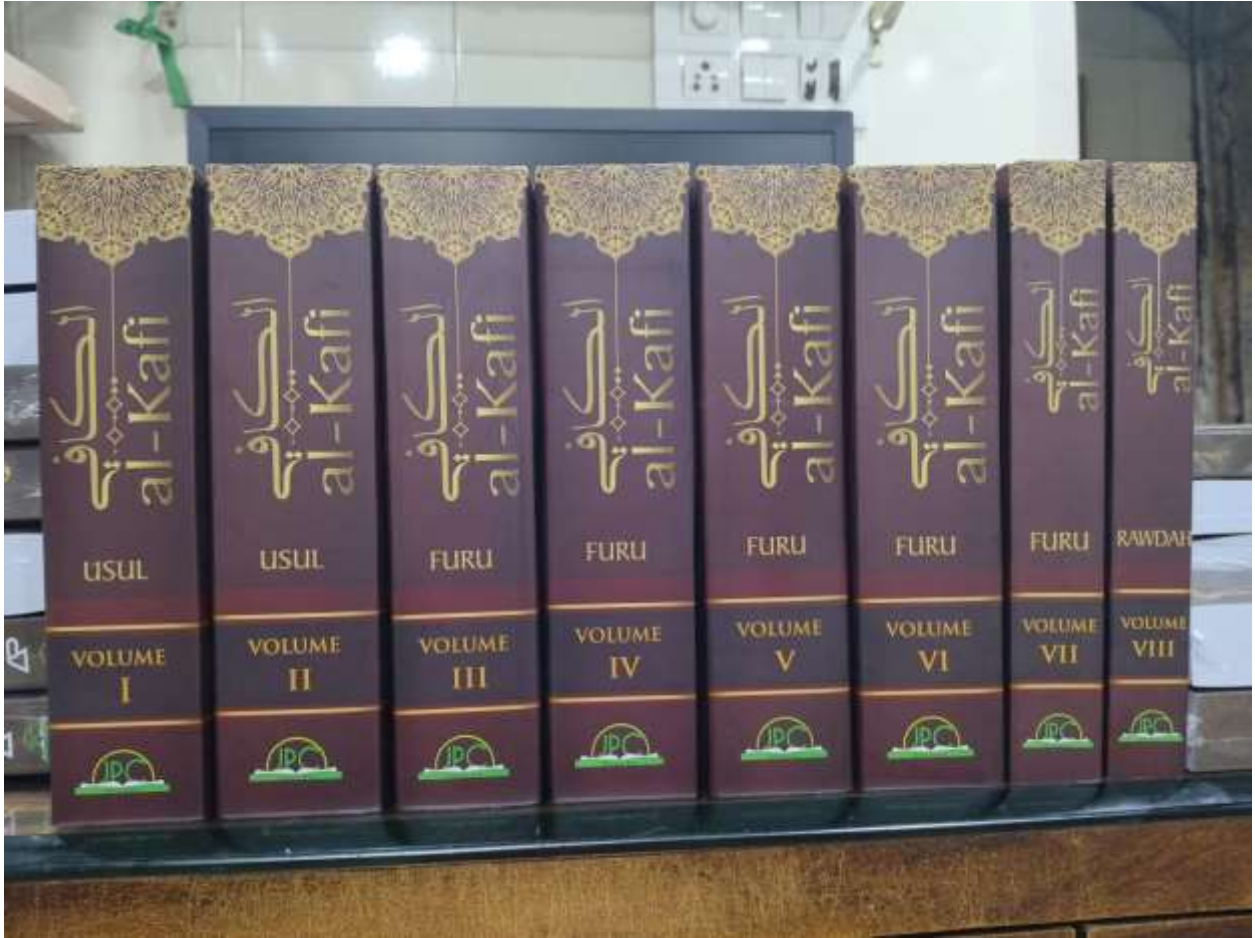


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# الكافي al-Kafi



Part 1 – *al-'Usul* (Principles)

Volume – I

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Arabic - English Bilingual Translation

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Compiled by

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ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni

English Translation by Muhammad Sarwar

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- Name** : al-Kāfi (Volume – I)
- Author** : Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni
- Translated by** : Muhammad Sarwar
- Publisher** : Jafari Propagation Centre  
94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10 & 11,  
Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid,  
Bandra (West), Mumbai - 400050.  
Tel.: +91-22-2642 5777  
Whatsapp: +91-84549 04070  
E-mail: jpcbandra@gmail.com  
E-mail: jpcbandra@yahoo.com  
Website: www.jpconline.org
- Year** : 2024
- ISBN** : 978-81-983842-6-3

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## Preface

*al-Kāfi* is a *Hadith* collection of the Twelver Shi'a tradition, compiled in the first half of the 10th century CE (early 4th century AH) by Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni. It is one of the Four Books (*Kutub al-Arba*). It is divided into three sections : '*Usul al-Kāfi* (Vol. I and II), dealing with epistemology, theology, history, ethics, supplication, and the Qur'an; '*Furu' al-Kāfi* (Vol. III to VII), which is concerned with practical and legal issues; and '*Rawdat* (or '*Rawdah al-Kāfi* (Vol. VIII), which includes miscellaneous traditions, many of which are lengthy letters and speeches transmitted from the Imams ﷺ. In total, *al-Kāfi* comprises 16,199 narrations.

*al-Kāfi* consists of three major fields of the Islamic system of belief and practice: theology, practical laws, and guidelines for moral discipline. All three fields of the system are dealt with in the Holy Quran in principle and sometimes in good details.

Average Muslims, to certain degrees, do read and study the Holy Quran and *Shari'ah*, the practical laws of Islam. However, the reading and study of a collection of *Hadith* such as '*Usul al-Kāfi* is ignored. Writers publish books on the subject of ethics and moral matters. This is the best proof of how badly '*Usul al-Kāfi* is ignored. With the existence of '*Usul al-Kāfi*, it is a total embarrassment to write anything on the subject of theology, ethics and moral discipline. The first volume of '*Usul al-Kāfi* is the best and the only book one needs, besides the Holy Quran and other authentic sources of *Hadith*, to read on theology. One's reading any other book, besides the Holy Quran and '*Usul al-Kāfi* or other authentic sources of *Hadith*, on these topics is an absolute waste of time and energy.

The second volume of '*Usul al-Kāfi* is the best and the only book needed, besides the Holy Quran and other authentic sources of *Hadith*, for complete instructions how to balance, improve, uplift and strengthen one's spiritual faculties, merits and potentials. It shows the right form of guidance, realistic aims and pure spiritual ambitions. *Hadith* 14 of the first part of the first volume is one of a kind and does not exist in any other collection of *Hadith* with such form and quality. The remaining six volumes of *al-Kāfi*, VIII volumes in all, are only explanation of different items of facts, mentioned in that marvelous *Hadith*, in practical perspectives.

It is regrettable that even the Shi'a Muslims do not read '*Usul al-Kāfi*. For years I have been translating things to be used as textbooks of Islamic teaching to children in weekend schools. What a waste of time and energy it was! As mentioned above it is a total embarrassment to write anything on the subject of theology and moral discipline with the existence of '*Usul al-Kāfi*. It is like teaching Islam to people in the presence of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ﷺ. You be the judge, what

could be more improper than speaking of the matters of theology and moral discipline while Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ؑ would be setting next to you. It is regrettable that *'Usul al-Kāfi* and the whole *al-Kāfi* is not studied in weekend schools, it is not publicized to encourage the Shi'a people to read and study this valuable book. What could be more regrettable than writing tons of things or saying a whole lot more about the principles of Islamic belief and ethics and ignore what the Imam ؑ have already explained in the simplest authoritative manners? This is only *'Usul al-Kāfi* (Volumes I & II). For the rest of the Divine treasures of guidance one would need to study the other six volumes of *al-Kāfi*.

The English Translation of *al-Kāfi* is now, by the will of Allah ﷻ, in your hands. It was only because of the beauty of the words of *Ahl al-Bayt* ؑ that made it all possible. The volume of this project had become quite large and complex due to two language texts and it was sometimes difficult to handle. All comments, suggestions and corrections will be very much appreciated. Please send your comments, suggestions or corrections to the following e-mail address: [jpcbandra@gmail.com](mailto:jpcbandra@gmail.com)

## About the Author

### (Biography of al-Kulayni)

Kulayn was born in a village 27 kilometers south west of the city of Ray, a well-known city in Iran. The ruins of the village still are near Tehran, Iran. Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni, the compiler of *al-Kāfi* was born in this village.

