

# A Survey of an Ancient Shi'ite Legacy: *The Commentary of Furat al-Kufi*

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**ABSTRACT:** One of the main features of contemporary research in the Islamic sciences is investigation of the ancient classics of the early period of Islam. Some of the results of this research confirm the authenticity of the intellectual and ideological Shi'a identity, although simultaneously acknowledging its gaps and deficiencies in surmounting its disparities. The Commentary of Furat al-Kufi from the third century and the early years of the fourth century, is part of the heritage of Shi'a exegeses which for the first time presents an esoteric interpretation to the Qur'an in order to explain the inner meanings of some verses. The exegete also presents some historical reports which reveal worthy historical information, although some reports are not fully relevant to the verses. Due to the narrations he used in his book, Furat al-Kufi has been considered by some historians as a Zadi Shi'i exegete with a mystical tendency. The paper will investigate this issue as well.

**KEYWORDS:** Furat al-Kufi, Kufa, exaggeration, Zaydiyya, commentary based on narrations, interpretation (correspondence, purpose, and interior).

## **Introduction**

Abu al-Qasim<sup>1</sup> Furat ibn Ibrahim ibn Furat al-Kufi<sup>2</sup> is one of the scholars of *hadith* and is a commentator of the second half of the third century and the first decade of the fourth century. No mention is made of him in the early sources of the science of the transmitters of *hadith*. According to *hadith* scholars' terminology, he is one of the insignificant or disregarded transmitters. It is likely that the reason Furat al-Kufi remains unknown is due to the special conditions of Kufa (the constant burgeoning of sects, conflicts, distance from the Imams, peace be upon them, etc.), the external obstacles to and pressures (both political and psychological) on the Shi'a, and the general conditions of that era (the lack of facilities, difficulties of communication among the Shi'a, and the dominance of mistrust, etc.). However, he may also have intentionally chosen to remain unknown, work secretly and keep silent.

In any case, on the basis of the kinds of narrations he chooses (the correspondence between some of the verses of the Qur'an and the People of the Prophet's Household, peace be upon them), it can be assumed that Furat al-Kufi was one of the scholars who was brought up in the School of the People of the Prophet's Household (as) and was one of the first commentators, who, with an exact and profound understanding of the importance and vitality of the teachings of the People of the Household (as) in the field of the Qur'an, tried to compose a commentary with an approach that differed from that of the dominant movement of the time and in a structure which was based upon narrations transmitted from the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as).

Furat al-Kufi was the first and perhaps the only commentator<sup>3</sup> who composed an exegetical compilation based on the narrations of the Prophet's Household in interpreting the Qur'an in this particular form and structure.<sup>4</sup> Although some narrators engaged in transmitting this book, they remain unknown and anonymous, just like Furat al-Kufi. This article aims to introduce this valuable Shi'a heritage by taking a brief look at the life and times of Furat al-Kufi, discussing his thought, and introducing his particular methodology within the manuscript.

### ***Birth to Death***

It is not clear where Furat al-Kufi was born. The only thing which we know for sure is his agnomen, al-Kufi. If Kufa was indeed his birthplace or at least where he grew up, the role and influence of the cultural and intellectual conditions prevalent in that area on his thoughts and beliefs would be undeniable.

We have no precise information on his date of birth or death either. The only way to try to discover the actual facts is to use the different indications within the period and analyse them. Therefore, researchers, on the basis of such information as the year of the death of some of al-Kufi's masters<sup>5</sup> (like Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Fazari, d. 300AH), conclude that he was alive after this date<sup>6</sup> and was a contemporary of Imam al-Hadi (d. 254 AH) and Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari (d. 260 AH), peace be upon them. This is inferred on the basis of a general estimation of human lifespan ranging from 60 to 70 years in normal and natural conditions.

On the basis of such information, the period of al-Kufi's activities and scholarly output falls within the time of the Minor Occultation,<sup>7</sup> a period of nearly seventy years between the time of the presence of the Imams (as) and the Major Occultation, with its special conditions and circumstances, and which was one of the most difficult periods in the life of the Shi'a in respect of their beliefs and the political pressures and cultural disorders of the time. Furat al-Kufi lived in such conditions and with such apprehensions. Nevertheless, the conditions of the time are not reflected in his book in the slightest, and, when he occasionally speaks of *al-Qa'im* [the Imam who rises up or as The Executor of God's Command (*al-Qa'im bi amr Allah*)], he does not refer to the occultation or to issues pertaining to it, even though the conditions prevalent at that time are clearly reflected in the extant works written during the same period.<sup>8</sup> Of course, later on in this paper, we will see that Furat al-Kufi's attitude towards the Imamate is to some extent different from that of the Imami Shi'a.

### ***Thoughts and Beliefs***

The influence of different factors, such as social structure, population formation and

grouping (even gender), environmental conditions, etc., on the development of the character of the individual is one of the theories which has been attested in sociological and behavioural sciences.

There is no doubt that the range of this influence also involves social orientation and political, economic and cultural orders, the difference being that it is many times more obscure and complicated due to the scope and diversity of the factors involved, where these elements are concerned.

We spoke earlier of the turbulent conditions in Kufa at the time being the main reason why Furat al-Kufi has remained unknown, but we need to provide more details in this regard. The social structure of Kufa (the diversity of nationalities – Naptians, Syrians, Persians, and Arabs – and religions – Christianity, Islam, and new foreign cults, such as the Mawali, the Hamra Daylam who had a Zoroastrian precedence – a large range of Badr veterans, some with a precedence in apostasy and others who were exploitative opportunists, as well as different economic and cultural classes), distance from the centre of Islam, a predominantly military spirit, and, more importantly, the corrupt and weak government at the time of 'Uthman, had made this land a centre which was different from other parts of the Islamic world. The presence of Imam 'Ali (as) in Kufa was supposed to introduce fundamental changes within the city but the battles that took place there did not leave any opportunity to do so. Therefore, the same people who were exasperated by the wrongdoing of the governors and were asking 'Ali (as) to be the caliph, left him alone in the most difficult circumstances and did not accompany or support him. 'Ali (as) was eventually killed by one of these ignorant people and by the conspiracy of some faithless apostates. Following the martyrdom of Husayn ibn 'Ali (as), and based on a claim to be avenging his blood, a number of movements were formed.

In such circumstances one of the most important and serious movements that was formed in Kufa was the extremist movement, that is, ascribing divinity to the Imams (as).<sup>9</sup> Even though, according to one view, its origins can be traced back to the time of Imam 'Ali (as), due to certain reasons (numerous battles and the quick and decisive reaction of Imam 'Ali, peace be upon him, in his capacity as governor) it

appeared to fade, but reemerged, reaching its climax during the time of Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn (as), Imam al-Baqir (as), and Imam al-Sadiq (as) and continuing up until the time of Imam al-Rida (as). The situation forced the Imams (as) to exhibit different reactions, such as chiding, cursing, promoting distinguished and eminent personalities, revealing conspiracies, and, giving warning to and admonishing the Shi‘a. Nevertheless, the evil effects left by this movement never disappeared, and in addition to penetrating the intellectual and ideological positions of some Shi‘a, they have played an undeniable role in corrupting the legacy of the Imams (as) and their companions, and, more importantly, causing the Shi‘a to be viewed negatively.

In these circumstances, the formation of certain movements, such as the Kaysaniyyah and Zaydiyyah, seems quite natural. Even the Kaysaniyyah sect played a central and determining role in the emergence of other sects, especially in the dissemination of the ‘extremist’ movement.

