



The Aspects of Reprimand and Praise of Muhammad Ibn Sinan

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Abstract

Studies on the character of Muhammad ibn Sinan in the books of the Rijal reveals different opinions towards him. He has been emphatically reprimanded by a great number of Rijaliyun by the accusations of being weak, being blamed, liar, and exaggerator. In the opposite, in many other narrations by infallible imams, he was praised for virtues like being loyal to the Imams. The present study examines the aspects of reprimand and praise of Muhammad ibn Sinan. The method of collecting data is library and the research method is descriptive-analytical. After investigations, it was found that the large number of trustworthy (thiqah) narrators who have narrated from Muhammad ibn Sinan and the abundance of narrations narrated by him in the authentic hadith heritage is a sign of the narrators' trust in him and a sign of his goodness. An examination of the type of narrations narrated by Ibn Sinan, which contain valuable themes and above the general understanding of the people, shows that at some point in time, contrary to the wills of the Imams, which advised to conceal difficult epistemological themes, by expressing those lofty teachings, he has prepared the ground for him being reprimanded and accused of exaggeration.

Keywords: *Muhammad Ibn Sinan; Reprimand (Qadh); Praise; Exaggeration; The Companions of the Secret*

Introduction

Muhammad ibn Sinan is one of the narrators about whom there has been a great deal of controversy, and scholars such as Kashshi, Mufid, and Shaikh Tusj have given different opinions about him in their works, and he has been praised a lot and also reprimanded a lot. In this article, while examining the various statements made about him, it is explained why there are reasons for these differences of opinion about him, and finally, what is his place in the Shiite hadith heritage? Can we consider him one of the trusted narrators or not?

Literature Review

The following writings have been published about Muḥammad ibn Sinān:

‘Arab, Murteza; Naqī-zadeh, Ḥasan; (2011) Reconsideration of the Reliability of Muhammad Ibn Sinān, *Journal of Kitab-e-Qayyim*. Summer. Issue 2.

Bagheri, Hamid. (1398) Nusīriyah and the transfer of the hadith heritage of the Ghulat (exaggerators) of Kufa to the Levant; A Case Study of the Works Attributed to Muḥammad ibn Sinān *Journal of Ulum Hadith*, Spring, No. 91.

Faqiḥe Imāni, Seyed Muḥammad Reza; (2013) Reconsideration of the Rajali character of “Muhammad ibn Sinān”, *Journal of Balagh Mobin*, fall and winter. No. 36 and 37.

Khādem-pir, ‘Ali; (2006) A Study of the Rejali Description of Muḥammad ibn Sinān, *Journal of Hadith va Andisheh*, New Edition, Fall and Winter. No. 2.

Mahdavi-rad, Muḥammad-Ali; ‘Ata’ullah Jabbarī, Amīr: (2012). Muḥammad Ibn Sinān • beyond perspectives, *Journal of Hadith Studies*. Fall and winter. No. 8.

Nāeini Manouchehri, Muḥammad Reza; Ḥakim, Muḥammad. (2017) Validation of Chains of Imam Reza's ilal al-ahkam (causes of rules) letter with an emphasis on reliability analysis of Mohammad Ibn Sanan, *Journal of Researches of Quran and Hadith Sciences*, spring. No. 33.

Sotoudeh, Hamid. (2011) Exploration in Trustworthiness and Weakness: Muḥammad ibn Sinān, *Journal of Fiqh ahl-al-Bayt*, summer and fall, No.66, 67.

Taheri, Ḥabibullah; Ḥakim, Muḥammad. (2012) Evaluation and Criticism of Weakening of Muhammad ibn Sinan and Its Effect on Imamiyah Jurisprudence, *Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence Research*, Spring and Summer, Volume 8 - Number 1.

Muḥammad ibn Sinān Abu Ja'far Zāheri was born in the middle of the second century AH in Zāher. His original name is Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Sinān. His father Ḥasan passed away while Muḥammad was only a child and his grandfather named Sinān took care of him and for this reason he became known as Muḥammad ibn Sinān (Najāshī, 1986, p. 328), he is regarded as the fourth or fifth stratum of companions of Prophet (Broujerdi, 1984 AH, vol. 3, p. 249) and he narrated from many companions of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (as). He was alive during the life time of four Imams: Imam Kādhim, Imam Rida, and Imam Jawad – completely - and Ḥādī (AS) - a little from the time of his Imamate.

