

Analysis of the Exegetical and Ethical Narrations of Imam Reza (A.S.) as Transmitted by ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Hasani (rah)

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Ḥadrat ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Ḥasanī is counted among the esteemed companions of the Pure Imams (A.S.) who received the endorsement of Imam Ḥādī (A.S.). By the command of Imam Ḥādī (A.S.), he migrated to the city of Rayy, dedicated himself to the dissemination of the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.), and became a religious authority for the Shi‘a. The narrations of Ḥadrat ‘Abd al-‘Azīm are dispersed across various hadith collections, and certain works have addressed his life; however, to date, no independent study has been devoted to the narrations transmitted by him from Imam Reza(A.S.). This research has been conducted using a descriptive-analytical method and employing library resources and hadith software. The findings demonstrate that Ḥadrat ‘Abd al-‘Azīm was the first compiler of the sermons of Nahj al-Balāghah, and his book *Khutab Amīr al-Mu‘minīn (A.S.)* [The Sermons of the Commander of the Faithful (A.S.)] can be regarded as one of the significant sources of Sayyid al-Radī in the compilation of Nahj al-Balāghah. An examination of the ten identified narrations from Imam Reza(A.S.) transmitted through Ḥadrat ‘Abd al-‘Azīm indicates that these narrations predominantly contain exegetical themes (such as the meaning of «khatm» [seal], the interpretation of «nazar ilā Allāh» [looking toward God], the negation of anthropomorphism, and the correction of distorted hadīths) and ethical themes (such as the boundary between faith (īmān) and submission (islām), the relationship between gratitude to the creature and gratitude to God, and the connection between «causing harm to a saint (walī)» and «polytheism (shirk). It was also established that the primary intermediary transmitter of Ḥadrat ‘Abd al-‘Azīm in narrating from Imam Reza(A.S.) is Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Maḥmūd, and the other narrators in this network are also, for the most part, classified among the trustworthy (thiqāt). This study, while filling the gap of previous research concerning the narrations of ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Ḥasanī (RA) from Imam Reza(A.S.), demonstrates that he was a reliable and influential link in the chain of transmission of the exegetical and ethical legacy of Imam Reza(A.S.).

Keywords: Keywords: Imam Reza(A.S.), Exegetical Narration, ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Ḥasanī (RA), Hadith..

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1. Introduction

By the command of Imam Hādī (A.S.), ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Ḥasanī (may Allah’s mercy be upon him)-a highly esteemed and trusted companion of the Infallible Imams (A.S.)-migrated to the city of Ray. Despite the suffocating atmosphere of oppression under the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate, he dedicated himself to disseminating the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) and serving as a religious authority for the Shi‘a. Notwithstanding numerous studies on his personality and life, there exists a conspicuous lacuna regarding an independent, systematic, and analytical investigation of the exegetical and ethical narrations of Imam Reza (A.S.) transmitted through him. This research gap is significant for three reasons: first, the pivotal role of ‘Abd al-‘Azīm in transmitting the ḥadīth heritage of Imam Reza (A.S.); second, evidence pointing to his eminent bibliographic standing, including the possibility that he compiled the first collection of the sermons of Amīr al-Mu’minīn (A.S.); and third, the necessity of understanding the network of intermediary transmitters to assess the chain-based authenticity (ṣiḥḥat al-sanad) of these narrations.

2. Research Objectives

Aiming to fill this existing gap, this research seeks to answer three fundamental questions: Through which transmitters did ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Ḥasanī (rah) narrate from Imam Reza (A.S.)? What are the primary exegetical and ethical themes contained in these transmitted narrations?

Which of the works attributed to him hold greater significance in the history of Shi‘a ḥadīth, and what is the reason for this significance? The ultimate objective is to elucidate a facet of his esteemed standing and to re-evaluate his contribution to the codification and transmission of the teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.) in the two domains of exegesis (tafsīr) and ethics (akhlāq).

3. Methodology

This research is structured using a qualitative approach and employs a “descriptive-analytical” method. In the descriptive phase, all narrations transmitted by ‘Abd al-‘Azīm from Imam Reza (A.S.) were extracted by searching through classical Shi‘a ḥadīth sources (such as al-Kutub al-Arba‘ah and ḥadīth collections) and exegetical works (like Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī, Tafsīr al-Qummī, and al-Burhān),

utilizing specialized ḥadīth software. In the analytical phase, each narration was evaluated from both chain-based (sanad) and textual (matn) dimensions: regarding sanad, the status of transmitters was determined based on the opinions of early and later scholars of biographical evaluation (rijāl); regarding matn, exegetical and ethical concepts were analyzed using “content analysis” methods, and their connections to the Noble Qur’ān, narrations of the Infallibles (A.S.), and the views of prominent exegetes were explained. The theoretical framework of this research rests upon three concepts: “narration” (ḥadīth/riwāyah), “exegesis” (tafsīr), and “exegetical narration” (al-riwāyah al-tafsīriyyah).

