

## The Role of *Jarḥ* and *Ta'dīl* in Evaluating Hadith Authenticity and Preserving the Prophetic Tradition

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### Abstract

The preservation and safeguarding of the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), following the Qur'an, has been among the most significant challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah. The science of *Jarḥ* (discrediting) and *Ta'dīl* (accrediting) has played a pivotal role as a key instrument in this endeavor. This study aims to examine and analyze the function of the science of *Jarḥ wa Ta'dīl* in verifying the authenticity or falsity of Hadiths and the role of narrators in preserving the Prophetic tradition. The research follows a descriptive-analytical method and gathers and analyzes data through the study of legal and Hadith sources. The findings demonstrate that *Jarḥ* as a form of negative criticism and *Ta'dīl* as positive validation of narrators offer rigorous and scholarly criteria for assessing the reliability of narrations. Thus, this science has had a significant impact on refining the Hadith corpus and ensuring its authenticity. Furthermore, the article emphasizes the importance of scholars and Hadith specialists in formulating the principles of *Jarḥ wa Ta'dīl* and their role in safeguarding the Prophetic legacy. Ultimately, the study concludes that a profound understanding and proper application of the science of *Jarḥ wa Ta'dīl* is among the most essential means to ensure the soundness of Hadiths and the accurate transmission of the Prophet's message (peace be upon him) to future generations.

**Keywords:** *Jarḥ, Ta'dīl, Hadith Authenticity, Narrators, Preservation Of The Prophetic Tradition*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Epistemological Framework of Islam, after the Noble Qur'an, the Prophetic Sunnah (peace be upon him) occupies a foundational position. The noble Hadiths of the Prophet serve as the second principal source of Islamic law, playing a vital role in elucidating, interpreting, and implementing religious rulings. Since these Hadiths have been transmitted to the Muslim community through narrators, their authenticity and credibility fundamentally depend on the reliability or unreliability of the transmitters. Therefore, from the earliest centuries of Islam, great Hadith scholars and Muslim intellectuals paid special attention to rigorously examining the attributes and conditions of narrators. They established systematic and scholarly principles for distinguishing trustworthy narrators from untrustworthy ones—an endeavor that collectively came to be known as *the Science of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl*.

The science of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl* is a discipline dedicated to evaluating the integrity, precision, memory, and trustworthiness of Hadith narrators. Through this science, the acceptance or rejection of transmitted Hadiths becomes feasible. *Jarḥ* refers to the articulation of qualities that weaken a narrator, thereby rendering his narration unreliable, whereas *Ta'dīl* refers to affirming a narrator's uprightness and trustworthiness, resulting in the acceptance of his report. This science, acting as a precise filter, distinguishes sound Hadiths from rejected ones and enables the Muslim community to access an accurate understanding of the Prophetic tradition.

Given the critical and determinative role of this science in safeguarding the Prophetic heritage, the present study seeks—using a descriptive and analytical method—to investigate the function of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl* in assessing the authenticity of Hadiths. It also aims to elucidate the significance of this science in preserving the legacy of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and in establishing Islamic legal rulings on a sound and well-documented basis.

Considering that the Prophetic Hadiths are, after the Qur'an, the second fundamental source of Islamic legislation, their authenticity or inauthenticity plays a decisive role in understanding, deriving, and implementing religious rulings. As these Hadiths have been transmitted through successive generations by narrators, the credibility and reliability of those narrators are considered essential prerequisites for accepting or rejecting any narration. For this reason, Hadith scholars from the earliest Islamic centuries founded a systematic discipline known as *the Science of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl*. Through detailed evaluation of narrators' integrity, retention, memory, and honesty, this science enables scholars to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic Hadiths. The core issue addressed in this study is the examination of the role that *the Science of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl* plays in evaluating and measuring the authenticity of Prophetic Hadiths. The research aims to clarify how Hadith scholars, employing rigorous principles and criteria of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl*, endeavored to purify the Hadith corpus of the Muslim community and what role this science has played in the preservation, reinforcement, and establishment of the Prophetic tradition. The study also seeks to answer the question of how effectively the rules of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl* have served in filtering weak narrations and confirming reliable ones, and what standing this science holds within the broader discipline of Hadith studies.