Najāshī mentions his death in 220 (835 A.D.) (Najāshī, 1986, p. 328) and Shaikh Tuṣī mentions him among the companions of Imam Kādhim, Imam Rida and Imam Jawad (AS). (Tuṣī, 1953, pp. 344-364-377) Shaikh Tuṣī has not included him among the companions of Imam Ḥādī (AS), but there are two narrations in Kāfī that show that Ibn Sinan met with Imam Hadi (as) and narrated from him: “He has narrated from Muhammad ibn Sinan that he said, I entered upon Abu al-Hasan (as), he said: O Muhammad, has something happened to Aal Faraj? I said: Umar has died. He said: Praise be to God, I counted, he repeated it for 24 times. So I said: May I be your sacrifice, if I knew it would please you [this much] I would have run to you barefooted” (Kulayni, 1986, vol., p.497)

[Explanation of hadith]: Muḥammad ibn Sinān said that I had the honor to come and meet Imam ‘Ali al-Naqī (as), he said: O Muḥammad! Has anything happened to Al-e-Faraj? I said: Yes, ‘Umar (Ibn Faraj, who was the governor of Medina) had passed away. Imam said, “Al-Hamdu-lillah [praise belongs to God]”. “I counted, Imam repeated this for 24 times.” Ibn Sinān said, “If I knew this would make you happy, I would run to you barefoot”

Elsewhere, he said, “He has narrated from Muhammad ibn Sinan said: Mohammed bin Ali has died while he was twenty-five years and three months and twelve days, he died on Tuesday, his death was on Tuesday the sixth Dhu al-Hijjah of the year 220 AH. He lived after his father nineteen years, but twenty-five day. ” (Ibid.) [Explanation of hadith]: Muhammad ibn Sinan said, “Muhammad ibn ‘Ali (Imam Jawad (as)) passed away while he was 25 years, 3 months and 12 days old, and his death was on the sixth Tuesday of Dhu al-Hijjah in the year 220, his life was 19 years but 25 days longer than his father.”

The first hadith clearly states that Ibn Sinan met with Imam Hadi (as) and quoted from him. The second hadith also shows that he was alive in the period of Imamate of Imam Hadi (AS) and quoted from him. Of course, these two hadiths do not contradict the words of Najashi, who mentions his death occurred at the end of Dhu al-Hijjah in 220.

In terms of scientific activity, Muhammad ibn Sinan is one of the authors of his time who wrote the books of the Tava’if, Kitab al-Adhallah, Kitab Al-Makasib, Kitab Al-Hajj and Kitab Al-Sayd and Al-Dhaba’ih, Kitab Al-Shura and Al-Bay’, Kitab Al-Wasiya and Kitab Al-Nawadir (Najashi, 1986, p. 328)

Existence of Reprimand in Ibn Sinan's Record

After mentioning name and a brief account of Muhammad ibn Sinan’s life, Najashi quoted from Imam Rida (as) on his authority as follows: “And there are well-known issues about him, and he is a very weak man (as a narrator) who cannot be trusted and his individual hadiths are not taken into account.” He also quoted from Rijal Abu ‘Amr from the words of Fazl Ibn Shadhan: “I do not permit you to narrate the hadiths of Muhammad bin Sinan.” (Najashi, 1946, p. 328). [Explanation of hadith]: He has mentioned renowned questions and discussions from him and he (in terms of the narration of the hadith) is really a weak narrator, and cannot be trusted and his individual hadiths (*hadith munfarid*) are not taken into account.

Of course, in this hadith, only the non-narration of Muhammad ibn Sinan is mentioned, which is a little different from *Qadh*. In his translation of Miyah al-Mada’ini, in the description of his book, Najashi asserted the weakness of the chain of narrators that reached Muhammad ibn Sinan, saying: “He has a book known as Risalah Maayah, and its path (narrator) is weaker than it, and it is Muhammad ibn Sinan” (Najashi, 1946, p.424)

In Al-Fihrist in No. 620, Shaikh Tusi explains Muhammad ibn Sinan’s exaggeration and mixing as his weakness: “He has books that has been criticized and weakened. And all of what he narrated contain confusion or exaggeration” (Tusi, 1992 AH, p. 406). In his book titled “Rijal”, Shaikh Tusi mentioned him among the companions of Musa ibn Ja’far al-Kadhim (number 5138) and Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Thaqani (number 5587) and only weakened him (with the number 5394) among the companions of ‘Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (AS): “Muhammad ibn Sinan is weak” (Tusi, 1953, p. 364)

In addition to his rijali books, Shaikh al-Tusi in his hadithi works also blamed Ibn Sinan and excluded the hadiths that Ibn Sinan is singular in quoting them [he only narrated them]. In Al-Tahdhib under the Hadith 1464, we read, “Muhammad ibn Sinan is blamed and he is really weak, and what he solely narrates in which others do not participate, is not be taken” (Tusi, 1986, vol. 7, p. 361). He also in Istibsar chapter of Luzum al-Muhr al-Mashqi bel Dukhul said, “Muhammad bin Sinan is blamed and he is so weak.” (Burujerdi, 1984, vol. 3, p. 256)