Further evidence that he was born therein is the fact that in history he is called the religious scholar of Shi'a of Ray in his time.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi al-Baghdadi was from a noble family of Kulayn. Outstanding scholars in jurisprudence and *Hadith* came from this family, al-Kulayni himself was the most prominent religious figure of his time in Ray. He lived in Baghdad, Iraq also. He lived in the gate of Kufa, Baghdad, Iraq as the chief of the Shi'a scholars in jurisprudence during the rule of al Muqtadir, the Abbassid Caliph, al-Kulayni, of all other compilers of *Hadith*, alone was a contemporary of all the four successive special representatives and ambassadors of Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام, the twelfth Imam عليه السلام. He had the chance to collect *Hadith* from the proper sources, *al-Kāfi*, the book is a unique collection of *Hadith*. al-Kulayni compiled this book on request from a prominent Shi'a scholar (as mentioned in his introduction to *al-Kāfi*).

Prominent scholars of Islamic studies in search of knowledge would meet him at his place to discuss, exchange notes and to confer with him for better understanding of the issues. al-Kulayni was a great scholar, a reliable narrator of *Hadith* and a man of great learning. He was of the outstanding scholars of law and an authority in the science of *Hadith*. He was a man of great chastity, piety, integrity and holiness.

His book *al-Kāfi*, no doubt, is a treasure of Islamic literature, *Shari'ah* (law), Divine commandments and prohibitions, in the form of texts of the *Sunnah*, the statements, actions and the approvals of the Holy Prophet عليه السلام and the twelve *A'imma* عليهم السلام. It is a text of the basis of the Islamic education and culture.

al-Kulayni has himself prefaced his book, *al-Kāfi* and has also provided certain explanatory notes in certain chapters, which shows his skill and proficiency in writing and in Arabic literature.

He was well versed in categorizing the narrators of *Hadith* and the texts of *Hadith*. He is the author of a book in the science of *Hadith* and an expert in scrutinizing the narrators. He was a great scholar of theology and he has written a book refuting *al-Qaramitah* (one of the several names applied to the sect of Isma'ilies who were once very active in politics).

His two books (1) Letters of *A'immah* ﷺ and (2) Poems in praises of the *A'immah* ﷺ, show his interest in linguistics.

His book on the interpretation of dreams is of the best books on the subject.

### **About *al-Kāfi***

This book was known as al-Kulayni (ibid p. 266.) and also *al-Kāfi* (*ar-Rijal*, *an-Najashi*, p. 266; *at-Fibris*, *at-Tusi*, p. 135; *Ma'a-lim al-Ulama'*, p. 88). In reply to one of his friends, al-Kulayni has explained why he compiled this book.

“Allah ﷻ has made the compilation of the book that you had wished for possible. I hope it will prove to be up to your expectations. It may have shortcomings but our intentions have not been insincere to provide good advice. Providing good advice to our people is obligatory. We also hoped to be considered as partners in all benefits of this book up to the end of time.” (*Usul al-Kāfi*, p. 8)

It took twenty years to complete *al-Kāfi*. (*ar-Rijid*, *an-Najashi*, p. 266)

## Introduction by al-Kulayni

### In Praise of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise belongs to Allah ﷻ Who is praised for His bounties, worshipped for His Might, obeyed in His Rule and feared for His Majesty. He possesses all that is attractive; His commands pervade in all of His creation. He is High, the Most High. He is near in His Highness and the Most High above being seen. His being the first has had no beginning and He is eternal. He existed before the existence of all things and He is the eternal Who guards all things. He is the overwhelming power and the preservation of the things does not burden Him. He is the only Almighty in His kingdom and only power to compel what is to compel. Through wisdom He has revealed His authority over His creation. He created all things in their origin new and at the very beginning through His might and wisdom and nothing existed to invalidate His being the originator of all things. No other cause existed to compete His invention. He alone created what He wished as He wished to reveal His wisdom and the reality of His Lordship. Reason is not able to grasp Him. Imagination is not able to reach Him. Eyes are not able to see Him. Measurement is not able to limit Him. Statements fail to describe Him. Eyes turn dull in trying to see Him. Describing Him by means of qualities loses the right path.