This research answers the Questions:

What role has the science of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl* played in assessing the authenticity of Prophetic Hadiths (peace be upon him), and how has it contributed to a precise understanding of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)?

The present study, titled "*The Role of the Science of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl in Assessing the Authenticity of the Prophet's Hadiths (Peace Be Upon Him)*", occupies a distinctive position within Islamic sciences, as it directly addresses the credibility and authority of the Prophetic Sunnah—the second foundational source of Islamic law. The science of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl* serves as the primary tool for identifying narrators and evaluating their integrity and precision, thereby playing a fundamental role in the acceptance or rejection of Hadiths.

In the absence of sufficient understanding of this discipline, the risk of distortion in the comprehension of Hadiths—and consequently in the application of religious rulings—increases significantly. Therefore, accurate knowledge of the principles, terminology, and foundations of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl* is essential and vital for safeguarding the authenticity and integrity of the Prophetic tradition.

From the earliest centuries of Islam, the scholars of the Muslim ummah recognized the importance of this science and, through their tireless efforts, produced invaluable works that today serve as scholarly references for identifying reliable narrations. This study, by clarifying the status of this science, aims to examine its role in refining Prophetic Hadiths and preserving the soundness of Islamic teachings. In doing so, it contributes meaningfully to the reevaluation of one of the essential pillars of Hadith sciences.

In alignment with the article's title—"*The Role of the Science of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl in Assessing the Authenticity of the Prophet's Hadiths (Peace Be Upon Him)*"—and based on the content presented, the objectives of this research are outlined as follows:

To examine the role of the science of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl* in accurately understanding the Prophetic Sunnah (peace be upon him) and evaluating the authenticity of Hadiths by analyzing the characteristics and conditions of narrators.

The discipline of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl*—the science of narrator criticism—occupies a central position in the broader field of Hadith studies and is instrumental in safeguarding the authenticity of the Prophetic tradition. As a methodological foundation, it has received extensive scholarly attention throughout Islamic history, leading to the production of numerous classical and contemporary works that scrutinize the integrity, reliability, and precision of individual narrators. This literature review surveys key contributions in this field and identifies existing gaps, particularly within Persian-language academic discourse.

One of the earliest and most authoritative texts in this domain is *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* by Imām al-Bukhārī, a pioneering scholar of Hadith. This voluminous biographical dictionary documents the lives of thousands of narrators, presenting critical evaluations of both reliable and weak transmitters. Bukhārī's meticulous documentation reflects the foundational nature of this work in the development of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl and its enduring influence on subsequent Hadith scholars. Another seminal contribution is *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* by Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, which systematically compiles the assessments of earlier Hadith authorities. This text serves as a vital reference point for determining the scholarly standing of narrators based on documented testimonies rather than conjecture, thereby contributing to the objectivity and consistency of Hadith criticism.

In contrast to these broader compendia, several works adopt a more focused approach. Ibn Ḥibbān, in his renowned work *Al-Thiqāt*, exclusively identifies and authenticates trustworthy narrators, offering a positive appraisal of transmission chains. Conversely, Ibn 'Adī, in *Al-Kāmil fī al-Ḍu'afā'*, dedicates his effort to profiling weak and unreliable narrators, thereby contributing to the critical dimension of narrator verification. These complementary approaches underscore the dual nature of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl: affirmation and critique.

In the modern era, Dr. Maḥmūd Ṭaḥḥān offers a concise yet impactful treatment of the principles governing this science in his introductory text *Taysīr Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth*. This work is particularly valuable for contemporary students and researchers, as it synthesizes the foundational guidelines of narrator criticism and highlights their ongoing relevance in distinguishing authentic from fabricated reports.

