

Ibnu Jarir al-Tabari: A Great Historian of the Islamic World

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Introduction

Abu Jaafar Muhammad Ibn Jarir al-Tabari was a great Shari'a scholar and historian who produced a prodigious chain of history concerning the rise and fall of various Muslim sects.¹ His outstanding work, *Tarikh al-Tabari*² has become a pivotal source of information for many generations of historians, especially pertaining to Islamic history and civilization. His work started to gain its remarkable popularity upon its translation into Persian in the year 963CE, upon the royal order of the Samanid Prince, Mansur Ibn Nuh. His historical data derived from numerous sources, including classical poetry, genealogy and tribal customs. These were all collected during his travels. The sources range in date from the Hijra to the year 915CE.³

Apart from history, al-Tabari is also well known for his notable contributions to the field of Quran and Hadith commentaries. His most influential and best known work in this area is the Qur'anic commentary known as *Tafsir al-Tabari*. This explains the text (sometimes word by word) based on its historical, lexicographic and juridical explanations. For every single Hadith he worked on, the chain of *isnads* (narrators) is sound and complete. Miskawayah, Ibn Asir and Abul Fida are among the Islamic historians who have referred to the works of al-Tabari.⁴ He learnt *fiqh* and jurisprudence from various school of thoughts, including Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali and Zahirī. He also founded his own school of thought, known as "Jariri".⁵

¹ Khan and Mohiuddin (n.d). "Biographical Data",

<<http://www.salaam.co.uk/knowledge/biography/viewentry.php?id=114M>>, viewed on 27th July 2015.

² The book is also known by other titles, *inter alia*; 'Tarikhul Rusul Wal Muluk', 'Tarikhul Umami Wal Muluk', and 'Akhbarul Rusuli Wal Muluk'. See Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp. iii.

³Ibid.

⁴Abu Jaffar Muhammad Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari", <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Jarir_al-Tabari>, viewed on 26th July 2015.

⁵ *Ibid.*

His Early Days

Abu Jaffar al-Tabari was born in Amul,⁶ Tabaristan (Iran), during the winter of 839CE.⁷ Al-Tabari himself was not really sure whether his birth fell near the end of 224 AH, or the beginning of 225 AH. It was, however, during the reign of the Abbasid caliph, al-Mu'tasim.

Al-Tabari memorised the Holy Quran by heart when he was only seven years old. He served as a prayer leader from the age of eight and began to study the prophetic traditions at age nine. It was narrated that his father had a dream concerning him: he saw his son (al-Tabari) standing before the Holy Prophet (pbuh); in between his two hands was a bag filled with stones, which he spread in front of the Prophet (pbuh). On the basis of this, a dream interpreter told al-Tabari's father that al-Tabari would grow up as a good Muslim and become a defender of its Shari'a.⁸ Because of this, al-Tabari's father agreed to support al-Tabari's studies while he was still a small boy. He also encouraged al-Tabari to leave home in quest of knowledge once he reached puberty.⁹

His Quest for Knowledge

In his quest for knowledge, al-Tabari left home in 236 AH/850CE, when he was just twelve. He retained close ties to his home town, however, returning at least twice (although on the final occasion, in 290 AH, his outspokenness caused some uneasiness and led to his quick departure).¹⁰ His studies, however, took him first to al-Ray, on the site of present-day Tehran. He remained there for about five years. The most prominent figures amongst his teachers at al-Ray were: al-Muthanna Ibn Ibrahim al-Amuli, Salama Ibn al-Fadl al-Maghazi and Ahmad Ibn Hammad al-Dawlabi. In particular, however, he also studied with Ibn Humayd (or Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Humayd al-Razi, d.248AH/862CE), who was then in his seventies. Ibn Humayd had previously lectured in Baghdad and had been invited by the noted jurist, Ibn

⁶ It is the principal capital of city of Tabaristan, located in the lowlands of the region at a distance of about 20 kilometres from the southern shore of the Caspian.

⁷ See Franz, Rosenthal, *The History of Al-Tabari* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1989), Vol. 1, pp.10-11; Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp. iii-iv.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ n.7, pp. 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp.16. See also, Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp.iv.; Abu Jaffar Muhammad Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari", <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Jarir_al-Tabari>, viewed on 26th July 2015.

