

***Isra'iliyyat* or Traditions of Jewish Origin: A Major Instance of Transferred Traditions**

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One of the recent inquiries in the field of hadith studies is the investigation of transferred traditions and their causes and impacts on Shi'i hadith circles. By exploring some traditions in the hadith collection of al-Shaykh al-Saduq and comparing the textual similarities and also the chain of transmitters, this research attempts to show that traditions of Jewish origin in the Shi'i hadith circles are often transferred traditions and more care and attention should be paid in transmitting and relying on them. However, such traditions in the Imami School are but few and had less chance of appearance, mainly because the Sunni transmitters of such traditions were critiqued and the Imams of the household of the Prophet, peace be upon them, stood against the transmission of these traditions and restrained their effect on the Shi'i scholars of hadith.

Keywords: transferred tradition, *Isra'iliyyat* (traditions of Jewish origin), consequences of the transferred traditions.

1. Introduction

1.1. Transferred Traditions

“Transferred traditions” is a recent term introduced by Allamah Askari in his invaluable book *Al-Quran al-karim wa riwayat al-madrasatayn* (The Quran and the Traditions of the Two Schools), where he argues that most of the corrupt traditions in the Imami circles of hadith are traditions transferred from the school of the Caliphs (Askari 1416 AH, 3:18). This term has been mentioned in some other researches, and some traditions have been studied in this light, such as the “Traditions of the Seven Letters” (Moaddab 1391, 11, 28). Although Allamah

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Askari discussed this term only in relation to those traditions transferred from the Sunnis to the Shi'is, yet this term can be extended to other Islamic sects and can be defined generally as those sayings and narrations which have been transferred from one religion or sect to another religion or sect and are accepted as true in some sources or cases. In this research, by the term "transferred traditions" is intended those traditions which have been transferred from the Sunnis to the Shi'is.

1.2. The *Israiliyyat* or Traditions of Jewish Origin

One of the reasons for confusing pure and impure interpretations and traditions in both schools is the intrusion of *Isra'iliyyat* or traditions of the Jewish origin. Although the term *Isra'iliyyat* apparently means stories derived from Jewish sources, yet for the interpreters and scholars of hadith it has a broader significance and includes all of the ancient myths which were introduced by classical scholars in exegesis, hadith, or history, whether their sources are Jewish, Christian, or other sources. Some interpreters and experts of hadith have an even broader definition for "*Isra'iliyyat*" as whatsoever has been introduced in exegesis and hadith by the enemies of Islam out of hostility and hatred (Ma'rifat 1385 Sh, 2:70; see also Dhahabi 1400 AH, 19-20). Researchers, especially in recent periods, have made many attempts to introduce and study the causes and motivations and also the impacts of the *Isra'iliyyat*.

Certain factors, such as communication with the People of the Book and their high status in learning, the common features of the Islamic texts and those of the People of the Book, and the curiosity of the Muslims are among the reasons for the intrusion of the *Isra'iliyyat* (Diyari 1383 Sh, 102ff.). However, it should be noted that the inattention of some Muslims to the orders and recommendations of the Prophet in respect of consulting the people of the Book, the disagreement with recording the Prophetic tradition, the simplicity of some companions in consulting the people of the Book and their narrations, especially in relation to the stories of the Quran, and the hostility of the Jews to the Muslims were the main causes that some of the exegeses and traditions are abounding with so many unpleasant materials that distinguishing the sound and the unsound has become too difficult even for the scholars. The period of the emergence and circulation of the *Isra'iliyyat* occurs at the end of the rule of Umar (Abu Shahba 1408 AH, 89). Following that period, these stories are conveyed

from the Companions to the Followers, and from the Followers to other generations to be recorded continually in the books of exegesis.

2. Rarity of *Isra'iliyyat* in the Shi'i Heritage

Because of certain reasons, the Imami exegetes and scholars of hadith were less affected by the *Isra'iliyyat* and were less suspected of transmitting such traditions. Considering these reasons could be helpful in this research.