Despite the richness of this Arabic corpus, a noticeable limitation persists in terms of accessibility and language. The majority of classical and contemporary works on Jarḥ and Ta'dīl remain untranslated and underrepresented in Persian-language academic literature. Existing Persian resources often lack the analytical depth required to engage younger scholars and students in the intricacies of this field. Furthermore, most extant works focus primarily on listing narrator names and verdicts without adequately exploring the epistemological and methodological implications of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl for Hadith authenticity and transmission.

In response to this lacuna, the present study seeks to offer a comprehensive and analytical investigation into the role of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl in Hadith evaluation. Unlike prior compilations, this research aims not only to document the mechanics of narrator appraisal but also to critically engage with its significance in preserving the integrity of the Prophetic Sunnah. Through descriptive and evaluative analysis, the study endeavors to provide Persian-speaking scholars and students with a structured and accessible framework to understand the historical development, key concepts, and contemporary relevance of this science.

In conclusion, while the field of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl boasts a rich intellectual heritage, its underrepresentation in Persian scholarship necessitates renewed academic engagement. This research attempts to bridge that gap, contributing to both the preservation of Hadith sciences and their transmission to future generations.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive-analytical research methodology, which is particularly well-suited for investigating conceptual and historical subjects within Islamic sciences, such as the discipline of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl*. In this approach, relevant information is first systematically collected from authoritative sources, and then analyzed through critical, logical, and academic reasoning. The descriptive aspect of the method allows the researcher to identify and present the key concepts, figures, and historical developments related to the science of narrator criticism, while the analytical dimension facilitates a deeper examination of how this science functions in

assessing the authenticity of Hadiths. The data collection primarily relies on library research, utilizing a wide range of sources including canonical Hadith collections, foundational works of Hadith criticism such as *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* by al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Al-Thiqāt* by Ibn Ḥibbān, and *Al-Kāmil fī al-Ḍu'afā'* by Ibn 'Adī, as well as contemporary academic texts like *Taysīr Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* by Dr. Maḥmūd Ṭaḥḥān. In addition, scholarly articles, digital sources, and trusted websites—both domestic and international—are consulted to ensure a comprehensive and balanced perspective. This methodological framework allows the researcher to engage with classical and modern materials in a structured way, enabling the clear articulation of the role, criteria, and implications of *Jarḥ* and *Ta'dīl* in preserving the integrity of the Prophetic tradition. It also facilitates a critical engagement with both theoretical principles and practical applications of the science, thus helping to fill a notable gap in Persian academic literature.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Conceptual Analysis of Jarḥ and Ta'dīl of Hadith Narrators

The critical examination (*Jarḥ* and *Ta'dīl*) of Hadith narrators has been pursued since the time of the Companions, the Followers (Tābi'ūn), and their successors. Throughout Islamic history, scholars have shown persistent dedication to preserving and protecting the Hadiths by verifying their chains of transmission (*isnād*). The sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have reached us through uninterrupted chains of narrators. The memorization of Hadiths in hearts, their documentation in manuscripts, and the attribution of reports to the Prophet have all relied on the scrutiny of their *isnād* chains. For this reason, the science of *Jarḥ and Ta'dīl*—which involves the critique and assessment of Hadith narrators—was established as a branch of *'ilm al-rijāl* (biographical evaluation), primarily for scrutinizing Hadith transmissions.

To begin with, it is necessary to define the terms *Jarḥ* and *Ta'dīl* and then refer to the general framework of the subject.

#### Lexical Definition of Jarḥ:

The word *Jarḥ* has multiple meanings, including bodily injury and verbal insult (فیروز آبادی، ابو طاهر محمد بن يعقوب، 1426: 34). In the Qur'an, *Jarḥ* is used to mean a wound caused by weapons, while *ijtirāḥ* denotes acquiring or committing (ابولوی، امین، 1418).

#### Technical Definition in Hadith Sciences:

In Hadith terminology, *Jarḥ* refers to criticism directed at the narrator's integrity (*'adālah*), precision (*ḍabṭ*), or both—resulting in the non-acceptance of their narration (اعظمی، محمد ضیاء الرحمان، 1403: 123).