Hanbal, to come and teach in al-Ray. Ibn Humayd became one of al-Tabari's most frequently cited authorities.¹¹ With him and his other teachers, al-Tabari studied Hanafi jurisprudence and the historical works of Ibn Ishaq (a well-known author of *al-Sira*, or the life of the Prophet Muhammad, pbuh). It was narrated that al-Tabari laid the groundwork for history after he studied Ibn Ishaq's *Mubtada'* and *Maghazi*.¹² Al-Tabari was also introduced to pre-Islamic and early Islamic history during his studies.¹³

After al-Ray, al-Tabari's quest of knowledge took him to Baghdad. He was not yet seventeen upon his arrival in Baghdad. He went there with an expectation to study under Ahmad Ibn Hanbal; the latter, however, died in either late 241AH/855CE or early 242AH/856CE, i.e. shortly before al-Tabari's arrival. Nevertheless, al-Tabari stayed in Baghdad until 242AH/859 CE, after which he journeyed to other important places, namely: Basra, Kufa and probably Wasit. In Basra, he met and studied under the eminent scholars Humayd Ibn Mas'ada (who he frequently quotes in his *Tafsir*), Bishar Ibn Mu'adh al-A'qadi, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-A'la al-San'ani, Abu al-Ash'ath Ahmad Ibn al-Miqdam, Muhammad Ibn Musa al-Harashi, Abu al-Jawza' Ahmad Ibn Uthman and Muhammad Ibn Uthman. It is narrated that the scholar al-Tabari profited most from in Basra was Muhammad Ibn Bashshar, who was also known as Bundar. Indeed, he frequently cites Bundar as a transmitter in his works.¹⁴ In Kufa, on the other hand, al-Tabari met Hannad Ibn al-Sari, who reputedly provided him with much information for his *Tafsir*. In addition, al-Tabari also encountered Ismail Ibn Musa al-Fazari, Sulayman Ibn Abd al-Rahman Ibn Hammad al-Talhi (an expert in reciting the Quran) and Abu Kurayb Muhammad Ibn al-A'la. The latter, in particular, supposedly exercised great influence on al-Tabari. Although Abu Kurayb was a difficult scholar, al-Tabari managed to mollify him, appeasing him with his extraordinary ability. Indeed, Abu Kurayb was amazed with al-Tabari's ability to memorize *ahadith* (traditions) in comparison to other students.¹⁵

After spending about two years in southern Iraq, al-Tabari subsequently returned to Baghdad in 244AH/858CE. There he was invited by the vizier, Ubaydallah Ibn Yahya Ibn Khaqan (al-Khqani), to teach his son, Abu Yahya. He held this tutorial position for four years (244AH-248AH), with the vizier paying him 10 dinar per month (reportedly al-Tabari refused any

¹¹ n.7, pp. 17.

¹² See Franz, Rosenthal, *The History of Al-Tabari* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1989), Vol. 1, pp.17; Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp.iv.

¹³ Abu Jaffar Muhammad Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari", <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Jarir_al-Tabari>, viewed on 26th July 2015.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

extra remuneration or gifts on top of the agreed pay).¹⁶ In Baghdad, al-Tabari also reportedly met and studied with Ahmad Ibn Yusuf al-Taghlibi, before learning Shafi'i jurisprudence under the supervision of Abu Said al-Istakhri.¹⁷

Later, in 253AH/867CE, al-Tabari visited Egypt, reportedly stopping in Syria and Palestine on the way. Although unclear, he probably studied in the latter two locations: the authorities cited in his writings include references to scholars from Hims (or Homs),¹⁸ al-Ramla¹⁹ and Asqalan.²⁰ Al-Tabari probably met these scholars in either Jerusalem or Damascus.²¹ In Beirut, he also studied under al-Abbas Ibn al-Walid Ibn Mazyad al-Udhri al-Bayruti, who instructed him in variant readings (*huruf*) of the Quran according to the Syirian School. Al-Bayruti was also instrumental in conveying to al-Tabari the legal views of al-Awza'i, as narrated through al-Bayruti's father, al-Walid, himself a prominent jurist. With al-Abbas, al-Tabari also completed his study of the Quran based on the narrations of the people of Syam.²²

When al-Tabari finally arrived in Egypt, he studied under Abu al-Hasan 'Ali Ibn Siraj and Yunus Ibn 'Abd al-'A'la, then Egypt's leading scholar in Hadith and Quranic recitation. Since Egypt also hosted a great number of Shafi'i and Maliki scholars, al-Tabari also gained an understanding of these legal systems. From the Shafi'i side, he studied with al-Rabi' Ibn Sulayman, al-Muzani and Muhammad Ibn al-Hakam, while from the Maliki side he encountered Muhammad Ibn Abdallah Ibn Abd al-Hakam.²³

After his time in Egypt, al-Tabari returned to Baghdad. There he began identifying himself as a Shafi'i scholar. He continued in this mould for the next ten years (i.e. until 267AH/880CE), after which he concentrated on teaching and publishing his own works on legal theory and practice, Quranic commentary and history. This development placed him at the forefront of

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp.22.

