

## **Imam Hafs b. Sulayman Abu ‘Umar al-Asadi: A Critical Comparative Analysis of his Qur’anic and Hadith Narration**

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### **Abstract**

This research examines the narration of Imam Hafs, whose popularity is widespread among Muslims due to his expertise in the recitation of the Qur’an. Specifically, the paper aims to study the criticism and authenticity of Imam Hafs’ narration, focusing on critiques by scholars such as al-Daraqutni and Yahya ibn Ma‘in, who categorized his narration as weak and unreliable. They argue that he lacked sharp memory, among others deficiencies. The central question addressed in this study is whether the statement regarding the weakness of his narration is general or specifically limited to his Hadith narrations, or if it also concerns his Qur’anic recitations on the authority of ‘Asim ibn Abi al-Najud. This study employs a critical comparative method, utilizing analytical, inductive, and comparative approaches in accordance with the science of Hadith criticism (al-Jarh wa al-Ta’dil) to determine the views of Hadith scholars about Hafs’ narrations in both the Qur’an and Hadith. The views of scholars were collected, reviewed, and comparatively analyzed, with special consideration given to opinions supported by substantial evidence. The study concluded That Imam Hafs is universally recognized as a reliable authority in Quranic recitation. While

critiques of his Hadith narration exist, they stem from his primary focus on Quran recitation, leaving limited scope for mastery in Hadith. This does not impact his esteemed status or the widespread adoption of his recitation today, as scholars across disciplines unanimously affirm his reliability in Quranic readings and teaching.

**Keywords:** Imam Hafis; Qur'anic recitation; Hadith criticism; *al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*; scholar critiques

## **Introduction**

Mastering the recitation of the Qur'an is a hallmark of Muslim societies. The Qur'an itself is meticulous in its guidance on various aspects related to script, pronunciation, recitation, recitation, and writing. Therefore, the ten canonical Qira'at represent a significant aspect of diversity and richness in Quranic recitation. Each Qira'a is attributed to one of the ten Imams, while each Riwaya is associated with their narrators. For example, Qira'a of Asim narrated by Hafis or Qira'a of Nafi narrated by Warsh. These Qira'at, transmitted mutawatir from the Prophet PBUH via Jibreel (AS), include:

- i. Nafi' al-Madani: Narrators: Qalun, Warsh
- ii. Ibn Kathir al-Makki: Narrators: Al-Bazzi, Qunbul
- iii. Abu Amr al-Basri: Narrators: Al-Duri, Al-Susi
- iv. Ibn Amir ash-Shami: Narrators: Hisham, Ibn Dhakwan
- v. Asim al-Kufi: Narrators: Shu'bah, Haf
- vi. Hamzah al-Kufi: Narrators: Khalaf, Khallad
- vii. Al-Kisai al-Kufi: Narrators: Al-Layth, Hafis Al-Duri
- viii. Abu Ja'far al-Madani: Narrators: Isa bin Wardan, Sulaiman bin Jammaz
- ix. Ya'qub al-Basri: Narrators: Ruways, Rawh
- x. Khalaf al-Ashir: Narrators: Ishaq, Idris

Today, the Qira'a of Nafi' (Riwaya of Warsh or Qalun) is prevalent in North Africa, such as Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, while Asim's Qira'a via Hafis is dominant in the Eastern Islamic world, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi, Egypt, the Indian subcontinent, and Turkey. Imam Hafis bin Sulayman (d. 180 AH/796AD) the author of the famous narration of the Qur'anic recitations. He became renowned for his endurance and

performance. However, some prominent scholars in the science of Hadith criticism have questioned his reliability and the authenticity of his narrations. They have even classified his narrations as unauthentic, which contrast with his recognized expertise and mastery of in Qur'anic narration. There is an urgent need to review the opinions of Hadith scholars regarding the authentication of Imam Hafs, as discussed for example, by Ghanim Kadduri, Hafs bin Sulaiman al-Asadi: Narrator of Asim's Reading, Between Criticism and Modification, and Yahya bin 'Abdullah al-Shihri in Hafs bin Sulayman al-Muqri' and His Narrations: Between Acceptance and Rejection.

It is crucial to consider such arguments raised by these scholars just to determine whether the criticism of Hafs is absolute or restricted solely to his narration of Hadith. This examination includes assessing whether it is valid to differentiate between his Qur'anic and Hadith narrations and understanding the impact on such criticism on his Qur'anic narration based on Asim's authority. This necessitates a thorough comparative study, presenting the opinions of Hadith critics and their methodologies in Hadith criticism (*al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*), alongside contemporary researchers' writings. By discussing and weighing these opinions according to established principles, the study seeks to arrive at a fair assessment of Imam Hafs. The following sections will first introduce Imam Hafs ibn Sulayman, then examine the opinions of the scholars of *al-Jarh* regarding his Hadith narration, explore the reasons for discrepancies in his narration, and finally, evaluate the status of his Qur'anic narration.

### **Imam Hafs bin Sulayman**

Hafs bin Sulaiman, nicknamed Abu 'Umar, was born around ninety years after the Hijra. He was known for his expertise in the sale of clothing.<sup>1</sup> Hafs stayed with Imam Asim, his mother's husband, from whom he learned Qur'anic Studies. He also studied Hadith from esteemed Hadith scholars such as 'Abd al-Rahman al-Suddi, Ayyub al-Sakhtiyani, Thabit al-Banani, 'Abdullah bin

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<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim Mustafa et al., *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit* (Cairo: Arabic Language Academy, 1972), 1:45, entry "al-Bazz: A type of clothing and weapon."