Of the most important and comprehensive movements which emerged in Kufa, two groups enjoyed closer relations and more intimacy than others, namely the Zaydiyyah and the Imamiyyah. Even though rigorous debates and discussions regarding ‘Imamate’ took place between the two parties, especially in the second century, not only did such discussions cause no problems between the two groups but they also contributed to the richness and depth of their intellectual foundations – especially the consolidation and substantiation of the principles and foundations of Imamate in Shi‘ite Imamiyyah, knowing that the Zaydi views on the Imamate in general did not postulate the rejection of the Imams which were accepted by the Imamiyyah. Indeed, their belief in the ‘Book’ and the ‘Household of the Prophet’ as central dogmas paved the way for further relations between them.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Furat al-Kufi’s Zaydi Tendency***

At a critical time in third century Kufa, when the Zaydi movement was dominant, Furat al-Kufi showed his inclination to the aforementioned movement. This claim can be proved by evidence and information supplied by his own book. The clearest evidence of this is the text of the narrations in al-Kufi’s book which are evidently in

harmony with and have much in common with the teachings of the Zaydis. By referring to certain subjects that are supported by a number of narrations in al-Kufi's commentary, we will try to prove his Zaydi leanings.

### ***Infallibility is Confined to the Privileged Ones of the Cloak***

In al-Kufi's commentary, there are certain narrations which directly or indirectly indicate that restricted is limited to five people, namely, the Messenger of Allah, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn (as). The clearest narration in al-Kufi's commentary on infallibility's being restricted to the Privileged Ones of the Cloak (as), or, in other words, the denial of this same infallibility to others, can be found in the following two narrations. In regards to verse 33 of *Sūrah al-Ahzab*, it is written:

Furat ... by a chain of names narrates from 'Ali ibn Qasim that his father had said, 'I heard Zayd ibn 'Ali state, "The infallible are five and there is no sixth for them. They are the same people about whom the verse says, *'Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification'*. They are the Messenger of Allah, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn, peace and greetings of Allah upon them. But we, the people of the Household, have hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement. The righteous of us is twice rewarded but the wicked of us is twice punished, as was promised to the wives of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his Household'.<sup>11</sup>

In a relatively long narration about verse 28 of *Sūrah al-Zukhruf*, Zayd ibn 'Ali says:

The Messenger of Allah is our grandfather, the migrant believer, is our father and his wife (Khadijah) is our mother, his daughter Fatimah is our mother ... Allah is the judge between us and anyone who exaggerates about us or places us in a position which is not ours or says about us what we do not say about ourselves. The Infallibles among us are five: the Messenger of Allah, 'Ali, al-Hasan, al-Husayn and Fatimah, peace and greetings of Allah on them. But the rest of us,

we, the people of the Household, do sin as other people sin ...<sup>12</sup>

See also other narrations in the commentary in this regard.<sup>13</sup>

This was said within Zayd's lifetime at the time of the two great Imams, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) and Muhammad al-Baqir (as). On the basis of these narrations, we can conclude that he does not believe in the infallibility of these great Imams (as). Furat al-Kufi, who was present at the time of the occultation of the Twelfth Imam (AJF), and was at least contemporary to some of the Imams (as), transmits such narrations.

### ***The Imam Must Rise Against the Unjust Ruler (Armed Resurgence)***

Zayd wrote a letter to some of his companions and followers, which, in reality, was the declaration of his positions. Zayd – on the basis of verse 33 of *Sūrah Fussilat*;

Who has a better call than him who summons to Allah and acts righteously and says, "Indeed I am one of the Muslims ...

– analyzes some of the issues and problems of his time, stresses the need to be sensitive to the deviations and abnormalities of the Umayyad rulers and asks for the people's help, calling them to rise against the oppressors.<sup>14</sup>

And among us that Imam must be obeyed who rises with sword and calls people to God and the tradition of His Messenger and practices the divine decrees ...<sup>15</sup>

Finally, in the concluding part, he cites a long narration transmitted by Zayd on verse 28 of the chapter entitled Ornamentation the necessity of rising up with the sword.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Disbelief in the Imamate of the Twelve Imams (as)***

There are narrations in this book that refer to there being twelve Imams (as), even though there are numerous Shi'a narrations on this matter.

### ***Evidence or Indications within the Chains of Narration***

This means either that there are many narrators mentioned in the chains of

narration of this commentary yet there is no information on them in Imami sources on the study of *hadith* narrators, or, that there are narrators with indubitably Zaydi inclinations whose names appear in the list of Furat al-Kufi's teachers. The most important Zaydi narrators in the chains of narration of this commentary are:

- Zayd ibn 'Ali, whose name appears 29 times in chains of narration.
- Husayn ibn Hakam al-Hibri, the author of *Tafsir al-Hibri* and one of Furat al-Kufi's teachers, was indubitably a Zaydi. Al-Kufi narrates from him almost 70 times.<sup>17</sup>
- Abu Khalid al-Wasiti is one of the Zaydi narrators who appears in the chains of the narration in this commentary.
- 27 of the narrators whom Ibn Dawud mentions are Zaydi narrators. The names of eleven of them appear in the chains of narration in Furat al-Kufi's commentary: al-Hasan ibn Salih ibn Hayy, Ziyad ibn al-Mundhir Abu al-Jarud, al-Hakam ibn 'Utaybah Abu Muhammad al-Kindi, Amir ibn Kathir al-Siraj, 'Ibadat ibn Ziyad al-Asadi, Amr ibn Jami' al-Basri, Ghalib ibn 'Uthman al-Hamadani al-Sha'ir al-Masha'iri Abu Salamah, Qays ibn al-Rabi', Kathir al-Nawa, Muqatil ibn Sulayman, and Yahya ibn Salim al-Fira'.

Even though the number of Zaydi narrators in this commentary is small compared to all the other narrators, many of the narrators of this commentary are nevertheless unknown. These unknown narrators, according to (unpublished) sources, are Zaydis whose names are not mentioned in Imami sources on the study of *hadith* transmitters. Furthermore, the names of many of them are mentioned in Zaydi sources.

### **Other Indications**

1. Furat al-Kufi's continuing presence until the fifth century (even though this presence is weak and not pervasive) through his being mentioned in later works. It should be mentioned, however, this was not the belief of all scholars, with the exception of Sheikh al-Saduq because of his special



attitude towards establishing communication with non-Imami scholars, his being a resident of Ray (which enjoyed a special environment with people of all Islamic schools and groups present there), listening to *hadith* from Sunni scholars, establishing communication with a number of Zaydis and even attending some of their teaching circles.<sup>18</sup>

2. Hasakani was one of the few scholars who, despite his affinity for the People of the Household (as), was a Sunni scholar. It is not unlikely that his interest in Al-Kufi was due to his Zaydi inclinations.
3. The book *Fadl Ziyarat al-Husayn (The Virtue of Visiting al-Husayn)* was written by a Zaydi scholar and citing al-Kufi in such a book indicates their accord and harmony.
4. Of the 24 narrations cited in Sheikh al-Saduq's books, 21 are transmitted through Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'id al-Hashimi and 3 through Ahmad ibn Hasan al-Qattan. Although Hasan ibn Muhammad is thought to be one of Sheikh al-Saduq's masters, Ayatullah al-Khu'i considers him to be an unknown narrator.<sup>19</sup> It is not unlikely, therefore, that he was one of the Zaydi narrators who were unknown to our scholars on *hadith* transmitters. Moreover, even though by no means certain that Ahmad ibn al-Hasan al-Qattan was a Sunni, apparently Ayatullah al-Khu'i had good reason for believing so.<sup>20</sup>

### ***An Analysis of Furat al-Kufi's Zaydi Stance***

The principles and intellectual foundations of Shi'ism were not widely available to the public until the time of Imam al-Baqir and Imam al-Sadiq (as).<sup>21</sup> According to some reports, the Shi'a who lived before Imam al-Baqir (as) used to learn their religious decrees from Sunnis<sup>22</sup> until Imam al-Baqir (as) began to teach them.

