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Semantic Interplay between Lexical Meaning and Hadith Terminological Usage in al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl Terminology and Its Impact on Evaluating Narrators

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the semantic development and customary restriction of a number of terms of al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl in Hadith sciences and to show how they move from their general linguistic meanings to their precise terminological meanings within the practice of Hadith critics. The study focuses on the way in which these terms acquire specialized meanings through their established use among scholars of Hadith criticism. The research material was divided into two main groups. The first comprised terms of commendation and authentication: “trustworthy,” “honest,” and “there is nothing wrong with him.” The second comprised terms of criticism and rejection: “deceitful,” “farsighted,” and “abandoned.” The study adopted an inductive and analytical approach to trace the meanings of these terms and determine their relationship to their original linguistic senses. The research concluded that Hadith terminology remains closely connected to its linguistic roots while being subject to precise customary restrictions that determine the status of the narrator in a positive or negative manner. It also revealed the distinctive features of certain critical schools, particularly Imam al-Bukhari's specific usage of certain expressions, and demonstrated the effect of these terms on the acceptance of Hadith and its use as evidence and for corroboration.

Keywords: al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl, semantic development, customary restriction, Hadith critics, Hadith terminology.

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, Who established through the foundations of His religion a beacon of truth and certainty; and blessings and peace be upon His chosen and trustworthy Prophet, al-Muṣṭafā al-Amīn, and upon his family and companions, the righteous and virtuous, who transmitted the Sunnah to us with honesty and precision and established the limits of the Sharī'ah. Through them, Allah, the Almighty, preserved and elevated His religion above the distortions and alterations that could affect it. To proceed:

The edifice of Hadith criticism established by the eminent Hadith scholars represents one of the most remarkable intellectual achievements in the history of human civilization. These critics succeeded in developing a precise standard for evaluating reports and examining the reliability and qualifications of their transmitters with fairness and accuracy.

The terminology of al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl did not emerge in isolation. Rather, it developed from the Arabic language and drew its vocabulary and structures from the linguistic heritage preserved in Arabic dictionaries and from the semantic range of the language.

However, a significant epistemological problem emerges from the semantic development and shifts in usage that occurred when these expressions were transferred into the specialized domain of Hadith criticism. Hadith scholars moved them from their broad linguistic meanings to technical meanings governed by precise restrictions and complex conditions. Consequently, a continuous semantic interplay arises between the linguistic meaning established at the level of the original usage and the specialized Hadith convention formulated and developed by successive generations of critics.

It is important to emphasize explicitly that the principal purpose of this article is to alert researchers who are not specialists in Hadith criticism, including those working in jurisprudence, legal theory, history, and linguistics. The specialist in

Hadith criticism becomes familiar with the investigation of reports and the interpretation of critics' terminology through systematic training, extensive reading, and sustained engagement with the relevant sources. Researchers from outside this field, however, may remain vulnerable to relying exclusively on the initial lexical meaning or to interpreting the terminology of al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl according to its ordinary linguistic usage, without recognizing the specific conventions adopted by individual critics or particular critical schools. This may adversely affect their accurate determination of a narrator's critical status and may lead non-specialists in Hadith studies to misunderstand the evidentiary value of reports and to apply judgments concerning narrators without sufficient methodological awareness.

From this perspective, this article sheds light on the semantic tension between language and technical terminology and examines its impact on understanding the judgments of Hadith critics concerning narrators. It does so by examining practical examples of six terms used in Hadith criticism, which are systematically divided into two balanced groups:

The first group: Terms of commendation and authentication.

This group examines expressions that indicate the authentication and commendation of narrators and considers how Hadith usage restricts their broad linguistic meanings according to the criterion of precision and reliability. These expressions are represented by the following terms: (trustworthy, honest, and there is nothing wrong with him).

The second group: Terms of criticism and rejection.

This group examines expressions and formulations that indicate weakness and rejection. Such expressions may range from euphemistic formulations to lexical expressions whose apparent meanings may suggest a moral defect, although their intended function is primarily technical. The terms examined in this group are: (deceitful, farsighted, and abandoned).

This division enables us to deconstruct these six terms and demonstrate how awareness of the shift from broad linguistic meaning to specialized usage constitutes one of the most important methodological safeguards for the sound and productive reading of Hadith biographical and critical works.

