An Analysis of ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī's Approach to Shiite and Sunni Exegetical Hadiths in *al-Mīzān*

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Abstract

A review of Quranic exegeses reveals that exegetes of the Quran have taken a prudent moderate path in relying on hadiths (the sayings of Prophet Muḥammad and Shiite Imams) concerning Quranic exegesis (or exegetical hadiths). ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī (1904-1981) is a Quranic exegete who attach particular importance to exegetical narrations, although he did not believe in an unqualified validity of khabar al-wāḥid (non-frequently transmitted: a hadith the number of whose transmitters is not enough to yield certainty). He argues that in Quranic exegesis, we must take account of the relevant hadiths. Ṭabāṭabāʾī's citation of hadiths in his exegesis of Quranic verses suggests that he assigns a role to such hadiths in understanding verses. In this article, I argue that Ṭabāṭabāʾī only endorses the hadiths that are in line with the content or spirit of the verses. ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī evaluated the accuracy of exegetical hadiths by considering possible deficiencies such as their inconsistencies, disconnections, inaccuracies, fabrication, forgery, Israelites, conflicts, as well as their incompatibility with the Quran, Sunna, reason, science, and history. Then, he drew on them to gain a better understanding of the verses.

Keywords: ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān*, exegetical hadiths.

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Introduction

Hadiths explicitly related to the Quran are divided into two general groups. Some are descriptions of the Quran and its position, the rules of understanding the Qurʾān, Quranic sciences, the virtues of Quranic verses, etc. which can be named "hadith-based Quranology". The second group are hadiths that explain the meaning of a verse or lay the groundwork for understanding it, which might be called "exegetical hadiths" (Mahrīzī 2010, 3; Khāmigar 2011, 82).

Therefore, Shiite exegetical hadiths can be considered as hadiths involving part of a Quranic verse, or referring to a verse and explaining its meaning or laying the groundwork for understanding it. This is the definition implicitly suggested by authors of hadith-based Quranic exegeses. A similar definition can be gleaned from Quranic exegeses by al-ʿAyyāshī, al-Qummī, al-Furāt al-Kūfī, *al-Burhān*, and *Nūr al-thaqalayn* (Mahrīzī 2010, 7). Of course, both groups of hadiths, i.e., "hadith-based Quranology" and "exegetical hadiths," can be considered as subsets of hadith-based exegesis of the Quran.

Since hadith-based exegesis is a kind of exegetical method, which was there since the very first days of the revelation of the Qurʾān (Awsī 2002, 138), exegetical hadiths serve as the foundations of hadith-based exegesis.

The method of hadith-based exegesis amounts to the same things as Quranic exegesis through *Sunna* (verbal and non-verbal traditions of the Prophet and Shiite Imams). By "hadith" we mean the sayings, deeds, and endorsements by the Infallibles (that is, the Prophet and Shiite Imams). In particular, an exegetical hadith consists in words or deeds (e.g., the way in which they performed prayers) of the Infallibles (a) through which a Quranic verse might be interpreted (e.g., a verse concerning the prayer).

Moreover, there are cases in which a person's interpretation of a verse, or his action based on it, is endorsed by the Infallibles (a). That is, the Infallible (a) endorses it through his silence—that is, his refusal to protest. Accordingly, in hadith-based exegesis, the exegete uses the "Tradition" of the Prophet (s) and other Infallibles (a) to clarify the meanings and intentions of certain Quranic verses (see Riḍaʾī Iṣfahānī 2003, 112).

Ahl al-Bayt (i.e., the Household of the Prophet) interpreted the Quran based on their God-given knowledge. Their sayings and deeds are thus considered explicit sources for Quranic exegesis (Riḍaʾī Iṣfahānī 2003, 116). Accordingly, a hadith-based exegesis is the one that only involves the hadiths about Quranic verses, whether they provide interpretations or *taʾwīl*s (allegorical

interpretation) or non-interpretations or non-*taʾwīl*. In hadith-based exegesis, the author merely cites hadiths, without presenting his own interpretation (Ustādī 1963, 351).