He is veiled without any barrier and is concealed without any covering. He is known but is not seen and is described without a form. He is characterized without a body. There is no Lord except Allah ﷻ. Imagination loses the right path in trying to reach His reality. Intelligent becomes exhausted and is not able to reach Him. So also is the case with imaginations and eyesight. He is all hearing and all knowing. Allah ﷻ has established His authority over His creatures through His messengers ﷺ, and has explained things with evidence. He has sent His messengers with glad news and warnings. So that those who would find salvation would do so with proper evidence and those to be destroyed would become so for ignoring proper evidence. So that people may learn about their Lord what they are ignorant of and know Him through His Lordship after that they were ignorant of this fact, so that they believe in Him as the only One Lord after their considering other things to be like Him. I thank Him in a way that to be a cure for the souls, a thankfulness of a degree to please Him, enough to fulfil the duty to express gratitude for His favors to us in the form of His pleasant blessings, graceful bounties and beautiful trials.

I testify that there is no Lord except Allah ﷻ alone Who has no partners. He is the only Lord, the only self-sufficient Who has no companion or children.

I testify that Muhammad ﷺ, is His servant. He is His chosen one, His messenger whom He sent at a time of lapse of messengers and at the time of the long sleep of the nations, wide spread of ignorance, mischief and shortages of authority, blindness to the truth, prevailing injustice and the disappearance of religion.

Allah ﷻ sent His Book to him (Muhammad ﷺ) that contains the statements and explanations, a reading in straightforward Arabic language so that people may become pious, Allah ﷻ has explained and organized this book for the people and with knowledge He has given the details. He has explained a religion in it, certain obligations are made obligatory therein and certain matters are declared for His creature in it. It contains signs that lead to salvation and evidence that call to guidance.

He (Muhammad ﷺ), preached His message and executed His commands. He fulfilled his responsibilities with patience for the sake of his Lord. He worked hard for His cause, gave good advice to his followers and invited them to salvation. He encouraged them to speak of (Allah ﷻ), gave them guidance to the right path after his passing away through a system, reason, basis for the people and signs that he established for them so that they are not misled after him. It was all due to his kindness and sympathy for them.

When his life ended and his days were over, Allah ﷻ took his soul to Himself. With Allah ﷻ he is well pleased for his deeds. His reward is a good deal and his position very great. He left this world leaving behind among his followers the Book of Allah ﷻ and the executor of his Will, Amir al-Mu'minin, Ali ﷺ, the master of the believers and the leader (Imam) for pious people.

The twine that he left behind was a united companion. They each acknowledge and speak in support of the other.

The Imam ﷺ speaks of Allah ﷻ from the Book. He speaks of what Allah ﷻ has made obligatory on His servants, of obedience to Him, of obedience to the Imam ﷺ, and of the acknowledgement of Leadership with Divine Authority. He speaks of His rights that are meant to be for the completion of religion, His commandments, establishment of His authority, seeking guidance in His light from its mines, His chosen and select people who have received goodness from Him.

Allah ﷻ through the *A'imma* ﷺ of guidance from the family of His Prophet ﷺ, has explained His religion. Through them He has clarified the ways of His system. Through them He has opened the inside of His knowledge. He has made them to be the path to know Him, the sources of knowledge of His religion, the medium between Him and His creatures, the gate that lead to know His rights and has given them the knowledge of His hidden secret.

Whenever, an Imam ؑ from them left this world He established a clearly known successor for that Imam ؑ for His creatures as a bright guide, an Imam ؑ and guardian with the truth and justice. Allah ؑ and those who preach for Him and supervise over His creatures have established their authority. Through their guidance people follow the religion and through their light people of the lands find their way.