¹⁷ Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp.iv.

¹⁸ Hims (or Homs) is in Syria. From Hims, al-Tabari quoted Imran Ibn Bakkar al-Kala'i, Abu al-Jamahir Muhammad Ibn Abd Rahman, Sulayman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ma'dakarib al-Ru'ayni, Muhammad Ibn Hafs al-Wassabi, Said Ibn Uthman al-Tanukhi, Muhammad Ibn A'wf al-Ta'i, Baqiyyah Ibn al-Walid and Said Ibn Amr al-Sakuni.

¹⁹ Al-Ramla is located in Palestine. From there, al-Tabari referred to Musa Ibn Sahl, 'Ali Ibn Sahl, 'Isa Ibn 'Uthman Ibn 'Isa, Ismail Ibn Israil al-Sallal, al-Hassan Ibn Bilal, Abd al-Jabbar Ibn Yahya and Ayyub Ibn Ishaq Ibn Ibrahim.

²⁰ Asqalan is a village in Kunduz Province, northern Afghanistan. From there, al-Tabari cited Muhammad Ibn Khalaf, Ubayd Ibn Adam Ibn Abi Iyas, Isam Ibn Rawwad Ibn al-Jarrah, Ubaydallah Ibn Muhammad al-Firyabi and Ibrahim Ibn Ya'qub al-Juzajani.

²¹ For details see; Franz, Rosenthal, *The History of Al-Tabari* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1989), Vol. 1, pp.23-27

²² *Ibid*, pp. 23. See also Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp.iv.

²³ Franz, Rosenthal, *The History of Al-Tabari* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1989), Vol. 1, pp.27-28. See also Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp.iv.

scholars. Many students came to study with him, constituting themselves as a special *madhhab*, known as Jariri.²⁴

Al-Tabari: A Scholar

Like other scholars from the period, al-Tabari mastered three fields of learning: legal theory, Quranic science and history. His gigantic contributions in these three areas are attributable to his exceptional learning in a variety of disciplines. In particular, his work on *Tafsir* demonstrates his outstanding capability in Arabic grammar and lexicography. Indeed, he was famous for his interest in foreign languages: his *Tafsir* discusses the relationship between Persian, Arabic and Ethiopic loan words in the Quran. He also knew the language of ‘Uman in addition to Coptic.²⁵

Apart from the above, al-Tabari also studied poetry with the great philologist, Thallab. In this respect, Ghulam Thallab (another of Thallab’s students) praised the accuracy of grammar and language used by al-Tabari in his *Tafsir*. The science of prosody²⁶ (*urud*) was also known to al-Tabari through his reading of al-Khalil’s fundamental work on the matter.

In addition, al-Tabari also excelled in arithmetic, algebra, logic, dialectics and *falsafa* (philosophy), the last of which he utilised to refute Mu’tazila views. It was reported that medicine was also one of al-Tabari’s great interests, which he pursued with his acquaintance, ‘Ali Ibn Rabban, author of the great medical encyclopaedia, *Firdaws al-Hikma*.²⁷

His Prominent Attributes

Al-Tabari was well-known for being both humble and ethical. These attributes are particularly evident in the context of his attitudes towards gifts, which he would always reject. As such, he rejected the gifts offered by the vizier, al-Khaqani, when the latter appointed al-

²⁴ *Ibid*, n.22, pp. 64.

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 45-46.

²⁶ In linguistics, prosody (from Ancient Greek ‘prosōidia’ to mean "song sung to music; tone or accent of a syllable") is concerned with those elements of speech that are not individual vowels and consonants but are properties of syllables and larger units of speech. These contribute to such linguistic functions as intonation, tone, stress, and rhythm. Prosody may reflect various features of the speaker or the utterance: the emotional state of the speaker; the form of the utterance (statement, question, or command); the presence of irony or sarcasm; emphasis, contrast, and focus; or other elements of language that may not be encoded by grammar or by choice of vocabulary. See < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosody_%28linguistics%29>, viewed on 10 October 2015.

