

[Home](#) > [Sciences of Hadith](#) > [Meeting 10: The Science of Al-Rejaal 1](#) > [Methods of Authentications](#) > [General Authentications](#) > The Narrators of Kamelu-Ziaraat (Complete Visitations)

Meeting 10: The Science of Al-Rejaal 1

Meeting 10: The Science of Al-Rejaal 11

Definition

Rejaal literally is the plural form of Rajol (man), thus Rejaal means men. The Science of Al-Rejaal is defined: "A science in which the biography of narrators as to whether or not they meet the conditions of accepting their narrations."² The one who is an expert in the science of Rejaal is called 'Rejaali'.

The differences between Rejaal and other similar sciences

Muslim scholars study the life of narrators from four different perspectives:

1. As narrators of Hadith: the science of Rejaal
2. As compilers of the original or secondary books: The science of bibliography
3. As Sheikhs and teachers who have given authority to others for narrating a Hadith: the science of knowing the Sheikhs and teachers.
4. As scholars who enjoyed a spiritual, social, political and scholarly life: the science of biography

Significance

The following are some of the proofs for the significance of Rejaal.

Rational Proof

None of their authors have ever claimed that they have heard the Ahadith from the holy lips of any of the Ma'soomin. They have narrated the Ahadith through many narrators who have either heard the Ahadith from other narrators or they have copied the Ahadith from their books. The only natural method to gain

confidence for the authenticity of the narrations is to examine the truthfulness and justice of the narrators. The science of Rejaal undertakes this responsibility.

Narrative Proofs

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

1. ***"O you who believe! If a liar (or evil person) comes to you with any news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful for what you have done."*** [49:6]

2. It is repeatedly narrated from the Prophet (S) and many scholars have quoted it in the beginning of their books of Hadith: "Many people have fabricated words in my name, so whoever fabricates any Hadith on me (intentionally) then his seat shall be in the Fire." [3](#)

3. Imam Ali (a.s.) in a very comprehensive Hadith divided the narrators into four groups of which the narration of only one group can be accepted.[4](#) The categorisation of the Imam (a.s.) forms the foundation of the science of Rejaal.

4. Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: "Whoever believes in the religion of Allah without hearing it from a truthful person, Allah will afflict him with perplexity and confusion until the Day of Judgment." [5](#)

3. Practical life of the Ma'soomin

1. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) concerning Al-Moghira Ibn Sa'eed said: "Verily, Al-Moghira Ibn Sa'eed interpolated in the Hadith books of the companions of my father. He added things that my father had not said. Thus, fear Allah and do not accept anything (claimed to be) from us that contradicts the Words of our Lord and the Tradition of our Prophet Muhammad (S)." [6](#)

2. Younus Ibn Abdul-Rahman said: "I met many people in Iraq who had met Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (peace be upon them). I heard their narrations and copied their books. Then when I met Imam Redha (a.s.) I presented them to him. He denied many of those narrations and said: 'Surely, Abul-Khattab fabricated in the name of Imam Sadiq (a.s.). May the curse of Allah be upon Abul-Khattab and his followers who interpolated these narrations to this day in the books of the companions of Imam Sadiq (a.s.). Do not accept anything (claimed to be) from us against the Quran.'[7](#)

The First Four Books of Rejaal

Ekhtiyar Ma'refat Al-Rejaal (Selection of Knowing the science of Rejaal) known as

Rejaal Al-Kashi:

Abu Amr Muhammad Ibn Omar Al-Kashi [8](#) was one of the contemporaries of Kolayni; the author of Al-Kaafi. Al-Kashi had written a book in the science of Rejaal that according to Ibn Shahr Aashoub (died in 588 A.H) was called "Ma'refatul-Naqelin Anel A'emmata-Sadeqeen" (Knowing the narrators from the truthful Imams). [9](#)

The original copy of this book which apparently contained numerous mistakes is lost. However, the late Sheikh Tousi (died in 460 A.H) had a copy of the book. He has revised the book and called it 'Ekhtiyar Ma'refatul-Rejaal'. Thus, 'Rejaal Al-Kashi' which is available today is in fact the revised version of the original book.

Al-Fahrast (bibliography)

As mentioned earlier in this chapter bibliography is one of the close sciences to Rejaal. The most comprehensive ancient Shia book in bibliography is Al-Fahrast written by Sheikh Tousi (died in 460 A.H). He collected the names of more than nine hundred narrators who had compiled about two thousand books.

Al-Rejaal

The third most important book in Rejaal is also compiled by the late Sheikh Tousi. In this book, he has mentioned the life of more than 8900 narrators. He has classified them according to the Ma'soomin commencing from the Prophet Muhammad (S).

Rejaal Al-Najashi

The author of this book is Abul-Abbas Ahmad Ibn Ali Al-Najashi a contemporary of Sheikh Tousi and the offspring of Abdullah Al-Najashi. [10](#) Al-Najashi was indisputably one of the most celebrated experts in Rejaal. His book is as respected –in the science of Rejaal– as Al-Kaafi is in Hadith.

Methods of Authentications

The main concern of a Rejaali (an expert in Rejaal) is to find out how truthful a narrator is. There are two methods by which a narrator would be authenticated; specific authentications and general authentications.