Yazid Al-Nakha'i, among others.<sup>2</sup> Hafs had many students, too numerous to count. Among his most prominent students who spread his narration and understood the methods of the narration of Imam Hafs are 'Amr bin al-Sabah<sup>3</sup> and 'Ubayd bin al-Sabah<sup>4</sup>.

Scholars differed as to whether they were full brothers or not, and some of them deviated and said that they were one, but Imam Abu Amr al-Dani chose that they were full brothers.<sup>5</sup> Imam Hafs studied in Baghdad and Mecca, and his recitation spread to this day, becoming the most famous and widespread in the world, due to his mastery and control over Asim's recitation, says Abu Hashim al-Rifa'i<sup>6</sup>, "Hafs was the most common reading of people about Asim's recitation, and therefore many Imams of recitation and Hadith preferred the narration of Hafs on the authority of Asim over the narration of Shu'bah Asim". Yahya bin Ma'in<sup>7</sup> says, "The correct narration narrated on the authority of Asim is the narration of Abu 'Umar Hafs bin Sulayman. Hafs died in the year (d. 180AH/796AD). The correct view was what said to be between eighty and ninety, and they are the ones who mentioned that he died of the plague in the year (130AH/747AD), because that person was Hafs bin Sulayman al-Manqari, one of Ayyub al-Sakhtiani's peers, and died long ago, so it is as if it was a misprint against them."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Yusuf bin Al-Zaki Abdul Rahman Abu Al-Hajjaj Al-Mizzi, *Tahtheeb Al-Kamal*, ed. Bashir Awad Maarouf (Beirut, Al-Resala Foundation, 1992), 7:11.

<sup>3</sup> He is Amr bin Al-Sabah bin Subaih, Abu Hafs Al-Baghdadi, d. 221 AH, the blind man, the perfect one, mentioned by Imam Al-Zahabi, among the scholars of the sixth class of memorizers of the Qur'an, and counted by Imam Ibn al-Jazari, among the scholars of readings. Muhammad Muhammad Muhammad Salem Muhaisen, *Dictionary Memorization of the Qur'an throughout History* (Beirut: Dar Al-Jeel, 1992), 466.

<sup>4</sup> He is: Ubaid bin Al-Sabah bin Subaih Al-Kufi. He died in the year 219AH, then al-Baghdadi. Al-Zahabi mentioned him among the scholars of the sixth class of memorizers of the Qur'an, as mentioned by Ibn al-Jazari, one of the scholars of readings. *Ibid.*, 407-408.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Yusuf Ibn al-Jazari, *Ghayat al-Nihayya fi Tabaqat al-Reciters* (Egypt: Ibn Taymiyyah Library, 1933), 1: 196.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad bin Yazid bin Rifa'ah, Abu Hisham Al-Rifai, Al-Kufi, d. 248 AH. Al-Zahabi mentioned him among the scholars of the sixth class of memorizers of the Qur'an. Muhammad Muhammad Muhammad Salem, *Dictionary Memorization of the Qur'an*, 518.

<sup>7</sup> He is the Imam al-Hafiz Yahya bin Mu'in al-Baghdadi, the sheikh of the Hadith scholars, and the Imam of *al-Jarh* and *al-Ta'dil*. He was born in the year one hundred and fifty-eight. He died in Medina in the year 233AH. Shams al-Din Muhammad bin Ahmed bin Othman al-Zahabi, *Biography of the Noble Figures* (Egypt: Al-Resala Press, 1985), Part 11, 72.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn al-Jazari, *Ghayat al-Nihayah*, 252-254.

### **Criticism of Hadith Narrators (Al-Jarh wa Al-Ta'dil) and its Relationship to the Narrators of the Qur'an**

Perhaps, one of the most prominent sciences unique to the Islamic nation is the science of Hadith Criticism on acceptance and rejection, which, by its application preserved for us the two revelations, through careful examination of the narrators, has no parallel in other religions. Although it appeared in the early time of the Companions, it was not leveled and completed until after the time of the Successors, because of the reason for its emergence; the spread of temptations, the abundance of narrations, the weakness of control, the similarity of surnames and names, and lying at times, so there was a need to establish it and set its features, in order to preserve the religion of Almighty Allah, and for the fear of something that was not of it seeps into it, as happened to other nations, which indicates its early emergence. Mujahid narrated on the authority of Ibn Abbas that, "Bashir Al-Adawi came to Ibn Abbas, and he started speaking and saying, "The Messenger of Allah PBUH said so and said, so Ibn Abbas did not allow his speech, nor did he look at him, so he said "O Ibn Abbas, why do I not see you listening to my speech? I am telling you about the Messenger of Allah PBUH and you do not listen." Ibn Abbas said, "Once, when we heard a man say, "The Messenger of Allah PBUH said, our eyes looked forward to him, and we listened to him with our ears. When the people rode through hardship and humiliation, we only took from the people what we knew."

The Hadith indicates the importance of knowing the narrator's condition in terms of justice and precision. On the other hand, it appears that the matter of finding out the narrator's condition is up to date, and it was not known at the time of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The Companions are all just, in addition to the fact that Prophet Muhammad PBUH was among them, is the authority in all their calamities and their decrees. However, he did not leave the matter open, as he named the Companions from whom it was taken, and he, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, said: "Ali bin Abi Talib decreed them." The most knowledgeable of them in the Book of Allah is Ubayy ibn Ka'b, the most knowledgeable of them regarding what is permissible and what is forbidden is Muadh ibn Jabal, and the most obligatory

among them is Zaid ibn Thabit.<sup>9</sup> Prophet Muhammad PBUH did not leave reciting the Glorious Qur'an to everyone, even though they were pure Arabs. This is an indication of referring to specialists known for their knowledge, justice, and discipline. Having this brief introduction, it is greatly important to define these terms appropriately.