Allah ؑ has made them, (*A'immah* ؑ) the life for people, the light in darkness, the key to the words and the pillars of Islam. He has based the system of His obedience and the fulfillment of obligation submission to them (*A'immah* ؑ) in all that one needs to know and ask them what one is ignorant of. He has prohibited others from engaging in what they are ignorant of and from rejecting what they do not know. It is because Allah ؑ has willed to save, from His creatures whoever He wills, from injustice and darkness.

May Allah ؑ grant blessings upon Muhammad ؑ, and the select members of his family whom Allah ؑ has thoroughly cleansed.

After my words about Allah ؑ and His Messenger ؑ in the above, herein below is my response to your note.

I have understood your concerns about the conditions of the people of our times who seem to have agreed up on ignorance to be the standard and authority in their dealings. They cooperate and work together to establish the ways and the manners of ignorance and distance themselves from knowledge and the people of knowledge. Consequently, knowledge is almost banished and the sources of knowledge are about to depart the people. It is all because they rely so much on ignorance (ignorant people) and lose the (blessing of) people of knowledge. You have asked, "Can the dealings of the people be considered proper in following a religion without knowing the rules and laws therein that show what is lawful or otherwise? Can they decide and settle all matters on the basis of what they feel is good and live a life in such a manner? Can they just do what their ancestors had been doing and rely on their own understanding of the issues great or small?"

To understand the answer to your question, note the following O brother in faith, may Allah ؑ grant you blessings:

Allah ؑ, has created human beings and has given them distinction over the animals. He has given them the ability to understand and distinguish good from bad. Human beings have been given the ability to understand Allah's ؑ commands and prohibitions.

There are two kinds of people: (a) There are those who are physically and mentally safe and sound and (b) those who lack such abilities, Safe and sound people are held responsible to follow the commands and prohibitions of Allah ؑ. Those who lack such abilities are exempt because



of their inability to learn, discipline and fulfill responsibilities. Allah ﷻ has designed education, good manners and moral discipline to serve as means of survival for the people who are safe and sound. Had it been permissible for safe and sound people to follow ignorance it would have been permissible for them not to become obligated to fulfill responsibilities. Such a condition amounts to make the coming of the Divine messengers and education useless. Ignoring the book of guidance, the Divine messengers and education destroys the whole civilization. This is a return to atheism. The justice and wisdom of Allah ﷻ, required the creation of creatures, who can understand the commands and prohibitions of Allah so that people do not live a useless life. Instead they realize the greatness of Allah ﷻ, they acknowledge His Oneness and that He is the Lord. They must know that He is their Creator Who gives them sustenance. The proof of His existence is so clear and obvious. The signs of His authority are shining and manifest. His lighthouses are visible everywhere and call people to believe in Allah ﷻ. Each sign testifies to the existence of the Lord and the One Who deserves to be worshipped. Such proofs that exist in each sign are proofs of the effect of the creation in them. Each creature is a marvelous proof of His plan. He invites them to know Him so that they will not remain ignorant of His existence and ignorant of His religion and laws.

People of wisdom do not consider ignorance of his existence a permissible attitude, as is the case of denying His religion. Allah ﷻ, said:

“Did they not make a covenant (with Allah) in the Book not to speak any thing other than the Truth about Allah and to study its contents well?” (7:169) “They call a lie something that is beyond the limit of their knowledge...” (10:39)

People are bound to obey the commands of Allah ﷻ and His prohibitions. It is not permissible for them to follow ignorance (ignorant people).

It is obligatory for them to ask if they do not already know and to acquire proper understanding of religion.

Allah ﷻ, has said, “Not all believers have to become specialists in religious learning. Why do not certain people from each group of believers seek to become specialists in religious learning and, after completing their studies, guide their group so that they will have fear of Allah.” (9:122)

If people who are physically and mentally safe and sound were permitted to stay ignorant Allah ﷻ would not have asked them to ask and learn. He did not need to send any messengers, books and guidance. In such case, they would have lived like animals or like people physically and mentally defective and if so they did not remain in existence even for a blinking of an eye. In fact, it is not permissible for them to live without discipline and education. Thus, it became

necessary for those physically and mentally sound to find instructors to educate and discipline them and provide answer to their questions,

The best and most important education for people of reason, the education worthwhile for one to study assiduously is the religious education. The education that teaches one about the Creator, His Oneness and how to worship Him, is the most important one. It is important to be educated in the issues of *Shari'ah*, His laws of guidance, His commandments, prohibitions, warnings and discipline. This is necessary because there is solid evidence to support the need for such education, that responsibility is real, life is short, indifference and procrastination is not acceptable.