²⁷ Franz, Rosenthal, *The History of Al-Tabari* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1989), Vol. 1, pp.46-51.

Tabari to teach his son (above). Al-Tabari likewise refused a magnificent gift of three thousand dinars from a politician, al-Hayja', the eventual founder of the Hamdanid Dynasty, on the pretext that he could not afford to return a gift of similar value. Indeed, throughout his lifetime al-Tabari tried his very best to disassociate himself from all gifts, particularly those extended by people in positions of power (including the caliph). He always shied away from them as so as to avoid allying himself with the political agendas of the donors. For him, a gift could become an embarrassment at some future time. This demonstrates his high integrity and dignity.

Al-Tabari was an easy going person who had a very good relationship with his neighbours, be they scholars or ordinary people. He attended picnics with them and gave advice to their children. In terms of physical appearance, al-Tabari was tall and lean, had a dark-brown complexion, large eyes and a long beard. He reportedly kept his black hair and beard until he was in his eighties. The leanness of his figure was not heredity, but attributable to his attitude towards diet: he avoided fat and made full use of raisins, *rutab* (fresh dates), herbal leaves (such as thyme and *habbatussawda*), unripe fruits, refined wheat flour and olive oil. There is an anecdote that he insisted on both cleanliness and good table manners, all in accordance with the traditions of the Prophet.

All-in-all, al-Tabari was a religious scholar whose life was occupied with reading and teaching the Holy Quran, observing prayers, and writing.²⁸

His Method of Argumentation

Al-Tabari was an honest scholar whose approach to writing was rooted in his constant and courageous expression of independent *ijtihad* (judgment). Overall, his views always leaned towards moderation and compromise. This attitude is proven by his interpretation of a Quranic verse pertaining to the practice of wiping the boot or washing the foot (5:6). While Sunni scholars interpreted this verse as necessitating the washing of the whole foot, not a mere act of wiping, Shia jurists insisted on interpreting it as just wiping the boot or foot. Al-Tabari combined both views, however, and stated that washing and wiping with one's hand are equivalent processes.²⁹ His moderation was further evidenced by the fact that he allowed women to hold the post of judge (including in *hudud* and *qisas* cases), a post many scholars

²⁸ *Ibid*, pp.38-43.

²⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 56-57

had previously limited to men. Although he qualified his position by requiring female judges to possess knowledge of Shari'a and the ability to exercise *ijtihad*, overall he held the view that male and female judges were on an equal footing.³⁰

Al-Tabari's admiration of 'Ali led some to accuse him of being a Shiite. Certainly, al-Tabari made it clear that he viewed 'Ali as the superior Imam after the demise of the Prophet (pbuh). Although this allegation may have caused his difficulties with the Hanbalis, it ultimately seems to have been baseless; al-Tabari stood as the defender of the first four caliphs and demonstrated great respect for Abu Bakar as-Siddiq and Umar al-Khattab. It was reported that al-Tabari did not regard Ibn Hanbal's dissenting opinion with any weight; he opined that Ibn Hanbal was not even a jurist, but merely a recorder of *ahadith*.³¹

His Works

Al-Tabari's major works were originally dictated in lectures he delivered to his students. Their subject matter allowed for a separate treatment of self-contained subjects. However, al-Tabari's method of citing his works was not uniform; he preferred to briefly reference his subject matter rather than provide dedicated titles. Some of his works are regarded as incomplete.³² His works include the following:

1. *Adab al-Manasik* (The Proper Ways of Performing the Pilgrimage). This work deals with the proper procedure for performing the pilgrimage. Other authors have sometimes referred to it as *Mukhtasar manasik al-Haj*, such as in Ibn Asakir's *Irshad* (also known as *Kitab al-Manasik*).³³
2. *Adab al-Nufus* (The Proper Ways of Spiritual Behaviour). Sometimes referred to as *Al-Adab al-Hamida wa al-Akhlaq al-Nafisah* or *Al-Adab al-Nafisah wa al-Akhlaq al-Hamida*, it explains man's religious duties according to all the parts of the human body, beginning with the heart, tongue, eyes, ears and so on. It bases itself on the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh), the practice of the Companions and their followers,

³⁰ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Freedom, Equality and Justice In Islam*. (Petaling Jaya: Ilmiah Publishers, 2002), pp.69.70.