Shahid Thaqani rejected the hadith in which Muhammad ibn Sinan is in chain of its narrator due to his weakness. He wrote in the following of a hadith about relative and breastfeeding Maharim: “In its path is Muhammad bin Sinan, who is weak.” (ibid, vol.3, p.258):

Of the other *rijaliyun* who have reprimanded him is Ibn al-Ghada’iri, who said the following about Ibn Sinan: “He is weak and exaggerator (*ghali*) to whom is not pay attention” (Hilli, 2002, p.394)

Also, Allamah Hilli in his Rijal book, after mentioning various sayings, voted to reject the narrations narrated by Ibn Sinan: “My choice is to stop at what he narrates” (ibid, p.394) Shaikh Mufid in Risalah al-Hilaliyah based on Asabah Ijma’ pointed to the weakness of Muhammad ibn Sinan. After quoting a hadith in which Muhammad ibn Sinan is in the chain of its narration, he said: “This is a rare and abnormal hadith that is not relied upon in its path of Muhammad ibn Sinan. He is blamed, and the scholars do not disagree in his accusation and weakness.” (Burujerdi, 1984, vol. 3, p. 253)

Al-Kashshi in Ikhtiyar Ma’rifah al-Rijal has studied the character of Muhammad ibn Sinan in detail and explained the various dimensions of his weakness. In Ikhtiyar Ma’rifah al-Rijal, number 584, in the translation of Mufaddal ibn ‘Umar, a hadith has been narrated, in the explanation of its chain of narrators Ibn Sinan, has been named as one of the pillars of exaggeration: “He narrated from Abu Yaqub bin Muhammad bin Basri, who is an exaggerator and rather, he is one of their leaders... He said, Muhammad bin Sinan told me, and he is like this.” (Al-Kashshi, 1988, p. 322)

Al-Kashshi in his book in several narrations forbid quoting from Ibn Sinan regarding the views of Hamdawayh. He wrote in No.729: “Hamdawayh said: I wrote the hadiths of Muhammad bin Sinan from Ayyub bin Nuh, and he said, “I do not consider to have permission to narrate the hadiths of Muhammad bin Sinan.” (Ibid., p. 389). In this quote, too, without blaming the character of Muhammad Ibn Sinan, only avoiding quoting his narrations is mentioned. In another narration, Hamdawayh mentioned to the narrations he quoted from bin Sinan: “Hamdawayh bin Naseer mentioned that Ayyub bin Nuh gave him a notebook containing the hadiths of Muhammad bin Sinan, and he said to us: If you want to write that, do so, for I wrote hadiths of Muhammad bin Sinan, but I do not narrate to you anything from him, for he said before his death: Whatever I narrated to you, was not which I heard or been told, but I found it.” (Ibid., pp. 506-507)

In another narration, Hamdawayh pointed to the fact that the narrations he quoted from Fadl Ibn Shadhan were *Vajade*¹: “Muhammad bin Masoud said Abdullah bin Hamdawayh said I heard Al-Fadl bin Shadhan say: I do not consider it permissible to narrate the hadiths of Muhammad bin Sinan, and Al-Fadl mentioned in some of his books that one of the Famous Liars is Ibn Sinan, and he is not Abdullah.” (Ibid., p. 507)

Al-Kashshi also quoted the words of Fadl Ibn Shadhan through Ibn Qutaybah al-Neyshaburi concerning the avoiding quoting from Ibn Sinan: “Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Muhammad bin Qutaiba al-Nisaburi said: Abu Muhammad al-Fadl bin Shadhan said they rejected the hadiths of Muhammad bin Sinan and said: I do not permit you to narrate the hadiths of Muhammad bin Sinan from me as long as I am alive, but he authorized to be narrated after his death.” (ibid.)

The significant point of this narration is the permission that Fadl Ibn Shadhan gave to narrate the narrations of Muhammad after his death! Fadl Ibn Shadhan's view of Ibn Sinan is also mentioned during the translation of Abu Samina Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Seyrafi in Rijal Al-Kashshi: “Al-Fadl mentioned in some of his books: the Famous Liars are Abu al-Khattab, Yunus bin Zabyan, Yazid al-Sa’egh, Muhammad bin Sinan, and Abu Suminah, who is the most famous of them.” (Ibid., p. 546)

In another quotation by Safwan Ibn Yahya, the spirit of Ibn Sinan in exaggeration is mentioned. In this quotation Safwan insisted that he and others stopped him from doing this and eventually he gave up exaggerating: “I found in the handwriting of Abu Abdullah Al-Shadhani that I heard Al-Asimi saying that Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Isa Al-Asadi, nicknamed Banan, said I was with Safwan bin Yahya in Kufa in a house when Muhammad bin Sinan entered upon us, and Safwan said: This is Ibn Sinan; he intended to be one of exaggerators (*ghulat*) more than once, so we fixed him until he was established with us.” (Ibid., p. 508)

¹ *Vajade* is that a person sees a book or a hadith in the narrator's handwriting without seeing the narrator in close, so if he trusts the narrator, he narrates it.