In these circumstances, the Shi'a in Kufa experienced completely different conditions from other Islamic regions; for instance, in addition to their distance from Medina, the inaccessibility of the Imam (as), political pressures and difficulties, diversity of thoughts and views, abnormal conventions, the bitter memory of the

martyrdom of Imam Husayn (as), vengeance seeking uprisings like those of the Penitents (*Tawwabun*), Mukhtar, and finally, of Zayd ibn 'Ali, and later the Occultation and issues pertaining to it, added to their confusion, bewilderment, misfortune and disunity. Indeed, confusion and diversity of opinion were the most conspicuous features of this land. Such conditions make the different inclinations (which were all nevertheless related to the People of the Household, peace be upon them) seem natural and justifiable, so much so that in spite of the differences they had on some issues, and unconnected to the boundaries that exist today, all Shi'a groups used to cooperate and work with each other. It would appear that the Zaydiyyah was the only live, active and dynamic movement with Shi'ite leaning and could be a source of help and hope for the people of that land. This is why some scholars claim, 'Most of our narrators in Kufa are Zaydis'.<sup>23</sup>

Furat al-Kufi grew up in such conditions, times and circumstances. Similarly, as is clearly apparent from the structure and arrangement of the narrations, there is a kind of confusion and disharmony in his book, so a person unfamiliar with the particular environment in which he lived will not understand or appreciate such a structure. In other words, al-Kufi did not only transmit narrations of a Zaydi bearing. There are some narrations in his book, albeit only a few, which are not only incompatible with Zaydi teachings but also quite opposed to them (see narrations 167 and 513, which refer to the importance of observing *taqiyyah* or precautionary dissimulation, and narrations 423-425 and 507, which speak of the designation of 'Ali (as) as the Prophet's trustee), whereas two of the principles emphasised by the Zaydis is disbelief in 'designation' – appointment by the Prophet (as) of a vicegerent – and in *taqiyyah*.

Therefore, it is likely that the only option for al-Kufi in the turbulent conditions of Kufa was to adopt the Zaydi school of thought. Nevertheless, whenever he comes across a narration which is compatible with the spirit of Shi'ism, he does not hesitate in transmitting it. This view is also compatible with the research<sup>24</sup> that refers to the complete separation of these two groups in 329 AH, and perhaps this is the reason why great scholars such as al-Saduq, Majlisi, and Mirza

Muhammad Baqir Khansari trust him. Of course, what is said is true and correct only if all of the narrations in the book are attributable to Furat al-Kufi; otherwise it is not clear who made these manipulations in the text and for what purposes.

### ***Extremist Tendencies***

Some contemporary researchers into the history of religious sects and schools of thought believe that the most evident sign of extremism is to hold that the Imams (as) were superhuman, to believe in their unlimited knowledge and that their creation and substance was different from that of others. Such concepts are often reported in the form of interpretative narrations and the interpretative nature of the narrations in Furat al-Kufi's commentary have engendered the hypothesis among scholars that the commentator had extremist tendencies.<sup>25</sup>

It should be said, however, that attributes such as 'manifest and hidden' verses or the 'allegorical interpretation (ta'wil) and literal meaning (tanzil)' of verses, are features common to all schools. We further find in Shi'ism that this belief is founded on factual narrations from Imam al-Baqir (as) and Imam al-Sadiq (as). Therefore, the conjecture that interpretative narrations are particular to inclinations to exaggeration is extremely weak and unsupported.

In any case, most of the narrations in Furat al-Kufi's commentary are interpretative (*ta'wili*), and, in some of them, the superhuman aspects of the Imams (as) are emphasised. Some of these narrations (numbers 179, 189, 230, 235, 293, 357, 424, 651 and 667) deal with the knowledge of the Imam (as) as a person who knows what was, is, and will be, while others (number 290, 394, 435, 681 and 662) speak of and refer to the luminous creation of the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as). Narrations 57, 89, 146 and 412 indicate that the Messenger of Allah (S) and 'Ali (as) are created of a clay different from that of others, while other narrations (47, 48, 49, 272, 279, 468, 503 and 593) are about the ascent to heaven and the World of Pre-Existence (*Alam al-Dhar*) – especially the narrations of the shades (*azillah*) in numbers 181, 184 and 665 and narration 699 on the Intermediary World (*Alam al-Mithal*) – 30 narrations in total – in addition to 43 narrations on the Throne.

In the analysis of the chains of narration of these narrations, there are certain interesting points to be considered.

In the first group of narrations (except for the Narrations of the Throne):

- four are transmitted by Ibn 'Abbas and of these, only one has a weak chain of narration back to Ibn 'Abbas.
- There are nine narrations not attributed to the Infallibles, peace be upon them (transmitted by Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Ibn Mas'ud, 'Ata' ibn Abi Rabah, Abu Basir, 'Umar ibn Yazid, Buraydah, Abu Wa'il al-Sahmi and Qubaysat ibn Yazid al-Ifriqi).
- There are sixteen narrations attributed to the Infallibles (as).
- In regard to the group of narrators of these narrations, scholars on hadith narrators only agree about Sulayman Daylami (an extremist) and Ubayd ibn Kathir (a fabricator). There are conflicting reports on others, such as Mufaddal ibn 'Umar and Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Fazari. One of the narrators is Husayn ibn Sa'id al-Ahwazi who is considered to be a reputed and trustworthy narrator. Other narrators are unknown, and, as mentioned earlier, part of this group is narrators – generally Zaydi – whose names are not mentioned in the Shi'a sources. Thus we have no evidence of their weakness or blameworthiness.

The second group – 43 narrations on the Throne – breaks down as follows:

- 7 narrations are not transmitted from the Infallibles, peace be upon them (3 from Ibn 'Abbas and 4 from others).
- 1 narration is transmitted from an Infallible (as) by a narrator suspected of extremism.
- The remainder – which form the majority – are transmitted by unknown narrators.

On the basis of the standards by which chains of narration are evaluated, no

decisive judgment can be passed on these narrations. In fact, judgment of these narrations solely on the basis of the kind of narrators would be incomplete. Moreover, the information gathered on the state of the narrators of this book, especially with regard to those suspected of extremism, is highly contentious. Of the 700 narrators mentioned in this book, nearly 200 of them are commendable and trustworthy and only 100 of them are weak, of whom only 11 are extremists or suspected of extremism. It is also interesting to note that, in the narrations which are suspected of exaggeration in al-Kufi's book, this group of (exaggerating) narrators are not central to the transmission. Of course, this does not mean that scholarly examination of the transmitters of *hadith* should be suspended in relation to these narrators, for, no doubt the authenticity and validity of the chain of narration<sup>26</sup> is a firm support for accepting the text of such narrations.

In regard to the critique of the text and the content of the narrations, it should be said that the critique and analysis of such narrations demand their own unique approaches. For the foundation of the interpretative narrations is much wider than the narrow circle of appearances and sometimes it is based upon relinquishing the known frames in interpretative narrations, and the only way these narrations can be properly analysed is by looking out for widespread transmission of the same meaning (*tawatur ma'nawi*). This is the method used by some contemporary scholars. What is important for these scholars in examining these narrations is the general message of these kinds of narrations, rather than the precise wording or chain of narration of each of them, which is accessible through logical investigation and differentiation or critical study of the fundamental content. Of course, those knowledgeable in different fields, including *hadith* and Qur'anic verses, are considered to be better. Therefore, in the analysis of these scholars regarding the Narrations of the Throne, the luminous creation, etc., not only are they not considered to be weak but greater weight is given to narrations related by them.

In this method, the chain of narration and the status of the narrators are normally only considered if the content of the narration cannot be justified. In such a case, because of the weakness of the narrator, the narration is rejected. In fact, using

this method, no narration is rejected unless it is strongly contradicts rational proof or the fundamentals of belief.

If this approach to such interpretative narrations is accepted, another question may then be raised. It would not be surprising if, in the past, some narrators were suspected of weakness, extremism and corruption in religion because of their belief in such dogmas (i.e., the extraordinary knowledge of the Imam, the creation of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, from a different material to other people etc.). In other words, some scholars who did not reach high levels of knowledge and could not grasp such questions used to reprimand the narrators who were entrusted with the secrets of the Imams (as). They used to criticize those narrators and eventually accused them of weakness and extremism, whereas our hadith compendiums abound with the narrations by these narrators, and, more importantly, there is nothing to indicate that the Imams (as) had ever directly or openly censured or rejected these narrators; on the contrary, there are narrations which show the Infallibles' (as) clear or implicit approval of those very same narrators. The reason, perhaps, is that the Imams (as) spoke to people according to their intellects and, therefore, some of their companions were more familiar with those secrets which were difficult or even impossible for others to grasp.