Some scholars distinguished hadith-based interpretation from the *al-atharī* (roughly: textual) exegesis of the Quran. The word *athar* literally means a trace of everything (Farāhīdī 1989 8:236; Ibn al-Manẓūr 1984, 4:5). There is no consensus among scholars on how to define "*al-tafsīr al-atharī*." It has been defined as *mawqūf* (the sayings or actions of a *ṣaḥābī* or an immediate companion of the Prophet)*, maqṭūʿ* (the sayings, actions, or approvals of the Prophet)*, khabar* (report), *manqūlāt ṣaḥāba* (the companions' sayings), and any saying quoted about the interpretation of Quranic verses (Fīrūzābādī 1:12; Ḥāfiẓiyān Bābulī 1424 AH, 2:359).

In Sunni terminology, a Quranic exegesis based on hadiths from the Prophet's companions and followers (*tābiʿūn*; that is, companions of his companions) is called *al-tafsīr al-atharī* (Kafāfī and Sharīf, n.d., 157). *Al-tafsīr al-atharī* is also called *al-tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr, al-tafsīr riwāʾī* or *al-tafsīr al-manqūl (*in which the exegesis is predominantly derived from authentic sources, such as other Quranic verses, accurate hadiths (*ṣiḥāḥ*), or established Traditions)*, as opposed to *al-tafsīr bi-l-raʾy* (in which the exegesis is based partly or entirely on one's personal interpretation and opinions (Murādī 2005, 275).

Al-tafsīr bi-l-tābiʿīn and *atbāʿ bi-l-tābiʿīn* (the followers and their followers) are also derived from the companions of the Prophet (s). Exegeses provided by the companions were therefore the source of Sunni *al-tafsīr al-atharī* (Shākir 2003, 243).

Sunni scholars generally accept the sayings of Shiite companions as reliable sources of their Quranic exegesis, while Shiite exegetes do not accept them as an independent source (Shākir 2003, 53).

For Sunni scholars, *al-tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr* refers to the sayings of the Prophet (s) and the companions or followers regarding the intentions by Quranic verses. For example, ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm Zarqānī refers to *al-tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr* as what we have received from the Quran, the Tradition, or the sayings of the companions as explanations of what is intended by Quranic verses (Zarqānī, n.d., 1:480).

Al-tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr (exegesis by textual evidence) can be defined as an exegesis of Quranic verses in accordance with the Traditions of the Prophet (in both Shiite and Sunni denominations), the Tradition of the Shiite Imams (in Shiism), and the sayings and relevant deeds of the companions (in Sunnism) (Mahdawīrād 1382 Sh, 126; also see Rustamī 1380).

The present study aims to examine Ṭabāṭabāʾī's approach to exegetical hadiths. To do so, the place of these hadiths, their authenticity, as well as their possible deficiencies will be studied from Ṭabāṭabāʾī's point of view. Accordingly, this article seeks to answer the following questions: How did Ṭabāṭabāʾī approach and deal with the exegetical hadiths? How does Ṭabāṭabāʾī evaluate the deficiencies of exegetical hadiths be evaluated?

There is an extensive literature, particularly in Persian, concerning exegetical hadiths. I have examined the following articles to determine the role of such hadiths:

Diyārī Bīdgulī, Muḥammad Taqī. 2011. "The role and function of exegetical hadiths with special emphasis on the views of ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī." *Ḥadīth-pazhūhī* 3, no. 1 (Summer and Spring): 43-68.

Asʿadī, Muḥammad. 2013. "The methodology of exegetical hadiths: an explanation and investigation of ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī's viewpoint in dealing with hadith transmitters." *Qurʾān-shinākht*, 2 no. 12: 26-39.

Zāriʿī, ʿAbbās. 2016. "A study of ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī's principles regarding the use of the hadiths in the Quranic exegesis, *al-Mīzān*." *Pazhūhish-hāyi nahj al-balāgha* 14, no. 49 (Summer): 135-51.