2.1. The Different Sources of Exegesis and Hadith in the Two Schools

The first reason is related to the different sources of the Shi'i and Sunni exegesis. One of the main differences concerns the sayings of the Companions. The Sunnis on the basis of the principle of the Justice of the Companions (*'adalat al-sahaba*) hold that their sayings are as reliable as the Prophet's. Therefore, "the majority of the Sunnis maintain that the traditions transmitted correctly by any of the Companions are authentic and believe that examining the justice and reliability of the Companions is out of question" (Babaie 1385 Sh, 1:181). Accordingly, for the Sunnis, a tradition reported on the authority of one of the Companions is as reliable as a tradition reported directly from the Prophet; that is, the flaw of extending the Prophetic tradition to that reported only by the Companions and the followers (As'adi 1389 Sh, 1:169).

The Shi'i scholars claim that the traditions of the Companions is valid only after securing its authenticity and when they report the sayings and traditions of the Infallibles (Moaddab 1386 Sh, 55). The Shi'is, on the basis of their realistic observation of the life of the Companions, hold that they were not infallible and, therefore, their sayings and actions are not authoritative. Thus, one may observe that most of the Sunni hadith collections, for example, abound in traditions reported by a Companion like Abu Hurayra, the student of Ka'b al-Ahbar, who is suspected by the Sunni scholars of deception in hadith. He was with the Prophet only for twenty-one months, but has related more hadiths from the Prophet than all other Companions put together, and, therefore, the Sunnis mention that he is the first suspected narrator in Islam (Abu Riyya 1389 Sh, 278-91). On the other hand, Sunni canonical hadith collections contain almost nothing by 'Ali—peace be upon him—who was with the Prophet from the very beginning, and both schools unanimously agree on his justice, reliability, and great virtues.

In contrast, since in the Shi‘i sources of exegesis and hadith, the Prophet and the immaculate Imams are considered to be infallible in their sayings and actions, the Shi‘i traditions have been less affected by the *Isra’iliyyat* and corrupt traditions.

2.2. The Campaign of the Imams against the *Isra’iliyyat*

Besides what was said, the Imams paid much attention to the intrusion of the *Isra’iliyyat* and tried to show their inauthenticity through rational and scholarly criticisms and with reference to the verses of the holy Quran and Prophetic traditions. The Imams in their weighty critique have considered both the texts and the chains of transmission.

2.2.1. The Imams’ Criticism of the *Isra’iliyyat*’s Content

As an example of the critique and rejection of the *Isra’iliyyat* by the Imams is Imam al-Sadiq and Imam al-Rida’s criticism of a forged story about Harut and Marut. It is reported in *‘Uyun akhbar al-Rida* that Ma’mun asked Imam al-Rida—peace be upon him—about the tradition indicating that the planet Venus was originally a woman who led Harut and Marut to sin, and because of that she was transformed into a planet. The Imam answered: “They lie in saying that ... Indeed, the Exalted and Glorious God does not transform His enemies into bright lights, preserving them as long as the heavens and the earth endure” (Saduq 1378 Sh, 1:271-2). The Imams not only opposed openly the transmitters of these traditions and called them liars, but also critiqued such stories both rationally and with reference to Quranic verses.

2.2.2. The Imams’ Critique of the Chain of Transmission of the *Isra’iliyyat*

The scholars of hadith have introduced certain individuals as the main sources of the circulation of the *Isra’iliyyat*. Some of the most famous among them are Ka‘b al-Ahbar, Abu Hurayra, Abdullah ibn Salam, Abdullah ibn ‘Amr al-‘As, Tamim ibn Aws al-Dari, and Wahab ibn Munabbih (Marifat 1385 Sh, 2:84; see also Abu Shahba 1408 AH, 97-106; al-Dhahabi 1400 AH, 95-115; ‘Abd al-Rahman Rabi‘ 2009, 44ff.). The infallible Imams—peace be upon them—give their clear views in their critique of these individuals. For example, it is reported that Imam al-Baqir called Ka‘b al-Ahbar, who claimed that the Ka‘ba prostrated every morning before Jerusalem, a liar (Kulayni 1407 AH, 4:239-40).

Compare now these views with the position of a person like Ka‘b al-Ahbar in the sources of the Sunnis. The majority of the Sunni scholars

believe he is a trustworthy person and nothing can tarnish his justice or put into doubt his reliability (Dhahabi 1400 AH, 96). They also call Abu Hurayra the narrator of Islam (Abu Riyya n.d., 90). So, thanks to the guidance of the Imams and the efforts and care of the Shi'i scholars of hadith, the *Isra'iliyyat* could not find much opportunity to affect the Shi'i hadith.