*Al-Jarh* literally means injury that affects the body with a split or cut, and it is borrowed in morals to mean influencing religion or morals with descriptions that contradict them<sup>10</sup> so the linguistic meaning is wounding with the tongue or the skin. Technically, it signifies the narrator in a way that requires refuting his narration, softening it, or weakening it. In other words, *Al-Ta'dil* linguistically means intent in matters, which is the opposite of injustice.<sup>11</sup> The linguistic meaning indicates levelness and uprightness and is closest to the conventional meaning. Technically, it describes the narrator in a way that requires accepting his narration.<sup>12</sup>

It is clear from the two definitions that criticism and modification is a science that examines the conditions and ranks of narrators in terms of accepting or rejecting their narratives, based on controls and rules established by the Hadith scholars. It is the most important condition that must be fulfilled by the narrator, and justice forces its possessor to adhere to piety and avoid major sins such as lying and deception. Imam Al-Shafi'i says, "If the majority is obedient, then he is the one who is moderate, and if the majority is disobedient, then he is the one who is injured."<sup>13</sup> Accuracy, means preserving what he narrates, either from his chest or from his mouth. The way of writing, and the ability to perform it as he heard it.

The importance of accuracy is confirmed by what was narrated by Imam Malik, "I have noticed in this country meaning Medina a sheikhdom, who has virtue, righteousness, and worship,

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<sup>9</sup> Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, ed. Muhammad Fouad Abdel Baqi (Egypt: Issa Halabi, 1952), 1:154 & 155.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Faris, *Dictionary of Language Standards*, ed. Abd al-Salam Muhammad Haroun (Syria: Dar al-Fikr, 1979), 196.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Fayoumi, *Al-Misbah Al-Munir* (Beirut, Scientific Library, n.d.), 2:44.

<sup>12</sup> Hatem Al-Awni, *Abstract of Rooting for the Science of Jarh and Ta'dil* (Saudi Arabia: Dar Alam Al-Fawaid for Publishing and Distribution, 2001), 6.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, *Al-Kifaya fi 'Ilm al-Riwa'ah* (India: Uthmani Encyclopedia Society, 1939), 79.

and they speak. I have never heard a Hadith from any of them.” It was said to him, “Why, Abu Abdullah?” He said, “They did not know what they were speaking.”<sup>14</sup> This is a clear criterion in that accepting or rejecting a narration is not limited to the piety of the narrator, memorization, listening, or knowledge of the narrators..., but there are other criteria that fall under this art of Hadith sciences. Basically, there are two types of *Jarh* and *Ta’dil*. Each type has its own knowledge and is the fruit of this knowledge and its great advancement. Therefore, the relationship that brings together the scholars of *Jarh* and *Ta’dil* and the narrator of the Qur’an is narration. This is because one of the tasks of Hadith critics is to know the condition of everyone who issues a narration and to present it on the scale of criticism and modification.

Since the people of the Qur’an are often not criticized for their justice, which is considered the greatest pillar of the narration, the criticism is from the aspect of control, the importance of which comes in second place after justice. If justice is present and it is absent or control is reduced, then it stops unless something appears. It requires a preponderance of the refutation side, and it is rejected, or a preponderance of the acceptance side, and it is accepted, and from that, it must be based on a witness through which the weakness in a narrator can be redressed in terms of accuracy.

### **Opinions of the Imams of *Jarh* Regarding Imam Haf’s Narration of the Hadith**

Hadith can be detailed regarding its narration by dividing these opinions into the following two schools of thought:

- i. The doctrine of the critic’s Imams: Those who held that Imam Haf’s narration in the Hadith was weak, and therefore not accepted. The most prominent of their names and rulings are as follows:

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<sup>14</sup> Al-Ramhurmuzi, *The Hadith Separator between the Narrator and the Conscious One* (Beirut, Dar Al-Fikr, 1984), 103.

<b>The Hadith Scholars</b>	<b>Imams Who are Issuing a Ruling on the Narration</b>
Yahya bin Sa'īd al-Qattan, d. 120AH (738AD)	He is weak, and once said he was not trustworthy. <sup>15</sup>
Yahya bin Ma'in, d. 233AH (848 AD)	He is not trustworthy. <sup>16</sup>
Al-Bukhari, d. 256AH (870AD)	' <i>tarakuh</i> ' (they left him). <sup>17</sup>
Muslim, d. 261AH (875AD)	Abandoned in Hadith. <sup>18</sup>
Abu Zar'ah, d. 264 AH (877AD)	' <i>dha'if</i> ' (weak). <sup>19</sup>
Ibn Hibban, d. 354AH (965AD)	Used to analyse the chains of transmission and raise the Hadiths. <sup>20</sup>
Al-Daraqutni, d. 385AH (995AD)	' <i>dha'if</i> ' (weak). <sup>21</sup>

In al-Sunan, under the chapter on the dislike of lowering and covering the mouth, Imam al-Bayhaqi narrated a Hadith according to which Prophet Muhammad PBUH is reported to have passed by a man praying who had lowered his garment, so he put it on him. al-Bayhaqi then commented on his narration stating that it was narrated by Hafs bin Abi Dawud, who is Hafs bin Sulayman al-Qari al-Kufi, on the authority of al-Haytham bin Habib, who narrated from Aoun bin Abi Juhayfah. Al-Bayhaqi noted that although Hafs is considered weak in Hadith, he wrote it from the Hadith of Ibrahim bin Tahman on the authority of al-Haytham. He