Specific Authentications

The following are the main specific authentications:

1. Authentication by one of the Ma'soomin (a.s.): For instance Ali Ibn Al-Mosayyeb said: "I said to Imam

Redha (a.s.): My residence is far away (from you) and I cannot reach out to you for every matter. From whom should I learn my religion? The Imam replied: 'From Zakariya Ibn Adam Al-Qomi who is trustworthy in the matter of this world and the religion.'" [11](#)

2. Authentication by one of the ancient eminent scholars. For example, Sheikh Tousi or Kashi or Najashi and the like attest that a particular narrator is trustworthy.

3. Authentication by claiming unanimity. If any of the experts in Rejaal claims that there is unanimity on the trustworthiness of a narrator, others regard him trustworthy. For instance, the late Sayyed Ibn Tawous claimed unanimity on the authenticity of Ibrahim Ibn Hashim; the father of Ali Ibn Ibrahim Al-Qomi. [12](#)

General Authentications

As-Hab Ejma' (the Unanimous Group)

Obviously, the narrators and the companions of the Imams (a.s.) were not all in the same educational and piety levels. Some were more learned and pious than others. Amongst all the narrators there are 18 people [13](#) who enjoyed the highest level of knowledge and trustworthiness and hence the scholars by and large number, accept their narrations without any verification.

These eminent narrators are called 'As-Habul-Ejma' which means those on whose trustworthiness the scholars are unanimous. The Late Kashi was the first scholar who claimed this authentication. In three different chapters of his book (which was revised by Sheikh Tousi) he attested this unanimity. According to Kashi they are:

1. From the companions of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (a.s.): Zorarah, Ma'rouf Ibn Kharrbouz, Borayd, Abu-Baseer Al-Asadi (or Moradi), Fodhayl Ibn Yasaar, and Muhammad Ibn Muslim. The most learned of all of them was Zorarah.

2. From the companions of Imam Sadiq (a.s.): Jamil Ibn Darraj, Abdullah Ibn Moskan, Abdullah Ibn Bokair, Hammad Ibn Eisa, Hammad Ibn Othman and Aban Ibn Othman. The most learned of this group was Jamil Ibn Darraj.

3. From the companions of Imam Kadhém and Imam Redha (a.s.): Younus Ibn Abdul-Rahman, Safwan Ibn Yahya known as Bayya'u Saberi (the seller of fine clothes), Muhammad Ibn Abi Omair, Abdullah Ibn Al-Moghaira, Al-Hasan Ibn Mahboub, Al-Hasan Ibn Ali Ibn Fadhaal and Fodhala Ibn Ayyoub. The most learned of the group were Younus Ibn Abdul-Rahman and Safwan Ibn Yahya.

Majority of scholars are of the opinion that if the narrators of a Hadith to any of the above named people were all trustworthy, the rest of the Esnad does not need any verification.

Mashayekh Theqat (the certifying Sheikhs)

The title Sheikh in the old days was a highly respectable title used only for senior scholars who were in the position of authorising their chosen students to narrate a Hadith. Mashayekh Theqat means certain Sheikhs who were authorised to authenticate others. Muhammad Ibn Omair, Safwan Ibn Yahya and Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abi Nasr Al-Bazanti are amongst the best celebrated certifying Sheikhs. In general, the scholars accept their narrations even if they did not mention the names of those from whom they have narrated.

The Narrators of Kamelu-Ziaraat (Complete Visitations)

Another example of general authentication is related to the narrators whose names are mentioned in the book of Kamelu-Ziaraat compiled by the Late Sheikh Jafar Ibn Muhammad known as Ibn Qulawayh (died in 367 or 369 AH). He was one of the most renowned and celebrated Shia jurists in the 4th century. His book has always been considered one of the main sources of Hadith for the coming scholars after him.

The author has testified in the introduction of his book that he has compiled his book by quoting “from those reliable narrators from among our narrators, may God include his Mercy upon them.” Similar to other methods of authentications accepting or rejecting this principle would include or exclude hundreds of Ahadith.

- [1.](#) On this science I am immensely indebted to my expert teacher the great Ayatollah Sayyed Musa Shobair Zanjani
- [2.](#) Sobhani: Kolliyatun Fi 'Elme-Rejaal, p.9
- [3.](#) In lesson 8 we mentioned the references of the Hadith
- [4.](#) Al-Kolayni: Al-Kaafi 1:62-64 We quoted the Hadith in lesson 4
- [5.](#) Al-Horr al-Ameli: Wasa'elu-Shi'a 27:75
- [6.](#) Rejaal al-Kashi, p. 195
- [7.](#) Ibid
- [8.](#) Kash is a village in Gorgan province-Iran or in Samargand Province-Uzbekistan
- [9.](#) Ma'alemul-Olama' p.91
- [10.](#) Abdullah al-Najashi was the governor of the Ahwaz Province-Iran. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) wrote a letter to him recommending him to 'Make your brother Happy and God will make you happy'. He kissed the letter of the Imam and acted upon it. You may site the full story in al-Kaafi 2: 190
- [11.](#) Rejaal al-Kashi, p.496
- [12.](#) Sobhani: Kolliyyat, p. 163
- [13.](#) There is a little disagreement about the number of the group. However, the number and the names mentioned in the text is according to the majority of scholars especially Kashi

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