3. The Incursion of the *Isra'iliyyat* into the Shi'i Legacy

Shi'i hadith and exegesis, however, are not free of the *Isra'iliyyat*. Najmi writes:

Unfortunately, some of these fake stories, which are much appealing and attractive to the common people, have been widely narrated by some narrators and story-tellers in the name of the stories of the Prophets, and have been collected in some cheap books of certain Shi'i authors, whose aim was to collect whatever is narrated, whether correct or incorrect, significant or insignificant. Some of these stories, such as the story of the Owner of the Two Hands (*Dhu al-Yadayn*) and the forgetfulness of the Prophet (*sahw al-Nabi*), found their way into certain sources, which attributed them to the Imams and established a chain of transmission for them in order to validate and authenticate these stories. (Najmi 1390, 395-396)

We attempt, however, to show the relative purity of the Shi'i hadith tradition from the *Isra'iliyyat* in comparison with the Sunni tradition. This is of course due to the two already mentioned reasons: questioning the absolute authority of the Companions' sayings and the struggle of the Imams against the *Isra'iliyyat*.

But what about the *Isra'iliyyat* in the Shi'i hadith collections and exegeses? The answer to this question is the main point in this research: the main traditions of Jewish origin in the Shi'i sources have been transferred from Sunni sources. Tracing an example of such traditions in Qur'anic commentaries such as *Majma' al-bayan* and *al-Tibyan*, we see that one of their important sources is al-Tabari's *Jami' al-bayan*, which is full of *Isra'iliyyat*. Moreover, examining the chains of transmission of these traditions indicates that many of them are narrated by people like Abu Hurayra and Tamim ibn Aws Dari. Experts of hadith and exegetes have sometimes cited these commentaries and in many cases without mentioning their chains of transmitters. Later, these Sunni reports entered Shi'i exegeses and were circulated as Shi'i hadith and

in the name of the people of the household of the Prophet, peace be upon them.

Here, we do not intend to have a thorough discussion and critique of the *Isra'iliyyat* and refer the reader to the detailed works written on this subject. Our aim in this article is to show that many of such traditions have been transferred from Sunni sources to Shi'i sources.

The other point which should be pointed out here is that although in the evaluation of the *Isra'iliyyat* their chains of transmission needs to be considered, we should know that, as attested by hadith scholars, the corrupters of hadith, including the Exaggerators (*Ghulat*), did their best to invent chains of transmission for the forged hadiths ('Askari 1416 AH, 3:254).

In the light of what has been said, we will have a look at some of the traditions mentioned in al-Saduq's work to show that they are invented and transferred from the Sunni sources to Shi'i collections.

4. A Case Study: The Traditions on the Causes of Earthquake in *Man la yahduruh al-faqih*

In his *Man la yahduruh al-faqih*, al-Shayk al-Saduq quotes three hadiths on the causes of earthquake:

4.1. The First Tradition

Al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, states, "When Dhu al-Qarnayn came to the dam, he crossed it and entered the darkness. He suddenly met an angel standing on a mountain, whose height was five hundred *dhira'*. The angel said to him, "O Dhu al-Qarnayn! Was there no other path behind you?" Dhu al-Qarnayn said, "Who are you?" The Angel answered, "I am one of the angels of the Merciful trusted with this mountain. Allah has created no other mountain but it has a vein connected to this mountain. When Allah the Exalted wants to strike a town with earthquake, He reveals that to me and I strike it with earthquake." However, earthquake could happen because of some other causes. (Saduq 1413 AH, 1:542)

This hadith has been mentioned on the authority of al-Saduq in many other hadith sources, such as *Tafsir al-wafi* (Fayd al-Kashani 1406 AH, 26:490), *Mir'at al-'uqul* (Majlisi 1404 AH, 25:367), *Bihar al-anwar* (Majlisi 1403 AH, 57:127), *Al-Nur al-mubin* (Jaza'iri 1404 AH, 143), *Rawdat al-wa'izin* (Fattal al-Naysaburi 1375 Sh, 1:46), *Tahdhib* (Tusi 1407 AH, 3:290), and *Tafsir al-Ayyashi* (Ayyashi 1380 Sh, 2:350).

