for instance, v. 4, p. 313 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 83, kh: 235, see also p. 36-37, 73, 159, 262, 305, 316.

<sup>123</sup> See Abū 'Ubayd Qāsim ibn Salām, *Gharīb al-Hadīth* (Ḥaydarābād al-Dakan: Maṭba'at Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Uthmānīyah, 1966). Compare v. 3, p. 436 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 18, kh: 77 and v. 3, p. 466 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 110, h: 112. See also v. 3, pp. 434-487 which exclusively are devoted to 'Alī's saying and most of which can be found in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., *Kitāb al-Amwāl*, ed. 'Abd al-Amīr al-Muḥannā (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥidāthah, 1988). Compare p. 256, no: 677 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 48, kh: 134. See also p. 9, no: 11; 53: 116; 56: 123; 57: 124; 89: 206; 90: 207, 208; 96: 226; 97: 232,

*Mustadrak Hākim*

c. *al-Madkhal fī 'Ilm al-Hadīth*

12. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* by Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj (d. 261/874)<sup>127</sup>

13. *al-Amālī* by Abū Ishāq ibn Sahl al-Nahwī

14. *al-Sunan* by Ibn Mājah (d. 275/888)<sup>128</sup>

15. Abī Dāwūd (d. 275/888) in his following books<sup>129</sup>

a. *Kitāb al-Sunan*

b. *Kitāb al-Qadar*

c. *al-Marasil*

16. *al-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā* by Abī 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Sa'd al-Zuharī<sup>130</sup>

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233; 98: 234; 106: 268; 109: 275, and more.

<sup>125</sup> See Nu'aym ibn Hammād al-Marwazi, *al-Fitan* (London: Microfilm from British library manuscript, oriental, no: 9449). This manuscript is copied in the year 760/1358 by Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Sīrafī al-Anṣārī. Compare p. 14 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 121, h: 375. See also p. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24 and more.

<sup>126</sup> Hākim al-Nishābūrī, *al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Naṣr, 1968). Compare v. 3, p. 123 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 46, kh: 127. See also p. 112, 113, 120. See also idem., *Ma'rīfat 'Ulūm al-Hadīth* (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Tijārī li al-Ṭibā'ah, 1935), p. 97, 141; idem., *al-Madkhal fī 'Ilm al-Hadīth*, ed, trans. James Robson (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1953), p. 42, 46.

<sup>127</sup> See Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Mu'assasat 'Izz al-Dīn, 1987). Compare, for instance, v. 1, p. 120 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 108, h: 45. For more of 'Alī's saying in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, see 'Abd al-Zahrā al-Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 2, p. 58: v. 4, p. 44, 45, 159.

<sup>128</sup> See Ibn Mājah, *al-Sunan* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, 1952). Compare, for instance, v. 1, p. 42, no: 114 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 108, h: 45, and p. 161, no: 477 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 124, h: 466. See also p. 44; p. 47, no: 129; p. 59, no: 167; p. 106, no: 291; p. 370, no: 1169; p. 373, no: 1179; p. 411, no: 1295; p. 461, no: 1433; p. 513, no: 1608, and more.

17. *al-Muṣannaf* by Abī Shaybah (d. 235/849)
18. *Kitāb Nasab Quraysh* by Abū `Abdallāh al-Muṣ`ab ibn `Abdallāh ibn al-Muṣ`ab al-Zubayrī (d. 236/850)<sup>131</sup>
19. *al-Maqāmāt* by Abū Ja`far al-Iskāfī (d. 240/854)
20. *Naqd al-`Uthmāniyah* by Abū Ja`far Muḥammad ibn `Abdallāh al-Mu`tazilī (d. 240/854)
21. Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) the founder of Ḥanbalī, school of jurisprudence, quotes `Alī's sayings in his following books:
  - a. *al-Zuhd*
  - b. *al-Fadā'il*
  - c. *Musnad*
22. *Asmā' al-Mughṭālīn min al-Ashrāf fī al-Jāhiliyah wa al-Islām* by Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥabīb al-Baghdādī (d. 245/859)
23. *al-Amālī* by the same author
24. *al-Mu`ammarūn wa al-Waṣāyā* by Abī Sahl Ḥātam ibn Muḥammad al-Sajistānī (d. 248/862 or 255/868)
25. *al-Maghāzī* by Abū `Uthmān al-Sa`īd (d. 249/863)

<sup>129</sup> See `Abd al-Zahrā al-Ḥusaynī, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa Asāniduh*. v. 1, p. 325; v. 2, p. 42; v. 4, p. 219.

<sup>130</sup> See Ibn Sa`d, *al-Ṭabaqāt* (Beirut: Dār Sādīr, 1957). Compare, for instance, v. 2, p. 338 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 67, kh: 189; v. 3, p. 34 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 21, kh: 25, p. 36 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 28, kh: 70. See also v. 2, p. 338, 339, 245, 262; v. 3 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1905).

<sup>131</sup> See Muṣ`ab ibn `Abdallāh ibn al-Muṣ`ab al-Zubayrī, *Kitāb Nasab Quraysh*, ed. A. Levi-Provencal (Cairo: Dār al-Ma`ārif, 1953), p. 193, 200, 281, 312, 349, 365.

26. Abū `Uthmān `Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāhiz (d. 255/869) has quoted `Alī's sayings in his following books.