#### Lexical Definition of Ta'dīl:

*Ta'dīl*, derived from the Arabic root *'adl*, linguistically means “to straighten” or “to make just,” and is the antonym of oppression and injustice (فیروز آبادی، ابو طاهر محمد بن يعقوب، 1426: 45).

#### Technical Definition in Hadith Terminology:

Among Hadith scholars, *Ta'dīl* refers to affirming the narrator's integrity (*'adālah*) and is evidence of their eligibility for their narrations or testimony to be accepted. In the context of Hadith narrator evaluation, *Ta'dīl* denotes *tauthīq* (declaration of reliability), which includes both justice and precision—two necessary attributes for a narrator's report to be considered valid (اعظمی، محمد ضیاء الرحمان، 1403: 129).

#### Types of Jarḥ: Absolute and Conditional

1. **Absolute Jarḥ:** This is when a narrator is generally described with a term of *Jarḥ* without being qualified or restricted to a specific circumstance. In such a case, the narrator is considered flawed in all situations.

- 2. Conditional Jarḥ:** Here, the *Jarḥ* is restricted to a particular context—for instance, the narrator may be criticized for narrations from a specific teacher or group. In this case, the narrator is only considered flawed concerning that specific context, not universally. For example, Ibn Ḥajar in *al-Taqrīb* remarks about Zayd ibn al-Ḥabbāb (from whom Muslim transmitted Hadith): “He is truthful but errs in Prophetic Hadith.” Thus, his narrations from al-Thawrī are considered weak, though not necessarily from others (1972:78, عثمانى، ظفر أحمد).
- Likewise, the author of *al-Khulāṣah* notes about Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Ayyāsh that Imām Aḥmad, Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn, and al-Bukhārī considered him trustworthy in narrations from the people of al-Shām but weakened him in narrations from the people of al-Ḥijāz. Hence, his narrations from al-Ḥijāz are deemed weak, but not those from al-Shām (عسقلانى، أحمد، بن علي به حجر, n.d.):

### Gradations of Jarḥ Terminology

The criticisms leveled against Hadith narrators come in varying degrees. The terms used to express these levels are as follows:

- 1. Mild Criticism (Talyīn):** This is the lightest form of *Jarḥ*, using expressions like “*layyin al-ḥadīth*” (soft in narration) or “*fīhi maqāl*” (there is some discussion about him). Ibn Abī Ḥātim states that when someone is described as *layyin al-ḥadīth*, it means his narration is written down but subject to scrutiny and used only in supporting reports and corroborations. Writing down a narrator’s Hadith implies it can be used to reinforce or supplement other narrations (78 :1403, محمد ضياء الرحمان, اعظمى, Hamzah ibn Yūsuf al-Sahmī asked Imām al-Dāraquṭnī about the meaning of “*layyin al-ḥadīth*”. He replied: “He is not discarded or completely rejected, but he has a flaw that prevents him from being considered fully just.”
- 2. Moderate Criticism:** This includes expressions implying the narrator’s report is not relied upon, such as “*lā yuḥtaju bihi*” (he is not used as evidence), “*da‘īf*” (weak), or “*lahu manākīr*” (he reports oddities) (1418:45, ابولاوى، امين).
- 3. Stronger Criticism:** These terms indicate that the narrator’s Hadith is not even written down, such as “*lā yuktabu ḥadīthuhu*” (his narration is not to be recorded), “*lā taḥillu al-riwāyah ‘anhu*” (it is impermissible to narrate from him), “*da‘īf jiddan*” (very weak), or “*wāhin bi-marrah*” (extremely feeble) (45 :1360, جمال الدين, قاسمى).
- 4. Accusation of Lying:** Some terms indicate the narrator is accused of lying, such as “*muttāham bi-l-kadhib*” (accused of lying), “*yasriqu al-ḥadīth*” (steals Hadith), “*matrūk al-ḥadīth*” (abandoned), or “*laysa bi-thiqah*” (not trustworthy) (بغدادى، أحمد بن علي الخطيب, 1406:80).
- 5. Certainty of Lying or Deceit:** These are terms confirming the narrator is a liar or has disgraceful traits, such as “*kadhhab*” (liar), “*dajjāl*” (deceiver), “*waḍḍā’*” (fabricator), or “*yakdhib*” (he lies).
- 6. Extreme Expressions of Fabrication:** These are the strongest terms indicating extreme fabrication, such as “*akdhab al-nās*” (the most deceitful of people), “*ilayhi al-muntahā fī al-kadhib*” (the ultimate liar), or “*huwa rukn al-kadhib*” (he is a pillar of lies) (طحان، محمود, 130 :1414).