In general, the narrations concerning reprimand of Muḥammad ibn Sinan can be divided into two categories. The first type is the narrations that directly and explicitly address his reprimand and, for example, call him exaggerator, liar and weak. And the second type, which does not have this explicitness and only emphasizes the prohibition of narrating from him. However, this prohibition is not permanently recommended in any case and permission is given after the death of the narrator, or in another case, he gave up exaggerating after the intervention of narrator's companions. But in the opposition of these news and evidences, there are news and reasons in the praise of Ibn Sinan which are mentioned.

The Cases of Ibn Sinan's Biography in Which He Was Praised

Al-Kashshi in his Rijal, as he has detailed the narrations concerning the reprimand of Muḥammad ibn Sinan, has also narrated the narrations which praise him in detail. In his Rijal, No. 963, he narrated a narration from Imam Jawad (as) quoting from 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn bin Dawūd al-Qummi that Imam (AS) mentioned Muḥammad ibn Sinan besides the precious companion of him Ṣafwan ibn Yahyā and expressed his satisfaction with them and his non-opposition of them to him: He said, "I heard Abu Ja'far the Second (as) mentioning Safwan bin Yahya and Muhammad bin Sinan in a good way, and he said: May God be satisfied with them as I am; they never disobeyed me, after what I was reported about them and what I heard from our companions." (Al-Kashshi, 1988, p. 502)

Al-Kashshi mentioned similar to this narration No.967: works similar to the narrative gives the figure of 967 mentioned: "From Ali bin Al-Hussein bin Dawud Al-Qummi, he said, I heard Abu Ja'far (as) mentioning Safwan bin Yahya and Muhammad bin Sinan in a good way, and he said: May God be satisfied with them as I am; they never disobeyed me nor my father, after what was reported from them and what was heard by more than one." (ibid., pp. 503-504)

In another hadith narrated by Ibn Thalt Qummi, Imam Jawad (as) counted Muhammad ibn Sinan along with Safwan ibn Yahya and Zakarya bin Adam as loyal to him: "From Abu Talib Abdullah bin Salt al-Qummi, he said: I entered upon Abu Ja'far The Second (as) at the end of his life, and I heard him saying: May God reward Safwan bin Yahya, Muhammad bin Sinan and Zakaria bin Adam for my sake, for what they fulfilled to me." (Ibid., 503)

Al-Kashshi in his Rijal No. 965 narrated a narration which pictured to the difference of narrations concerning Ibn Sinan: "Muhammad bin Quluwayh told me, he said, Saad narrated to me from Ahmad bin Hilal, from Muhammad bin Ismail bin Bazi', that Abu Ja'far (as) used to curse Safwan bin Yahya and Muhammad bin Sinan saying: They disobeyed my command. And when there was a visitor he said to Muhammad ibn Sahl al-Bahrani, follow Safwan ibn Yahya and Muhammad ibn Sinan, I was satisfied with them." (Ibid, p. 503) In this narration, Ahmad Ibn Hilal explained that the curse of Ṣafwan and Ibn Sinan by Imam Baqir (AS) is while he has expressed his satisfaction with the two before and advised Muḥammad ibn Sahl to make friends with them. Considering that in the science of Rijal, the trustworthiness of Ṣafwan Ibn Yahyā has been proven and he is considered as one of the *Ashāb Ijma'* (companions of consensus), so between these two, the first quotations which refer to the reprimanding Ṣafwan and Ibn Sinan have not been issued in natural conditions and the possibility of *Taqiyya* exists.

Another narration has been narrated in the Rijal on account of Ibn Sinan that said after Ibn Sinan made a vow at the presence of Imam Musa Kadhim (as) to obey and acknowledge the rights of the Imams after Imam Musa Kadhim, the Imam praised him a lot and named him as one of the great Shiites whose name is in the Sahifa of the Commander of the Faithful and shines brightly in the darkness: "He said: Muhammad bin Sinan narrated to me that I entered upon Abu al-Hasan Musa (as) a year before he was carried to Iraq with his son (as), and he said to me: "O Muhammad! I said: Yes my lord. He said: There will be a movement this year on the ground, so you do not go out. Then he lowered his head and pricked the soil with his hand, then he raised his head toward me and said: And God leads astray the wrongdoers and does what He wills. I said: and what is that, my lord? He said: Whoever oppresses my son depriving