- a. *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*
- b. *al-Rasā'il*
- c. *al-Bukhalā'*
- d. *al-Ḥayawān*
- e. *al-Maḥāsin wa al-Addād*
- f. *Risālah fī al-Tashbīh*

27. *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Bukhārī (d. 256/869)

28. *al-Muwaffaqiyyāt* by Zubayr ibn Bakkār (d. 256/869)

29. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Barqī (d. 270/883 or 280/893) in his famous work *al-Maḥāsin* has quoted `Alī's writings and sermons widely.<sup>132</sup>

30. Aḥmad ibn Wāḍih al-Ya`qūbī (d. 276/889 or 292/905) quotes `Alī's sayings in his famous following books:

- a. *Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī*
- b. *Mushākalat al-Nās Zāmānihim*

31. Abū `Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Kūfī al-Dīnawarī, known to Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889) in his following works records many of `Alī's letters and sermons and sayings.

- a. *al-Imāmah wa al-Siyāsah*<sup>133</sup>
- b. *`Uyūn al-Akḥbār*

<sup>132</sup> Out of more than one hundred volumes of his *al-Maḥāsin*, only 13 volumes have survived which are printed together in two volumes.

<sup>133</sup> The attribution of this book to Ibn Qutaybah is doubted by some scholars.

- c. *Gharīb al-Hadīth*
- d. *al-Hadā'iq al-Wardīyah*
- e. *Mukhtalaf al-Hadīth*
- f. *al-Ma`ārif*

32. Aḥmad ibn Yahyā ibn Jābir al-Baghdādī al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) in the following books:

- a. *Futūḥ al-Buldān*
- b. *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*

33. *al-Sunan* by al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/692)

34. *al-Alfāz al-Kitābīyah* by Nu`aym Ibn Hammād al-Hamadānī (280)

35. Abū Ḥanīfah Aḥmad ibn Dāwūd al-Dīnawarī (d. 282/895) quotes `Alī's sayings in his books:

- a. *al-Akḥbār al-Tiwāl*
- b. *al-Imāmah wa al-Siyāsah*

36. *al-Kāmil* by al-Azdī al-Baṣrī (d. 285/898)

37. Abū al-`Abbās al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898) in his following books:

- a. *al-Fāḍil*
- b. *al-Kāmil*
- c. *al-Muqtaḍab*

38. *Qurb al-Asnād* by Abī al-`Abbās `Abdallāh ibn Ja`far al-Ḥimyarī al-Qummī (d. 290/902), a contemporary of Ḥasan ibn `Alī al-`Askarī the 11th Shī`ī Imam.

39. *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* by Abū Ja`far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār (d. 290/902)

40. *al-Fākhir* by Abū Tālib al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Salamah ibn `Aṣim (d. 291/903)
41. Abū al-`Abbās Aḥmad ibn Yahyā al-Tha`ālibī (al-Tha`labī) (d. 291/903) in his following books:
  - a. *al-`Arā`is*
  - b. *al-Majālis*
42. *al-Badī`* by `Abdallāh ibn al-Mu`tazz ibn al-Mutawakil al-`Abbāsī (d. 296/908)
43. *al-Maḥāsīn wa al-Masāwī* by Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Bayhaqī (d. 225/839)
44. *al-Buldān* by Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Hamadānī, known as Ibn al-Faqīh (d. 300/912)
45. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* known as *Tafsīr al-Ayyāshī* by Abī Nadr Muḥammad ibn Mas`ūd ibn Muḥammad ibn Ayyāsh al-Silmī al-Samarqandī (d. 300/912)<sup>134</sup>
46. *al-Khaṣā'is* by Aḥmad ibn Shu`ayb al-Nisā'ī (d. 303/915)
47. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by `Alī ibn Hāshim al-Qummī, known as al-`Allāmah al-Qummī (d. 307/919)<sup>135</sup>
48. Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/922), the outstanding Muslim historian, in his history *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk* quotes `Alī's utterances.
49. *al-Kunā wa al-Asmā'* by Dūlābī (d. 310/922)
50. *al-Futūḥ* by Abī Muḥammad Aḥmad ibn A`tham al-Kūfī (d. 314/926)

<sup>134</sup> What is survived from his *Tafsīr* covers only from the beginning of the Qur'ān till sūrat 18.

<sup>135</sup> Muḥammad Dashtī Mentions a *Tafsīr* for `Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 307/919) which seems to be the same person.

51. *al-Insāf fī al-Imāmah* by Ibn Qubbah al-Rādī (d. 319/931)
52. *al-Insāf* by Abū al-Qāsim `Abdallāh ibn Aḥad ibn Maḥmūd ibn Ka`bī al-Balkhī (d. 319/931)
53. *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 319/931)
54. Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Durayd al-Azdī (d. 321/993) quoted some utterances of `Alī in his:
  - a. *al-Jamharah fī al-Lughah*
  - b. *al-Ishtiḳāq*
  - c. *al-Mujtanī*
  - d. *al-Mu'talaf wa al-Mukhtalaf*

55. Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥusayn `Alī ibn Shu`bah al-Ḥarrānī al-Ḥalabī (d. 322/934) collected a significant number of `Alī's utterances in his *Tuhaf al-`Uqūl*. He writes, "If we desire to quote all his (Ali's) sermons and utterances only with regard to the unity of God, leaving all other themes beside, it would equal this very book."<sup>136</sup>

56. *al-Muwashshā*<sup>137</sup> by Abū Ṭayyib Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ishāq al-`Arabī known as al-Washshā' (d. 325/936)

57. Ibn `Abd Rabbih (d. 327-8/940-1) quotes `Alī's sayings in his famous book *al-`Iqd al-Farīd*. He gives more than 280 direct quotations from `Alī, most of which exist in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, and some of them are very long. Very often he reproduces the whole sermon.<sup>138</sup> The author does not quote from anyone as much as he quotes

<sup>136</sup> wāḥid Akhtar, *Early Shī'ite Imamiyyah Thinkers*, p. 149.