4. Findings

4.1. Historical-Bibliographic Level: It was determined that ‘Abd al-‘Azīm (rah) was more than a mere transmitter; he was the first compiler of the book *Khuṭab Amīr al-Mu’minīn* (The Sermons of Amīr al-Mu’minīn). Given his chronological precedence over Sayyid al-Raḍī (rah), this book is highly likely one of the important sources in the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

4.2. Rijālī-Chain Based Level: Among the ten identified narrations, the primary intermediary transmitter between ‘Abd al-‘Azīm and Imam Reza (A.S.) is “Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Maḥmūd,” whose reliability (wathāqah) is recurrently confirmed (tawātur) in rijāl sources. Other transmitters in this network, such as ‘Abd al-Salām ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Harawī, are generally among the trustworthy. An important rijāl achievement is the identification of a possible scribal error (taṣḥīf) in the name “Maḥmūd ibn Abī Bilād” instead of “Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Bilād” based on rijāl evidence. Furthermore, the presence of transmitters like Sahl ibn Ziyād al-Ādamī in certain chains indicates the necessity of caution in the final authentication of these narrations.

4.3. Analytical-Content Level: Analysis of the ten narrations showed that they can be primarily categorized into two domains: “Exegesis” (Tafsir) and “Ethics” (Akhlaq). Exegetical Themes: Through ‘Abd al-‘Azīm, Imam Reza (A.S.) interpreted concepts such as “khatm” (sealing the hearts of disbelievers as a punishment, not compulsion/jabr) and “nazar ilā Allah” (meaning awaiting divine reward, not physical vision) with a transcendent (tanzīhī) approach. The peak of this perspective is seen in the seventh narration, where the Imam, by cursing “those who distort words from their places” (al-muḥarrifīn al-kalim ‘an mawāḍi‘ihi), rectifies the forged ḥadīth of “God’s descent to the heaven of this world” and substitutes it with the descent of an “angel.”

Ethical Themes: In ethics, a conceptual network comprising “Īmān” (faith), “Islām” (submission), and “Iḥsān” (benevolence/excellence) is delineated. The most prominent ethical concepts include the necessary correlation (talāzum) between “gratitude to the creature” and “gratitude to God,” and the equation of “annoying the Walī (divine guardian)” with “polytheism (shirk) to God” in the logic of divine forgiveness. Furthermore, the social responsibility of a Muslim is measured by the tangible criterion of “neighbor’s security,” and exiting this circle is met with exclusionary terms such as “laysa minnā” (he is not from us). Collectively, these narrations form a coherent intellectual system in which tawḥīd (monotheism) is the origin of transcendence (tanzīh), religiosity is a network of social responsibilities connected to wilāyah (divine authority), and historical truth is defined as part of the corpus of faith.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

This research, by filling the existing study gap, demonstrates that ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Ḥasanī (rah) was a reliable, influential link whose status exceeds that of a mere transmitter in the chain of transmission of the exegetical and ethical heritage of Imam Reza (A.S.). On the historical-bibliographic level, his role as the first compiler of the ‘Alawī sermons and the potential influence of this book on the compilation of Nahj al-Balāghah is prominent. On the rijāl level, alongside identifying the primary transmitters and emphasizing the prevailing reliability of the narrative network, the necessity of caution in specific cases (such as narrations via Sahl ibn Ziyād) is noted. Finally, the content analysis introduces the narrations of this transmission path as a rich source for understanding the transcendent, ethical, and social teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.). It is suggested that future research specifically examine the book Khuṭab Amīr al-Mu’minīn from the perspective of its alignment with Nahj al-Balāghah, and that other dimensions of ‘Abd al-‘Azīm’s narrations-including jurisprudential (fiqhī), theological (kalāmī), and historical aspects-be independently investigated.

Keywords: Imam Reza (A.S.), ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Ḥasanī (rah), Exegetical Narrations, Riḍawī Ethics, Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Maḥmūd, Khuṭab Amīr al-Mu’minīn, Transcendence (Tanzīh) and Negation of Anthropomorphism (Nafy al-Tashbīh).