The evidence of this claim is the words of an Infallible (as). Abu Ja'far says, 'The Messenger of Allah had said, "What Muhammad's Household say is difficult and complicated and it is only believed in by an intimate angel (archangel), a chosen Messenger, or a servant whose heart Allah has tested for belief. So whatever of the speech of the Household of Muhammad comes to you and your hearts lean to it ..."<sup>27</sup>

In another narration, the Imam speaks of delivering his secrets to some of his companions. Abu 'Abdullah (as) states:

O Abu Muhammad! By Allah we one of Allah's secrets and some of Allah's knowledge, which, by Allah cannot be endured by any intimate angel, chosen Messenger, or believer whose heart Allah has

tested for belief. By Allah, Allah has trusted it to no one but us and took no servant for that from anyone else but us. We have one of Allah's secrets and some of Allah's knowledge, which Allah has commanded us to deliver. We delivered on Allah's behalf what he ordered us to deliver. But we had found no place or people for it or carriers to carry it until Allah created for it certain people who were created from the clay of which ... was created ...<sup>28</sup>

It is also in relation to this that the Infallible (as) refers to the difference between Salman al-Farsi and Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari.

He says, 'By Allah, if Abu Dharr knew what was in Salman's heart, he would have killed him, but the Messenger of Allah made them brothers. So, what do you think of other people? Indeed, the knowledge of the scholars is difficult and complicated...'<sup>29</sup>

The Imams (as) ensured that each kind of people, as typified in the statement above regarding the different level of secrets which were entrusted to Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari and Salman al-Farsi, were friends and companions.

### ***The Methodology of the Book***

*The Commentary of Furat al-Kufi* is one of the oldest extant commentaries handed down from the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century. While the commentator only mentions one or more narrations following the verses of a number of chapters, he gives no commentary or opinion on the narrations or the verses. Nevertheless, the very act of selecting the narrations may be considered to be somewhat representative of the commentator's personal opinion.<sup>30</sup> This book, like many other extant works, is not free of what is false interspersed with what is true and therefore needs to be evaluated, edited and examined.

This and other works of its kind, indicate that this method of interpreting the verses, besides being "native" and deep-rooted, is actually quite old and has been commonly practised and followed by hadith commentators. The commentator, according to this type of methodology, refers extensively to interpretative narrations

and applies a kind of correspondence with their instances or applicability – without of course mentioning or referring to such terms. In recent periods, such narrations are called the narrations of ‘correspondence’ and ‘applicability’. From the viewpoint of the scholars, the narrations which indicate the ‘correspondence and application’ of the verses also reveal the ‘interpretation of the interior’ and so, in practice, separating them from each other is not easy.<sup>31</sup> Although sometimes some of the narrations only explain the interior sense, others try to introduce the instances of the verses and occasionally they refer to both. Nevertheless, in the end, all of them are placed under the heading of ‘interpretation’ (*ta'wil*). Some scholars hold that the narrations in Kufi's commentary are less interpretative and mainly focus on correspondence.<sup>32</sup> The study of the structure of the edited manuscript of this commentary<sup>33</sup> is the subject of our discussion in this section.

Sheikh Kazim Mahmudi, the learned editor of the book, has written a scholarly and relatively long introduction to the commentary. In his introduction, after praising and lauding Allah (SWT), greeting the Prophet and his Pure Household (as), and praying for divine success, he writes of the manner in which he edited Al-Kufi's book and how he acquired some of its manuscripts.<sup>34</sup> He briefly but precisely discusses Al-Kufi's place among the scholars, the evidence indicating he was a Zaydi, and the factors contributing to the destruction of the works of some Kufan scholars. He then introduces the book by examining different issues, such as the kinds of narrations it contains, the reasons why Furat al-Kufi and his book were neglected and why his commentary was inaccessible for centuries.<sup>35</sup> He continues by giving a long report on the organisation of the book, explaining the disorder of the manuscripts – the narrations of each chapter are scattered and sometimes overlap with other chapters – the chains of narration, manipulation of the chains of narration, his method for eliminating these defects, introducing the manuscripts he had in his possession and the way he used them in this study, giving a report on the views of recent scholars on al-Kufi, and finally, providing the names of almost 120 of his teachers and some of his students.<sup>36</sup>

The text of the book is arranged in two parts: first, a brief introduction is given



and the second part contains the main text.

The anonymous author of the introduction begins his short address by testifying to the unity of the Pure Divine Essence and his devotion and the Prophethood of Muhammad (S). He continues by greeting him and the chosen among his household ('Ali, al-Mahdi, Hasan and Husayn and the virtuous Imams, peace be upon them). He introduces the book with the statement, 'This is a commentary of the verses of the Qur'an according to the narrations of the Imams', and gives his chain of narration for the book as follows:

Abu al-Khayr Miqdad ibn 'Ali al-Hijazi al-Madani has told us that Abu al-Qasim 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Alawi al-Husayni says that the learned Master and the Master of the traditionists in his time Furat ibn Ibrahim al-Kufi, may Allah bless him, had said Muhammad ibn Sa'id ibn Rahim al-Hamadani and Muhammad ibn Isa ibn Zakariyyah had told us that 'Abd al-Rahman through al-Asbagh ibn Nabatah had told us that 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, says ...

Apparently, the honourable editor of the book, by adding a few narrations at the end of his brief introduction, tries to organize this section in the form of a preface before discussing the narrations on each chapter. Thus, by introducing certain headings, he brings more general narrations under these sections (although there is no sign or indication that he had organized the text in this way). The first section is entitled 'The Commander of the Faithful says: "The Qur'an was revealed in four quarters, etc."' and it begins by stating the chain of narration cited by the narrator of the book as well as two narrations transmitted by Asbagh ibn Nabatah with slight differences and different chains of references. Under the second title, it is narrated that Ibn 'Abbas says that the Messenger of Allah (S) had said, "Allah the Exalted sent for the sake of 'Ali (as) the noble verses of the Qur'an" and there is a narration similar to the two narrations which were cited before. In what follows, six narrations are mentioned the common theme of which is, 'Wherever the expression "O you believers!" is mentioned in various similar and sometimes identical passages of the Qur'an, the chief and leader of them is 'Ali (as).' Finally, with a short oral

tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as) regarding the practice of the Messenger of Allah (S) in pronouncing 'In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate' aloud, his introduction suddenly comes to an end. It is not clear whether this narration follows on from the previous one or if it starts a new topic. If the latter is the case, a chain of narration would be required, but as it is, it is missing.

Thus, on the basis of the first chain of narration mentioned at the beginning, this book reaches Furat al-Kufi through three intermediaries. Regarding the first intermediary, no clue is given as to the identity of the person or persons to whom the first person plural pronoun on its own or in the phrase "We are informed" refers. Nevertheless, on the basis of his testimony in the introduction, we have to assume this intermediary is Imami Shi'a. Even though the name of the second intermediary is mentioned, as far as scholars on hadith transmitters are concerned, he is unknown and his name is not mentioned in any source. The third intermediary, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Alawi al-Husayni (or al-Hasani), is one of Furat al-Kufi's students and also taught Sheikh al-Saduq's teacher, Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Sa'id al-Hashimi. Even though Al-Husayni is not a well-known figure in the study of *hadith* transmitters due to the fact that his name does not frequently appear in chains of narration, he is still of interest to some scholars.

### ***The Text of the Commentary***

This one-volume commentary comprises more than 770 narrations and aims at establishing a relationship between some of the Holy Verses and the People of the Household (as), particularly 'Ali (as). Perhaps it can in this respect be called a 'theme-based exegesis' (*tafsir mawdu'i*). With respect to the text of this book, two things must be discussed:

### ***The Methodology Used in Selecting the Verses***

A reminder of a few points regarding the verses which have been discussed in this book is necessary:

- The narrator has chosen only those verses about which there are narrations

about the merit of the People of the Household (as).