<sup>15</sup> Al-Mazzi, *Tahdhib Al-Kamal*, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Abi Hatem, *Al-Jarh wa'l-Ta'dil* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Tarath al-Arabi, 1952), 3:173.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad bin Ismail bin Ibrahim bin al-Mughirah al-Bukhari, *Al-Tarikh al-Kabir* (Al-Hind: Uthmani Encyclopedia, 1959), 2:363.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn al-Jawzi, *The Weak and the Abandoned* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1985), 1: 221.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn al-Jawzi, *The Weak and the Abandoned*.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Muhammad bin Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Zureik, *Man Takallam fih al-Daruqutni fi Kitab al-Sunan min al-Dhu'afa' wa al-Matrukin wa al-Majhulin*, ed. Husayn bin 'Ukashah (Qatar: Wizarah al-Auqaf wa al-Shu'un al-Islamiyyah, 2007), 1: 45.



further mentioned that if narration is preserved, it is more reliable than that of Hafs al-Qari.<sup>22</sup>

The statements of those who criticized Hafs, despite their varied forms and wording, consistently indicate the weakness of his Hadith narration. These criticisms pertain to both his integrity and accuracy. Some critiques highlight his lack of precision, describing him as one who overturns the chains of transmission, while others are more ambiguous, merely labeling him as weak. The focus in Hadith narration is on the narrator's fairness and accuracy. If a narrator is deemed prominent to them, he is considered trustworthy and reliable; if not, he is rejected based on the degree of his accuracy and mastery.

ii. The Doctrine of the Hadith *al-Ta'dil* Imams:

Waki` bin al-Jarrah, d. 196 AH	He was trustworthy, and he was from the people of Kufa. <sup>23</sup>
Ahmed bin Hanbal, d. 241 AH	Saleh said, <sup>24</sup> and he once said that there was no harm in Hafs Al-Qari <sup>25</sup> .

There are many Imams who praise Imam Hafs, but they are included among the testimonies of the editors, because they are general praises, such as the testimony of Muhammad bin Saad Al-Awfi when he said: "Hafs bin Suleiman used to go down the stem of Nasr. If you had seen him, your eyes would have been pleased with his knowledge and understanding"<sup>26</sup> or it came from scholars of other sciences, such as recitations, or that specialize in recitation of the Qur'an, as will be mentioned at the end of the study.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Bayhaqi, *Al-Sunan al-Kubra* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, 2003), 2:344 (no. hadis 3312).

<sup>23</sup> 'Ali bin Muhammad Al-Sakhawi, *The Beauty of the Readers and the Kamal of the Readers* (Egypt: Al-Madani Press, 1978), 2: 446.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad*, ed. Bashir Awad Marouf (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 2001), 9:64.

<sup>25</sup> Sulayman bin Ahmad al-Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, ed. Mahmud Muhammad 'Amara al-Sa'adani (n.p.: Jami'ah al-Azhar, n.d.) 2: 247.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad*, 183.

But the authentication of Imam Waki' bin Jarrah (d.197) and his recommendation of Hafs is a testimony that has its weight among the scholars of Hadith Imams. Imam Ahmad counted Waki' as one of the three trustworthy people from whom Hadiths are taken in Iraq, and he also said about him, I have never seen a man like Waki' in knowledge, memorization, and chain of transmission, and if he narrated about Waki', he says, it was narrated to me by someone who's like your eyes have not seen, and 'Ali ibn al-Madini and Yahya ibn Ma'in<sup>27</sup> authenticated it. As for Imam Ahmad, al-Zahabi mentioned his saying, there is nothing wrong with it, and even though it is in the third rank of the levels of modification, Ibn Ma'in believes that there is no harm in modifying it. Their statement: "Trustworthy, but what constitutes doubt on Imam Ahmad's statement is the narration of his son Abdullah." He narrated on the authority of his father Ahmad that Hafs is abandoned in Hadith. So does he mean Imam Hafs bin Sulaiman al-Kufi, or someone else like Hafs al-Manqari, whom the Hadith scholars differed in criticizing and amending, therefore, we need evidence that strengthens the first possibility, especially since Imam Ahmad's first narration is a statement of acceptance, and what can be relied upon to remove the accusation against the Imam is what al-Khatib al-Baghdadi narrated on the authority of Imam Ahmad, as three narrations were quoted from him in Imam Hafs; Two of them contain documentation, and one narration contains weakness.<sup>28</sup>

It becomes clear, through the presentation of the two Imams' statements, that Imam Hafs is trustworthy, and there is nothing wrong with his narration of the Hadith. Some may have a problem with criticizing the predecessors, and how to combine them. There is no doubt that these are among the issues on which the sayings of the Hadith scholars are not agreed upon. Imam al-Nasa'i said, "A Hadith is not left out." The man until they agree to leave him."<sup>29</sup> This supports the authority of Imam Hafs and his authentication, and it is also reinforced even by the statements of those who stipulated presenting the wound if it was not ijihad,

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<sup>27</sup> Al-Mazzi, *Tahdheeb al-Kamal*, 170 & 172-173.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Zahabi, *Knowledge of Great Readers* (Egypt: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, 1997), 142.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Suyuti, *Training the Narrator in Sharh Taqreeb al-Nawawi*, ed. Muhammad al-Faryabi (Saudi Arabia: Dar Taiba, 1994), 1:363.

such as Imam Ibn Daqiq al-‘Id.<sup>30</sup> It is not said that the injury is subject to modification because that is if the injury is established, and the reason is explained. Otherwise, the injury is not accepted if it is not so. Therefore, the statement of acceptance is stronger and more likely than the response.