### Rulings on the Levels of Jarḥ Terminology

- Regarding narrators categorized under the first two levels of *Jarḥ* terminology, their Hadiths are not cited as authoritative evidence; however, their narrations are recorded for consideration. That is, their Hadiths can be used for corroborating and supporting other narrations. This ruling applies to narrators of both levels, although those in the second level are considered weaker than those in the first.
- As for narrators falling into the remaining four levels of *Jarḥ*, their Hadiths are neither relied upon for evidence nor used to support or corroborate other narrations. These

narrations are considered unacceptable even as subsidiary evidence (*shawāhid* or *mutāba'āt*) (1406:95, أحمد بن علي الخطيب, بغدادى)

### Conditions for Accepting Jarḥ

There are five essential conditions for the acceptance of *Jarḥ*:

1. The *Jarḥ* must be made by an upright ('*ādil*) individual. Therefore, it is not accepted from a sinful person (*fāsiq*).
2. The person making the *Jarḥ* must be intellectually capable and astute; thus, it is not accepted from someone unintelligent or frivolous.
3. The *Jarḥ* must be issued by someone familiar with the causes that justify criticism. A person unfamiliar with the reasons that render a narrator defective cannot offer acceptable *Jarḥ*.
4. The cause of *Jarḥ* must be explicitly stated. Therefore, ambiguous criticism—such as merely saying, “He is weak” or “His narration is rejected”—is not valid. The reason for criticism must be specified to clarify the defect, since a narrator may be criticized for a reason that does not merit rejection. This is the opinion held by the majority of scholars. However, al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar considered even ambiguous *Jarḥ* to be acceptable—except when the narrator's uprightness is well established, in which case *Jarḥ* is not accepted unless the reason is clearly explained. This latter opinion is preferred, especially if the critic (*jāriḥ*) is among the prominent scholars of Hadith). (1430:78, محمد بن صالح, ابن عثيمين)
5. *Jarḥ* is not accepted against those whose uprightness has been affirmed by widespread transmission (*tawātur*) and whose leadership is widely recognized—such as Nāfi', Shu'bah, Mālik, and al-Bukhārī. Criticism of such figures is rejected (1388:3, محمد بن عبد الرحمن, سخاوى)

### Types of Ta'dīl of Hadith Narrators

*Ta'dīl* (validation of narrators) is divided into two types:

1. Absolute Ta'dīl:  
This refers to the unqualified description of a narrator as being upright, without limitation to specific circumstances. Such an endorsement implies the narrator is considered reliable in all contexts (178 :1405, سيوطى, جلال الدين, عبدالرحمن بن ابي بكر)
2. Conditional Ta'dīl:  
This refers to validating a narrator only with respect to specific narrations or contexts—for example, saying “his narrations from such-and-such a shaykh are acceptable.” In this case, the narrator is deemed trustworthy only in relation to that particular individual or group. For example, if it is said, “He is trustworthy in narrating from al-Zuhrī,” then only those narrations are accepted. However, if this restriction is intended only to refute opposing views that consider him weak in those narrations, it does not preclude him from being reliable in other cases as well (178:1405, سيوطى, جلال الدين, عبدالرحمن بن ابي بكر)

### Levels of Ta'dīl Terminology

The terminology of *Ta'dīl* is categorized into six levels:

1. Highest Level – Expressions that indicate the utmost reliability, such as: “*Awṭāq al-nās*” (the most trustworthy of people), “*A'dil al-nās*” (the most just of people), or “*Athbat al-nās*” (the most precise of people). These are often in the *af'al* superlative form and indicate emphasis and exaggeration in validation. An example is the statement by Ibn Ma'in: “*A'thbat al-nās fī al-Zuhrī Mālik wa Ma'mar wa Yūnus*”—“The most reliable transmitters from al-Zuhrī are Mālik, Ma'mar, and Yūnus.” Thus, narrations from al-Zuhrī through these three are considered stronger than those transmitted by others (179–178 :1405, سيوطى, جلال الدين, عبدالرحمن بن ابي بكر)
2. Second Level – Terms that mention one or two traits with strong emphasis, such as: “*Thiqah thiqah*” (trustworthy, trustworthy), “*ḥāfiẓ*”, “*ḥujjah*”, or “*thiqah ḥujjah*” (trustworthy and a conclusive authority).
3. Third Level – General phrases of *Ta'dīl* without emphasis, such as: “*Thiqah*” or “*ḥujjah*” (1388 :231, محمد بن عبد الرحمن, سخاوى)
4. Fourth Level – Terms indicating reliability and praise, but without implying strong precision or mastery, such as: “*Ṣadūq*” (very truthful), “*maḥallahu al-ṣidq*” (a place of truthfulness), or “*lā ba'sa bihi*” (no harm in him). These terms do not, according to the majority of *Jarḥ* and *Ta'dīl* scholars, guarantee a narrator's precision. However, Ibn Ma'in considered “*lā ba'sa bihi*” to indicate reliability. Ibn Abī Ḥātim explains that if it is said “*ṣadūq*,”

“*maḥallahu al-ṣidq*,” or “*lā ba’sa bihi*,” it implies the narrator’s Hadiths are to be examined further for accuracy, as these terms alone do not affirm the conditions of precision and retention (1388 :231, سخاوی، محمد بن عبدلرحمن).

5. Fifth Level – Expressions that neither confirm nor deny a narrator’s reliability, such as: “*Shaykh*” (a scholar) or “*ruwīya ‘anhu al-nās*” (people narrated from him).
6. Sixth Level – Terms that suggest the narrator is near to being criticized, such as: “*Ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*” (acceptable in Hadith) or “*yuktabu ḥadīthuhu*” (his narration is recorded). Ibn Abī Ḥātim says: when it is said “*ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*,” it means the narrator’s reports are acceptable only as supporting evidence. Abū Ja’far Aḥmad ibn Sinān relates that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Maḥdī, when evaluating narrators with minor weakness but some level of truthfulness, would describe them as “*ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*” (1388 :231, سخاوی، محمد بن عبدلرحمن).

### Rulings on the Levels of Ta’dīl Terminology

- A) Regarding the first three levels of Ta’dīl terminology, the narrations of such narrators are accepted and relied upon as authoritative sources, even though some may be stronger than others.
- B) Concerning the fourth and fifth levels, the narrations of these narrators are not relied upon for legal evidence. However, their Hadiths are recorded and may be considered with caution. That is, one must exercise deliberation and precaution in accepting their narrations until their precision and accuracy become evident. This ruling applies to both fourth- and fifth-level narrators, even though those of the fifth level are considered lower in status than those of the fourth.
- C) As for narrators belonging to the sixth level, their narrations are not considered as authoritative evidence. Rather, their Hadiths are used solely as supporting or corroborative evidence (shawāhid or mutāba’āt) (أحمد بن علي به حجر, عسقلاني، n.d.).

### Conditions for Accepting the Ta’dīl of a Hadith Narrator

There are four essential conditions for the acceptance of Ta’dīl (validation of a narrator): The Ta’dīl must be issued by an upright (‘ādil) individual; thus, the validation made by a sinner (fāsiq) is not acceptable.

The person issuing Ta’dīl must be intellectually discerning. Therefore, it is not accepted from someone naïve or easily deceived by appearances.

The validator must be familiar with the conditions and criteria that warrant Ta’dīl; validation issued by someone unaware of the traits necessary for accepting or rejecting narrators is not considered valid.