<sup>137</sup> This book is also known as *al-Zarf wa al-Zurafā'*.

<sup>138</sup> See Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd al-Farīd* (Cairo: Lijnat al-Ta'līf wa al-Tarjumah

from `Alī in his book.<sup>139</sup>

58. *al-Amālī* by Abū al-Qāsim `Abd al-Rahmān ibn Ishāq al-Ṣaymarī known to al-Zujājī (d. 329/940)

59. *al-wuzarā' wa al-Kutāb* by Muḥammad ibn `Abbās ibn `Abd al-Jahshyārī (Jahshayārī) (d. 331/942)

60. Ibn `Abd al-Birr (d. 338/949) in his following books:

a. *Jāmi' Bayān al-`Ilm*

b. *al-Mukhtaṣar*

61. *al-Ghaybah* by Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Nu'mānī, known to ibn Zaynab (d. 342/953)

62. *al-wuḥāt wa al-quḍāt* by Abū `Amr Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Kindī (d. 350/961)

63. Aḥmad ibn Sahl ibn Mutahhar al-Maqdisī (d. 355/965) in his books:

a. *al-Bad' wa al-Tārīkh*

b. *al-`Adad al-Qawwīyah*

64. Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 356/967) in his following books records some of `Alī's sayings:<sup>140</sup>

a. *al-Aghānī*

b. *Ḥulyat al-Awlīyā'*

c. *Maqātil al-Tālibīyīn*

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wa al-Nashr, 1953), v. 4, pp. 153-4.

<sup>139</sup> For his quotation from `Alī see the index in *ibid.*, v. 7, pp. 132-135.

<sup>140</sup> See Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, *Maqātil al-Tālibīyīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Ihyā', 1949). Compare, for instance, p. 38-9 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 96, letter. 47.



65. Abū `Alī Ismā`īl ibn Qāsim al-Qālī (d. 356/967) quotes utterances from `Alī in his following books:<sup>141</sup>

- a. *Kitāb al-Nawādir*
- b. *al-Amālī*
- c. *Dhayl al-Amālī*

66. Muḥammad ibn Nu`mān (d. 363/973), known to al-Qadī Nu`mān, in his following books quotes significantly from `Alī's sayings:

- a. *Uṣūl al-Madḥḥab*<sup>142</sup>
- b. *Da`ā'im al-Islām*
- c. *Ta'wīl al-Da`ā'im*

67. *Tahdhīb al-Lughah* by Muḥammad ibn Azhar al-Azharī (d. 370-2/980-2)

68. *Ḥjāz al-Qur'ān* by Abī Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭabīb al-Bāqilānī (d. 370/980)

69. *Kitāb al-Luma`* by Abū Naṣr `Abdallāh ibn `Alī al-Sarrāj (Sirāj) (d. 377/988).<sup>143</sup>

<sup>141</sup> See Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A`yān wa Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*, ed. Iḥsān `Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Sādīr, 1977), v. 1, p. 226; Abū `Alī al-Qālī, *al-Amālī* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1954), editor's introduction, p. (ayn); `Abd al-`Alī al-Wadghīrī, *Abū `Alī al-Qālī* (Rabat, Maroc: Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1983), pp. 155-171. Muḥammad Dashīf mentions another book for al-Qālī titled *Uṣūl al-Madḥḥab* (Ravish, p. 485) which is not mentioned by Wadghīrī, who seems to be using most of the available bio-bibliographical sources, nor is it mentioned by any of the sources above. For `Alī's sayings, compare, for instance, v. 2, p. 53 of *al-Amālī* with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 113, h. 191, and p. 50, kh: 145. For more sayings of `Alī, see *al-Amālī*, v.2, p. 67, 91, 98, 117, 143, 225, 254, 256; also see *Dhayl al-Amālī*, p. 55, 94, 110, 170, 173, 174, 195.

<sup>142</sup> This book is also known to *Iktishāf Uṣūl al-Madḥḥab*.

<sup>143</sup> See Ibn al-`Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī 1350 A.H.), v. 3, p. 91. This book was edited for the first time by Reynold Alleyne Nicholson and printed by E. J. Brill in London in 1914 and translated into German by Richard Gramlich (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1990). See Abū Naṣr `Abdallāh ibn `Alī al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma`*, ed. `Abd al-Ḥalīm Muḥammad & Ṭāhā `Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Hadīthah, 1960). Compare, for instance, p. 180 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 116, h: 260, no: 5; p. 180 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 107, h: 31; p. 179 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 15, kh: 1; p. 426