him of his right and denies his Imamate after me, it was like the one who oppressed Ali bin Abi Talib depriving him of his right and his Imamate after Muhammad (PBUH). Then I knew that he had mourned for himself and referred to his son. So I asked: By God, if God extends my life, I will entrust to him his right and admit to his imamate; I bear witness that after you he is the proof of God over His creation and the caller to His religion. He told me: O Muhammad, God will extend your life and you will call for his leadership and the leadership of whom will take his place after him. I asked him: Who is he, my lord. He answered: his son, Muhammad. I said with my contentment and submission. He said: I have already found you so in the book of the Commander of the Faithful (as). As for you, among our Shiites, you are clearer than lightning on a dark night” (Ibid: 508-509)

Another narration refers to the high epistemological knowledge of Muhammad ibn Sinan in dealing with the excellent and difficult contents. He and Safwan sat in the mosque of Kufa to answer the religious questions; Safwan to answer to the Islamic jurisprudence problems and Halal or Haram and ibn Sinan to answer abstruse issues of religion: “And from him he said: I also heard he said: We used to enter the mosque of Kufa, and Muhammad bin Sinan was looking at us and saying: Whoever wants [to learn] complex issues, come to me, and whoever wants to know about halal and haram, should follow the Sheikh, meaning Safwan bin Yahya.” (Ibid., P. 508)

Another narration that is mentioned in Rijal Al-Kashshi showed Ibn Sinan's special spirit in retelling and revealing unseen content and news. In this story, when Shadhwayah was narrating the words of Imam (as) to the companions, Ibn Sinan told him the whole words of the Imam in details, which contained an unseen message. At this moment, the other companions blamed him. According to this narration, Ibn Sinan's ability to conceal unseen news was less than others; other companions were also aware of the words of the Imams (as) but did not reveal it: “From Shadhweyh bin Al-Husein bin Dawud Al-Qummi, he said: I entered upon Abu Ja'far (as) while my wife was pregnant, and I told him: May I be your sacrifice! Pray to God to give me a son! He lowered his head for a while, then he raised his head and said: Go, God will grant you a son (*ghulam'an dhakiyy'an*), he repeated it three times. So I came to Makkah and went to the mosque. Then Muhammad bin Al-Hasan bin Sabah brought a message from a group of our companions, including Safwan bin Yahya, Muhammad bin Sinan, Ibn Abi Umair and others. I came to them and they asked me, so I told them what he said. They told me, did you noted if he said *dhaki* (halal sacrifice) or *zaki* (intelligent)? I said: He said *dhaki*. Ibn Sinan said: So you will have a son, either he will die immediately or he will be born dead. Our companions told Muhammad bin Sinan, “You have done wrong, we have understood what you understood.” So a boy came to the mosque and said, “I noted that your wife is going to die.” So I went quickly and found her dying, then soon she gave birth to a dead boy.” (Ibid., P. 581).

In addition to Al-Kashshi in other works of narrators and Rijaliyun, there are also praise of Muhammad ibn Sinan. Shaikh Mufid in his *Irshad* has mentioned him as one of those who have affirmed the Imamate of ‘Ali Abi Al-Hasan Al-Rida and has considered him among the special and trusted companions of Imam Kadhim: “He was one of his (Kazim's) trustworthy companions, and one of the people of piety, knowledge and jurisprudence in the Shiites.” (Quoted from Davari, 2005, vol. 2, pp. 559-560)

Shaikh al-Tusi, who has weakened him in his *Rijal* book, mentioned Muhammad ibn Sinan as one of the praiseworthy agents of the Imams (as) in *Al-Ghaybah* in the chapter “Zikr al-Mahmudin Min Vukala' al-A'imah” and narrated from Imam Jawad (as) that the Imam was pleased with him: “It was narrated from Ali bin Hussein, the son of Davud said, I heard Abu Ja'far The Second (as) mentions Mohammed bin Sinan in a good way and says, may Allah be satisfied with him as I am; he never disobeyed me and my father”. (al-Tusi, 1411 AH, p. 348) and in the same place he narrated another tradition where Ibn Sinan along with a few other companions was admired by Imam Jawad (as): “What was narrated by Abu Talib al-Qummi that he said, I entered upon Abu Ja'far The Second (as) in the last days of his life so I heard him says: May Allah reward Safwan bin Yahya and Muhammad ibn Sinan and

Zakariyya bin Adam and Saad bin Saad for my sake, they have fulfilled my promise, and Zakariyya bin Adam was one of their followers”. (Ibid)

‘Allameh Majlisi in Al-Wajiza, referring to the reputation of his weakness and his authenticity asserted by Shaikh Mufid, considered Muhammad Ibn Sinan as his trust: “Muhammad bin Sinan has a renowned weakness, but Mufid considered him as his trust, and he is trustworthy to me” (Burujerdi, 1984., vol.3, p.256)

Therefore, along with the sayings that have been reprimanding Muhammad ibn Sinan, he has been completely praised in other narrations and has been considered as one of the special companions of the Imams (AS). Meanwhile, scholars such as Shaikh Mufid and ‘Allameh Majlisi, knowing the reputation of his weakness, have voted to his authenticity.