The condition for a worship to be proper and acceptable is to fulfil all the obligations on the basis of certainty, knowledge and proper understanding. Only then the worshiper is considered praiseworthy in the sight of Allah ﷻ and deserving rewards and His great blessings. On the other hand, one who acts without proper knowledge and understanding does not know what and for what reason one is acting. Ignorant people do not have trust in what they do. They do not acknowledge any thing because acknowledgement does not come without doubt free knowledge of the subject to be acknowledged.

The person who has doubts is not like a person who has certainty of the matters of piety, humbleness before the Lord and the need to seek nearness to Him. Allah ﷻ has said, "Those who have witnessed the truth only they have proper knowledge." (43:87)

Only the testimony of those who possess proper knowledge is accepted and it is because of the knowledge of the subject of the testimony. Without the knowledge of the subject of the testimony it is not accepted. The acceptance of the deeds of the people who act with doubts is up to Allah ﷻ to decide.

He may accept such deeds because of His grace or He may refuse to accept because of the absence of the conditions such as knowledge and certainty. It is Knowledge, proper understanding and certainty that separate one from those mentioned in the following words of Allah ﷻ, "Certain people worship Allah to achieve worldly gains. They are confident when they are prosperous, but when they face hardships they turn away from (worship). They are lost in this life and will be lost in the life to come. Such loss is indeed destructive." (22:11)

It is all because of acting without knowledge and certainty in the beginning and in the end.

The scholar has said, "One who accepts the faith with certainty remains in it steadfast and the faith benefits him. Those who accept the faith without certainty they leave it just as they came in."

He has also said, "Those who get their religion from the Book of Allah ﷻ and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the strength of their faith is as such that mountains may be destroyed but not their faith. Those who get their religion from the words of the people they may reject it" He has also said, "Those who do not know us through the Holy Quran they fail to protect themselves against mischief."

This is why so many religions have emerged in our times as well as disgraceful systems that almost have entered the level of disbelief. This is because of the opportunity that Allah ﷻ has provided for every one. One whose faith in the will of Allah ﷻ is to remain solid He makes the means that to make it so happen, available. He then gets his religion from the Book of Allah ﷻ and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger ﷺ, with certainty and proper understanding. His religion is stronger than the heavy mountains. Those whose faith in the will of Allah ﷻ is to be temporary and bound to failure, may He grant us refuge – He gives them the opportunity to follow certain ideas that are devoid of Divine authority. They follow what seems good to one to follow and such other matters like following what others do, certain interpretations and so on without proper understand and certainty. In such case Allah ﷻ may or may not accept their deeds. They may live as a believer in the morning and a unbeliever in the evening or vice versa. It is because such people may easily follow the influential elements in the society or act upon what they feel is good.

The scholar ﷺ, has said, "Allah ﷻ, has created the prophets with prophet-hood they can be nothing but prophets. He has created the executors of the will of the prophets as the executors thus they can be nothing but the executors of the wills of the prophets. He has given temporary faith to certain people. He may complete it for them or remove it from them as mentioned in this expression of Quran, "The established faith the temporary faith." (6:98)

You have mentioned that you are confused in the issues of the verification of *Hadith* due to the difference in variously narrated texts and that you know the reason for variation but you do not find reliable people to discuss with. You have said that you wish you had a book sufficient (*Kafi*) that contained all issues of the religion. A book that provides a student all the material that he needs is urgently needed. A book is needed that can help people to have proper guidance in the matters of religion to follow the correct instructions of the truthful people ﷺ, and the prevailing *Sunnah*, the basis of practices. So that one can fulfil his responsibilities toward Allah ﷻ, and follow the *Sunnah* of (the Holy Prophet ﷺ).

You have said, that you hope such a book, Allah ﷻ willing, will help our brothers in faith to find the right guidance.