70. *al-Munīq* by Muḥammad ibn `Imrān al-Marzabānī (d. 377-84/987-94)<sup>144</sup>
71. *Ṭabaqāt al-Nahwīyīn* by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Zubaydī (d. 379/989)
72. *al-Taṣhīf wa al-Tahrīf* by Abū Aḥmad Ḥasan ibn `Abdallāh al-`Askarī, a teacher of al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 380/990)
73. Abū Ḥayyān `Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn `Abbās al-Tawhīdī (d. 380/990) quotes `Alī's sayings in his following books:
- a. *al-Baṣā'ir wa al-Dhakha'ir*
  - b. *al-Ṣadīq wa al-Ṣadaqaḥ*
  - c. *al-Amtā` wa al-Mu`ānasah*
  - d. *al-Hawāmil wa al-Shawāmil*
74. Muḥammad ibn Bābwayh al-Qummī (d. 381/992), known as al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, one of the most authoritative Shī`ī scholars quotes extensively from `Alī's sayings in his following books:
- a. *al-Tawhīd*
  - b. *Man Lā Yaḥduruh al-Faqīh*
  - c. *al-Amālī*
  - d. *Madīnat al-`Ilm*
  - e. *al-Khiṣāl*
  - f. *`Ilal al-Sharā'ī*
  - g. *Ma`ānī al-Akḥbār*

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with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 62, kh: 179; 458 with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 112, h: 147. See also p. 174, p. 181, 182, 456. Muḥammad Dashtī dates his death in the year 200 which seems to be a mistake.

<sup>144</sup> According to Ibn al-Nadīm, this book was more than 5000 leaves (10000 pages).

- h. *Ikmāl al-Dīn*
- i. *ʿUyūn Akhbār al-Ridā*
- j. *al-ʿIṭiqād*
- k. *Thawāb al-al-Aʿmāl*
- l. *Miṣbāḥ al-Mujtahid*
- m. *ʿIqāb al-Aʿmāl*
- n. *ʿUyūn al-Jawāhir*
- o. *Ṣifāt al-Shīʿah*

75. al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Saʿīd al-ʿAskarī (d. 382/992) in *al-Mawāʿiz wa al-Zawājir*.

76. *al-Masūn* by Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAskarī (d. 382/992)

77. *al-Zawājir wa al-Mawāʿiz* by Ibn Saʿīd al-ʿAskarī (d. 382/992)

78. *Qūt al-Qulūb* by Abī Ṭalīb Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAṭīyah al-Makkī (d. 382/992)

79. *al-Faraj Baʿd al-Shiddah* by Abū ʿAlī al-Musinn ibn Abī al-Qāsim al-Tannūkhī (d. 384/994)

80. *ʿAyn al-Adab wa al-Siyāsah* by Yahyā Ibn Hudhayl (d. 389/998)

81. Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Jawharī (d. 393/1002) in his book *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*

82. Abū Hilāl al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbdallāh al-ʿAskarī in his following books:

- a. *al-Awāʿil*
- b. *Jamharat al-Amthāl*
- c. *Dīwān al-Maʿānī*
- d. *al-Ṣināʾatayn*

83. *Tafsir al-Kabîr* by Ibn Hījām (d. fourth/tenth century)
84. *al-Fitan* (compiled 307/919) by Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Salīfī (d. fourth/tenth century)
85. Abū `Ubayd Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn `Ubayd al-`Abdī al-Hirawī (d. 401/1010) in his following books:
  - a. *al-Jam` Bayn al-Gharībayn*
  - b. *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*
86. *Hulyat al-Awliyā'* by Abū Na`īm `Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad al-Iṣbahānī (d. 402/1011).<sup>145</sup>
87. *Ḥjāz al-Qur'ān* by al-Bāqilānī (d. 403/1012)
88. *Rijāl al-Kashshī* by al-Kashshī (fourth/tenth century)
89. *al-Ja`fariyāt*<sup>146</sup> by Ismā`īl, the son of Mūsā ibn Ja`far, the seventh Shī`ī Imam.
90. In *al-Ṣaḥīfah*, a collection of sayings of `Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā the eighth Shī`ī imam, some sayings of `Alī are quoted.
91. *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī* by al-Shaykh Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Furāt. In this book, the author narrates `Alī's saying on the authority of Ḥusayn ibn Sa`īd al-Ahwāzī, a companion of `Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā the eighth Shī`ī imam.

<sup>145</sup> Scholars have different opinions about the date of his death. `Abd al-Zahrā al-Ḥusaynī regards the above date more likely to be the correct. See *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 1, p. 35. The reason that this book is placed among the earlier sources of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is that its author gives full chains of transmission for the traditions he quotes from `Alī. There are also some textual differences between their sayings of `Alī in this book and *Nahj al-Balāghah* suggesting that their authors used different sources for their *riwāyah*. Moreover, this book is so comprehensive that could not be compiled in two years; therefore, it is more likely to have been compiled before *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

<sup>146</sup> Also known as *al-Ash`athīyāt* for its being narrated on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ash`ath al-Kūfī.

### Earlier Manuscripts of Nahj al-Balāghah

In the second chapter, it was suggested that some changes have taken place in *Nahj al-Balāghah* after Radī's death (406/1015) or even after Ibn Abī al-Hadīd wrote his commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah* (460-466/1067-1073). We argued that such changes are very unlikely to happen. The followings are some of the earlier manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* which are available in the present time in some libraries. The first group of these manuscripts, which are being introduced for the first time by the present writer, are given a chronological order. The next group follows some of the manuscripts which has been introduced by `Abd al-Zahrā al-Husaynī, again are given a chronological order, but separated from those of the first ones.