- At least one, and usually more, verses have been chosen from almost all the chapters of the Qur'an; the exceptions are Al-Dukhan (Smoke), Nuh (Noah), Al-Tahrim (Making Illicit), Al-Muzzammil (Enwrapped), Al-Infitar (The Splitting), Al-Buruj (The Constellations), al-Tariq (The Night-Star), al-A' la (The Highest), Al-'Alaq (The Blood Clot), Al-Qari'ah (The Calamity), Al-Humazah (The Backbiter), al-Fil (The Elephant), Quraysh, al-Ma'un (Almsgiving), Al-Masad (The Palm Fibre) and Al-Talaq (Divorce) – one verse of this chapter is mentioned but with no narration as its narration was mentioned earlier in Sūrah al-Nahl (The Bee).
- As is clear from the heading for each *sūrah* – 'and of *sūrah* ...', some narrations are cited with reference only to certain verses within a *sūrah* and sometimes even part of a single verse.<sup>37</sup> Sometimes narrations are mentioned for all the verses of a *sūrah*.<sup>38</sup> However, on occasion, none of the verses of a *sūrah* are identified and it is only within the body of the narration that some of the verses of that *sūrah* are cited.<sup>39</sup>

Apparently, in the earlier manuscripts of the commentary, such as the one printed in Najaf, the names of some *sūrahs* were written differently and the editor of the book has listed them as they appeared in the aforesaid manuscripts. For example, *Sūrah al-Hamd* is called *Fatihah al-Kitab* 'The Opening of the Book', *Sūrah al-Isra'* is called *Bani Isra'il* (The Children of Israel), *Sūrah al-Ghafir* is called *Al-Mu'min* (The Believer), *Sūrah Fussilat* is listed as *Ha Mim al-Sajdah: Fussilat* (Ha Mim The Prostration: Made Distinct), *Sūrah al-Shura* becomes *Ha Mim, Ayn, Sin, Qaf*, *Sūrah al-Qamar* is called *Iqtarabat*, *Sūrah al-Qalam* becomes *Nun wa al-Qalam*, *Sūrah al-Ma'arij* is listed as *Sa'ala Sa'ilun*, *Sūrah al-Insan* is called *al-Dahr*, *Sūrah al-Naba'* is named *Amma*, *Sūrah al-Takwir* is called *Kuwwirat*, *Sūrah al-Inshiqaq* becomes *Inshaqqat*, *Sūrah al-Inshirah* is called *A lam Nashrah*, *Sūrah al-Zilzal* is named *al-Zilzila*, *Sūrah al-Takathur* is listed as *Al-Hakum*, and *Sūrah al-Nasr* is called *Al-Fath*.

### ***The Method of Choosing Hadith***

It should be noted that the number of narrations in the commentary have been reported differently. In the manuscript printed in Najaf, there are 766 narrations, whereas the editor's manuscript contains 775 narrations. It should be said, however, that after mentioning only part of narration 81, the esteemed editor begins citing narration 82, even though it is apparent that the previous narration is incomplete. The second mistake is a numbering error. For example, after relating narration 509, number 511 is recorded. Additionally, it is not clear why two subsequent numbers are assigned to a single narration, i.e., 195 and 196, and narrations which follow the heading, 'with this chain of narration', are sometimes counted and sometimes not. Therefore, calculating the number of narrations in the book cannot be precise.

With regard to the chain of narration of the narrations, it should be said that, although almost chains of narration are provided for all the narrations in the book, there are, overall many defects and problems with them as they stand. The most frequent and simultaneously important defect which afflicts most of the chains of narration is *irsal*, or a break in the chain of narrators' names, which manifests itself in different ways. Sometimes it appears at the beginning of the chain (making the narration suspended (*mu'allaq*)),<sup>40</sup> sometimes in the middle (causing the narration to be disconnected (*munqati'*)),<sup>41</sup> and sometimes at the end of the chain (which blocks the narration).<sup>42</sup> Irrespective of the different names which have been given to such narrations<sup>43</sup> and the lack of precision in using these names, the important thing is that these names have no major effect on the state and status of these narrations. In other words, by whatever name we call them, the result will be the same – namely, the weakness of the narration. Now, if we add to this group the chain of transmission of the narrations, which is counted as a weakness by some, the results will be even worse.

The editor of the book writes in this regard:

We have said already that no one other than Hasakani had access to Furat al-Kufi's commentary, and of the features of the manuscript which he had, we have no information other than that it contained the chains of

narration and most of the cases which are cited in the manuscript of Hasakani from Furat al-Kufi's commentary are also recorded in our manuscript except for one case. However, all but some of the chains of narration at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the manuscript we have, have been omitted.<sup>44</sup> The manuscript of the commentary which was available and reliable for Majlisi (the same version which we have) was also missing the chains of narration. So, the manuscript Majlisi had is much like a summary of Furat al-Kufi's commentary presented by an unskilled person apparently not familiar with the scientific methodology of this discipline. Accordingly, it can be said that the manuscript Majlisi had is incomplete and disorganized, but the manuscript which we have, according to Abu al-Khayr Miqdad ibn Ali is composed by Abu al-Qasim 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Alawi of Furat. This chain of narration, which appears at the beginning of the book, is also mentioned at the end of it. Therefore, the introduction at the beginning of the book is apparently not written by Furat ibn Ibrahim, and there is no point, annotation or speech made by him in the book. As regards omitting the book's chains of narration, it is not clear when this unfortunate process began. On the one hand, if we look at the manuscript Hasakani had – which does contain the chains of narration – and also consider carefully the chains of narration in the manuscript of Furat al-Kufi's book which we have, and on the other hand, if we consider the history of the versions available today – the earliest of which can be traced back to five centuries ago – we will understand that the time period over which the changes and omissions of the chains of narration of the narrations of this commentary occurred may have been between the fifth and the tenth centuries.<sup>45</sup>

Some recent scholars also believe that the chains of narration were originally omitted by the narrator of the book for the sake of brevity and there is no evidence that the chains of narration were ever provided.<sup>46</sup> Looking carefully into the method applied in the present version shows us that the process of documentation of the chains of narration was as follows:

From the beginning of the book up until narration 51, with the exception of narrations 9 and 24 which are worded as *mu'an'anan* meaning incomplete chain, the chains of narrations are provided in their entirety.<sup>47</sup> From narration 52 onward, following the mention of the name 'Furat', the chains of narration have been provided along with the word 'transmitted'. This process continues until the end of *Sūrah Al 'Imran* (narration 87). At the beginning of *Sūrah al-Nisa'*, there is one narration with a complete chain of narration, then, from narrations 89 to 511, the term 'transmitted' is stated clearly in the chain of narration.<sup>48</sup> From narrations 512 to 577, the complete chains of narration appear once again. From narration 578 onward, the term 'transmitted' appears in the chains of narration and is repeated until the end.<sup>49</sup> Thus, of a total of 775 narrations contained in the book, the chains of narration of almost 150 narrations are given in a complete and uninterrupted form (almost 19%).

In some of the chains of narration, Furat al-Kufi's name is not mentioned.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, a substantial proportion of the narrations were transmitted by Ibn 'Abbas, and, in some cases, it is not clear how al-Kufi is linked to him in the chain.<sup>51</sup> A few of the narrations are transmitted through Abu Hurayrah<sup>52</sup> due to the fact that some of the other narrations have been transmitted through Ahl al-Sunnah.<sup>53</sup>

The other feature of this commentary is the repetition of some of the narrations.

### ***The Verses Which Have Been Commented On***

The verses of the *sūrahs* which al-Kufi follows up with one or more narrations are as follows:

- *al-Hamd*: verses 6 and 7 – 1 narration.
- *al-Baqarab*: verses 25, 26, 30, 33, 31, 37, 38, 40, 43, 82, 90, 98, 124, 138, 143, 177, 185, 189, 199, 207, 208, 210, 248, 249, 253, 265, 274 and 285; sometimes for the entire verse and sometimes for just part of it – nearly 39 narrations.