My brother in faith, may Allah ﷻ grant you proper guidance, please note that there is

no other way to sort out the confusion that comes from the variation of the narration of the scholars except by the help of the principles that the scholar ﷺ, has set. “Compare a narration with the text of the Holy Quran. Whatever agrees with the Holy Quran is acceptable and what does not agree is rejected.”

Also he has said, “Leave alone what agrees with the views of the others because the right is in what is opposite to them.”

Also there are his (Imam's ﷺ) words, “Follow what is unanimously agreed upon because there is no harm in what is unanimously agreed upon.”

We are only able to apply such principles to a very few of such cases. We do not find any thing better and more precautionary than to refer to the scholar (Imam ﷺ), and accept that which is within the limit of his (Imam's ﷺ), words, “Whichever you follow in submission and obedience is excusable for you.”

Allah ﷻ has made the compilation of the book that you had wished for possible. I hope it will prove to be up to your expectations. It may have shortcomings, but our intentions have not been insincere to provide good advice because to provide good advice to our people is obligatory. We also hoped to be considered as partners in all benefits of this book up to the end of time.

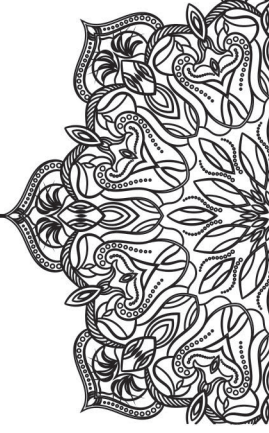
The Lord is one, the Messenger is one, the last prophet ﷺ, is one and the *Shari'ah* is one. What Muhammad ﷺ, has made lawful will remain lawful up to the Day of Judgment and what he has made unlawful will remain unlawful to the Day of Judgment.

We extended the Book on ‘People with Divine Authority’ to a certain degree although not as it should have been done because we did not like to be deprived of the benefits thereof. I hope Allah ﷻ, will approve what is based on our intentions. If life will give us a chance we intend to compile a book of a bigger volume to serve the causes as they should be served, by the will of Allah, the Most High. From Him comes the power and means. From Him one expects help and increase in rewards and opportunity.

May Allah ﷻ grant blessings up on Muhammad ﷺ and his purified family.

The first thing is the book of Intelligence and the excellence of knowledge, the excellence of the people of knowledge, the defects of the people of ignorance and its harms. Intelligence is the focal point and the axes of the matters. On the basis of Intelligence come the rewards and sufferings and Allah ﷻ is the best One to provide good opportunities.

# الكافي al-Kafi



Part 1 – *al-'Usul* (Principles)

Volume – II

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Arabic - English Bilingual Translation

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Compiled by

*Thiqatu al-Islam* Abu Ja'far Muhammad

ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni

English Translation by Muhammad Sarwar

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- Name** : al-Kāfi (Volume – II)
- Author** : Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni
- Translated by** : Muhammad Sarwar
- Publisher** : Jafari Propagation Centre  
94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10 & 11,  
Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid,  
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Tel.: +91-22-2642 5777  
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E-mail: [jpcbandra@yahoo.com](mailto:jpcbandra@yahoo.com)  
Website: [www.jpconline.org](http://www.jpconline.org)
- Year** : 2024
- ISBN** : 978-81-983842-4-9

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# الكافي al-Kafi



Part 2 – *al-Furu'* (Branches)

Volume – III

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Arabic - English Bilingual Translation

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Compiled by

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English Translation by Muhammad Sarwar

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- Name** : al-Kāfi (Volume – III)
- Author** : Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni
- Translated by** : Muhammad Sarwar
- Publisher** : Jafari Propagation Centre  
94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10 & 11,  
Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid,  
Bandra (West), Mumbai - 400050.  
Tel.: +91-22-2642 5777  
Whatsapp: +91-84549 04070  
E-mail: jpcbandra@gmail.com  
E-mail: jpcbandra@yahoo.com  
Website: www.jpconline.org
- Year** : 2024
- ISBN** : 978-81-983842-1-8

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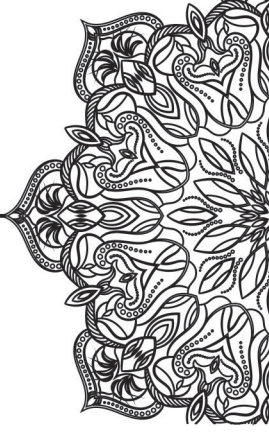