1. A manuscript of *Nahj al-Balāghah* written before 529/1134 is being held in the library of Ayat Allāh Mar`ashī in Qum. In the first page of this copy, there is an authorization (*ijazah*) of Muṣaddiq ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Husayn to `Abd al-Muẓaffar Muḥammad ibn Zayn al-Dīn Abī al-`Izz Aḥmad ibn Jalāl al-Dīn Abī al-Muẓaffar Muḥammad ibn `Ubayd Allāh ibn Ja`far dated the month of Rajab 529/1124. There are also other notes indicating the names of people who possessed the book in certain dates.<sup>147</sup>

2. A copy of *Nahj al-Balāghah* belonging to fifth/11th century or early sixth/12th century is in the library of Sipahsālār in Tehran.<sup>148</sup>

3. A copy of *Nahj al-Balāghah* written in the six/12th century is in the library of

<sup>147</sup> Muhammad Mar`ashī & Aḥmad Husaynī, *Fihrist Nuskhehā-ye Khaṭṭī-e Kitābkhāneh-e Ayat Allāh Mar`ashī* (Qum: Chāp-e Mihr, 1975), no: 2310.

<sup>148</sup> Dīyā' al-Dīn Hadā'iq & Ibn Yūsuf Shīrāzī. *Fihrist Kitābkhāneh-e Sipahsālār* (Tehran: Chapkhanah-e Majlis, 1316-18), no: 803.

Mar`ashī.<sup>149</sup>

4. Another very old and precious copy, which probably was written in the six/12th century, is in the library of Mar`ashī.<sup>150</sup>

5. A copy of *Nahj al-Balāghah* exists in the library of Majlisi-e Shūrā-e Millī<sup>151</sup> in Tehran belonging to six/12th century.<sup>152</sup>

6. A copy of the commentary of Ibn Abī al-Hadīd on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which is very likely to be from the time of its author (six/12th century), is being held in the library of Astān Quds.<sup>153</sup>

7. Another copy in the library of Mar`ashī written in the year 649/1251 by Qawām al-Islām Abī Ishāq Ismā`īl ibn Ya`qūb ibn al-Jundī who also has written a commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>154</sup>

8. A very precious and old copy, in which there is an authorization by Yahyā ibn Sa`īd given to `Izz al-Dīn Hasan ibn Muḥammad ibn `Alī, known as al-Abrāz al-Ḥusaynī, dated 27<sup>th</sup> of Sha`bān of 655/1257. There is another *ijazah* given by Abū al-Faḍl al-Rāwandī to `Alā' al-Dīn ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Hasan. In this manuscript the chains of transmission through which al-Rāwandī receives the book and his authorization to Abū Ja`far Muḥammad ibn `Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Muḥammad, are recorded.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>149</sup> *Fihrist Mar`ashī*, no: 154.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, no: 3573.

<sup>151</sup> Now the libraries name is changed to the Kitābkhāneh-e Majlisi-e Shūrā-i Islāmī

<sup>152</sup> Kitābkhāneh-e Majlis-e Shūrā-e Millī, *Fihrist Kitābkhāneh-e Majlis-e Shūrā-e Millī* (Tehran: Chapkhanah-e Majlis, 1335), no:1235.

<sup>153</sup> Kitābkhāneh-e Astān Quds Raḍawī, *Fihrist Astān Quds Raḍawī*, (Mashhad: Chapkhanah-e Tūs, 1329 A.H.), no: 585.

<sup>154</sup> *Fihrist Mar`ashī*, no:55.

9. A copy of *Nahj al-Balāghah* dated 675/1276 is being held in the library of Āstān-i Quds in Mashhad.<sup>156</sup>

10. A copy of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is being held in the National Library of Malik in Mashhad transcribed by `Alī ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Hasan ibn Abī al-Faraj ibn Abī al-Barakāt dated 22nd of Sha`bān of 676/1277.<sup>157</sup>

11. A copy of the commentary of `Alī ibn Maytham al-Bahrānī dated Monday six of the month of Ramaḍān of 677/1278 is being held in the library of Majlis-e Shūrā in Tehran.<sup>158</sup>

12. A manuscript of *Nahj al-Balāghah* copied by Ḥasan ibn Mahdī al-`Alawī al-Ḥasanī al-Āmulī al-Bahlawī dated the month of Rabī` al-Awwal of 677/1278 exists in the library of Mar`ashī.<sup>159</sup>

13. A copy of *Nahj al-Balāghah* transcribed by Muḥammad ibn `Abd al-Karīm Abrqū`ī 687/1288 is being held in the library of Malik.<sup>160</sup>

14. A copy of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is in the library of Malik in Mashhad written by Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥasanī al-Shīrāzī in the Rabī` of 693/1293.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., no:5690.

<sup>156</sup> *Fihrist Āstān Quds Radawī*, no: 1862.

<sup>157</sup> Muḥammad Taqī Dānish Pazhūh & Īraj Afshār, *Fihrist Kitābhā-ye Khattī-e Kitābkhāneh-e Millī Malik* (Tehran: Kitābkhāneh-e, 1352 A.H), no: 153.

<sup>158</sup> *Fihrist Kitābkhāneh-e Majlis-e Shūrā-e Millī*, no: 1236.

<sup>159</sup> *Fihrist Mar`ashī*, no: 677.

<sup>160</sup> *Fihrist Malik*, no: 1176.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., no:179.