Ta’dīl cannot be applied to individuals known for blatant lying, open immorality, or other qualities that render their narrations unacceptable (131 :1436, صبحی، صالح).

### Rulings on Ambiguous Ta’dīl and Jarḥ

#### A. Ambiguous Ta’dīl:

This refers to validating a narrator without specifying the reason or evidence behind the validation. According to the correct and widely accepted view among Hadith scholars, Ta’dīl issued by senior authorities in Hadith, even if lacking explanation, is acceptable. This is because the causes and indicators of a narrator’s reliability are numerous and may not always be itemized due to the complexity and depth of individual evaluation : 1414 , (طحان، محمود . . 135).

#### B. Ambiguous Jarḥ:

This refers to criticizing a narrator without stating the reason for the criticism. Among Hadith scholars, such Jarḥ is not accepted, as valid Jarḥ must be explained and substantiated. Given that scholars differ in their bases for Jarḥ, and that one scholar’s basis may stem from personal judgment that might not constitute valid criticism, the reason for the Jarḥ must be clearly stated and justified (Qāsimī, 136 AH, p. 67).

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ affirmed that this principle is firmly established in Islamic jurisprudence and legal theory: a valid Jarḥ must be clearly explained. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baḡhdādī also emphasized that Jarḥ is acceptable only when the cause is explicitly mentioned and substantiated (ابن صلاح، عثمان عبدالرحمن , 96:1404).

**Conflict between Jarḥ and Ta'dīl: Cases and Rulings**

Sometimes, a narrator is described in such conflicting terms that one statement leads to the acceptance of his narrations, while another leads to their rejection. For example, some scholars may describe a narrator as trustworthy (thiqah), while others label him weak (ḍa'īf). In cases where both Jarḥ and Ta'dīl exist concerning the same narrator, there are two main viewpoints:

- A. The accepted and widely authoritative view is that Jarḥ takes precedence—provided it is clearly explained and substantiated. This is because the scholar validating the narrator may have done so based on outward appearances or general reputation, while the critic may have had access to more specific and concealed flaws that affected the narrator's credibility (طحان، محمود، . 1414:134)
- B. Another opinion holds that if the number of scholars validating the narrator exceeds those criticizing him, Ta'dīl should take precedence. However, this view is considered weak and unreliable by the majority of Hadith scholars (1414:134 , . محمود، طحان)

**Cases of Conflict between Jarḥ and Ta'dīl**

According to several Hadith scholars, conflicts between *Jarḥ* (criticism) and *Ta'dīl* (validation) are not without the following four possible scenarios:

1. Both Jarḥ and Ta'dīl are ambiguous: that is, neither the cause for the criticism nor for the validation has been explicitly stated. In this case, *Jarḥ* takes precedence over *Ta'dīl*.
2. Both Jarḥ and Ta'dīl are explicit: that is, both the reason for criticism and validation are explained. In such a case, *Jarḥ* is preferred unless the validator claims that the reason for *Jarḥ* has ceased to exist or has been resolved. If so, then *Ta'dīl* is given preference, as the validator possesses greater knowledge of the narrator's updated status.
3. Ta'dīl is ambiguous, but Jarḥ is explicit: here, the criticism is prioritized, because the critic has provided more information and insight.
4. Jarḥ is ambiguous, but Ta'dīl is explicit: in this situation, *Ta'dīl* is preferred over the *Jarḥ*, since it is substantiated, while the *Jarḥ* remains vague. (ابن صلاح، عثمان عبدالرحمن، 87 :1404)

**Major Causes of Criticism (Jarḥ) of Hadith Narrators**

The intent behind discrediting (*ta'n*) a narrator is to evaluate and critique the narrator's integrity (*'adālah*) and precision (*ḍabṭ*) as assessed by Hadith critics. When flaws or deficiencies are observed in either of these two attributes, the narrator is subject to criticism. The primary causes that lead to such criticism are ten in number: five relate to a narrator's *'adālah* (uprightness), and five pertain to their *ḍabṭ* (accuracy in transmission). (طحان، محمود، . 1414:135)

