

Atiyyah Al Awfi

IN THE EYES OF MUHADISEEN



Compiled by

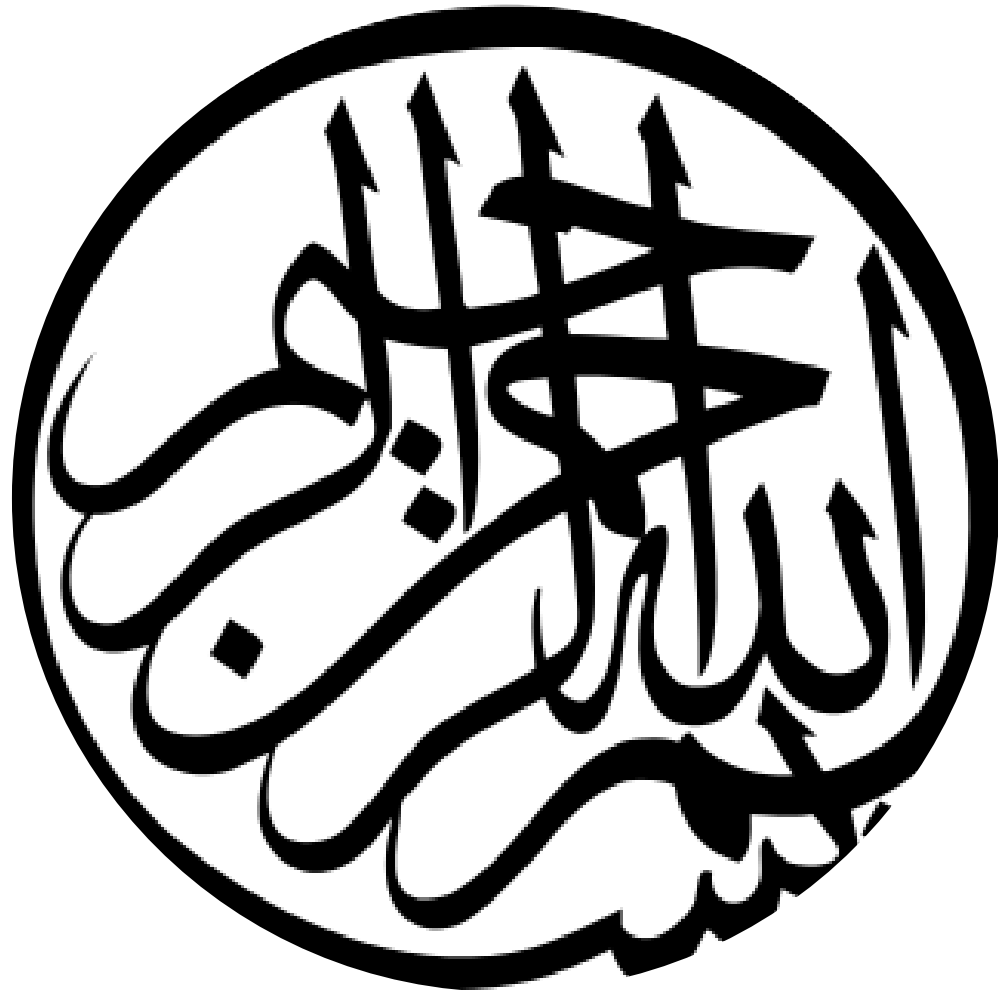
Abu Sumayyah Moin

'Atiyyah bin Sa'd Al-'Awfi Al-Kufi

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INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allah, and Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon His Final Messenger, his pure family, his noble Companions, and all those who follow them with righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

‘Atiyyah is an important narrator to study in as we see many of the innovators try to defend him just to establish their odd beliefs and practices as some of the narrations, which allegedly support their beliefs, has been reported by him. Hence, many of the Sufis and Rawafidh do try hard to misinterpret or misrepresent the statement of scholars to declare this narrator Thiqah or trustworthy.

Even though this topic is purely a topic in which incorrect conclusion can be excused, however the ignorance and love for innovation has turned this into a discussion of Sunnah against Bid’ah. In this article I will be discussing the status of ‘Atiyyah as a narrator along with some details of his life. My intention is to prove the weakness of ‘Atiyyah in narrations where he is alone in narrating.

This work will, inshAllah, cover the refutation of Mahmud Sa’eed Mamduh Misri, who belongs to the circle of Tafdili Sufis, who has written most extensively to show that ‘Atiyyah is a reliable narrator. It was necessary as some people have partially translated his writing on ‘Atiyyah and mostly all those who defend ‘Atiyyah rely on him.