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# الكافي al-Kafi



Part 2 – *al-Furu'* (Branches)

Volume – IV

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Arabic - English Bilingual Translation

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Compiled by

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ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni

English Translation by Muhammad Sarwar

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- Name** : al-Kāfi (Volume – IV)
- Author** : Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni
- Translated by** : Muhammad Sarwar
- Publisher** : Jafari Propagation Centre  
94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10 & 11,  
Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid,  
Bandra (West), Mumbai - 400050.  
Tel.: +91-22-2642 5777  
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E-mail: [jpcbandra@gmail.com](mailto:jpcbandra@gmail.com)  
E-mail: [jpcbandra@yahoo.com](mailto:jpcbandra@yahoo.com)  
Website: [www.jpconline.org](http://www.jpconline.org)
- Year** : 2024
- ISBN** : 978-81-983842-3-2

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# الكافي al-Kafi



Part 2 – *al-Furu'* (Branches)

Volume – V

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Arabic - English Bilingual Translation

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- Name** : al-Kāfi (Volume – V)
- Author** : Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni
- Translated by** : Muhammad Sarwar
- Publisher** : Jafari Propagation Centre  
94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10 & 11,  
Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid,  
Bandra (West), Mumbai - 400050.  
Tel.: +91-22-2642 5777  
Whatsapp: +91-84549 04070  
E-mail: jpcbandra@gmail.com  
E-mail: jpcbandra@yahoo.com  
Website: www.jpconline.org
- Year** : 2024
- ISBN** : 978-81-983842-9-4

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# الكافي al-Kafi



Part 2 – *al-Furu'* (Branches)

Volume – VI

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Arabic - English Bilingual Translation

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English Translation by Muhammad Sarwar

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- Name** : al-Kāfi (Volume – VI)
- Author** : Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni
- Translated by** : Muhammad Sarwar
- Publisher** : Jafari Propagation Centre  
94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10 & 11,  
Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid,  
Bandra (West), Mumbai - 400050.  
Tel.: +91-22-2642 5777  
Whatsapp: +91-84549 04070  
E-mail: [jpcbandra@gmail.com](mailto:jpcbandra@gmail.com)  
E-mail: [jpcbandra@yahoo.com](mailto:jpcbandra@yahoo.com)  
Website: [www.jpconline.org](http://www.jpconline.org)
- Year** : 2024
- ISBN** : 978-81-983842-7-0

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# الكافي al-Kafi



Part 2 – *al-Furu'* (Branches)

Volume – VII

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Arabic - English Bilingual Translation

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English Translation by Muhammad Sarwar

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- Name** : al-Kāfi (Volume – VII)
- Author** : Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni
- Translated by** : Muhammad Sarwar
- Publisher** : Jafari Propagation Centre  
94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10 & 11,  
Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid,  
Bandra (West), Mumbai - 400050.  
Tel.: +91-22-2642 5777  
Whatsapp: +91-84549 04070  
E-mail: [jpcbandra@gmail.com](mailto:jpcbandra@gmail.com)  
E-mail: [jpcbandra@yahoo.com](mailto:jpcbandra@yahoo.com)  
Website: [www.jpconline.org](http://www.jpconline.org)
- Year** : 2024
- ISBN** : 978-81-983842-8-7

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# الكافي al-Kafi



Part 3 – *al-Rawdah* (Garden of Flowers [*Hadith*])

Volume – VIII

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Arabic - English Bilingual Translation

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Compiled by

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English Translation by Muhammad Sarwar

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- Name** : al-Kāfi (Volume – VIII)
- Author** : Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni
- Translated by** : Muhammad Sarwar
- Publisher** : Jafari Propagation Centre  
94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10 & 11,  
Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid,  
Bandra (West), Mumbai - 400050.  
Tel.: +91-22-2642 5777  
Whatsapp: +91-84549 04070  
E-mail: jpcbandra@gmail.com  
E-mail: jpcbandra@yahoo.com  
Website: www.jpconline.org
- Year** : 2024
- ISBN** : 978-81-983842-5-6

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