1. Authenticity of Hadiths about Quranic Exegesis from ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī's Viewpoint

Scholars such as Ṭūsī, Shaʿrānī, and ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī believe that hadiths cannot be relied on in interpreting the Qurʾān. Ṭūsī tackles the issue in his discussion of the inauthenticity or invalidity of *al-khabar al-wāḥid* (non-frequently transmitted hadiths: a hadith that is not regarded as *mutawātir* [a frequently transmitted hadith]) in non-jurisprudential contexts. Unlike Sayyid Murtaḍā, he believes in the inauthenticity of non-frequently transmitted hadiths. However, he does not accept the inauthenticity of non-frequently transmitted hadiths in Quranic exegetical contexts, arguing that a non-frequently transmitted hadith is acceptable if it is supported by intellectual or religious evidence, but it is unacceptable if it does not meet this condition (Ṭūsī, n.d., 1:6). Shaʿrānī (see his preface to Kāshānī 1927, 1:31) believes that

just as non-frequently transmitted hadiths are not authentic about the words of Quran, they are not authentic about the meanings of the Quran.

This view has been attributed to ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī as well. Although Ṭabāṭabāʾī argues that it is possible to understand and interpret the meanings of the Quran without appealing to hadiths, he recognizes the significant role of hadiths in understanding Quranic verses and stories (see Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 5:336). For example, regarding the Quranic phrase "*Wa fār l-tanūr*" (the oven gushed) (Quran 11:40) and a hadith concerning it, Ṭabāṭabāʾī says:

> This hadith, part of which I quoted in length, had little to do with our interpretation. We just quoted it to show an instance of the many hadiths which have been cited in detail by Shiites and Sunnis and also to help the readers understand the stories of the given verses through hadiths. (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 10: 243)

In some cases, he says that we need hadiths and there are parts of the Quran which we cannot understand except by the hadiths (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 6:8, 9:89, 16:311).

Ṭabāṭabāʾī restricts the validity or authenticity of non-frequently transmitted hadiths—even those with reliable or sound chains of transmission—to establishment of Islamic judicial rulings (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 1:293, 2:378, 5: 291-92, 6:57, 9:211; also see Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1388 Sh, 87). Accordingly, he evaluates non-frequently transmitted hadiths—those about the issuance of which we are not *certain*, even if their chain of transmission is reliable—in terms of their agreement and disagreement with *prima facie* meanings and contexts of the relevant verses as well as the general principles extracted from the Quran. He rejects hadiths which he considers contrary to the *prima facie* meanings or contexts of the verses. ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī says that hadiths in which Quranic verses are interpreted do not count as authentic if they are non-frequently transmitted, except if they are in accordance with the content of the relevant verses. In such cases, they are valid as far as they agree with the contents of the verses. This is studied in principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). The idea here is that the judicial authenticity or validity is based on the judicial effects. However, non-judicial hadiths such as those about historical events and Quranic exegesis are not judicially valid or authentic. The same holds about rational validity: it does not seem rational to trust hadiths given possible fabrications, forgeries, and distortions, particularly in exegetical and historical hadiths, as confirmed by *al-Manār*, quoting Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal

as saying that "these hadiths are not authentic." Thus, hadiths are not deemed rationally valid unless their contents are consistent with *prima facie* meanings of Quranic verses.

On this account, those who dismiss non-jurisprudential hadiths as invalid should, first, see whether these hadiths agree or disagree with the Quran. If they the hadith is found in line with *prima facie* meanings of the Quran, then it can be accepted. Otherwise, it is totally rejected. The only criterion for the validity of a non-judicial hadith is whether it is compatible with the Quran. If it is not, it is not authentic even if its chain of transmission is reliable.

Many Quranic exegetes tend to evaluate the authenticity of hadiths without seeing whether they agree or disagree with the Quran. They consider the hadiths as authentic only if they have reliable chains of transmission. Then, they impose their meanings and implications on the Quran. In fact, they view the Quran as dependent on hadiths in its meanings. There is no evidence or reason to support this position, however (for further detail see Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 9:212).

Of course, some people hold that Ṭabāṭabāʾī's view of the inauthenticity of hadiths about Quranic Quran might be objectionable. They have presented arguments for their opinion (see Bābāʾī 1389 Sh, 2:271).

Accordingly, Ṭabāṭabāʾī neither rejects nor accepts the authenticity of hadiths in interpretation of the Quran. From his "hadith-based discussions" and his citation of hadiths throughout his *al-Mīzān* as part of his interpretation of Quranic verses, we can conclude that, in his view, hadiths and their authenticity should not oblige the exegete to firmly accept them.