In order to identify the dimensions of this problem and achieve the article's intended purpose, the nature of the research requires its division into an introductory preamble, two applied sections, and a conclusion, as follows:

Authentic Preamble: Rules Governing Semantic Transposition and the Origins of Specialized Hadith Conventions.

Section 1: Terms of Commendation between Linguistic Meaning and Terminological Restriction.

Section 2: Terms of Criticism between Lexical Explicitness and Technical Usage.

Conclusion: This section presents the principal findings and methodological recommendations.

Authentic Preamble: Rules Governing Semantic Transposition and the Origins of Specialized Hadith Conventions

Understanding the language of Hadith critics and accurately interpreting the objectives of their critical discourse necessarily require awareness of the methodological and historical process through which the terminology of al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl was formed. The critical term did not emerge as an isolated terminological innovation detached from the context of scholarly development. Rather, it passed through precise semantic stages in which the broad resources of the Arabic language interacted with the conventions of Hadith criticism.

Tracing these stages and identifying the rules governing semantic transfer from general linguistic usage to specialized convention constitute a methodological safeguard that protects the non-specialist researcher, particularly those working in jurisprudence, legal theory, or history, from the problems of lexical interpretation. It also directs the researcher toward interpreting biographical and critical texts in accordance with the methodological purposes of the scholars who produced them.

This epistemological foundation and semantic process can be grounded in three methodological pillars:

First: The Stage of Early Usage (the First and Second Centuries AH) and the Prevalence of Direct Practical Conventions

In the early period of Hadith transmission, the first critics among the Successors and their followers, including Ibn Sirin, al-Sha'bi, Ibrahim al-Nakha'i, and later Shu'bah, Malik, and al-Thawri, expressed judgments concerning narrators and the reliability of transmission through critical terms that arose from direct practical observation, careful scrutiny, and close knowledge of the conditions of contemporary transmission. During this period, criticism was largely based on the prevailing practices of the scholars of the time in determining the narrator's integrity and reliability through verbal indications, observable conduct, and contextual evidence (Al-Awni, 1996, p. 32).

At this early stage, their statements were not yet governed by the finely differentiated terminological categories that became established in later works, such as the technical distinctions among ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan, and ḍa'īf according to their developed methodological classifications. Rather, their judgments functioned as descriptive indicators that reflected the circumstances of transmission and the nature of the narrator's scholarly performance.

One indication of this is that the term "munkar" among the early critics was not necessarily restricted to the later technical definition of a report involving the violation of an established pattern of reliable transmission by a weak narrator. Rather, they could apply it to a narrator who transmitted a report uniquely when he was not considered among those qualified to transmit independently, regardless of his religious standing or personal honesty (Ibn al-Salah, 2008, vol. 3, p. 34).

Similarly, their use of the term "shaykh" did not necessarily signify absolute authentication, nor did it merely refer to the narrator's advanced age. Rather, it constituted a practical convention within Hadith criticism, indicating that the narrator belonged to the circle of transmitters from whom reports had been received and whose narrations were recorded by the scholars of the time (Ibn al-Qattan, 2011, vol. 5, p. 339).

Accordingly, the non-specialist researcher must exercise particular caution at this stage and avoid the danger of anachronistic interpretation. The expressions used by these early critics should neither be interpreted according to the fully developed terminological conventions of later works nor treated as merely spontaneous linguistic expressions. Rather, they should be understood as “practical critical conventions” governed by close examination of the methods and practices of Hadith transmission prevalent in their historical context.

Second: The Stage of Terminological Stabilization and the Formation of Specialized Critical Expressions (from the Third Century AH Onward)

With the expansion of Hadith transmission during the third century AH and the increasing diversity of its methods and scholarly foundations, this period witnessed the emergence of extensive and systematic efforts to codify the causes of Hadith weakness and the biographical assessment of narrators. Critics of this era, including Yahyā ibn Ma‘in, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bukhari, Abu Hatim, and Abu Zur‘ah al-Razi, contributed significantly to a discernible shift toward the stabilization and relative independence of critical conventions, together with their boundaries and specialized technical criteria.