In his *'Ilal al-shara'i'*, al-Saduq also mentions the same hadith with a disconnected chain of transmission: "I was informed of this hadith by 'Isa ibn Muhammad on the authority of 'Ali ibn Mahziyar, 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, 'Abbad ibn Hammad, reporting from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him (Saduq n.d., 2:554-5). Al-Saduq also mentions the complete chain of transmission in *al-Amali* and links the chain through Isa ibn Muhammad to Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him:

We were told by Muhammad ibn 'Ali Majiluyah, may Allah be pleased with him, through Muhammad ibn Yahya al-'Attar, Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn 'Umran al-Ash'ari, 'Isa ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Mahziyar, 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullah ibn Hammad from Abu 'Abdillah al-Sadiq, peace be upon him. (Saduq 1376 Sh, 464)

In al-Saduq's *Kamal al-din wa tamam al-ni'mah*, such a tradition has also been reported (from one of the Infallibles) on the authority of Muhammad ibn Sulayman in a detailed story about Dhu al-Qarnayn (Saduq 1395 Sh, 2:394-406).

4.2. The Second Hadith

Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, says, "Allah the Exalted created the earth and ordered the fish to carry it. It boasted that "I carry it by my own power." Allah the Exalted then sent another fish whose length was no more than a span and it entered its nose. It was disturbed for forty mornings. So when Allah wants to strike a land with earthquake, He makes it imagine that fish and it shakes the earth out of fear." Of course, earthquake may occur because of other reasons. (Saduq 1413 AH, 1:543)

4.3. The Third Tradition

Al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, says, "Allah the Glorious and Exalted has ordered the fish to carry the earth, and each land of the lands is settled on one of its scales. When Allah wants to strike a land with earthquake He orders the fish to shake that scale, and the fish shakes it. If the scale is removed that land will turn upside down with the permission of Allah the Exalted." Of course, earthquake may occur because of any of these three causes, and these traditions are not different. (Saduq 1413 AH, 1:543)

4.4. The Fourth Tradition

Sulayman al-Daylami asked Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, about earthquake: "What is it?" The Imam answered, "It is one of

the signs of Allah.” Sulayman asked, “What is its cause?” The Imam replied, “Allah the Exalted has trusted an angel with the veins of the earth, and when Allah wants to strike a land with earthquake, He orders that angel to shake such and such a vein. Then the angel shakes the vein of that land which Allah the Most High and Exalted has ordered and the land would move with its people.” (Saduq 1413 AH, 1:543-4)

In what follows, we will see some evidence and proofs that these hadiths are transferred traditions.

4.5. An Assessment of the Four Hadiths

4.5.1. The Discrepancy between Their Contents

In the first hadith (about Dhu al-Qarnayn), the cause of earthquake is claimed to be an angel, who is set firmly on a mountain to which all the mountains of the earth are connected by a vein. By the order of Allah, the angel shakes that vein and there will be an earthquake. In the second hadith, the fear of the big fish (i.e., the whale) is said to be the cause of earthquake. And in the third, the cause is the movement of the fish on whose scales cities are located. The fourth hadith is somehow a restatement of and an emphasis on the first hadith, for it speaks of an angel in whose hand is the vein which connects all cities to each other and by each movement there would be an earthquake in one of the cities.

4.5.2. The Traditions of Earthquake and the *Isra'iliyyat*

One who is familiar with the *Isra'iliyyat* knows that such traditions deal with the phenomena of the world of nature more than any other subject (Marifat 1385 Sh, 2:136). Galaxies, darkness, night and day, mountains, lightning and thunder, heaven and earth, water and sea, the sun and the moon and stars, and other natural phenomena make a huge bulk of the *Isra'iliyyat*.

One of the cases which is considered by many scholars to be one of the clear instances of the *Isra'iliyyat* is the sayings and traditions which follow the story of Dhu al-Qarnayn and the first verse of the surah Qaf (Qur'an 50:1). The stories and sayings reported on these two cases include certain issues, the most important of which is the story of the mountain Qaf and its role in the universe. In most of these traditions, all the regions of the earth are connected to this mountain by a vein, and when it moves those regions move as well. These traditions have been narrated in different ways and on different authorities in Sunni hadith collections.

In order to draw the attention of the reader to the similarity between these *Isra'iliyyat* and what is said by al-Saduq, we mention as an example some of these traditions which al-Suyuti mentions under the first verse of the surah Qaf.