2. Pathology of Exegetical Hadiths

2.1. Deficiencies of Exegetical Hadiths

There are many hadiths directly interpreting Quranic verses. According to ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī, the number of exegetical hadiths cited in Sunni sources is smaller than 250, many of which are unreliable and some are *munkar*; that is, their transmitters are accused of having made too many mistakes in their reports (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1388 Sh, 79). Among Shiite exegetical hadiths, ʿAyyāshī's exegesis is the only one that contains hadiths with chains of transmission. However, his student apparently omitted chains of transmission for the sake of brevity (ʿAqīqī Bakhshāyishī 2003, 114)

Therefore, exegetical hadiths can be evaluated and criticized. They cannot be accepted without taking account of criteria of the textual criticism (Miʿmārī

2005, 145). Moreover, ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī argues that Shiite scholars and exegetes such as al-Furāt al-Kūfī, Abu Ḥamza al-Thumālī, al-ʿAyyāshī, ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, and al-Nuʿmānī, just like their successors, have cited the relevant hadiths without mentioning their chains of transmission (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1388 Sh, 75-76).

Shiite Imams (a) frequently asserted that chains of transmitters should be evaluated (Kulaynī 1986, 1:52; ʿĀmilī 1988, 27:81). In fact, the authenticity of reports of the sayings of the Infallibles (s) depends on their chains of transmitters—whether they were reliable or not. Some exegetical hadiths from the Prophet (s), his Household (s), and his companions suffer from distortions both in terms of their chains of transmission and their texts. It is necessary to identify and refine such hadiths (Maʿrifat 1998, 1:76; 2:31).

In addition, Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī holds that the elimination of chains of transmission of hadiths as a major deficiency that has undermined Sunni hadith-based exegesis of the Quran. He argues that carelessness on the part of later scholars (namely, shortening the chains of transmission and their failure to attribute the sayings to their transmitters) led to inconsistencies in hadiths and the loss of their original validity (Dhahabī 1961, 1:201). In a similar vein, ibn Ḥanbal believed that exegetical hadiths, those involving predictions, and those about wars were not authentic (Muqātil ibn Sulaymān 2002, 5:239). However, citing other Sunni scholars, Suyūṭī argues that Ibn Ḥanbal had in mind the majority of exegetical hadiths that have been cited without chains of transmission, and refers to very few *marfūʿ* hadiths (Suyūṭī 1998, 768).

Obviously, exegetes who attempt to interpret Quranic verses and have before them a large number of exegetical hadiths should be alert to possible deficiencies and distortions of those hadiths in order to present a flawless exegesis and avoid personal interpretations. However, at this stage, the first method that comes to mind for refining exegetical hadiths is to refine and examine their chains of transmission. It should be noted that evaluation of chains of transmission is effective in the jurisprudential hadiths, but regarding Quranic exegesis, it is not valid for two reasons.

First, many exegetical hadiths at our disposal today lack chains of transmission, which renders them invalid. Second, since many of these hadiths are non-frequently transmitted, without being accompanied by conclusive supporting evidence, they are suspicious because, at least for some scholars

(such as Ṭūsī and Ṭabāṭabāʾī), such hadiths are not valid unless one is fully convinced that they are authentic, whether in the principles of religious beliefs, history, moral virtues, or the like. They are only authentic in the case of jurisprudence, where partial confidence about the authenticity of the relevant hadiths is sufficient (see Ṭūsī, n.d., 1:6; Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417, 3:84; 8:141; 9:211; 10:366; 14:124; Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1388 Sh, 87). When it comes to religious beliefs, there is no way to rely on non-frequently transmitted hadiths (for further detail, see Rustamī 1961, 323).

Authentic Shiite exegeses of the Quran, including hadith-based exegeses, have drawn on hadiths that seem to be *mursal* (i.e., hadiths without chains of transmission) as confirmatory or incremental evidence for already established views (Miʿmārī 2011, 48). The first step in examining exegetical hadiths is to analyze the degree of their validity and their chain of transmission, as well as the degree of the credibility of their narrators. However, since most of these hadiths are *mursal* and sometimes their chains of transmission are unreliable, some scholars do not treat them as valid and significant (Ṭūsī, n.d., 1:37).