During this phase, the critical expression was no longer merely a passing description or an isolated individual judgment. Rather, it increasingly functioned as a “conditional critical expression” governed by precise conceptual restrictions that combined the criterion of religious uprightness with the Subsection of accuracy in preservation and transmission. The terminology consequently acquired differentiated classifications, each carrying a recognized implication for the acceptance, rejection, or qualification of a particular narration.

One of the clearest indications of this practical terminological stabilization is Imam Muslim’s treatment, in the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, of the systematic classification of narrators according to their levels of integrity, precision, and mastery, together with his identification of the characteristics of abandoned narrators and those characterized by negligence or inattention (Muslim, 1998, pt. 1, p. 23).

Similarly, Imam al-Tirmidhi’s treatment of the concept of “ḥasan” in his discussion of the ‘ilal demonstrates the development of comprehensive technical criteria for the term. He describes it in terms that include the condition that “there is no narrator in its chain who is accused of lying, that the report is not *shādh*, and that it is narrated through another route” (Al-Tirmidhi, 2009, pt. 6, p. 481). Here, the term moved beyond its general linguistic meaning of beauty, approval, or general acceptability and became a technical judgment related specifically to the evaluation of chains of transmission and the evidentiary status of reports.

This development imposes an important methodological Subsection on the non-specialist researcher: in this period of terminological stabilization, critical expressions had moved beyond their broad lexical meanings and acquired specific functional and technical connotations. It is therefore inappropriate to interpret them solely according to the apparent meaning of the Arabic language without examining them in light of the methodological framework and critical system established by the Hadith scholars of the period.

Section 1: Terms of Commendation between Linguistic Meaning and Terminological Restriction

This Section examines and classifies the principal terms of commendation and authentication upon which judgments concerning the acceptance and reliability of narrators were based. It focuses on three major expressions: “trustworthy,” “honest,” and “there is nothing wrong with him.”

These sections aim to demonstrate how these expressions move from their linguistic origins, which may indicate honesty, general trustworthiness, or mere freedom from objection, to their technical meanings, which depend on the narrator’s combination of religious uprightness with accuracy in preservation and transmission. The discussion also examines differences in their respective levels and their critical implications for accepting a Hadith, using it as evidence, or considering it for corroboration, in accordance with the conventions of individual critics and their respective critical schools.

Subsection 1: The Term “Trustworthy” and Its Semantic Phases in the Criticism of Narrators

1. Linguistic Significance:

The term “trustworthy” in the Arabic language revolves around the meanings of firmness, strength, precision, and reliability (Al-Zawī, 1996, vol. 4, p. 573). Ibn Manzur states in *Lisan al-‘Arab*: “Trust is the verbal noun of your saying: I trusted him, I trust him, I trust him; that is, I considered him trustworthy” (Ibn Manzur, 2003, vol. 12, p. 250).

2. Customary Restriction in Hadith Usage:

The Hadith critical tradition restricted this broad lexical meaning, which may suggest absolute precision, honesty, and integrity, and made the term indicative of a specific rank combining religious uprightness with complete accuracy in transmitting reports (Al-Dhahabi, 2001, vol. 16, p. 70).

Evidence of this restriction in practice and terminology includes the following:

In the practical context of Hadith transmission, the critics established that mere righteousness and linguistic honesty were insufficient for accepting a narrator’s reports without adequate precision and mastery. In this context, Imam Muslim, in the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, reports the statement of Yahyā ibn Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān: “We have not seen among the righteous anyone who is free from mistakes in what they narrate” (Muslim, 1998, pt. 1, p. 30). The intended meaning is that occasional errors in transmission may occur even among upright narrators and that such errors reflect deficiencies in precision rather than intentional lying.

During the stage of terminological stabilization, Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī established a methodological hierarchy for the terminology of al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl in the introduction to his work, stating: "There are different ranks in the terminology of criticism and commendation. If it is said of a narrator that he is trustworthy or firmly established, then his narration is used as evidence" (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1952, vol. 2, p. 37).

Subsection 2: The Term "Ṣadūq" and Its Semantic Phases in the Criticism of Narrators

1. Linguistic Significance:

The term "ṣadūq" in the Arabic language denotes an intensive form of truthfulness. Ibn Manzur states in *Lisan al-ʿArab*: "A ṣadūq person is more truthful than one who is merely truthful" (Ibn Manzur, 2003, vol. 12, p. 61). Its linguistic connotation therefore rests on inherent truthfulness and complete freedom from deliberate lying.