- *Al-‘Imran*: verses 15, 16, 18, 31, 33, 34, 37, 59–61, 103, 106, 112, 128, 143, 144, 153, 154, 155, 157, 172, 186 and 200 – nearly 38 narrations.
- *al-Nisa’*: verses 1, 29, 31, 36, 47, 48, 54, 55, 56, 59, 69, 80, 83, 119, 159 and 174 – 33 narrations.
- *al-Ma‘idab*: 3, 5, 11, 32, 37, 54, 55, 56, 67 and 87 – 35 narrations.
- *al-An‘am*: verses 28, 44, 45, 54, 82, 109, 112, 122, 124, 153, 158 and 160 – 14 narrations.
- *al-A‘raf*: verses 40, 44, 46, 65, 73, 85, 142, 145 and 172 – 18 narrations.
- *al-Anfal*: verses 1, 6, 11, 41, 42, 66 and 75 – 7 narrations.
- *al-Tawbah*: verses 1–12, 16, 17, 19–22, 100, 102, 111 and 119 – 32 narrations.
- *Yunus*: verses 15, 25, 32, 58 and 94 – 8 narrations.
- *Hud*: verses 7, 12, 17, 40, 50, 61, 84, 86, 98, 109, 113 and 116 – 21 narrations.
- *Yusuf*: verses 38, 76, 80, 100, 106 and 108 – 13 narrations.
- *al-Ra‘d*: verses 7, 11, 19, 28, 29 and 37 – 22 narrations.
- *Ibrahim*: verses 24, 27, 28, 35 and 37 – 10 narrations.
- *al-Hijr*: verses 40, 42, 47, 72, 75 and 87 – 9 narrations.
- *al-Nahl*: verses 16, 24, 32, 43, 68, 69, 89 and 90 – 11 narrations.
- *al-Isra’*: verses 26, 33, 41, 44, 46, 64, 65, 73 and 74 – 8 narrations.
- *al-Kahf*: verses 17 and 82 – 4 narrations.
- *Maryam*: verses 67, 85, 96 and 97 – 12 narrations.
- *Taba*: verses 25–35, 54, 61, 81, 82, 108, 111, 114, 124 and 128 – 11 narrations.

- *al-Anbiya'*: verses 7, 24, 69, 73, 87 and 103 – 6 narrations.
- *al-Hajj*: verses 19–24, 27, 40, 41, 45, 73, 75, 77 and 78 – 12 narrations.
- *al-Mu'minun*: verses 51, 57–61, 93–95 and 101 – 6 narrations.
- *al-Nur*: verses 35, 36, 40, 41, 52, 55 and 63 – 12 narrations.
- *al-Furqan*: verses 8, 9, 44, 54 and 63–76 – 7 narrations.
- *al-Shu'ara'*: verses 4, 100–102, 214, 218, 219 and 227 – 13 narrations.
- *al-Naml*: verses 60–64, 82, 89 and 90 – 6 narrations.
- *al-Qasas*: verses 5, 6, 44 and 46 – 8 narrations.
- *al-Ankabut*: verses 1, 2, 5, 6, 18, 43, 49 and 69 – 8 narrations.
- *al-Rum*: verses 4, 5, 30 and 38 – 7 narrations.
- *Luqman*: verse 14 – 1 narration.
- *al-Sajdah*: verses 18–20 and 24 – 7 narrations.
- *al-Ahzab*: verses 6, 30, 33, 56 and 72 – 19 narrations.
- *Saba'*: verse 46 – 4 narrations.
- *Fatir*: verses 32–35 and 41 – 6 narrations.
- *Yasin*: verses 13 and 14 – 3 narrations.
- *al-Saffat*: verses 24, 130, 143, 164 and 166 – 6 narrations.
- *Sad*: verses 28, 62, 63 and 64 – 4 narrations.
- *al-Zumar*: verses 9, 29, 30, 53, 56, 60 and 65 – 12 narrations.
- *al-Mu'min*: verses 7, 28 and 51 – 5 narrations.
- *Fussilat*: verses 1–5, 30 and 34 – 4 narrations.
- *al-Shura (Ha Mim 'Ayn Sin Qaf)*: verses 13, 23, 41, 42 and 52 – 21 narrations.



- *al-Zukhruf*: verses 19, 28, 41, 42, 57–59, 68–70 and 87 – 16 narrations.
- *al-Jathiyah*: verses 14–21 – 1 narration.
- *al-Ahqaf*: verses 13 and 15 – 1 narration.
- *Muhammad*: verses 15, 17 and 33 – 3 narrations.
- *al-Fath*: verses 2, 4, 10, 18, 25 and 29 – 5 narrations.
- *al-Hujarat*: verses 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13 – 12 narrations.
- *Qaf*: verses 19 and 24 – 9 narrations.
- *al-Dhariyat*: verses 5–9 and 36 – 3 narrations.
- *al-Tur*: verse 21 – 3 narrations.
- *al-Najm*: verses 1–4, 9, 32 and 56 – 8 narrations
- *al-Qamar*: verses 36, 50 and 55 – 3 narrations.
- *al-Rahman*: verses 19–22, 39, 46 and 66 – 6 narrations.
- *al-Waqi'ah*: verses 7–14 and 17–33 – 6 narrations.
- *al-Hadid*: verses 12, 21 and 28 – 3 narration.
- *al-Mujadilah*: verse 12 – 4 narrations.
- *al-Hasbr*: verses 7, 9, 10 and 20 – 7 narrations.
- *al-Mumtahanah*: verse 1 – 1 narration.
- *al-Saff*: verses 4, 9 and 14 – 3 narrations.
- *al-Jumu'ah*: verses 2, 9 and 11 – 3 narrations.
- *al-Munafiqun*: verse 8 – 1 narration.
- *al-Talaq*: verses 10 and 11.
- *al-Tabrim*: verse 4 – 10 narrations.
- *al-Mulk*: verse 27 – 5 narrations.

- *al-Qalam*: verses 1–6 – 5 narrations.
- *al-Haqqah*: verse 12 – 8 narrations.
- *al-Ma'arij*: verses 1 and 2 – 4 narrations.
- *al-Jinn*: verses 14–16 – 5 narrations.
- *al-Muddaththir*: verses 38–48 – 4 narrations.
- *al-Qiyamah*: verses 16 and 31–34 – 2 narrations.
- *al-Dahr*: verses 7, 8, 30 and 31 – 8 narrations.
- *al-Mursalat*: verse 48 – 1 narration.
- *al-Naba'*: verses 1–3 and 38 – 4 narrations.
- *al-Nazi'at*: verses 6 and 7 – 1 narration.
- *'Abasa*: verses 34, 35 and 36 – 1 narration.
- *al-Takwir*: verses 7, 8 and 9 – 6 narrations.
- *al-Mutaffifin*: verses 7–28 and 29–36 – 6 narrations.
- *al-Inshiqaq*: verse 8 – 1 narration.
- *al-Ghashiyah*: verses 2, 3, 4, 5 and 25 – 4 narrations.
- *al-Fajr*: verses 27–30 – 4 narrations.
- *al-Balad*: verses 1, 2, 11, 12 and 13 – 5 narrations.
- *al-Shams*: verses 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9 – 8 narrations.
- *al-Layl*: all verses – 4 narrations.
- *al-Duha*: verses 5–7 – 6 narrations.
- *al-Inshirah*: all verses – 5 narrations.
- *al-Tin*: all verses – 6 narrations.
- *al-Qadr*: all verses – 2 narrations.

- *al-Bayyinah*: verse 7 – 9 narrations.
- *al-Zalzalah*: verse 4 – 1 narration.
- *al-'Adiyat*: verses 1, 2 and 3 – 4 narrations.
- *al-Takathur*: verse 8 – 3 narrations.
- *al-'Asr*: verse 3 – 1 narration.
- *al-Kawthar*: verse 1 – 2 narrations.
- *al-Kafirun*: all verses – 1 narration.
- *al-Nasr*: all verses – 4 narrations.
- *al-Ikhlās*: all verses – 1 narration.
- *al-Falaq*: all verses – 1 narration.
- *al-Nas*: all verses – 1 narration.