That said, there are others who do not resist this objection because they adopt a different definition of exegetical hadiths. In their view, any hadith that helps us to understand the Quran in one way or other counts as an exegetical hadith. On this definition, most hadiths in sources of hadiths will turn out to be exegetical (Miʿmārī 2011, 50).

In addition, some Quranic exegetes, such as ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī, despite their careful examinations of chains of transmission of exegetical hadiths, have made great efforts to study and review their texts as well. Indeed, they never left out a hadith only because its chain of transmission was unreliable or otherwise flawed. They believe that the unreliability of a hadith, or any evidence for that matter, cannot be a reason to reject it as long as its text does not contradict reason and other reliable hadiths (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 1:293; 14:69).

In considering many exegetical hadiths, Ṭabāṭabāʾī takes account of the unreliability of their chains of transmission and transmitters, even if they were cited in both Shia and Sunni sources and were transmitted frequently. For example, as to the cloth that Prophet Joseph sent to his father Prophet Jacob, Ṭabāṭabāʾī writes:

> It has been mentioned in several hadiths from Shia and Sunni chains that the shirt Joseph sent to Jacob had come down from Paradise, and that it was indeed Abraham's shirt, which Gabriel had brought to him

when he was thrown into the fire, so he wore it and it was cool and peaceful on him, then Isaac inherited it, then Jacob inherited it, then Jacob made it an amulet and hung it on when Joseph was born. It was on his neck until Joseph took him out of the charm, so the wind of Paradise blew up, and Jacob found it. Likewise, other hadiths from Shias and Sunnis include a book written by Jacob to Joseph, who considers him the favorite of Pharaoh's family, to extract Benjamin, in which he mentions that he is the son of Isaac, the sacrificed for God, whom God commanded his grandfather Abraham to slaughter, then he ransomed him with a great sacrifice. In an earlier part of the book, it reads that the sacrificed was Ishmael, rather than Isaac. (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 11:251-52; also see 1:224; 5:195; 7:68, 14:8; 11: 254; 13:71; 16: 147; 19: 246; 20: 308).

2.2. Contradiction and Incompatibility of the Text with the Given Components

A major principle to be considered in reviewing the text of a hadith is whether it is compatible or incompatible with religion. A hadith should not be incompatible with the Quran, the Tradition, and reliable accurate (ṣaḥīḥ) hadiths—the main sources of religion (Nafīsī 2011, 20-26) In other words, a hadith should not be in conflict with the general spirit of the Quran and presumptions of other reliable hadiths. Therefore, evaluating exegetical hadiths against the Quran, the Tradition, and reliable hadiths leads to a distinction between accurate and inaccurate hadiths.

There are different ways in which exegetical hadiths might be incompatible with the Quran, including their contradiction with the general Quranic doctrines, their contradiction with the style of the Quran, their contradiction with the content of other verses, their conflict with the context of the verse, and their contradiction with the structure of the relevant sura. ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī has considered these elements because of his particular exegetical method, namely, interpretation of the Quran with the Quran (Khāmigar 2011, 97-98).

Shiite exegetes have paid special attention to this issue. Of course, in existing hadith-based exegeses, there are traditions contrary to the text of the Quran, and other primary sources of religion. For example, narrations such as the story of Prophet David and Uriah and the improper accusation against David are incompatible with the infallibility of prophets (Qummī 1367 Sh, 2:229). Fayḍ al-Kāshānī holds that these narrations are contrary to the spirit of religion (Fayḍ al-Kāshānī 1994, 4:295; also see Baḥrānī 1995, 4:646; Ḥuwayzī 2003, 4:445).

The story of Moses's request to see [the glory of] God and that Moses asked every thunder and lightning that passed over him: Are you, my God? (ʿAyyāshī 1380, 2:26; Baḥrānī 1995, 2:584; Qummī Mashhadī 1989, 5:174) is considered contrary to the principles of religion and the infallibility of the prophets (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 8:259). Moreover, the story of Hārūt and Mārūt and the star of Venus, and allegations of adultery and wine drinking against both of them (Ḥuwayzī 2003, 1:111) is strongly rejected by Fayḍ Kāshānī in his *al-Ṣāfī* because it is contrary to verses of the Quran and the principle governing the religion (Fayḍ Kāshānī 1994, 1:173; also see ʿAskarī 1988, 475; Qummī al-Mashhadī 1989, 2:104).

ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī views these hadiths in line with Jewish narrations (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 1:239). Ṭūsī also considers the hadiths about wrongdoings of the two angels as non-frequently transmitted hadiths, which cannot be taken seriously and are incompatible with the infallibility of the prophets (Ṭūsī, n.d., 1:384). Moreover, the story of Joseph's desire for Zuleikha, which has been narrated in most exegeses, is cited in ʿAllāma Majlisī's *Biḥār al-anwār* as quoted from *Tafsīr al-Qummī* from Abu-l-Jārūd and *Tafsīr al-ʿAyyāshī* with a *mursal* chain of transmission. The validity of *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, particularly the hadiths it transmits from Abu-l-Jārūd, has been established by Shiite scholars (Majlisī 1982, 12:224, 300, and 301; ʿAyyāshī 1961, 2:173-74).

Ṭūsī believes that transmitters of these hadiths were uninformed, holding that if such hadiths were reliable, then Joseph would be a traitor (Ṭūsī, n.d., 6:123). ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī also considers these hadiths as fabrications because of their contradiction with other hadiths issued by Shiite Imams concerning the infallibility of the prophets (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 11:167).

On many other occasions in his exegesis, Ṭabāṭabāʾī has criticized and dismissed Shiite exegetical hadiths, particularly *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, which Ṭabāṭabāʾī saw as inconsistent with the *prima facie* implications of other Quranic verses and hadiths (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 5:320; 8:232; 10:307; 11:183, 332; 12:222; 13:125; 14:106; 18:318; 19:182; 16:143; 19:246; 20:101). Other scholars also have criticized such hadiths and tried to refine them. Al-Qummī Mashhadī, al-Ḥuwayzī, and al-Baḥrānī are among hadith-based exegetes of the Quran, who have been very careful in their citation of exegetical hadiths (Mahdawīrād 2003, 41).

It should be noted that Ṭabāṭabāʾī has criticized the incompatibility of texts of hadiths with established religious doctrines in one way or another, and, in

some cases, he dismisses such hadiths as contrary to the Quran (see Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 4:381; 17:39; 18:271; 20:203-4, 329).

In Ṭabāṭabāʾī's view, it is also essential to take account of reason or rational principles in the study of hadiths (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 3:268; 4:382, 383; 5:473; 7:323; 10:471; 17:564). The contradiction with Shiite theological views and principles is another criterion deployed by Ṭabāṭabāʾī in his assessment of exegetical hadiths (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 4:133; 13:338; 14:73, 379; 20:110). Another criterion is the compatibility or incompatibility of hadith with concrete evidence from history (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 4:133; 13:338; 14:73, 379; 20:110). Contradiction with human sciences is also another factor that Ṭabāṭabāʾī puts into consideration when examining exegetical hadiths (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 18:512).

3.2. Hadith Forgery

It is widely acknowledged that forgery often occurs in exegetical hadiths (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 135). That is why ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī dismisses certain hadiths concerning history and Quranic exegesis as rationally inauthentic or unpalatable (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 9:211). A hadith fabricated by a transmitter and falsely attributed to the Prophet (s) is called *al-mawḍūʿ* (Ḥāfiẓiyān Bābulī 1424 AH, 1:131).

Forgery is sometimes revealed through the transmitter's confession and sometimes by external evidence (Mudīr Shānichī 2006, 191). In most cases, words or chains of transmission of such hadiths are fabricated by liars and forgers. When they are not able to manipulate chains of transmission by *tadlīs* (misrepresentation) and other forgery tools, they attempt to make up forged chains of transmission that are purportedly connected to the Prophet (s). Then they attribute aphorisms or proverbs or the like to the Prophet (Ṣaliḥ 1956, 196).

ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī believes that the contradiction between the sayings of the Prophet's companions and their followers and between the hadiths implies that there is a large amount of forgery in exegetical hadiths. He believes that a careful reflection of exegetical hadiths leaves no doubt that there are a lot of forged hadiths of this sort. Contradictory sayings are attributed to one and the same companion or follower. Undeniably false stories and anecdotes are prevalent among these hadiths. There are stories about occasions of revelation of Quranic verses, as well as *al-nāsikh* (abrogating verses) and *al-mansūkh* (abrogated verses), which are not consistent with contexts of the relevant. Such hadiths are too many to be neglected (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1388 Sh, 72-73).

In his exegesis of the story of the Companions of the Cave, ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī explains the main reasons for the conflicts within the relevant hadiths. In addition to forgery, he notes two things: first, the story has received a great deal of attention from the "People of the Book"; and that "Muslims" exaggerated in adopting and spreading the narrations. This is particularly the case with the Prophet's companions and their followers who learned about the past from a group of newly convert Muslim scholars with whom they had conversations and interactions. They treated this group of narrations similarly to hadiths transmitted from the Prophet (s).

Second, in narrating its stories, the Holy Quran just presents a selection of significant points in stating its purpose, without going into all the details since the Book of God is not a book of history or stories, but rather a book of guidance, unlike the stories of the "People of the Book" which always contain details and pointless elaborations.

In order to fill out the gaps in Quranic stories, early exegetes added invalid hadiths to Quranic verses. The differing opinions in citing such hadiths "led to what we see now" (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 13:291-92). In his description of many hadiths, Ṭabāṭabāʾī mentions that they are forged and made up (for example, see Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 1:293; 3:240; 9:211; 12:108; 20:70).

4.2. Irregularities in Hadiths

Another reason to reject a hadith consists in irregularities in its text, where they are caused by a host of factors, such as the ban on compiling hadiths in the early Islamic period, *taqiyya* (dissimulation), *idrāj* (gradation), failure to record the transmitter's words, *taqṭīʿ* (fragmentation), and rephrasing the words of the Prophet and Shiite Imams (Mīr Jalīlī 2009, 130-35).

The irregularity in the text or meaning of a hadith means there is a contradiction in it, or the transmitter has stated the story incompletely or has not taken care of its prerequisites (Khāmigar 1390, 92; Farāsatkhāh, 1992: 47).

There are sayings of Shiite Imams (a) according to which hadiths containing irregularities should be dismissed (see Ibn Bābawayh 1942, 182; Majlisī 1982, 27: 87; 69: 40).

Throughout *al-Mīzān*, ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī has emphasized the irregularities of Shiite exegetical hadiths in *al-Kāfī, Tafsīr al-Qummī, Tafsīr al-ʿAyyāshī, Biḥār al-anwār*, and so on. There are strategies to remove irregularities. For example, one might refer to authentic and original versions of the relevant hadiths, and accordingly refine the given irregularities.

5.2. Alertness to Isrāʾīliyyāt

Undoubtedly, *Isrāʾīliyyāt* (literally: of Israelites; that is, narratives imported into Islamic texts from Christians, Jewish or other non-Islamic sources) have remarkably undermined the body of general and specific exegetical hadiths. Al-Dhahabī argues that the Prophet's companions were culprit for the introduction of *Isrāʾīliyyāt* into Islamic hadiths and Quranic exegesis, because when they heard a story in the Quran, they were curious to learn about all of its details. To do so, they asked the Jews who had newly converted to Islam and were aware of the relevant narratives. In this way, they gained a lot of information from them (Dhahabī 1961, 1:169-70).

Isrāʾīliyyāt pervade exegetical works, especially those related to stories and anecdotes much so that ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī, in rejecting some of the sayings of Quranic exegetes, writes: "Their extreme reliance on narrations has led them to accept *Isrāʾīliyyāt* and to trust forged hadiths that dirty hands ... imported in our hadiths" (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 11:134).

The Shia also suffered from *Isrāʾīlīyyāt* in their commentaries and books of narration. Relying on Sunni or even Shi'ite narrations, some authors of the narration books included *Isrāʾīlīyyāt* in their books and commentaries. Therefore, *Isrāʾīlīyyāt* also enters into Shi'ite commentaries. In addition, some Shi'ite narrators have also played a role in this regard (Sālihī Najafābādī 2003: 257-61; 321; 326-33).