2. Customary Restriction in Hadith Usage:

The specialized Hadith convention restricted this broad linguistic meaning, which might otherwise suggest the attainment of the highest degree of authentication. Instead, the term became an indication of a narrator characterized by uprightness and personal honesty, but whose precision and preservation did not reach the level associated with the term "trustworthy." Evidence of this restriction and terminological classification includes the following:

During the stage of terminological stabilization, critics placed the term "ṣadūq" below the rank of absolute authentication and associated it with the level of consideration and corroboration. Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī states in the introduction to his work on al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl: "If it is said of him: ṣadūq, or his status is ṣadūq, or there is nothing wrong with him, then his narration is written down and considered, and this is the second rank" (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1952, vol. 2, p. 37).

This distinction becomes particularly clear through systematic comparison among the ranks of narrators. Scholars distinguished between the rank of ṣadūq and that of trustworthy narrators on the basis of differences in precision and preservation. Thus, the ṣadūq narrator is one who is well known for truthfulness and honesty but has not attained the level of the most reliable narrators because of some deficiency in memorization and mastery. Nevertheless, his status remains above that of narrators whose reports are rejected when they transmit independently, and his reports may be regarded as acceptable for consideration and corroboration (Ibn Hajar, 2002, p. 80; Al-Khudair, 2006, p. 65).

Subsection 3: The Phrase "There Is Nothing Wrong with Him" and Its Semantic Phases in the Criticism of Narrators

1. Linguistic Significance:

The phrase "there is nothing wrong with him" in the Arabic language revolves around the negation of hardship, harm, and distress. The term associated with harm denotes difficulty and affliction, while the expression "there is nothing wrong with you" means that there is no fear, harm, or hardship (Ibn Faris, 1999, vol. 1, p. 328; Ibn Manzur, 2003, vol. 7, p. 317). The linguistic connotation of the phrase is therefore based on the mere absence of a serious defect or significant deficiency and on the negation of blame or objection concerning the person to whom it is applied.

2. Customary Restriction in Hadith Usage:

Hadith critics transferred this phrase from its general linguistic meaning, which denotes the absence of severity, harm, or blame, and established it as a secondary critical judgment whose significance varied between the practical usage of the early critics and the later stage of terminological stabilization.

Evidence of this restriction and terminological classification includes the following:

During the stage of terminological stabilization, the phrase became closely associated with the term "ṣadūq" in terms of its critical evaluation and rank. Ibn Hajar placed it within the fourth rank, describing it as applying to a narrator whose standing falls somewhat below the third degree, the degree associated with individuality, such as the terms "trustworthy" or "master." He further indicated that expressions such as "truthful," "good," or "there is nothing wrong with him" may be used to refer to narrators at this level (Ibn Hajar, 2002, p. 80).

In the practical usage of the early critics, however, the phrase could carry a stronger meaning and approach the level of authentication. This is evident in the practice of Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn. When Ibn Abi Khaythamah asked him about his well-known expression, he explained: "If I tell you that he is acceptable, he is trustworthy; but if I tell you that he is weak, then he is not trustworthy, so do not write down his Hadith" (Ibn al-Salah, 2008, vol. 4, p. 112).

Section 2: Terms of Criticism between Linguistic Usage and Hadith Terminological Restriction

This Section examines and classifies three terms and expressions of criticism that are associated with judgments of non-acceptance or suspension of a narrator's report: "mudallis" (one who practices tadrīs), "matrūk" (abandoned), and "farsighted."

These sections aim to demonstrate how these expressions move from their linguistic origins, which may indicate concealment, reflection, or abandonment, to their precise technical meanings within Hadith criticism. The discussion also considers their respective ranks and critical implications for rejecting a Hadith, accepting it under specific conditions, or considering it for corroboration, according to the evaluative standards of Hadith critics and their respective critical schools.