Ibn Hatam quotes Ibn 'Abbas (Suyuti 1404 AH, 6:101-2) that Allah created a sea that encompasses this earth and beyond this sea He has created a mountain called Qaf, which is the heaven of this earth and it encompasses the sea. Beyond this mountain, He created an earth like this earth but seven times bigger. Beyond that, He created a sea that encompasses that earth and then a mountain by the name Qaf, which is the second heaven and encompasses that sea. Then he continued his counting up to seven earths, seven seas, seven mountains, and seven heavens, and added that this is the meaning of the verse "and the sea replenished with seven more seas" (31:27).

It is narrated that 'Abdullah ibn Barida, following the verse "Qaf" (50:1), said, "Qaf is a mountain of emerald, which encompasses the world, and the two sides of heaven are set on it." Ibn Abi al-Dunya in his book *'Uqubat* ("Punishments"), and Abu al-Shaykh in *al-'Azama* ("The Book of Majesty") have quoted Ibn 'Abbas as saying:

Allah created a mountain by the name Qaf, which encompasses the entire world. The roots of Qaf reach down the very rock on which the earth is settled. When Allah wants to strike a land with earthquake, He orders the same mountain and the mountain shakes the veins which are tied closely to that land and makes it shake and move. This is how an earthquake strikes a land while nothing happens in another land. (Suyuti 1404 AH, 6:101-2)

A look into the words of al-Saduq and the traditions on Dhu al-Qarnayn and Qaf leave no doubt that these traditions are among the *Isra'iliyyat*. Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH) is probably the first person who shows with meticulous erudition that these traditions are of Jewish origin. He states,

Such traditions are rooted in the superstitions of the Israelites, and because some people believe referring to their traditions on subjects which can be neither attested nor contested is permissible they have accepted these views from them. I believe these traditions and those similar to them are the fabrications of some disbelieving Jews to deceive people in religious issues; as in the Muslim community also,

despite the presence of great scholars, memorizers of the Quran, and leaders, such false sayings are attributed to the Prophet. (Ibn Kathir 1419 AH, 7:368)

Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari (fl. tenth century AH) in his *Mawdu‘at al-kubra* (“The Great Subjects”) argues that this tradition is one of the traditions which are rejected by many sound arguments (Qari 1391, 451). Al-Alusi, having mentioned the tradition of the mountain Qaf and the cause of earthquake, writes:

My view on this subject is that of al-Qarrafi. Such a mountain according to sensible evidence does not exist. Explorers have many times travelled around the earth, but they never saw such a mountain. Although some of the narrators of these traditions are committed to transmitting sound traditions, yet critiquing and rejecting such traditions is easier than denying the senses. Of course, such a denial is not like the denial of the existence of a thing which cannot be found, as it is not hidden from people of wisdom. Earthquake as a phenomenon cannot be dependent on the mountain Qaf, but it is due to terrestrial gases and their need to rush through the surface of the earth and the resistance of the earth. For the people of even a little knowledge, the denial of these facts is absurd. (Alusi 1415 AH, 13:322)

Abu Shahba in his invaluable book *al-Ista‘iliyyat wa l-mawdu‘at fi kutub al-tafsir*, gives the reasons why the mentioned tradition is one of the *Isra’iliyyat*:

What is said in this regard has no external existence and, therefore, is not reliable. Such traditions are rooted in the superstitions of the Israelites, whose discourse is contaminated by lies, corruption, and distortion. Some hold that these traditions are made up and fabricated, and some others have admitted them with good intention; they have transmitted them, but because of their oddity, they do not believe they are true. We thank Allah for those scholars who rejected these fake traditions even before empirical sciences proved their inaccuracy as we see today. (Abu Shahba 1408 AH, 383)

He further severely criticizes people, such as al-Haythami, who try to admit and justify such traditions. He writes:

My question for al-Haythami and those who agree with him is, what the use and result of accepting such views, which are rejected by

schoolboys, let alone scholars, would be? Is it other than that such views open the door for those who desire to find fault with the infallibility of the Prophet? If such views could be accepted at the Age of Ignorance and superstition, today they cannot be admitted. Astronomers have travelled round the earth and have seen the earth suspended in the space without a mountain, a sea, a rock or a pillar. How can we admit such *Isra'iliyyat*, which go against the sense and scientific observations? (Abu Shahba 1408 AH, 383).