### **Discussion on the Opinions of the Two Divisions**

An examination of the statements and opinions of those who criticize Imam Hafs reveals three primary reasons for their critiques. The first reason is the similarity of names. Many of the criticism, such as those narrations from ‘Abdullah on the authority of his father, Imam Ahmad, and Ibn Hibban, are based on narrations like that of Yahya bin Sa‘id. Yahya reported that Shu‘bah said: “Hafs bin Sulayman took a book from me and did not return it. He said: He used to take people’s books and copy them.”<sup>31</sup>

What is confirmed by what Ibn Shahin narrated in *al-Thiqat*,<sup>32</sup> Ahmad said, Hafs bin Sulaiman al-Manqar Saleh, nicknamed Abu al-Hasan, and he was the most knowledgeable of them about al-Hasan’s words. He died shortly before the plague. Thirty-one, then he mentioned what Yahya bin Saeed narrated on the authority of Shu‘bah; from the fact that he borrows books and does not return them, there is confusion between Hafs bin Sulaiman al-Manqari al-Basri, and Hafs bin Sulayman al-Kufi, the reader, caused by Shu‘bah’s statement about Hafs al-Manqari, from which it was understood that he meant Hafs al-Kufi, and what strengthens the illusion caused by the agreement of names between the two narrators, it is the confusion between the date of their death, as Ibn al-Nadim mentioned that Hafs bin Sulaiman al-Qari, died before the plague, and the plague occurred in the year one hundred and thirty-one, except that Hafs al-Qari, as Imam Ibn al-Jazari asserted, died in the year 180AH, according to the correct view, and it was said between the eighty and ninety years, and that the one who

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Abu al-Ma‘ati al-Nuri, Ahmed Abd al-Razzaq ‘Id, and Mahmud Muhammad Khalil, *Mausu‘ah Aqwal al-Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal fi Rijal al-Hadith wa ‘Ilalih* (Beirut: ‘Alam al-Kutub, 1997), 1:277.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn Sa‘ad, *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, ed. Muhammad Abdul Qadir Atta (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, 1990), 7:256.

died before or because of the plague, he is Hafis bin Sulayman al-Manqari.<sup>33</sup>

The thing that needs to be reconsidered is that the imitation of major critics is incorrect. How Shu'bah contradicted some men in his criticism, how much the sayings of Abd al-Rahman ibn Mahdi and Yahya al-Qattan differed regarding narrators, how much Ibn Ma'in and Imam Ahmad disputed over a man whom one of them weakened and the other corrected, and how much Abu Zur'ah and Abu Hatim pursued Muhammad ibn Ismail. Al-Bukhari, each critic has its own consideration and keen look at the conditions of men, and they are also divided into classes in knowledge and expertise, in strictness, moderation and leniency, in piety and authority of the tongue, and then al-Zahabi, who is one of the people of complete extrapolation in criticizing men, said, "No two of these are combined." The matter is never based on weak documentation, nor is it based on weak trustworthiness.<sup>34</sup>

The second reason: his narration on the authority of Kathir ibn Zazan<sup>35</sup> and al-Qamah ibn Marthad<sup>36</sup> As for the second reason for rejecting the narration of Imam Hafis, it is his narration by Katheer bin Zazan and al-Qqamah bin Marthad, the ignorant people of Katheer bin Zazan. Saeed al-Darimi says, I asked Yahya bin Ma'in about the Hadith of Hafis bin Suleiman, and he said, he is not trustworthy. I said, he narrates on the authority of Katheer. bin Zazan who is he? He said, I do not know him,<sup>37</sup> and Al-Dhahabi said: Kathir bin Zada, a Kufi from the Tabi'een who is not known.<sup>38</sup>

The term ignorance according to the Hadith scholars revolves between two meanings: ignorance of the situation and ignorance

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<sup>33</sup> Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Zubr al-Rubi'i, *The History of the Births and Deaths of Scientists*, ed. Abdullah Ahmed Suleiman al-Hamad (Riyadh: Dar Al-Asimah, 1990), 306.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Sakhawi, *Announcing a Rebuke to Those Who Disparage the People of History*, ed. al-Zafiri (Riyadh: Dar Al-Sumaie for Publishing and Distribution, 2017), 525.

<sup>35</sup> Kufi, one of the followers, does not know the date of his death. Al-Zahabi, *Al-Majarr fi Asma Al-Rijal*, ed. Faisal al-Jawabrah (Saudi Arabia: Publishing House, 1988), 30.

<sup>36</sup> Khalid al-Ribat, Sayyid 'Izzat 'Id, and a group of researchers, *Al-Jami' li 'Ulum al-Imam Ahmad* (Egypt: Dar Al-Falah for Scientific Research and Heritage Investigation, 1988), 18:168.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad*, 64.