Subsection 1: The Term "Mudallis" and Its Semantic Phases in the Criticism of Narrators

1. Linguistic Significance:

The term "mudallis" is derived from the Arabic root associated with tadrīs, whose basic meaning relates to concealment and darkness. The expression tadrīs is connected with the concealment produced by darkness, and the Arabs use related

expressions to denote concealment or deception. In commercial transactions, *tadlīs* refers to concealing a defect in merchandise from the purchaser (Ibn Faris, 1999, vol. 2, p. 296).

The linguistic meaning therefore centers on concealment, obscurity, and the withholding of the true condition of something.

2. Customary Restriction in Hadith Usage:

Hadith critics transferred this description from the context of concealing defects in commercial transactions to the context of chains of transmission. They used it to denote the concealment of a defect in the *isnād* and the presentation of the chain in a manner that gives the impression that it is free from such a defect (Al-Khudair, 1427, p. 92).

A narrator described as a *mudallīs* is not necessarily a liar or someone who deliberately fabricates reports. Rather, the critical convention restricts the acceptance of his narration according to the manner in which he transmits it and the specific forms of *tadlīs* involved.

Evidence of this restriction and terminological classification includes the following:

Acceptance and Rejection According to the Form of Transmission: Hadith critics established a distinction in dealing with the narration of a *mudallīs* between reports transmitted using ambiguous expressions and those transmitted using explicit formulas indicating direct hearing. Ibn al-Salah stated in his introduction concerning this methodological principle: "They then differed concerning the acceptance of the report of one known to practice *tadlīs* ... The correct position is to distinguish between them: what the *mudallīs* narrates using an ambiguous expression that does not indicate hearing or direct transmission is treated according to the ruling applicable to *mursal* reports and their various forms, whereas what he narrates using an explicit formula of transmission, such as 'I heard,' 'he narrated to me,' or 'he told us,' and similar expressions, is acceptable and may be used as evidence" (Ibn al-Salah, 2008, vol. 2, p. 255).

The Effect of the Description on the Criticism of Narrators: Describing a narrator as a *mudallīs* constitutes criticism related to the manner of his transmission rather than necessarily to his religious integrity or personal uprightness. Accordingly, al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani classified narrators described as practitioners of *tadlīs* into different ranks and categories according to the extent of their practice of *tadlīs*, whether frequent or limited, and according to the narrator's overall status and reliability (Ibn Hajar, 2007, pp. 33–35).

Subsection 2: The Phrase "There Is a Consideration" and Its Semantic Phases in the Criticism of Narrators

1. Linguistic Significance:

The Arabic root associated with the term "consideration" revolves around contemplation, examination, and investigation. Ibn Faris states: "Nūn, Zā', and Rā' constitute a sound root whose branches refer to one meaning: contemplating and examining a thing" (Ibn Faris, 1999, vol. 5, p. 444).

The linguistic meaning therefore centers on pausing to examine something, requiring further verification, and withholding an immediate or definitive judgment.

2. Customary Restriction in Hadith Usage (the Convention of Imam al-Bukhari):

Hadith critics moved this phrase beyond its basic linguistic sense of pausing and reflecting and developed it into a specific critical expression. This usage is particularly significant in the critical terminology of Imam Muhammad ibn Isma'īl al-Bukhari, who was known for employing this expression as a cautious form of criticism. In his usage, the phrase often indicates serious reservations concerning the reliability of a narrator (Abdulaziz Al-Abdul Latif, 2007, p. 198).

Evidence of this restriction and terminological classification includes the following:

The Expression as Defined through Its Critical Usage: Imam al-Bukhari was characterized by a careful and restrained approach in his criticism, including his preference for courteous expressions when criticizing narrators. Accordingly, the expression "there is a consideration concerning him" could indicate that the narrator's status was sufficiently problematic for his reports to be set aside. Al-Dhahabi transmitted this methodological observation in *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*, stating: "Whoever examines his statements concerning al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl will recognize his piety in speech about people and his fairness toward those whom he weakens. Among the expressions he most frequently used are: 'His Hadith is rejected,' 'They remained silent concerning him,' and 'There is a consideration concerning him,' and similar expressions. He avoided saying: 'So-and-so is a liar' or 'He used to fabricate Hadith.' Instead, he would say: 'There is a consideration concerning so-and-so's Hadith.' This means that the narrator is suspected of having a defect, and this reflects his statement: 'May Allah not hold me accountable for having wronged anyone.' Such was the extent of his piety" (Al-Dhahabi, 2001, vol. 12, p. 441).