³¹ Abu Jaffar Muhammad Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari", <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Jarir_al-Tabari>, viewed on 26th July 2015.

³² Franz, Rosenthal, *The History of Al-Tabari* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1989), Vol. 1, pp.80

³³ *Ibid*, pp. 81-82. See also Al-Tabari , *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp.vi

as well as the deeds of the Sufis and other pious men. Nevertheless, this work remains incomplete.³⁴

3. *Ikhtilaf 'Ulama' al-Amsar fi Ahkam Shara'iei al-Islam* (The Disagreements of the Scholars in the Major Centres with Respect to the Laws of Islam). Also referred to as either *Ikhtilaf al-Fuqaha* (sometimes reduced to just *Ikhtilaf*) or *al-I'tidhar*, this text comprises three thousand folios. In it, al-Tabari discusses the disagreements amongst scholars like Malik bin Anas, Abdul Rahman Ibn Amr al-Awza'ie and Sufyan al-Thauri. This work also contains al-Tabari's defence of the Hanbalis. The book remained unpublished when al-Tabari died, having been buried in the ground. It was finally made public by the Hanbalites. Al-Tabari reportedly stated that:

“I have written two books that are indispensable for jurists, *Ikhtilaf* and *Latif*.”³⁵

4. *Ahadith Ghadir Khum* (Traditions of Ghadir Khum). This work has been utilised by many (particularly Shia) scholars to justify the existence of the event known as Ghadir Khum, when the Prophet (pbuh) reportedly declared 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib as his successor. This work was published by al-Tabari in order to refute a statement made by a Baghdadi scholar that the Ghadir Khum episode could not be true because 'Ali was in Yemen at the time the declaration was supposedly made. Ibn Kathir, however, was uncomfortable with this work by al-Tabari, claiming that, even though it was two volumes long, al-Tabari failed to distinguish sound information from weak.³⁶
5. *Fadhail* (Virtues). When working on his Ghadir Khum text, al-Tabari began praising and highlighting the many virtues of 'Ali. As a result, many Shia Muslims flocked to listen to his lectures on the subject. When some extremist Shia, however, began slandering other Companions of the Prophet, al-Tabari started to write this text about the virtues of Abu Bakar and 'Umar. It also reportedly highlights the virtues of Abbas of the Abbasid dynasty.³⁷
6. *Basit al-Qaul fi Ahkam Shara'iei al-Islam* (A Plain and Simple Exposition of the Laws of Islam). Contained in 1500 folios, each chapter of this work deals with the agreements of the Companions and their followers according to their way of transmissions. Al-Tabari also mentions his preferred view on the subject matter. He published the document forms (*shurut*), records and documents (*al-mahadir wa al-*

³⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 82-83

³⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 104-105.

³⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 91-93.

³⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 90-92.

sijillat), last wills (*al-wasaya*), characters of the judges (*adab al-quda*), ritual purity, prayers, charity, taxes and classification of scholars (*tartib al-'ulama'*). This work is incomplete.

7. *Tabsir Uli al-Nuha wa Ma'alim al-Huda* (An Instruction for the Intelligent and Directions towards Right Guidance). Also known as *al-Basir fi Ma'alim al-Din*, *Tabsir fi Usul al-Din* or just *al-Tabsir*, this completed book was addressed to the people of Tabaristan and concerns the disagreements which had arisen amongst them about the identity or non-identity of names and things named and the doctrines of innovators. This book contains thirty folios.³⁸
8. *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk* (History of the Prophets and Kings) or *Tarikh al-Tabari*. This text is the major primary source for historians of Islam. In it, al-Tabari references numerous sources to produce a comprehensive narrative of past events as recorded by the traditions he referred to. Ibn Al-Mughallis stated that:

“Nobody has ever done what Abu Ja'far did in respect to writing and giving full presentation of history.”³⁹

9. *Tahdhib al-Athar wa Tafsil ma'ani al-Thabit 'An Rasulillah Min al-Akhbar* (An Improved Treatment and detailed Discussion of the Traditions established as going back to the Prophet). This work deals with the traditions transmitted from the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh). It is also known as *Tahdhib al-Athar*, or just *al-Tahdhib*. The work was probably meant to rival Ibn Hanbal's *Musnad*. It is not, however, a mere collection of traditions. Rather, it provides an exhaustive and penetrating analysis of the philological and legal implications of each *hadith* mentioned in the text, discussing its meaning as well as its significance for religious practice and theory. The text, however, remains unfinished.⁴⁰
10. *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil Ay al-Qur'an* (A Commentary on the Qur'an). More commonly known as *Tafsir al-Tabari*, this is al-Tabari's second great work. It has retained its outstanding importance to this day. Taking him seven years to finish (namely, from 283AH to 290AH), in it al-Tabari extended his commentaries on the Qur'an. He explained his *tafsir*, the legal data derived from the Quran, its abrogating

³⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 126-127.