Causes related to the narrator's uprightness (*'adālah*):

- a. Lying (*kādhīb*)
- b. Accusation of lying
- c. Open sinfulness (*fiṣq*) — acting contrary to divine commands
- d. Innovation (*bid'ah*)
- e. Being unknown (*majhūl*)
- f. Causes related to the narrator's precision (*ḍabṭ*):
- g. Frequent errors
- h. Weak memory
- i. Carelessness and inattentiveness
- j. Excessive delusions and imaginations
- k. Contradicting the narrations of reliable and trustworthy transmitters (طحان، محمود، . 1414:136)

**Conditions for Acceptance and Validation of a Narrator's Hadith**

According to the majority of leading Hadith authorities, there are two fundamental and essential conditions for accepting a narrator:

1. Integrity
 

This means the narrator must be:

  - a. A Muslim, mature, and sane
  - b. Free from acts of *fiṣq* (open sin) and immorality

- c. Not involved in conduct that undermines manliness or dignity  
(قاسمی، جمال الدین، 1360:79)
2. Precision and Accuracy (*dabṭ wa itqān*):

This entails that the narrator must:

- Not contradict the reports of reliable and trustworthy narrators
- Not have poor memory
- Not be prone to frequent mistakes
- Be careful and attentive in acquiring Hadith
- Not be characterized by excessive delusions

The integrity (*‘adālah*) of a narrator is confirmed in one of two ways:

- Through explicit *ta‘dīl* by recognized authorities in Hadith science
- Through widespread and well-known reputation for righteousness among the scholarly community—when both specialists and laypeople praise his honesty and virtue. Such individuals do not require explicit *ta‘dīl* as proof.

Examples include renowned Imams such as:

- Abū Ḥanīfah
- Mālik
- al-Shāfi‘ī
- Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal
- Sufyān al-Thawrī
- Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah
- al-Awzā‘ī

—whose credibility and reputation are firmly established and universally acknowledged.

As for precision (*dabṭ*), it is determined by comparing a narrator’s reports with those of well-known and reliable narrators. If the narrator’s reports consistently align with theirs, he is considered accurate (*dābiṭ wa mutqin*) in transmission. (عسقلانی، أحمد بن علی به حجر، n.d.)

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussions presented in this study, it is evident that the science of *Jarḥ* (criticism) and *Ta‘dīl* (validation) constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of Hadith studies and holds a foundational position in the evaluation and authentication of the Prophetic traditions (*Ahadith*) of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Since Hadiths, after the Qur'an, represent the second most important source of Islamic law, their credibility inherently depends on the reliability of their narrators.

This research demonstrated that scholars of Hadith have meticulously examined the characteristics of narrators based on rigorous scientific principles. By employing the concepts of *Jarḥ* and *Ta‘dīl*, they established a systematic framework to distinguish authentic Hadiths from weak ones. The precise delineation of the gradations of *Jarḥ* and *Ta‘dīl*, along with the necessary conditions for accepting or rejecting narrations, illustrates the scientific depth and practical rigor of this discipline.

Furthermore, it was clarified that *Jarḥ* and *Ta‘dīl* operate in both absolute and conditional dimensions and utilize a six-tier classification system that plays a critical role in determining the degree of reliability of narrators. Hadith scholars formulated explicit rules to differentiate between Hadiths that are authoritative (*muḥṭāj*), those that are merely recorded (*maktūb*), and those that serve only as corroborative evidence (*shāhid*). This scholarly differentiation has not only preserved the Prophetic tradition but also prevented distortion and misinterpretation within religious texts.

Ultimately, it can be concluded that the science of *Jarḥ* and *Ta‘dīl* plays an indispensable role in safeguarding the authenticity of the Prophetic Sunnah, protecting the sources of Islamic legislation, and providing an accurate and well-substantiated understanding of the Hadith corpus.

Familiarity with this discipline is essential and unavoidable for every researcher in Islamic sciences, as well as for all those engaged in the fields of jurisprudence and Hadith studies.

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