## Notes

1. Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-'Alawi al-Shajari al-Zaydi al-Kufi, *Fadl Ziyarat al-Husayn*, ed. Sayyid Ahmad al-Husayni (Qum: Maktabat al-Mar'ashi, 1403), 50, 83. This agnomen has been mentioned twice in the book.
2. In Sayyid ibn Tawus' books, the name of Furat al-Kufi's grandfather has been cited as 'Al-Yaqin' and 'Al-Tahsin'.
3. There are reports on some books of Qur'anic exegesis by a number of the Imams' pupils; however, they are either lost or have become embedded within other works and need to be discovered by researchers.
4. There were some commentaries on the Qur'an before Furat al-Kufi's own commentary. However the only remaining historical record of them is their titles. As a result of invasions by various rulers, a huge part of Shi'ite heritage was damaged, and works completely have been destroyed. Some works are being recovered and restored by researchers. A lot of these sources, up to the third century, have been introduced in the

following book: Mudarrisi Tabataba'i, Husayn, *Mirath Maktub Shi'ah az seh Qarn Nokhustin*, vol. 1, trans. Sayyid Ali Qara'i and Rasul Ja'farian (Qum: Kitabkhaneh Takhassusi Tarikh Islam, 1383). Mudarrisi Tabataba'i, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi'ite Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1993 CE); Persian trans. Hashimi Zadpanah, (n, 1375).

5. One of his masters was 'Ubayd ibn Kathir (d. 294 AH). Husayn ibn Sa'id Ahwazi was his other master. Some contemporary researchers believe that there is no accurate date for Husayn ibn Sa'id's death. He is introduced as a pupil of Imam al-Hadi (as) in the following books: *Rijal al-Tusi*, ed. Jawad al-Qayyumi (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jami'at al-Modarrisin, 1415 AH), 385; Taqi al-Din al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Dawud al-Hilli, *Kitab al-rijal*, ed. Jalal al-Din al-Husayni (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1383/1342). Al-Tustari, Muhammad Taqi, *Qamus al-Rijal*, vol. 3, 3rd edition, (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islami, 1425 AH), 457. Since the demise of Imam al-Hadi (AS) took place in 254 AH, one can only surmise that Husayn ibn Sa'id lived some time either before or after this date. In this regard, see the following source: Mohibb 'Abdallah Muwahhidi, "Negahi beh Tafsir Furat Kufi", in *Ayeneypajubesh* (n, 1378), 34.
6. Meir M. Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis in Early Imami Shi'ism* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 29.

Bar-Asher relies on sources such as *Tanqib al-Maqal (Mamqani, Abdullah)*, *Rawdat al-Jannah*, *al-Fawa'id al-Radawiyyah and al-Dhari'ah*. His view about the year of the death of Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Fazari is correct, but he certainly has made a mistake regarding the date of Husayn ibn Sa'id's death because Agha Buzurg Tehrani has not said anything about the date of Husayn ibn Sa'id's death; rather what he deals with Furatal-Kufi and 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi's sharing the same date of death – 307 AH. See Agha Buzurg Muhammad al-Muhsin al-Tehrani al-Razi, *al-Dhari'ah ila Tasanif al-Shi'a*, vol. 4, 3rd edition (Beirut: Dar al-Adwa', 1403 AH/1983 CE), 298.

7. According to historical evidence, Imam Hasan al-'Askari(as) passed away in 260 AH. See Qarashi, Baqir Sharif, *Zindagi Imam Hasan 'Askari*, trans. Sayyid Hasan Islami, 5th edition (Qum: Daftar Intisharat Islami, 1382), 277-279. After the death of Imam Hasan al-'Askari (as), the minor occultation commenced, terminating in 329 AH. During this time, Shi'ite society was in such chaos and disturbance that the appearance of fourteen sects was reported in this period. See Al-Qummi al-Ash'ari, Sa'd ibn 'Abdallah al-

- Ash‘ari, *al-Maqalat wa al-Firaq* (Tehran: Mu‘assasat ‘Ata‘i, 1963 CE), 102.
8. Ali ibn Babawayh, *al-Imamah wa al-Tabsirah min al-Hayira*, ed. Muhammad Rida al-Husayni, 2nd edition (Beirut: Mu‘assasat Al al-Bayt li Ihya‘ al-Torath, 1412 AH/1992 CE).
  9. For an analytical and historical discussion on the matter, see the following article by the author: ‘Bazshenasi Andishe Ghuluww’, *Mutale‘at Islami*, no. 78 (Mashhad University, 1386), 115-120.
  10. The cooperation between the Zaydiyyah and the Imamiyyah shows a deep and widespread unity between them in some issues, like the necessity of combating an unjust system, the necessity of the clear designation of the Imams as guides after the Prophet, the belief in the infallibility of the Privileged Ones of the Cloak, commitment to divine justice and unity, the rejection of anthropomorphism, agreement on certain rules of practice, and, most importantly, agreement the sources of judgments and rules (the Qur‘an, consensus, and *hadiths* transmitted so widely as to be indubitable). All these factors prove the importance of their relations, for the widespread use of the narrations concerning the virtues of the Prophet’s Household, especially those of Imam ‘Ali (AS), in addition to using Sunni scholars’ *hadiths*, led to a wider use of the Prophetic heritage. See Sayyid Muhammad Rida al-Husayni al-Jalali, ‘al-Imamiyyah wa al-Zaydiyyah, Yadan bi Yad fi Himayat Turath Ahl al-Bayt’ in ‘*Ulum al-Hadith*, no. 12, year 6 (n, 1423 AH), 274-278; al-Sayyid Muhammad ibn Hamud al-‘Amdi, *al-Zaydiyyah wa al-Imamiyyah Janban ila Janb* (Qum: Markaz al-Abhath al-Aqa‘idiyyah, 1427 AH), 7.
  11. Ibid., narration 464, 339-340.
  12. Ibid., narration 536, 402.
  13. Ibid., about verse 23 of *Sūrah al-Shura*, narration 527, 395-397; regarding verse 33 of *Sūrah al-Ahzab*, narration 451 and nine subsequent narrations, 331-332.
  14. Ibid., narration 512, 382-384.
  15. Ibid., narration 620, 474-475.
  16. Ibid., narration 536, 402.
  17. Ibid., 31.

18. Ahmad Pakatchi, 'Saduq' in the *Great Islamic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, (n, 1369), 65.
19. Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i, *Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith wa Tafsil Tabaqat al-Ruwat*, 5th edition (Qum: Madinat al-'Ilm Publications, 1413 AH/1992 CE), vol. 6, p. 125 and vol. 14, p. 272.
20. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 92.
21. A significant example is the formation of Shi'a jurisprudence in the time of Imam al-Sadiq (as) and the reason is most definitely the political condition of the Shi'a.
22. Al-Tusi, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali, *Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat al-Rijal*, vol. 2, (Mashhad: Danshkadah Ilahiyat, Mashhad University, 1348), 724. Muhammad ibn Mas'ud al-'Ayyashi, *Tafsiral-'Ayyashi*, ed. Sayyid Hashim Rasuli Mahalati, vol. 1, (Tehran: al-Maktabatal-'Ilmiyya), 252. In this narration, and basically in all narrations, the word 'nas'(people) refers to the Ahl al-Sunnah.
23. Al-Husayni al-Jalali, Sayyid Muhammad Rida, 'al-Imamiyya wa al-Zaydiyya' in *'Ulum al-Hadith* (n, 1423 AH), no. 12, year 6, 277.
24. *Ibid.*, 274- 278.
25. The majority of narrations in *The Commentary of Furat al-Kufi* which are in an interpretive form are allocated in order to state the virtues of the Prophet's Household (as), while those narrations in al-Kufi's work which are related to the commentary and occasions of revelation are not many (nearly 19%).
26. It should be said that the commentary in its present form suffers from *irsal* (a break in the chain of narrators' names). This damage is widely seen in the book. However, according to some evidence from this commentary and other contemporary studies, all the narrations in the book, or at least the majority of them, do essentially have chains of transmission; however, they have been omitted for the sake of brevity, and consequently the vast majority of the narrations (more than 80%) lack first transmitters (*mursal*). On the other hand, a considerable number of the narrators of the book (almost 70%) are designated as unknown narrators, which, by itself, is another cause for the increase in the level of *irsal* in this book.
27. Subhi Salih, *Nahj al-Balaghah* (Tehran: Markaz al-Buhuth al-Islamiyyah, 1395 AH), sermon 231.