<sup>38</sup> Shams al-Din al-Zahabi, *Diwan of the Weak and the Abandoned, and Creation from the Unknown and the Trustworthy in them*, ed. Hammad bin Muhammad al-Ansari (Mecca: Al-Nahda al-Hadithah, 1967), 329.

of the reality. The first of them is rejected by the majority of Hadith scholars, and al-Subki reported the consensus on that.<sup>39</sup> The other one is of unknown condition: he is the one who narrated the story of Katheer bin Razan, and the majority agreed to accept his narration. Imam al-Zahabi says: “Majority of the scholars are of the opinion that whoever is one of the Sheikhs has narrated from him in a group and has not come up with anything to deny that his Hadith is authentic”<sup>40</sup> and some Shafi’is<sup>41</sup> have interpreted their doctrine that the principle is good belief in the matter of news, because it is based on good belief in the narrator. Because the narration of news is with those who are unable to know justice inwardly, so limit it to knowing that outwardly, unlike testimony, which is with the rulers, so it is not impossible for them to do so.

The narration of a trustworthy person strengthens the narration of an unknown person. Ibn Abi Hatim says, “I asked my father about the narration of trustworthy narrations on the authority of an untrustworthy man, which strengthens him? He said, if he is known to be weak, his narration will not strengthen him, and if he is unknown, the narration of a trustworthy person on his behalf will benefit him.”<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the response of Imam Hafs because of his narration on the authority of Katheer bin Zazan is not supported by evidence. On the contrary, it authenticates and strengthens the narration of Katheer bin Zazan, if we rely on the testimony of Imam Waki’ bin Jarrah in his recommendation of Hafs, with his saying trustworthy and proven.

As for al-Qamah bin Marthad, al-Nasa’i said about him, while Muhammad bin al-Abbas told him about “Hafs bin Sulaiman narrated on the authority of al-Qamah bin Marthad, an abandoned Hadith”<sup>43</sup> but what appears from the critics’ words is that the injury was not due to the seizure, as al-Qamah bin Marthad was a trustworthy Hafiz. He was controlled, but he was accused of

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<sup>39</sup> Aladdin Al-Mardawi, *Al-Tahrir Sharh Al-Tahrir fi Usul Al-Fiqh*, ed. Abdul Rahman al-Jibreen, Awad al-Qami, and Ahmed al-Sarrah (Saudi Arabia: Al-Rushd Library, 2000), 4:909.

<sup>40</sup> Shams al-Din al-Zahabi, *The Scale of Moderation in Criticism of Men*, ed. Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi (Lebanon: Dar al-Ma’rifa for Printing and Publishing, 1963), 3:126.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Nawawi, *Training the Narrator*, 371.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Abi Hatim, *Al-Jarh wal-Ta’deel* (Al-Hind: Council of the Uthmani Encyclopedia, 1952), 2:36.

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Adi, *Al-Kamil fi Al-Du’fa’*, 269.

postponement. Imam Ahmad says: “al-Qamah bin Marthad was accused of postponement, and he was trustworthy in his Hadith and controlled.”<sup>44</sup> Intentionally, calling for his heresy or not, Imam al-Suyuti discussed these sayings, and concluded that the accepted opinion regarding someone whose narration is narrated is:

“Whoever denies a recurring matter from the Sharia that is necessarily known from the religion, or believes the opposite of it, and as for whoever is not like that, and to that is added his punishment.” Because he narrates it with his piety and piety, there is no objection to accepting it.<sup>45</sup>

This is because every group claims that opposing it is heretical, and it may go to extremes and declare its opponents to be infidels. If that was taken in general, it would necessitate the infidelity of all groups. On the other hand, saying it requires rejecting many Hadiths, because of the differences of the time of the followers increased; It increased in the era of the Followers of the Followers, as some of the followers of those groups and their Imams were among the people of the narration, known for their religiosity, piety, and asceticism, so there is no doubt that rejecting their narration is clearly corrupt.

What weakens this argument however, is that Imam Hafis narrated on the authority of other trustworthy and reliable people, such as al-Awam bin Hawshab al-Shaybani, who died in the year 148AH, Othman bin Asim al-Asadi, who died in the year 127AH, Amr bin Murrah al-Muradi, who died in the year 116AH, Ghailan bin Jami' al-Muharbi, who died in the year 132AH, and Mas'ar bin Kadam al-Amiri. He died in the year 153AH, Mansour al-Sulami who died in the year 132AH, and many others who are at the highest levels of modification.

More so, even if we accept that he narrates on the authority of some weak or unknown people, this does not necessitate

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<sup>44</sup> Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Al-Jami` `Ulum Imam Ahmad*, 268.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Suyuti, *Training the Narrator Training the Narrator in Sharh Taqreeb Al-Nawawi*, 384.

weakening Imam Hafs and rejecting his narration, as al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and other scholars of Hadith narrated on the authority of the weak, and even some of them on the authority of extremist Shi'ites, such as Hashim ibn al-Barid al-Zubaydi al-Kufi, who attributed it to him. Al-Bukhari, Ibn Adi, and al-Jawzjani referred to extremism in Shiism, and al-Zahabi described him as a flogged Shiite Rafidi. However, Abu Dawud, al-Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah<sup>46</sup> narrated from him, for reasons collected by Ibn al-Salah in defending Imam Muslim, including that he was trustworthy in his personality but weak in others, or that his weakness occurs after the narration, or if a weak person exalts his chain of transmission<sup>47</sup>.

Therefore, their justification based on the narrations of al-Qamah bin Marthad and Karim bin Zazan in rejecting and weakening Imam Hafs is not supported by evidence, just as what is known among the people of this science is that narration from those who are characterized by poor memorization and lack of genius should not be abandoned, as the unknowing person imagines. Rather, narration from them is of great benefit to the critical scholars, and therefore they were keen on that, and the benefit appears if the Hadith came to us from two different paths, all of their narrators being trustworthy and memorized of the same degree, except that each Hadith reported to us different from the other, then we found a third path that was less accurate and preserved, but narrated it in the manner in which one of them narrated it. His narration prevails over the other narration in most cases, and the one who believes in the other narration is often attributed to delusion in this matter. In this case, the narration of this weak person is useful in strengthening one of the two opinions over the other, and therefore the ruling to reject it absolutely is a transgression and a loss of a preponderant interest.