Moreover, ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī believes that it is an undeniable fact that *Isrāʾīliyyāt* and forged hadiths influenced Shiite narratives. He writes: "The infiltration of *Isrāʾīliyyāt* and forgeries associated with them among our hadiths is not deniable, and there is no authenticity in a hadith in which the forgery is not identified" (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 12:112).

The existence of *Isrāʾīliyyāt* and forgery of hadiths have led ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī to mistrust hadiths concerning occasions of revelation of Quranic verses (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1388 Sh, 5135). Scholars have cited reasons for the origins of *Isrāʾīliyyāt*, including:

(A) Cultural impoverishment of the Arab society and the rich culture of Jews and Christians (Ibn Kathīr 1998, 1:443; Jaʿfariyān 2007, 1:150; Maʿrifat 1998, 2:71).

(B) The Quran's brevity in retelling stories (Dhahabī 1961, 1:169; Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 13:291).

(C) Coexistence and proximity of Muslims with Christians and Jews (Ibn Hishām, n.d., 1:300; Amīn 1969, 23).

(D) Long-lasting hatred and intense hostility of Jews against Muslims (ʿAskarī 1942, 6:112)

(E) Invitation of people by the Quran and the Prophet (s) to ask the "People of the Book"; that is, Jews and Christians (Quran 2:211; 3:93; 7:136; 10:94; 13:43; 17:101; 16:43; 21:77).

(F) The ban on transcription and compilation of hadiths in the early Islamic period (Ḥusaynī Jalālī 1992, 487; Subhānī 1998, 104).

(G) Elimination of chains of transmission and negligence in the transmission of hadiths (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1388 Sh, 72)

(H) Caliphates' support of storytellers (ʿAskarī 1988, 6:83; Maʿrifat 1419, 2:103, 108; for more, see Diyārī Bīdgulī 2011, 52-56).

Shiite exegetes such as ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī have avoided citing *Isrāʾīliyyāt*, except in few cases in which they have mentioned them to criticize them (see Diyārī Bīdgulī 2011, 57-58). He particularly criticizes hadiths transmitted from Kaʿb al-Aḥbār and other Jewish scholars who converted to Islam (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1417 AH, 1:140; 4:136; 5:321; 7:299; 8:378; 9:254; 11:64-71; 13:353; 17:194; 20:281).

Conclusion

ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī, a prominent Shiite exegete of the Quran, does not ignore hadiths concerned about the meanings of Quranic verses. Indeed, he draws on such hadiths in his interpretation of Quranic verses for a variety of purposes. Sometimes he draws on them to explain the verse in question and determine its meaning, to clarify the occasion of its revelation, to expel suspicions about the verse, and various other purposes. Ṭabāṭabāʾī's positive view of the role of exegetical hadiths in understanding Quranic verses is evidenced by his practice of citation of hadiths to explain the meanings of Quranic verses as well as his inclusion of sections in his exegesis devoted to hadith-based exegesis titled *A Narrative/Hadith-Based Discussion*. In the meantime, Ṭabāṭabāʾī, like other Quranic exegetes, comments on authenticity or inauthenticity of exegetical hadiths.

He believes that just as in the words of the Quran, non-frequently transmitted reports are not authentic and could not be relied on for recitation

or reading (*qirāʾa*) of the Quran, much less about its meaning. Ṭabāṭabāʾī reiterates this view throughout *al-Mīzān*. However, he believes that the meanings and purposes of the Holy Quran can be understood and explained even without the help of hadiths, although he accepts the role of hadiths in understanding Quranic verses and stories. Moreover, ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī does not consider non-frequently transmitted hadiths as authentic except in the case of jurisprudential rulings. Accordingly, he evaluates such hadiths—even if they have reliable chains of transmission—in terms of their compatibility with *prima facie* implications and contexts of the relevant verses and general principles extracted from the Quran. He rejects hadiths that contradict *prima facie* meanings or contexts of the verses. He only accepts those that are in line with the contents of Quranic verses, confirming or reinforcing them. Accordingly, he rejects unreliable or *mursal* hadiths or those violating valid criteria such as the Quran, the Tradition, authentic hadiths, reason, science, solid evidence from history, etc.

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