HIS LIFE

His full name is **‘Atiyyah bin Sa’d bin Junadah al-‘Awfi**.

His Kunyah was Abul Hasan and he lived in Kufa. He was born during the caliphate of ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (ra).

Hence his birth would be between the years 35 – 40 AH. He himself reported that when he was born his father came to ‘Ali and informed him about his birth, so the caliph ‘Ali named him as ‘Atiyyah.¹

His father Sa’d bin Junadah was a companion who was from the inhabitants of Ta’if.² He later migrated to Kufa. His mother was a European slave-girl.

He was with Ibn al-Ash’ath when they rebelled against Hajjaj bin Yusuf and hence when they were defeated ‘Atiyyah fled to Persia.

Hajjaj sent order to his deputy that ‘Atiyyah be asked to curse ‘Ali and if he does not do so then he should be lashed with four hundred lashes and his head and beard should be shaved off. This has been stated by Sa’d bin Muhammad bin Hasan bin ‘Atiyyah, the great grandson of ‘Atiyyah.³

He died in the year 111 AH.

1 Tabaqat Ibn Sa’d (6/305) under the entry of ‘Atiyyah bin Sa’d al-‘Awfi.

2 Al-Isabah by Ibn Hajar (3/41-42)

3 Tabaqat Ibn Sa’d (6/305)

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ‘ADALAH [عدالة] AND DHABT [ضبط] OF A NARRATOR

Before we move on let this be understood that ‘Adalah of a person or his righteousness and piety does not necessarily mean the person is reliable in Hadith. While all this is necessary but there is also a second thing that must be analyzed in a narrator, that is Dhabt [ضبط] of the narrator. In simple words Dhabt indicates the memory and the accuracy of the narrator while ‘Adalah indicates his truthfulness and piousness. Therefore, a righteous and truthful person can be a weak narrator at the same time. Basically the criticism on ‘Atiyyah is about his Dhabt not his ‘Adalah. So ‘Atiyyah may have been a truthful person and he never intended to lie while narrating but his accuracy in memorizing names and content of a hadith is not affirmed by scholars.

SCHOLARS WHO CRITICIZED ‘ATIYYAH AND HIS NARRATIONS

Sufyan al-Thawri [d.161 AH] and **Hushaim b. Bashir** [d.183 AH] would weaken narrations of ‘Atiyyah.⁴

Yahya b. Sa’eed al-Qattan [d.198 AH] said, “‘Atiyyah, Abu Harun al-‘Abdi and Bishr bin Harb are equal according to me.”⁵ This indicates toward the weakness of ‘Atiyyah in sight of Yahya al-Qattan as he is equating him with other two weak narrators.

At another place Bukhari said that Yahya al-Qattan would not narrate (any Hadith) through ‘Atiyyah.”⁶ Bukhari also said, “Yahya [Al-Qattan] would speak against ‘Atiyyah.”⁷

Ahmad bin Hanbal [d.241 AH] said, “He [‘Atiyyah] was weak in Hadith.”⁸

Abu Zur’ah al-Razi [d.264 AH] said “He was weak [Layyin].”⁹

It is to be noted that the term “Layyin” [لين] is not a something closer to reliability than the term Da’eef [ضعيف]. If we compare his usage of the term “Layyin” it becomes clear that Abu Zur’ah intends general weakness with it. Hence, in his answer to al-Bardha’iyy he said regarding Abu Hamza Thabit bin Abi Safiyyah that he is “Waahi al-Hadith”¹⁰ which is a term used for severe weakness, and in response to Ibn Abi Hatim he called him “Layyin”¹¹ In another example, he declared ‘Isa bin Qirtas to be Da’eef¹² and at other instance he called him Layyin.

4 Kitab “Al-‘Ilal” (4502) by ‘Abdullah b. Ahmad. Also see “At-Tarikh al-Awsat” (1/267) by al-Bukhari.

5 “At-Tarikh al-Awsat” (1/267), Tahdheeb al-Kamal (20/147)

6 “At-Tarikh al-Kabeer” (5/122) by Bukhari.

7 “Al-Tarikh al-Kabeer” (4/83)

8 “Al-Ilal” (1306) by Abdullah.

9 “Al-Jarh wa at-Ta’deel” (6/383) by Ibn Abi Hatim.

10 “Ad-Du’afa” (2/428) by Abu Zur’ah

11 “Al-Jarh wa at-Ta’deel” (2/451)

12 “Ad-Du’afa”(2/434)

In fact, with regards to the narrator Zam'ah bin Saleh he said, "He inhabited in Makkah. He was Layyin Waahi al-Hadith [لين واهي الحديث]."¹³ It is well known that Waahi al-Hadith [واهي الحديث] is a term which denotes severe weakness.