The third reason is that Imam Hafs is not a specialist in the science of Hadith. The answer is that Imam Hafs's fame was due to his reading and recitation, and his control and genius of his narration on the authority of Asim, in which he surpassed his

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<sup>46</sup> Jamal al-Din al-Mazzi, *Tahdheeb al-Kamal fi Asma al-Rijal*, ed. Bashar Awad Maarouf (Beirut: Al-Resala Foundation, 1992), 30:127.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn al-Salah, *Maintenance of Sahih Muslim*, ed. Muwaffaq Abdullah Abdul Qadir (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1988), 96.

peers, and in which there was evidence, not Hadith. Al-Zahabi says: “He was firm in reading, but weak in Hadith, because he was not proficient in Hadith and mastered the Qur’an and mastered it, otherwise he was truthful in himself.”<sup>48</sup> Ibn Hajar said: “The Hadith is abandoned, with his leading the recitation.”<sup>49</sup> Hence, even if we accept that Hafs is weak in narrating Hadith, that does not fault him, due to the difficulty of bringing together two different experts and achieving the level of imamate in them is more difficult, and in the biographies of scholars there are many examples of this type. Imam Abu Hanifa reached the level of absolute *ijtihād* in jurisprudence and failed in controlling it. A person may be an imam in a certain knowledge and the reference for that knowledge, and he may be weak in another knowledge. Al-Shafi’i says, “People are dependent on Abu Hanifa in jurisprudence, and al-Zhahabi says, Imamate in jurisprudence and its details are handed over to Imam Abu Hanifa.”<sup>50</sup>

As for the Hadith, it was considered weak by al-Nasa’i, Ibn Adi and others<sup>51</sup>, and in al-Zahabi’s words there is an indication that this is not the case in the Hadith, and al-Shafi’i despite the majesty of his ability, his preservation and accuracy, and his long history in jurisprudence and Hadith, he used to say to Imam Ahmad, as his son Abdullah narrated it from him, “If the Hadith is authentic to you, then inform us so that we can return to it. You are more knowledgeable about authentic information than us, so if it is authentic information, then inform me so that I go to him, whether he is Kufi, Basra, or Levantine<sup>52</sup>.

Fame in any field or science, especially the science of narrating Hadith, is not a reason for mastering the science of narration. Because it is based on knowledge, memorization, control, and practice in the first place, so whoever does not practice the art of speaking or pay attention to it cannot be skilled on it, so what if he works on others and masters them? There is no

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<sup>48</sup> Al-Zhahabi, *Mizan Al-Itidal* (Lebanon: Dar Al-Ma’rifa for Printing and Publishing, 1963), 1:558.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Taqrib Al-Tahtheeb*, ed. Muhammad Awama (Syria: Dar Al-Rashid, 1986).

<sup>50</sup> Muhammad bin Talaat, *Al-Tadhyl ‘ala Kitab Tahdhib al-Tahdhib li al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani* (Riyadh: Maktabah Adwa’ al-Salaf, 2004), 136.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Zahabi, *Mizan al-Itidal*, 265.

<sup>52</sup> Ibn al-Wazir, *Al-Awasim min Al-Qawasim*, ed. Shuaib Al-Arnaout (Egypt: Al-Risala, 1994), 4:308.



doubt that he will be less skilled and knowledgeable about the laws and principles of the novel than a specialist.

The case of Hafs, we will find that he took precedence over the readings and did not give priority to the narrations, and from here occurred the illusion, error, and uniqueness in his Hadith, for which the Hadith scholars abandoned his Hadith, and therefore there is no contradiction. What is emphasized in this section is that the reciter is not a Hadith narrator. We do not require the reciter to be a Hadith narrator nor for the Hadith narrator to be a reciter. Imam al-A'mash, d. 148AH, to whom most Hadith scholars have applied his imamate in Hadith, was described by Imam Ahmad, Yahya Ibn Ma'in, and al-Nasa'i. Al-Zahabi and others that it was proven<sup>53</sup>, despite this, it had an anomalous reading, in which the conditions for frequent reading were not met, and this did not lose its status among the Hadith scholars, and its narrations were not mentioned in the Hadith.

It is worth noting the example of al-Hasan al-Basri, even if he is less precise and therefore the terminology of the critics of the Hadith scholars should be interpreted according to their approach. The Hadith scholars did not weaken the reading of Hafs on the authority of Asim. Rather, according to them, it is an argument in ancient and modern times. Muslims have applied it for more than twelve centuries, and they did not dare. No one can respond or challenge it. Imam al-Zahabi, after reviewing scholars' opinions on Imam Hafs, "As for reading, there is trustworthiness that has been proven, unlike its case in Hadith."<sup>54</sup> Although this is deficient in terms of narrating the Hadith, it is fair to what the Muslims agreed upon. He described his narration in the Qur'an as the highest level of acceptance, so he interpreted the words of Imam Hafs as being extremely beautiful in this context.

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<sup>53</sup> Al-Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat*, 1:221.

<sup>54</sup> Al-Zahabi, *The Book of Knowledge for Great Readers on Classes and Cyclones*, 85.