The Place of Muhammad Ibn Sinan in the Shiite Hadith Heritage

Apart from examining the personality of Muhammad ibn Sinan in the books of Rijal, the type of attitude of the narrators towards the narrations by Muhammad ibn Sinan can provide an objective criterion of his position and credibility in the eyes of the narrators. Paying attention to the multiplicity of narrations narrated by him in hadith books shows the certainty and the trust that the narrators had in him, and this issue can somehow compensate for the cases in his reprimand. If these reprimanding narrations were accepted by the narrators, the narrations from him would not have been quoted.

Al-Kashshi in his Rijal No.980, after mentioning several reliable narrators who narrated from him, asserted that other just and trustworthy narrators narrated from him: “Al-Fadl and his father, Yunus, Muhammad bin Isa, Muhammad bin Al-Husein bin Abi Al-Khattab, Al-Hasan and Al-Husain, the sons of Saeed Al-Ahwazi, the sons of Dandan, and Ayyub bin Nuh, and other just and trustworthy scholars, are among those who have narrated from him.”

As Al-Kashshi mentioned that the collective narration concerning his trustworthiness is a proof of his trustworthiness, especially the narration of famous narrators who are trustworthy and accepted, such as: Ibrahim ibn Hashim, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid, Al-Hasan ibn Al-Husein Al-Lu’lu’ei, Al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali ibn Fadal, and Shazan ibn Khalil and ‘Ali ibn Asbat, ‘Ali ibn al-Hakam, Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Yahya, Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Barqi, Muhammad ibn ‘Isa ibn ‘Ubayd, as well as Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Isa al-Ash’ari, who was very cautious in narrating and is very famous for hasting in reprimanding others. Also, the most narrator of him is Muhammad ibn al-Husein ibn Abi al-Khattab, about whom Najashi said on page 257 of his book: “He is one of our great companions, who has great status, abundant in narrations, *thiqah*, *ayn*, *hasan*, and the books are reach by his narrations” (1984, vol. 3, p. 270)

In general, the four Shiite books are full of the narrations of Muhammad ibn Sinan. Thiqah al-Islam Kulayni has filled *Uṣūl* and *Furu’ Kafi* with his narrations. Shaikh *Tusi* has narrated from him in *Tahzib* and *Istibṣar*, and the chief narrator, *Saduq*, has also narrated from him in *Man la Yahduruh*; while in the beginning of his book he has guaranteed that he will not include a hadith in this book unless it is a strong reason between him and his God. His name also appears in the commentary documents of *Ali ibn Ibrahim Qummi*. (Qummi, 1983, vol. 1, pp. 378, 380; vol. 2, pp. 15, 75, 103)

In general, the name of Muhammad ibn Sinan is mentioned in 797 hadith documents (Khuei, 1994, vol. 16, p. 138) is mentioned, which there is doubt as, the name of Ibn Sinan in 447 hadith² ‘Abdullah ibn Sinan is meant or Muhammad ibn Sinan (Davari, 2005, vol. 2, p.556) He has narrated alone from 150 companions of Imam *Sadiq* and Imam *Baqir* (as) (Khuei, 1994, vol. 17, pp. 138-140), of

2. “This title was repeated in the chain of many narrations, amounting to seven hundred and ninety-seven cases.”

which 101 hadiths are merely from Ibn Muskan. The number of narrators who have quoted him is more than 70, which in total the consensus of these just and reliable scholars on the narration of him and the compilation of his news in famous books are a proof on his good faith and acceptance of his narrations.

The news and reasons regarding the praise of Muhammad ibn Sinan indicate that he had a high status and had a special position among the infallibles. It can be said that the point that most of the scholars of the Rijals have weakened him and the numerous narrations of reprimanding him originate only from one issue. It should be said that all aspects of reprimanding go back to one thing, and that is his accusation of exaggeration, which we will analyze and justify this accusation here.