Kulayni, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub, *Tarjumeḥ Usul Kafi*, i, ed. Sadiq Hasanzadeh, vol. 2, (Qum: Nashr Salawat, 1383), 282-3.

Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 'Izz al-Din Abu Hamid, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balaghah*, ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, vol. 6, (Qum: Ayatollah Mar'ashi Library, 1337 AH), 129.

*The Commentary of Furat al-Kufi*, 54- 56 and 114-115.

28. Kulayni, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub, *Tarjumeḥ Usul Kafi*, , vol. 2, (n, d), 284, *hadith* 1051.
29. Ibid, p. 282, *hadith* 1048.
30. Sayyid Hidayat Jalili, 'Negahi digar beh Tafsir Athari', in '*Ulum al-Hadith*, no. 43, year 12, (n, 1386), 23.
31. Al-Tabataba'i, Muhammad Husayn, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* (Qum: Manshurat Jami'at al-Mudarrisin), vol. 2, p. 347; vol. 8, p. 290; vol. 16, p. 57.
32. Muwahhidi, 'Negahi beh Tafsir Furat Kufi', 45.
33. Al-Kufi, Furat ibn Ibrahim, *Tafsir Furat Kufi*, ed. Kazim al-Mahmudi, 1st edition (Tehran: Wizarat Irshad Islami, 1410 AH/1990 CE). This manuscript was edited by the Iraqi scholar Shaykh Kazim Mahmudi and was published by the Iranian Ministry of Islamic Guidance.
34. The editor used eight different manuscripts of the book and two published versions from Najaf and Iran: The manuscript of the Amir al-Mu'minin Library in Najaf (written in the early 14th century)  
 The manuscript of the Ayatullah Burujirdi Library [Mirza Nuri's manuscript], (written in 1083 and the best manuscript available)  
 The manuscript of Ahmad ibn Muhammad Rida al-'Alawi al-Husayni Khansari in the Najlah Library of Qum (written in 1326)  
 The manuscript of the Faydiyyah School (the early 11th century)  
 The manuscript of the Radawi Library of Mashhad (n.d.)  
 The manuscript of the Rawdati Library in Isfahan (9th or 11th century)

The manuscript of the Malik Library in Tehran (from 909)

The second manuscript of the Malik Library in Tehran (in the late period)

35. Apparently, earlier scholars did not possess this book except Al-Hasakani, who related either directly from Furat al-Kufi's book or via his own chain of narration back to al-Kufi himself.
36. The names of 126 of Furat al-Kufi's teachers have been mentioned; however, some of the names are repeated and others are not identified.
37. Most of the book's narrations are in this part.
38. Such as *Sūrah al-Inshirah and al-Qadr*.
39. Such as *Sūrah al-Layl, al-Dhuha, al-Tin, al-Bayyinah, al-Zalzala, al-'Adiyat, al-'Asr, al-Kawthar, al-Kafirun, al-Nasr, al-Ikhlās, al-Falaq, al-Nas*.
40. Al-Qasimi, Muhammad Jamal al-Din, *Qawā'id al-Tabdith min Funun Mustalah al-Hadith* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1353 AH), 123.  
Subhi Salih, *'Ulum al-Hadith wa Mustalahatuhu*, 18th edition (Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm li al-Malayin, 1991 CE), 224.  
Subhani, Ja'far, *Usul al-Hadith wa Ahkamuhu fi 'Ilm al-Dirayah*, 2nd Edition (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Imam al-Sadiq, 1419 AH), 69 and 105.
41. Subhani, *Usul al-Hadith*, 104-105.
42. Ibid., 101.
43. For different names given to such narrations, see Ibid., 102-105.
44. Ibid., 15.
45. *The Commentary of Furat al-Kufi*, 16.
46. Dawari, Muslim, *Usul 'Ilm al-Rijal bayn al-Nazariyyah wa al-Tatbiq*, ed. Muhammad 'Ali Salih al-Mu'allim (n, 1416 AH), 289;  
Al-Hibri, al-Husayn ibn al-Hakam ibn Muslim, *Tafsir al-Hibri*, ed. Sayyid Muhammad Rida al-Husayni al-Jalali (Beirut: Mu'assasat Al al-Bayt li Ihya' al-Turath, 1408 AH/1987 CE), 210. He has not referred to these clear pieces of evidence.



47. In all but a few cases in which the chains of narration are cited, only the first two or three narrators are mentioned by terms such as, 'They told us.' Furthermore, in order to relate the names of the narrators, the term 'an (from) is sometimes used, but this is different from 'transmitted' chains.
48. Narrations that are mentioned with complete chains of narration are as follows: 76, 83, 97, 99, 123, 124, 126, 130, 142, 150, 157, 171, 195, 196, 217, 221, 222, 228, 229, 236, 239, 241, 251, 261, 263, 264, 265, 266, 268, 278, 295, 302, 307, 308, 312, 313, 325, 326, 328, 336, 340, 344, 353, 356, 369, 370, 371, 378, 379, 380, 388, 389, 391, 393, 398, 399, 408, 418, 419, 420, 424, 426, 434, 446, 448, 449, 451, 452, 454, 480, 483, 486, 494, 495, 496, 500, 504, 506, 508, 509 (80 narrations in total).
49. In this section, the chains of narration were complete: 602, 609, 612, 615, 618, 619, 626, 629, 636, 640, 643, 644, 647, 651, 660, 661, 669, 674, 675, 677, 680, 685, 686, 687, 688, 698, 713, 719, 720, 724, 732, 733, 742, 743, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 762, 764, 768, 771, 773, 774, 775 (47 narrations in total).
50. Narration numbers 583, 587, 588, 589, 591, 592, 598, 603, 604, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 624, 626, 627, 630, 637, 634, 635, 638, 639, 641, 642, 666, 673, 677, 678, 680, 681, 682, 683, 686, 687, 691, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 700, 701, 703, 705, 706, 707, 727, 731, 735, 737, 738, 739, 741.
51. On pages 48, 49, 53, 57, 59, 60, 65 (2 times), 66, 69, 71 (2 times), 72, 77, 89, 90, 96, 98, 99, 101, 119, 120, 121, 122, 126, 127, 128, 129, 131 (2 times), 134, 135 (2 times), 142, 144, 158, 160, 165, 173, 174, 193, 207, 208 (3 times), 209, 221, 224, 248 (2 times) 249, 261, 273, 288 (3 times) 292, 297, 315 (2 times), 316, 318, 323, 327 (3 times), 328 (2 times), 331, 340, 343, 355 (3 times), 356, 359, 389, 390 (3 times), 391 (2 times), 403, 443, 451, 459, 463, 464, 468, 477, 479, 481, 483, 490, 491 (2 times), 495, 500, 512, 528, 529, 546, 562 (2 times), 569 (2 times), 570, 575, 584, 591, 613, 614, 617, 621 (113 times in total).
52. Narration no. 387, p. 287; no. 661, p. 503; no. 690, p. 539.
53. Ali ibn al-Hazur, narration no. 8, p. 50; Muhammad ibn Marwan al-Sa'di, no. 10, p. 51; Muhammad ibn al-Fudayl ibn Ghazwan, no. 31, p. 65; Ali ibn 'Abis, no. 44, p. 71. Muslim and Tirmidhi have mentioned narration no. 379 in their *Sihab*. 'Abd al-Aziz ibn 'Abd al-Samad al-Basri, no. 570, p. 433; 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Quddus and Musa ibn Musayyib in no. 563, p. 427.