Perhaps the most judicious comment on the tradition of the mount Qaf, including the question of earthquake, is what is said by Allamah Tabataba'i in *al-Mizan*. Having quoted the tradition reported by Ibn 'Abbas and shown the different ways it was transmitted by the Sunnis and how it found its way into the exegesis of al-Qummi, he rejects it saying, "The reason for the inauthenticity of this tradition is that it is very similar to the *Isra'iliyyat* (Tabataba'i 1417 AH, 18:15). Ma'rifat also believes that this tradition is one of the *Isra'iliyyat* (Ma'rifat 1385 Sh, 2:137). Moreover, 'Allamah Tehrani writes in this regard and on the incursion of such traditions into the exegesis of al-Qummi: "Such traditions are quoted by Shi'i and Sunni narrators, for they do not know that these traditions are rooted in the Israelites' superstitions, which have entered our traditions mainly to corrupt the visage of Islam as opposing rationality, science, and sensible experience" (Sadiqi Tehrani 1365 Sh, 27:268).

Ignoring the Jewish origin of such traditions and that they are transferred traditions made many scholars fail in their explanation of the hadith. For example, Majlisi writes:

One way to explain the apparent difference among the traditions related to earthquake is that all of these causes occur in every earthquake or each earthquake happens due to one of these causes, as al-Saduq writes in *Man la yahduruh al-faqih*. The other way is to say that showing the (small) fish (to the big one) indicates an earthquake in the entire earth, shaking one of the scales indicates a strong earthquake in a particular region of the earth, and shaking one of the veins of the earth indicates a weaker earthquake in a particular region of the earth. (Majlisi 1403 AH, 88:149)

Ghaffari, who usually looks at hadiths with a critical eye, accepts these traditions and holds that such utterances are tailored to the level

of the perception and understanding of the Imam's addressees (Saduq 1367 Sh, 2:260-1).

Al-Saduq also refers to the mount Qaf and its story on another occasion, but in a different context. At the end of a detailed tradition reported on the authority of Sufyan al-Thawri from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, on the *disconnected letters* in the first verse of surah Qaf, he quotes the Imam as saying, "As to Qaf, it is the mountain that encompasses the earth and gives the sky its azure, by which Allah holds the earth lest it shakes with its people" (Saduq 1403 AH, 22-23). This tradition is regarded as inauthentic, because it is narrated on the authority of Sufyan al-Thawri, who is not considered a reliable narrator, and because such a tradition is narrated many times in Sunni sources (Akbarnejad 1392 Sh, 165-78). We should also add that the hadith, like the other hadiths on earthquake, is a transferred tradition.

4.5.3. The High Frequency and Diversity of the Transmission of the Tradition in Sunni Sources

As a general rule when a tradition is transmitted in different ways and on different authorities but with the same content in a school and then it is found in other schools, the tradition must have been transferred from the first school. This rule applies in particular to those traditions which are incompatible with the Quran, the established tradition, or the accepted principles of the target school. Besides the many reasons we have that this tradition is of a Jewish origin, some sources also have indicated that it is transmitted mainly by the Sunnis.

Allamah Tabataba'i (1417 AH, 18:15) among the Imamis and Abu Shahba (1408 AH, 383) among the Sunnis have stressed the many ways this tradition has been transmitted by the Sunnis. Consulting Sunni sources substantiates this testimony, as the hadith has been narrated in many of both early and recent Sunni hadith collections including the following:

1. **The third century AH.** Ibn Abi al-Dunya in *al-'Uqubat* (Punishments) reports on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas and Ka'b al-Ahbar, who is the most important and most known transmitter of the *Isra'iliyyat* (Ibn Abi Al-Dunya 1996, 1:23).
2. **The fourth century AH.** Abu al-Shaykh al-Isbahani in *al-'Azama* (The Book of Majesty) reports on the authority of Wahab, who is one of the main sources of transmitting and spreading the *Isra'iliyyat*, and Ibn 'Abbas (Isbahani 1408 AH, 1489).

Among the recent scholars, the author of *Al-Fatawa al-fiqhiyyah al-kubra* has collected the different views of the early scholars, especially those of Ibn 'Abbas, in order to reject the claim that this tradition is one of the *Isra'iliyyat*. Like what was said on the traditions quoted by al-Saduq about earthquake, he hints at the discrepancy between the traditions and tries to show their agreement (Haytami n.d., 1:383). In his criticism of those who believe that the sayings of Ibn 'Abbas are no more than his personal interpretation and are unreliable, he writes: "Whatever is transmitted by the companions and is not their personal opinion should be considered as the sayings ascribed to the Prophet (Haytami n.d., 1:277).