### Sayings of the Imams of *al-Jarh* Regarding Imam Hafṣ' Narration of the Qur'an

Yahya bin Mu'īn, d. 233AH (848CE)	The authentic narration narrated from Asim's reading was of the narration of Abu Umar Hafṣ bin Sulayman. <sup>55</sup>
'Ali bin al-Madini, d. 234AH (849CE)	Narrated on the authority of Asim, most of the readings are supported. <sup>56</sup>
Abu Hisham al-Rifai, d. 248AH (862CE)	Among those who were known to recite Asim in Kufa was Hafṣ bin Abi Dawud, and he was the most knowledgeable of them in reciting Asim. <sup>57</sup>
Al-Tabarani, d. 360AH (970CE)	Hafṣ Imam in Reading. <sup>58</sup>
Al-Khazraji, d. 446AH (1054CE)	Hafṣ in recitation, proven unanimously. <sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad*, 8:148.

<sup>57</sup> Abu Amr Al-Dani, *Jami' Al-Bayan fi Al-Saba'a Qira'at* (Al-Emirates: University of Sharjah, 2007), Part 2.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Khazraji, *Summary of the Jurisprudence of Tahdheeb Al-Kamal*, ed. Abdel Fattah Abu Ghudda, 5th ed. (Beirut: Dar Al-Bashaer, 1995), 2:247.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Khazraji, *Summary of the Jurisprudence*, 87.

Ibn Abdul Hadi, d. 744AH (1343CE)	Was famous for his knowledge of reading and transmitting it. <sup>60</sup>
Al-Zahabi, d. 748 AH (1347CE)	Was proven in reading. <sup>61</sup>
Ibn Hajar, d. 852 AH (1448CE)	Was an imam in recitation <sup>62</sup>
Al-Manawi, d. 1031 AH (1622CE)	proven in reading. <sup>63</sup>

Ibn al-Munadi said<sup>64</sup> he recited Hafis to Asim repeatedly, and the ancients used to consider him superior in memorization to Abu Bakr bin Ayyash and described him with the accuracy of the letters that he recited to Asim, and he recited to the people for a long time, and the reading that he took from Asim rose to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. The last sentence in it is a reference to what Hafis questioned about the difference between what Asim read in contrast to Shu’bah. Asim mentioned that I read to you what Al-Sulami read to me on the authority of Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, on the authority of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, and Shu’bah read what Zur bin Hubaysh read to me on the authority of Abdullah bin Masoud. May Allah be pleased with them all.

<sup>60</sup> Abdel Hadi, *Al-Sarim al-Manki in the Response to al-Subki* (Lebanon: Al-Rayyan Foundation, 2003), 63.

<sup>61</sup> Al-Zahabi, *Al-Kashef fi Ma’rifat al-Manna fi Ma’rifah al-Kutub al-Sita’ah* (Saudi Arabia: Dar Al-Qibla for Islamic Culture, 1992), 1:341.

<sup>62</sup> Ibn Hajar, *Taqrib al-Tahdheeb*, 172.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Manawi, *Fayd al-Qadir Sharh al-Jami’ al-Saghir* (Egypt: Grand Commercial Library, 1937), 4:264.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Zahabi, *The Book of Knowledge for Great Readers on Classes and Cyclones*, 85.

Imam Al-Shatibi, in his compilation *Hirz al-Amani fi al-Saba' al-Qira'at*, also favoured his narration over Shu'bah, which indicates his control and mastery in his specialty. He says that Ibn Ayyash is Abu Bakr al-Rida and Hafs, and he was preferred in mastery. His preference over Shu'bah was clear, especially if he knew that Imam Hafs was raised as an orphan under the care of Asim, who was his stepfather. This entails a long period of companionship with frequent listening and reading, which began at the early period, in addition to Hafs's specialization in the Qur'an and spending most of his time and effort reading and reciting. Without a doubt or fear of exxageration, this makes him stand out and excelled in reading and recitation over others.

### **Conclusion**

Imam Hafs bin Sulaiman bin al-Mughirah bin Abi Dawud al-Asadi was the Kufi reciter, in addition to his proficiency in recitation, studied Hadith from a group of Hadith scholars such as Ayub al-Sakhtiani, Thabit al-Banani and others. He had many students, and many Imams of recitation preferred his narration from Asim over Shu'bah's narration. The opinions of the Imams of al-Jarh differed regarding Imam Hafs's narration of the Hadith. Some group argued that Imam Hafs's narration of the Hadith was weak, and therefore not accepted. The most prominent of these were Yahya bin Saeed al-Qattan, Yahya bin Ma'in, al-Bukhari, Muslim, and Abu Zar'ah.

Ibn Hibban, and al-Daraqutni were among the group of Hadith scholars who accepted his narration, the most prominent of whom were Waki` ibn al-Jarrah and Ahmad ibn Han Rather, Ahmad considered him one of the three trustworthy people from whom Hadiths are taken in Iraq. It appears that the reasons for the insult are due to three things: the similarity of the names with Hafs bin Sulaiman al-Manqari al-Basri, and the narration of Imam Hafs on the authority of Kathir bin Zazan and al-Qamah bin Marthad, who are unknown, and that he was not specialized in the science of Hadith.

Discussion of these reasons show they are relative, and even if we accept that Hafs is weak in narrating Hadith, that does not fault him, due to the difficulty of combining two different techniques, and achieving the level of imamate among them is

more difficult, so there is no criticism of his narration of the Qur'an. The terminology of the Hadith scholars should be interpreted according to their approaches. The Hadith scholars did not weaken the reading of Hafis on the authority of Asim. Rather, according to them, it is an argument in the past and in the present. Muslims have applied it for more than twelve centuries, and no one dared to reject or challenge it.

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