The Need to Accompany the Public in Expressing the Teachings of Religion

As it is clear, people have different levels in their faiths; those who are at a higher level of faith have more power to comprehend deep and heavy knowledge, and those who have a lower level of faith do not have the power to bear the sublime truths. As it is quoted from the fourth Imam (as): “By God, if Abuzar had known what was in Salman’s heart, he would have killed him; whereas the Messenger of God (PBUH) has fraternized between them so what about the rest of people?” (Kulayni, 1986, Vol. 2, p. 332) Therefore, Imam Sadiq (as) in a hadith after determining the levels of faith in ten levels, emphasizes that those with higher levels of faith should not put pressure on people with lower faith, which will cause their faith to collapse: “O Abdul Aziz, faith has ten degrees; it is like a ladder from which one ascends one step after another, so whoever is at the second step should not tell the one who is at the first one that you are up to nothing. Until he reaches the tenth. So do not overthrow those below you, for those above you will not overthrow you. And if you see someone who is a step lower than you, raise him to you gently, and do not burden him with what he could not bear. So whoever breaks [the faith of] a believer, he must repair it.” (Ibid., p. 45)

Among the companions of the Imams (as), this difference of degrees is also noticeable, as narrated from the holy Prophet (PBUH) who said: “We, the community of the prophets, speak to people according to their intellect.” This behavior of the Messenger of God (PBUH) can of course be seen in the behavioral style of the Imams (AS) as well. As he who had stronger faith among the companions, his understanding of the truths was more, so that among his companions some were known as the companions of secrets. Because imams told them secrets and truths that were beyond the comprehension and tolerance of ordinary people and they also did not have the right to disclose the secrets. Because it might mislead the people or might were being denied. The following narrative confirms this: “From Jabir bin Yazid al-Ju’fi, he has narrated that Abu Ja’far (as) narrated to me seventy thousand hadiths, and I did not tell them [to anyone]. Jaber said: I said to Abu Jafar (as): May I be your sacrifice, you have carried me with a great burden of your secrets which you told me not to tell anyone. Perhaps it swelled in my chest to the point that some madness would drive me away! He said: O Jabir, if that is the case, then go out to the desert and dig a hole and put your head in it. Then say, Muhammad bin Ali told me this and told me that.” (Al-Kashshi, p. 194)

In other narrations, Imam Sadiq (AS), referring to the difficulty of the Imamate, advises the companions to talk to the people as much as they understand, because the deep knowledge concerning the Imams could only be carried by the angels or the prophets or those believers that God has tested their hearts, “Salamah bin Al-Khattab, from Al-Qasim bin Yahya, from his grandfather, from Abu Basir, and Muhammad bin Muslim, from Abu Abdullah (as) who said: Accompany and share with people what they understand and let them be out of what they don’t understand, and do not burden yourselves and us [with it]. Indeed, our affair is difficult, much more difficult, and only a close angel, a prophet sent by God, or those believers that God has tested their hearts can bear it” (Majlisi, 1982, vol. 2, p. 171).

Retelling Excellent Issues by Ibn Sinan and Laying the Groundwork for Reprimanding

From the numerous narrations that have been narrated from Muḥammad ibn Sinan, especially in terms of miracles, it can be understood that he had a high status and position among the Imams and was among the companions of secrets. As ‘Allama Muhammad Taqi Majlisi has mentioned this in the commentary of Mashakhah man La Yahzuruhul Faqih: “What appears from the hadiths, [shows that] he was one of the people of secrets.” (Burujerdi, 1984., vol.3, p. 260)

This issue, of course, can be deduced from the words of Muhammad ibn Sinan himself, which is: “Whoever wants to know about obscure issues, come to me, and whoever wants to know about halal and haram go to Sheikh, meaning Safwan bin Yahya” (Al-Kashshi, 1988, p.508) According to this statement, he has been expert in analyzing, explaining and interpreting difficult hadiths with sublime themes, and this is what led him to be accused of exaggeration. He was accused of exaggeration because at some point in his life he revealed those secrets, because the general public and even the lower level companions could not understand those secrets and facts.

That is why Imam Rida (AS) also warned him of telling secrets and ordered him to hide. But he did not comply and was accused of exaggeration. However, it is clear from Safwan's narrations: “He intended to be one of exaggerators (*ghulat*) more than once, so we fixed him until he was established with us.” And Najashi's statement about him: “This indicates a disturbance that was [then] and gone [now].” (Najashi, 1986, p. 328) that he revealed the secrets for a short time and he stopped doing so by the order of Imam (AS). Perhaps the fact that Shaikh Tuṣi included him among the companions of Muṣā ibn Ja'far, ‘Ali ibn Muṣā, and Muḥammad ibn ‘Ali al-Thaṇi (as) but weakened him as the companions of Imam Rida (as) is that this was done by him during the time of Imam Rida (as).