15. A copy written on Sunday the first of Sha`bān of 698/1298 in the library of Mar`ashī.<sup>162</sup>
16. A manuscript, probably written in the seventh/13th century, is in the library of Mar`ashī in Qum.<sup>163</sup>
17. A manuscript in the library of Mar`ashī probably copied in the 7th/13th century.<sup>164</sup>
18. A copy in the library of Malik written in 7th/13th century.<sup>165</sup>
19. A copy dated 701/1301 is in the library of Astān Quds<sup>166</sup>
20. A copy written by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ja`far ibn Aḥmad dated six of Raḥmān 703/1303 in Baḥrāyn is the library of Mar`ashī.<sup>167</sup>
21. A copy in the library of Astān Quds dated 729/1328.<sup>168</sup>
22. A manuscript of *Nahj al-Balāghah* copied in seventh of Rajab of 735/1332 by Ḥasan al-Shiblī is being held in the library of Köprülü in Istanbul.<sup>169</sup>
23. Another copy in the library of Astān Quds is written in 12th of Rabī` al-Thānī of 785/1383. This copy is transcribed by Abū al-Ḥasan Ḥaydar ibn Muḥammad ibn `Alī

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<sup>162</sup> *Fihrist Marashi*, no: 6851.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, no: 3670.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, no: 4745.

<sup>165</sup> *Fihrist Malik*, no: 1159.

<sup>166</sup> *Fihrist Astān Quds*, no: 1858.

<sup>167</sup> *Fihrist Mar`ashī*, no: 3741.

<sup>168</sup> *Fihrist Astān Quds*, no: 1860.

<sup>169</sup> See Ramazan Seşen and others, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Köprülü Library* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1986), v. 2, p. 122, no: 1407.



al-Ḥasanī from a copy belonging to the time of Raḍī.<sup>170</sup>

24. Another copy is in the library of Aṣṭān Quds dated Shawwāl of 816/1413 written by Naṣr ibn Muḥammad al-Zayn al-Zābīdī al-Shāfiʿī from a copy belonging to the time of Raḍī and compared with another copy.<sup>171</sup>

ʿAbd al-Zahrā al-Husaynī al-Khaṭīb also introduced some manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* existing in different libraries of Iraq and Iran with their descriptions. He mentions a manuscript in which there was an authorization written by al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, Raḍī's brother, to one of his pupils. This manuscript had been seen by ʿAbd al-Husayn al-Amīnī, the author of *al-Ghadīr*. al-Husaynī introduces other manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, written in the following years: 512/1118, 525/1130, 544/1149, 565/1169, 631/1233, 667/1278, 682/1283, 701/1301, 726/1325,<sup>172</sup> 704/1304, 767/1365, 792/1389, 875/1470.<sup>173</sup>

<sup>170</sup> *Fihrist Aṣṭān*, no: 766.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, no: 767.

<sup>172</sup> This copy was written by Yāqūt al-Muṭaṣṣim, the famous scholar who was greatly fond of his calligraphy.

<sup>173</sup> See al-Husaynī, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah*, v. 1, pp. 182-190.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis studies the question of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* by way of examining two major issues, compilation and composition.

As shown in the first and last chapters wherein earlier manuscripts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* were introduced, it seems that no additions to *Nahj al-Balāghah* could have been incorporated after its compilation was completed in the year 400/1008. This translates into the theory that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by a single author, who could either be Raḍī or his brother Murtaḍā.

The examination of the Shīʿī sources from the time of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* up to now shows their consensus about Raḍī's compilership. Sunnī sources could be divided into two categories in this respect. Modern Sunnī scholars usually credit Raḍī with *Nahj al-Balāghah*, yet often do not fail to mention their predecessors' suspicion about its compilation by one of the two brothers Raḍī or Murtaḍā. Earlier Sunnī sources which normally quote from al-Dhahabī and al-ʿAsqalānī, who also referred to Ibn Khallikān, give more credit to Murtaḍā's compilership and do not omit mentioning Raḍī as the second alternative. Orientalists, as discussed in the first chapter, give more weight to Sunnī sources for certain reasons which are suggested by this study. Nevertheless, if one is permitted to divide the orientalist sources into two categories of earlier and later, it is evident that later orientalist sources rely equally on Shīʿī sources as well as those of the Sunnīs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Later orientalist sources are generally more careful and scholarly in the study of Islam unlike some of the early scholars who produced superficial studies on Islam.

We argued in the closing section of the first chapter that for various reasons Shī'ī sources may be considered more reliable with respect to *Nahj al-Balāghah* as is true about Sunnī sources with regard to the issues of their concern. In this respect two distinguished Shī'ī scholars were mentioned, both of whom were very closely acquainted with Radī and Murtaḍā and both attribute *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Radī. First, al-Tūsī, who shared more than 28 years of academic life with Murtaḍā (408-436/1017-1044), five years as his colleague under al-Mufīd and about 23 years as his student and finally succeeded him as the leader of the Shī'ite community. Al-Tūsī does not mention *Nahj al-Balāghah* among Murtaḍā's books, rather he narrates *Nahj al-Balāghah* on Radī's authority. Secondly, al-Najāshī clearly states that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by Radī. One should be reminded that al-Najāshī was a colleague of Murtaḍā and Radī under the supervision of al-Mufīd and a very close friend of Murtaḍā until he died. He organized a memorial ceremony in his honour and was responsible for performing the last funeral rites. This is in addition to the many pieces of evidence given in this thesis from Radī's other books, whose authenticity is beyond reproach, including *Nahj al-Balāghah* itself in which Radī claimed *Nahj al-Balāghah* as a compilation of his. On the other hand, there is no mention of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in any of Murtaḍā's books of which more than forty books are available to us. Furthermore, among numerous commentators and translators there is no single scholar who doubts its compilation by Radī.