³⁹ *Ibid*, n.31, pp.132.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 128-129.

and abrogated verses, its difficult passages, its rare words and its interpretation with the proper vocalization (*i'rab hurufi*). He did all this word by word.⁴¹

11. *Al-Jami' fi al-Qiraat* (The Complete Collection of Variant Readings of the Quran). Also known as *al-Fasl Bayna al-Qiraah*, *Kitab fi al-Qiraat* or *Kitab al-Qiraat wa al-Tanzil wa al-A'dad*, this text is amongst al-Tabari's completed works. It records the variant readings (*huruf*) of the Quran and specifies the names of the Quranic readers in Medina, Mecca, Kufa, Basra, Syria and elsewhere. When referring to the readings, al-Tabari states his own preference for what is correct and provides proofs to support his case. He also gives his *tafsir* for certain verses and establishes their correct linguistic form (*i'rab*).⁴²
12. *Latif al-Qaul fi Ahkam Shara'ie al-Islam* (A Light Discussion on the Muslim Laws). This text contains the sum total of his legal school and became key for his followers. A completed text, it is valuable for understanding his *madhhab*. It is also referred to as *Latif*.⁴³
13. *Al-Khafif fi Ahkam Shara'ie al-Islam* (The Light Work on the Laws of Islam). Also known as *al-Khafif fi al-Fiqh*, this is an abridgment of *Kitab al-Latif*. Meant to facilitate an understanding of Islamic law, it contains four hundred folios.⁴⁴
14. *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal* (The Historical Information on Religious Scholars needed in Connection with History). Also known as *Tarikh al-Rijal*, this completed text discusses the history of the Companions of the Prophet. It has one thousand folios.⁴⁵

Apart from the aforementioned books, the following are also attributed to al-Tabari:

1. *Al-Radd A'la Al-Hurqusiyyah* (A Refutation of the Hurqusiyya).⁴⁶
2. *Al Radd A'la Dhi Al-Asfar* (A Refutation of the One with Tomes).
3. *Al-Radd A'la Ibn Abd Al-Hakam A'la Malik* (A Refutation of Ibn Abd al-Hakam's statements on Malik)
4. *Turuq al-Hadith* (Methodology of Hadith)
5. *Al-Ramy bi al-Nushshab* (On Arrow Shooting)⁴⁷

⁴¹ *Ibid*, pp. 105-106.

⁴² *Ibid*, pp. 94-95.

⁴³ *Ibid*, pp. 114-115. See also Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp.viii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 111-113. See also Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp.vii.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 89-90. See also Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp.vii.

⁴⁶ Some scholars refused to refer these works to be attributed to Al-Tabari. See Franz, Rosenthal, *The History of Al-Tabari* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1989), Vol. 1, pp.119-125. See also Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 2008), 1/6, pp.vii-viii.

⁴⁷ This piece of work was also argued as wrongly attributed to Al-Tabari. *Ibid*.

6. *Sarih al-Sunna* (The Essence of Orthodox Muslim Belief)
7. *Al-Dalalah A'la Nubuwwat (Rasulullah)* (Evidence for the Prophethood of the Messenger of God)
8. *Ibarat al-Ru'ya* (On Dream Interpretation)
9. *Al-Mujaz fi al-Usul* (A Concise Treatment of Legal Principles)⁴⁸
10. *Mukhtasar al-Faraid* (A Short Work on Religious Duties)
11. *Al-Mustarshid* (The Seeker of Guidance)
12. *Al-Musnad al-Mukharraj* (The Prophetic Traditions made Public)
13. *Al-Waqf* (Endowment).⁴⁹

His Death

Al-Tabari passed away on 28th Shawal 310 AH.

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<<http://www.salaam.co.uk/knowledge/biography/viewentry.php?id=114M>>, accessed on 27th July 2015.

⁴⁸ See Franz, Rosenthal, *The History of Al-Tabari* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1989), Vol. 1, pp.117.

⁴⁹ See, n.45.