But even this short time was enough to accuse him of exaggeration, so that enemies, by abusing him of this issue, would falsely attribute it to him and incite it. To the extent that even his students such as Ibn Shazan and Ayyub Ibn Nuḥ could not recognize this matter and removed the ugliness from themselves (Burujerdi, 1984, vol. 3, p. 277) and each of them gave a reason for not quoting his hadiths. Ayyub ibn Nuḥ rejected his hadiths on the pretext of being *Vajade*, while the multiplicity of ibn Sinan's hadiths from the Imams and his many meetings with the Imams, which are reflected in various hadiths, prove the opposite, and if they are narrated from the companions of the *Sadiqin* (as) in the form of *Vajade*, the authenticity of *Vajade* in case of enjoying necessary conditions is certain and infallibles confirm authenticity of narrating *Vajade*.

The arguments of Faḍl ibn Shazan are also contradictory; the reason why he did not allow others to narrate from him from Ibn Sinan but gave permission to be narrated from him after his death is vague. This weak argument reinforces the possibility that these words were attributed to Faḍl ibn Shazan and his books were manipulated. Because Ibn Dawud in his Rijals in the translation of Muhammad ibn ‘Ali Abu Samina has said Al- Fadl said, “There are four of the Famous Liars: Abu al-Khattab, Yunus bin Zabyan, Yazid bin al-Sane’, and Abu Sumayna; who is the most famous of them.” (Burujerdi, 1984, vol. 3, p. 274)

While in the narration of Al-Kashshi, the name of Muḥammad ibn Sinan is also among them and it is very likely that the books of Faḍl have been manipulated. But this process continued, and after his students, the scholars also could not find out the truth. And they sometimes looked at the slanders in their books and weakened him, and sometimes they looked at the sound news and the praised and confirmed him.

One of the most important damages caused by this policy of Muḥammad ibn Sinan in quoting abstruse hadiths is the exaggerators got close to him; Al-Kashshi has mentioned an example of the exaggerators' narration which has been attributed to ibn Sinan. Exaggerators used this opportunity to fabricate false hadiths, attribute them to him, and quote them in their books. This has become a reason that the companions and the people got confused, and he was accused of exaggeration. In one of his

books, Shaikh Mufīd, in response to a question about “The narrations of ghosts”, after mentioning the activity of exaggerators in composing books in this field, mentioned one of the cases in which exaggerators falsely attributed a book to Ibn Sinan. He pointed out: “The hadiths about ghosts have different words and different meanings, and the narrators of exaggerators have built on them many falsehoods, and compiled vain books about it, and added books around it to a group of the sheikhs of the Ahl Al Haqq, and by doing this, they have penetrated into falsehood, among them is a book called «The Book of Ghosts and Shadows», which was attributed to Muhammad bin Sinan.” (Shushtari, 2010, vol. 9, p. 308)

But the most important reason that can be given for his lack of exaggeration is the emptiness of his narrations in the four books (Kutub Arba’eh) from exaggeration and confusion (Davari, 2005, vol. 2, p. 573) and also Qum-mi-in³’s trust in him, despite their meticulous attention to the narrations. In this regard, Sayyid ibn Tawūs quoted a narration in the introduction of Falah al-Sa’il, in which Ibn Sinan is emphatically considered immune from exaggerated and his purity and obedience are confirmed: “I narrated with my chain of transmission to Harun bin Musa al-Tal’akbari with his chain of transmission that he mentioned at the end of the sixth part of Abdullah bin Hamad al-Ansari’s book, what is this wording: Abu Muhammad Harun ibn Musa said: We were told by Muhammad ibn Humam, he said: We were told by al-Husain ibn Ahmad al-Maliki, he said: I said to Ahmad ibn Halik al-Kufi: Tell me what is said about Muhammad ibn Sinan about the matter of exaggeration? He said: God forbid, I swear to God that he taught me purity and making good family, and he was austere and devout.” (Hilli, 1985, p. 52)

Conclusion

The totality of views about the character of Muḥammad ibn Sinan in the books of hadith has several layers. The first level is the reports that have been received from various people about reprimanding or praising him. The noteworthy point in this regard is that reprimanding him is generally made from the non-infallible side and the narrator quoted his negative opinion or that of another person about him, while the news quoted from the Infallible (as) are in his praise. The second layer refers to the behavior of the famous narrators with his hadiths and they have quoted them many times in their books. And the third layer is the statements of narrators who, despite being aware of the negative news about him, for some reason did not accept them and confirmed him. In addition to Rijālī studies, reflection on the hadiths narrated by Muḥammad ibn Sinan and reflection on the culmination of its lofty and invaluable teachings, along with the wills of the Imams concerning the observance of the people and the concealment of high and abstruse themes for the general public, reinforces the view that Ibn Sinan was one of the companions of secret of the Imams (AS) who, at some point in time, contrary to Imams’ wills, recounted the teachings related to the position of the Imams (AS) which paved a way for such accusations.

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³ The Qummiyyin expelled the narrators who narrated weak or exaggerated hadiths.

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