Radī's extreme interest in literature can also be added to the evidences that confirm the attribution of the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to him. Almost all of his books are related to literature in one way or another. Even his books on *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* are influenced by very strong literary coloration. One may include the difference between the method of writing of these two brothers to credit Radī with the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Murtaḍā's method is the method of *fuqahā'* and *muhaddithīn*, who most of the time include the chains of the transmission and give the

incident of a certain *riwāyah*, while like most of the *udabā'*, Radī does not give a chain of transmission for his narrations. These all leave little doubt that *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled by the younger brother Radī.

The second issue is a discussion on the question of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* aiming to identify its composer. This thesis in no way attempts to trace the content of the entire book back to 'Alī. It is rather an examination of the possibility of its fabrication by the compiler. It also shows that a great portion of *Nahj al-Balāghah* had already been recorded in earlier sources before Radī. Certainly, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to identify every single sentence of *Nahj al-Balāghah* or any other work in earlier sources for many reasons. Countless sources have been destroyed or lost during the course of history. Moreover, for many years the text of the traditions were narrated orally and it was by late second/eighth century that recording of the traditions in written form was seriously undertaken. Furthermore, the textual differences, as the compiler notes in his introduction to *Nahj al-Balāghah*, is one of the elements which would make it more difficult to identify the entire book in the earlier sources.

However, there are certain reliable methods by which some degree of confidence about the traditions can be obtained. Relying on oral narration of trusted people is one of these methods. This mode is employed to authenticate a great portion of Tabarī's history or Bukhārī's *ḥadīth* collection which cannot be found in any earlier written documents, but Muslims indeed rely on them.

In this thesis more than fifty authoritative historical sources, most of them by Sunnī writers, have been examined only for Radī's biography; among these sources there is not a single author who accuses Radī of being a liar, rather there is a

consensus among the Sunnī scholars about Raḍī's integrity.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps that is one of the reasons why some Sunnī writers attributed the composition of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to Murtaḍā because some of them have accused Murtaḍā of lying.<sup>3</sup>

This is in addition to the fact that historians inform us about written collections of `Alī's sayings some of which belong to a very early period. `Alī's sayings were also memorized by many people. Mas`ūdī who died only 13 years before Raḍī reports that more than 480 sermons of `Alī were memorized in his time.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Raḍī's recording 242 sermons in *Nahj al-Balāghah* does not seem to be outlandish.

There are other elements which produce confidence in *Nahj al-Balāghah's* authenticity. Raḍī had many enemies among both politicians including caliphs and rulers, and the scholars and poets. They would not have lost an opportunity to malign Raḍī if he had forged *Nahj al-Balāghah*. A simple friendship with al-Ṣābī, a non-Muslim scholar and poet, was a cause of objections levelled against Raḍī. Had the content of *Nahj al-Balāghah* not been found within the earlier sources of which a wide variety were available to all Raḍī's enemies, they would have immediately reacted against it. One should also be reminded that Raḍī's time was one of scholarly debate, in which theological and religious discussions were at its climax in the history of Muslim civilization. Despite this, there is no question raised for almost three centuries about the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* until the time of Ibn Khallikān.

One may include Raḍī's extreme attitude against the forgery into the evidence supporting the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. In his poetry, he criticized the

<sup>2</sup> Mubārak, a contemporary Sunnī scholar who studied Raḍī's life through a careful examination of his own writings, sees absolutely no way to accuse Raḍī of forgery even if *Nahj al-Balāghah* cannot be seen as `Alī's sayings.

<sup>3</sup> This, however, does not influence Murtaḍā's significance for the Shī'īs.

<sup>4</sup> `Alī ibn al-Husayn Mas`ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1958), v. 2, p. 413.

fabricators with very harsh words. To those who plagiarize his poetry by mixing them with their own, he says: "They are mixing the jewels and diamonds with worthless stones which can be easily differentiated." This statement also shows his ability to distinguish between the styles of writings of different people. Therefore, given the trustworthiness of Raḍī in his attribution of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to `Alī, along with the testimony of the scholars on Raḍī's distinctive ability in literature leads one to conclude that Raḍī was less likely to have made an error in his attribution of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to `Alī.

Furthermore, a false attribution to any of the Shī`ī imams as well as the prophets is considered an unpardonable sin according to the Shī`ī belief. Such an attribution would nullify one's prayers and fasts and with such repeated instances it would make him an unbeliever. Therefore, it seems very unlikely that Raḍī, who had been acclaimed as a righteous person with the consensus of the Sunnī and Shī`ī sources, would have committed such a sin. Once again, if he had done so, he would have been opposed by many concerned scholars even by the Shī`īs themselves who were familiar with `Alī's sayings. Certainly, his brother Murtadā as the greatest jurist of the time and the leader of the Shī`ite community was one of those scholars who would not have tolerated any forgery in `Alī's name.