Subsection 3: The Term "Abandoned" and Its Semantic Phases in the Criticism of Narrators

1. Linguistic Significance:

The term "abandoned" in Arabic revolves around the meanings of leaving, relinquishing, and forsaking. Ibn Manzur states in *Lisan al-'Arab*: "Tarak: to leave and relinquish a thing ... and I left the thing, meaning that I abandoned it ... The legacy of a deceased person is what he leaves behind of inherited property. And a person who practices *tabattul* is one who abandons marriage" (Ibn Manzur, 2003, vol. 12, p. 286).

The linguistic meaning is therefore based on refraining from something, abandoning it, and ceasing to give it attention or consideration.

2. Customary Restriction in Hadith Usage:

Hadith critics transferred this term from its broad linguistic meaning, which denotes general abandonment or rejection, to a highly restricted technical meaning. In Hadith terminology, a “matrūk” narrator is one who has been accused of lying in Hadith transmission (Al-Khudair, 1427, p. 126).

The critics therefore did not use the term merely to indicate ordinary rejection. Rather, they assigned it to one of the most severe levels of criticism, indicating that the narrator’s status had fallen to an extremely low level. His reports are consequently not strengthened through corroboration, nor does his narration ordinarily serve to strengthen the reports of others.

Evidence of this restriction and terminological classification includes the following:

The Absence of Consideration and Corroboration: Hadith critics established that reports transmitted by an abandoned narrator are not ordinarily subject to consideration or corroboration. Al-Sakhawi explains that reports capable of being strengthened through supporting chains are generally those containing a narrator whose weakness is relatively minor, such as poor memorization, occasional non-serious error, or similar deficiencies. By contrast, when a narrator is accused of lying, the report cannot normally be strengthened merely by the existence of another chain of transmission (Al-Sakhawi, n.d., vol. 1, p. 119).

The Limit of the Rank of Complete Rejection: The term is associated with the ranks approaching those of narrators characterized by fabrication and lying. Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi states in his classification: “If they say: ‘Abandoned,’ ‘His Hadith is close to being abandoned,’ or ‘A liar,’ then this indicates the rejection of the Hadith. His Hadith is not written down, and this is the fourth rank” (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1952, vol. 2, p. 37).

Conclusion

This study, which examined the semantic phases and customary restrictions of the terminology of al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl, particularly the relationship between its linguistic connotations and technical implications, has reached several important conclusions and recommendations, the most significant of which are as follows:

- The close relationship between linguistic origins and critical usage: The study demonstrated that the terminology of Hadith criticism is firmly rooted in its linguistic origins, including meanings related to truthfulness, concealment, cessation, and abandonment. Hadith critics adopted these linguistic expressions and subjected them to precise restrictions, thereby transferring them from their broad linguistic meanings to a specialized “technical convention” specific to the discipline of Hadith criticism.
- The flexibility of early usage and the stabilization of later terminology: The study revealed semantic variation in the use of certain expressions between the practical conventions of early critics and the later stage of terminological stabilization. For example, the expression “there is nothing wrong with him” could, in the usage of certain early critics, carry a meaning approaching strong authentication, whereas in the later established terminology it became associated with the rank of “ṣadūq.”
- The terminological distinctiveness of critical schools: The methodological particularity of certain Hadith critics was reflected in their use of distinctive critical expressions. This is particularly evident in Imam al-Bukhari’s use of the phrase “there is a consideration concerning him,” through which he moved beyond the merely linguistic meaning of pausing for examination and employed the expression as an indirect but serious form of criticism indicating a narrator’s weakness and the setting aside of his reports, while maintaining the characteristic restraint and courtesy of his critical language.
- The impact of terminology on acceptance, rejection, and corroboration: The terminology of criticism is carefully differentiated according to its implications for the acceptance and rejection of Hadith reports. While the narration of a mudallis may be considered acceptable when transmitted using explicit formulas indicating direct hearing, the degrees of rejection vary according to the severity of the criticism. At the level represented by the term “abandoned” (matrūk), the critical convention assigns the narrator a severe status of rejection. His reports are therefore not ordinarily strengthened by supporting chains, nor can they generally be used to strengthen the reports of other narrators.

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