One rarely comes across a Sunni exegesis that does not report and accept the tradition of the mountain Qaf and its details. This tradition has been narrated, among many others, in the following Qur'anic commentaries: in the second century, Farra' in *Ma'ani al-Qur'an* (The Meanings of the Quran) (n.d., 3:75); in the fourth century, Nahhas in *I'rab al-Qur'an* (1421 AH, 4:331), al-Tabari in *Jami' al-bayan* (Tabari 1412 AH, 26:93); in the sixth century, Ibn al-Jawzi in *Zad al-masir* (Ibn al-Jawzi 1422 AH, 4:157); and in the tenth century, al-Suyuti in *al-Durr al-manthur* (Suyuti 1404 AH, 6: 102).

One of the oldest written reports of this tradition is seen in Muqatil ibn Sulayman's exegesis (Muqatil 1423 AH, 5:78). This tradition has been repeated so frequently in the Sunni sources that Rumi, the great Sunni poet, has put into verse the story of Dhu al-Qarnayn and earthquake (Rumi 1378 Sh, Book 4).

The following are evidence enough that this tradition is a transferred one.

4.5.4. Textual Similarity

In the traditions of *Man la yaduruh al-faqih*, three causes are mentioned for earthquake and all of the three are reported in the Sunni Hadith books. The first tradition (related to Dhu al-Qarnayn) maintains that the cause of earthquake is the angel in whose hand are the veins of the earth. This cause is mentioned in most Sunni traditions with the difference that there the mountain is mentioned instead of the angel. As an example, it is reported that:

'Abd ibn Humayd quotes 'Ikrima as saying that when Dhu al-Qarnayn came to the mountain which is called Qaf, he was called

by an angel. Dhu al-Qarnayn asked, "What mountain is this?" The angel answered, "It is a mountain called Qaf, which is the origin of all mountains, and all other mountains are of its veins. Whenever Allah wants to strike a city with an earthquake, He shakes one of its veins. (Haytami n.d., 1:277; Suyuti 1404 AH, 6:102)

In the second hadith, the fear of the big fish (the whale) is claimed to be the cause of earthquake. Ka'b al-Ahbar and 'Abdullah ibn Salam report:

I was informed that 'Abdullah ibn Salam asked the Prophet, peace be upon him, where the fish was, and the Prophet said, "It is on the black water, and the fish takes from that sea as much as one of your fish takes from one of these seas." I was told that Satan got into that fish and made it think it is very big. He told the fish that there was no creature as rich and powerful as it was. The fish became excited and moved, and so there is earthquake whenever it moves. Then Allah sent a small fish and made it live in its ear; so whenever it moves, that which is in its ear moves too. (Suyuti 1404 AH, 6:238)

In the third tradition, the cause of earthquake is said to be the movement of the fish on whose scales the cities are built. The same tradition (but without mentioning the scales) is reported by the Sunnis:

Ibn Abi al-Dunya quotes Ka'b in *al-'Uqubat* (The Punishments) that "the earth is stricken with earthquake, because it is created on the back of a fish, and it is likely that when the fish moves or when sins are committed on it, it shakes out of fear that the Exalted Lord is looking at it. (Ibn Abi al-Dunya 1996, 1:31-32)

Another tradition is reported by Haqqi al-Barusawi but with the same content. "Ibn Abi Ka'b has said that earthquake occurs not but for three causes: either because Allah looks with awe at the earth, or because of the many sins of the people, or because of the movement of the fish on which the seven earths are settled, and that is to refine people" (Haqqi al-Barusawi n.d., 9:102).