A large portion of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is available in the works of the authoritative Sunnī and Shī`ī scholars who died before Raḍī. In the third chapter of this thesis, numerous sources were discussed in which parts of `Alī's discourses are recorded. Most of those sources exist either in printed form or are in manuscripts in different libraries. Moreover, as more research is being undertaken, additional sources are being discovered in which some parts of the content of *Nahj al-Balāghah* can be found. So far some scholars have undertaken painful researches in tracing the sermons of *Nahj al-Balāghah* back to earlier sources. Imtiyāz `Alī Khān `Arshī, an

Indian Sunnī scholar, was the first one to engage in scholarly research on *Nahj al-Balāghah* and was able to trace 106 sermons, 37 letters and 79 short sayings of *Nahj al-Balāghah* which cover about half of the book.

As discussed in the third chapter, many works by later scholars can be included into the sources of *Nahj al-Balāghah* due to aforementioned reasons suggesting that they have most probably taken `Alī's sayings from other sources than *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Given that some of these later sources can be included into the sources of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, there will remain only a very small part of *Nahj al-Balāghah* which cannot be found in other books. This method was followed by some other scholars, such as `Abd al-Zahrā al-Khaṭīb in his *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah* and later by Muhammad Dashtī. So far, al-Khaṭīb's work of four volumes stands as the best work in introducing the sources of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

It is significant, however, that no solid and elaborate argument has been advanced by the opponents of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, all the objections together cover a very small part of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, certainly less than ten percent, which does not seem adequate to doubt the authenticity of the entire book. Furthermore, proponents of the authenticity of the book have traced most of the controversial parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* back to the earlier sources and provided satisfactory arguments in response to the objections. All in all, the evidence shows that Radī is very unlikely to engage in any forgery in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

There remains one more problem. Given that Radī is exonerated from any forgery, what is the response if one argues that Shī'ī scholars before Radī fabricated the content of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and recorded them in their books or made some changes in `Alī's sayings? The main concern of this study is to follow the problem

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<sup>5</sup> Wadad al-Qadi's argument can be seen as an exception and this thesis has devoted a long section on her article.

until Raḍī's time; nevertheless, some arguments can be provided. First, proving this statement is as difficult as disproving it. Secondly, as it has been argued, Shī'īs, like other Muslims, do not permit any false attribution to their Imams. Attributing such sayings would not enhance `Alī's station in the sight of the Shī'īs as there is ample evidence available in other sources that elevates the position of `Alī!

Moreover, assuming that such a forgery has taken place, it must have been done only by one person because many experts in Arabic language and literature, such as Ibn Abī al-Hadīd, testify that there is an absolute consistency in *Nahj al-Balāghah*'s style and in the structure of the sentences, thought, and vocabulary. Moreover, *Nahj al-Balāghah* deals with a great variety of topics in a way that gives the impression to a reader that its composer was specialized in all of these subjects. Historical sources give no indication about such a person. Among the Shī'īs, Raḍī is considered to be the greatest man of letters, but not competent to compose a work like *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Dealing with this problem, Mubārak states that, "There is absolutely no way to deny the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Otherwise, it is a testimony of the fact that the Shī'ah had the greatest ability in creating the most eloquent literature."<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, there are many passages of *Nahj al-Balāghah* which are narrated through reliable Sunnī and Shī'ī sources whose attribution to `Alī cannot be denied by any means. Therefore, the consistency of these parts with other parts for which one cannot find enough reliable sources suggests that the entire book was composed by one person. As a result, with respect to the fact that a large portion of *Nahj al-Balāghah* can be found in the earlier sources before *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the suggestion is that Raḍī can be trusted about the other parts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* as well, unless there is evidence that those parts were not uttered by `Alī. Certainly, this does not

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<sup>6</sup> Zakī Mubārak, *Abqarīyat al-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Hijāzī, 1952), v. 1, p. 222.



mean that every single word of *Nahj al-Balāghah* was composed by `Alī or was actually written by him on paper. Such a statement cannot be made about any Sunnī or Shī`ī collection of *ḥadīth*. As mentioned, for a long time sayings of the Prophet and Shī`ī Imams were transmitted orally and very often the narrators were not careful about the exact wordings of the *ḥadīth*. For this reason, we can find a certain *ḥadīth* narrated in a variety of wordings with similar meanings and at times disparity in meanings. Thus, it appears that Radī was scrupulous in selecting the most reliable narrations of `Alī's sayings without giving the chains of transmissions. This is to suggest that *Nahj al-Balāghah* can be seen as a *ḥadīth* collection in which one may find `Alī's discourse falling into different *ḥadīth* categories. Therefore, it is entitled to be examined according to certain criteria used for the authenticity of *ḥadīth*. This also means that there are passages of *Nahj al-Balāghah* which fall in the category of *mutawātir* whose attribution to `Alī is unquestionable, while for the rest, one cannot deny their attribution, until there are enough evidence to do so.

It seems, however, that the accusation of the fabrication of *Nahj al-Balāghah* was motivated by religious reasons because the earliest arguments of the opponents are made by the Sunnīs with a great emphasis on the issue of the *ṣaḥābah*. This thesis cannot be seen as an attempt to resolve the deep rooted religious debate between the Shī`īs and the Sunnīs. Nor is it an attempt to assess which one of these parties represent a better understanding of Islam. Nevertheless, wherever it was relevant to resolving the problem of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, it has attempted to make a distinction, if any, between the understandings of these two parties. Sunnīs themselves also see the debate on *Nahj al-Balāghah* to be based on religious considerations. As Mubārak states, "If Shī`īs are accused of fabricating *Nahj al-Balāghah* for their religious fanaticism, why not say from our (Sunnī) side that the accusation of forgery itself is made by the Sunnīs for religious reasons."

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