Perhaps one of the connections and similarities between the traditions in *Man la yahduruh al-faqih* and the *Isra'iliyyat* is the expression "five hundred yards," which is the current measure in the *Isra'iliyyat*. In many of these traditions, this figure is repeated, sometimes to indicate the stature of people like the people of 'Ad

(Qurtubi 1364 Sh, 21:45; Ibn 'Adil 1419 AH, 20:318). Mulla Salih Mazandarani in his commentary on *al-Kafi* and in the story of the meeting of Ibrahim with the angel of death also speaks of a man with such height (Mazandarani 1382 Sh, 12:547). On other occasions, the number is mentioned in relation to the description of one of the angels (Tusi 1407 AH, 3:290) and in describing the gate of the Court of Alexandria, which is said to have been five-hundred yards high (Bakri 1992, 2:638; Maqrizi 1418 AH, 1:297), and in many other sources. In the tradition about the causes of earthquake reported in the works of al-Saduq, sometimes the stature of the angel or the height of the mountain is given such a measure.

Accordingly, the traditions reported by al-Saduq are similar in text and content to the Sunni traditions.

4.5.5. Evidence for the Invention and Transference of the Tradition of Earthquake

1. As was mentioned, the first tradition of al-Saduq on earthquake is mentioned in *Kamal al-din* on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn Sulayman, who admits that he had taken this tradition from the books of other religion: "I read in some books of Allah the Exalted" (Saduq 1395 Sh, 2:385, 395). We cannot find a better evidence that this tradition is one of the *Isra'iliyyat*. 'Abdullah ibn Sulayman repeats the same words mentioned in the tradition as the cause of earthquake. Now, the same saying but on a different authority is mentioned in other books of hadith, and such *Isra'iliyyat* are attributed to the Imam. Therefore, the tradition is not really said by the Imams, and thus it is not reliable for us it. Moreover, there is evidence enough that it is one of the *Isra'iliyyat*.

2. In the chain of transmission of some of these traditions, some Exaggerators (*Ghulat*) or those who are suspected of Exaggeration (*ghuluww*) are seen. From the viewpoint of Allamah 'Askari, the Exaggerators, like 'Abdullah ibn Bahr and Sulayman al-Daylami, are some of the most important transmitters of Sunni traditions into Shi'i sources.

3. The tradition has also been reported by al-'Ayyashi ('Ayyashi 1389 Sh, 2:349). Because of his frequent communication with the Sunnis and because he was formerly a Sunni himself, he is suspected of transferring such traditions.

4. In Sunni hadith, some of the traditions are transmitted on the authority of Wahab ibn Munabbih and Ka'b al-Ahbar, whose role in inventing some of the *Isra'iliyyat* is unanimously accepted by scholars.

5. As a common argument for reporting these narrations by Shi'i narrators, one may refer to the confusion in reporting the narrations. In one of his important reports, Kashshi writes,

Fadl ibn Shadhan says that his father asked Muhammad ibn 'Umayyir, why, despite meeting so many Sunni masters, he had not reported any tradition from them. In response, he [i.e., Muhammad ibn 'Umayyir] said, "I have listened to their narrations, but I noticed that many of the Shi'i narrators, who had listened to the traditions reported by both the Sunnis and Shi'is, fell into confusion so much that they reported Sunni traditions through the Shi'is and Shi'i traditions through the Sunnis. I did not like such a confusion, and therefore I abandoned it and acted as Idid." (Kashshi 1409AH, 590-1).

Therefore, it is likely that some Shi'i narrators may have heard or read such traditions in Sunni sources and then through confusion attributed them to their Imams. The similarity in the chains of transmission and texts of these narrations with those in Sunni sources supports this claim.

5. Conclusion

1. Because of the Imamis' different sources of exegesis and hadith, and the opposition of the Imams to the *Isra'iliyyat*, such traditions are very few in Shi'i sources compared to Sunni sources.

2. The traditions related to earthquake in *Man la yahduruh al-faqih* are among the *Isra'iliyyat*.

3. These traditions are similar in many ways to those in Sunni hadith sources.

4. Some Sunni traditions are reported by Ka'b al-Ahbar and Wahab ibn Munabbih, which leaves no doubt that the traditions are unreliable and among the *Isra'iliyyat*.

5. In the chain of transmission of such traditions in the Shi'i hadith circles, there are some Exaggerators or those suspected of Exaggeration, who themselves are inventors of these traditions and mediators in transferring Sunni traditions.

6. The confusion of the narrators in reporting the traditions and in attributing the sayings of the Sunnis to the Imams is one of the reasons why these narrations have found their way into Shi'i hadith sources.

To sum up, the *Isra'iliyyat* in general, and the traditions of the causes of earthquake mentioned in *Man la yahduruh al-faqih* in particular, are evidently transferred traditions and unreliable.

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