Abu Hatim al-Razi [d.277 AH] said: "He was weak in Hadith. His narrations should be written. Abu Nadhrah is preferable to me as compared to 'Atiyyah."¹⁴

In another book he said, "Muhammad bin Hasan bin 'Atiyyah, his father [Hasan bin 'Atiyyah] and his grandfather ['Atiyyah] were all weak in Hadith."¹⁵

Abu Dawud [d.275] said regarding him, "He is not to be relied on."¹⁶

Nasai [d.303 AH] said, "He is Weak."¹⁷

Al-Daarqutni [d.385 AH] said, "He is Mudhtarib al-Hadith."¹⁸

In another place he called him weak.¹⁹

Zakariyyah As-Saaji [d.307 AH] said, "He is not Hujjah and he would prefer 'Ali over all."²⁰

Ibn Khuzaimah [d.311 AH] said in his Sahih, "I have something in my heart against 'Atiyyah bin Sa'd except this narration is also narrated by Zaid bin Aslam."²¹

Ibn 'Adi [d. 365AH] says, "Even with weakness in him, his narrations are to be written down. He was from the Shi'a of Kufa."²²

13 "Al-Jarh wa at-Ta'deel" (3/624)

14 "Al-Jarh wa at-Ta'deel" (6/383)

15 'Ilal al-Hadith (1095) by Ibn Abi Hatim.

16 Su'alaat Abu 'Ubaid al-Aajurri (p.105)

17 "Al-Du'afa wa al-Matrukeen" (p.85) by Al-Nasai

18 Al-'ilal (no.2289) by Al-Daarqutni

19 Sunan (5/70) [Ch. On Talaq and Khula'] by Daarqutni.

20 Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb (7/226) by Ibn Hajar.

21 Sahih Ibn Khuzaimah (2367), also see (2368)

22 Al-Kamil (7/85) Al-Du'afa (3/359) by al-'Uqaili.

Abu Ja'far al-'Uqaili [d.322 AH] listed him among the weak narrators in his book "Al-Du'afa".²³

Ibn Hibban [d.354 AH] totally rejected the reliability of 'Atiyyah while relying on the accusation of Tadlees which will be discussed later.²⁴

Abu 'Abdullah al-Hakim [d.405 AH] said, as quoted by his student al-Bayhaqi, commenting on a narration of 'Atiyyah, "A person with basic knowledge of Rijal will not allow to take evidence from this narration. This is because 'Atiyyah b. Sa'ad al-'Awfi is highly unreliable [ذهب بمرّة]."²⁵

Al-Bayhaqi [d.458 AH] declared him weak at multiple places in his book.²⁶

Khateeb Baghdadi [d.463 AH] also claimed that Jarh is established against 'Atiyyah al-'Awfi.²⁷

23 Al-Du'afa (3/359) by al-'Uqaili.

24 Al-Majruheen (2/176) by Ibn Hibban.

25 Al-Khilafiyat (2/383) al-Bayhaqi.

26 Al-Khilafiyat (2/397), As-Sunan Al-Kubra (11153)(13403)

27 Al-Kifayah (p.376) Khateeb Baghdadi.

OPINION OF YAHYA BIN MA'EEN

There have been conflicting opinions narrated from Ibn Ma'een regarding 'Atiyyah al-'Awfi.

The most famous one is that which is reported from one of his close student Al-Duri. Al-Duri said: I heard Yahya saying, "Atiyyah al-'Awfi is 'Atiyyah al-Jadali." Yahya was then asked, "How are the narrations of 'Atiyyah?" He replied, "Salih."²⁸

Salih in the terminology of early scholar was not necessarily tantamount to Hasan or Sahih in recent understanding as some people might assume. It may mean "Saleh [fair] for corroboration". Generally "Salih al-Hadith" is considered the fourth level of praise which comes after Saduq and even below "Shaykh". In other words it is the lowest level of praise in which the hadith of the narrator is written for corroboration but not relied on individually.²⁹

In narration of Ibn Tahman, Ibn Ma'een reported to have said, "There is no problem in 'Atiyyah al-'Awfi." He was asked, "Is he to take as evidence [in narrations]?" He replied, "There is no problem in him."³⁰

These statements from Ibn Ma'een are considered strongest evidence by those who authenticate his narrations, to reject all the criticism from other scholars against 'Atiyyah al-'Awfi. However, as it has been clarified already that the first report from the narration of al-Duri does not necessarily mean Tawthiq or strengthening of the narrator 'Atiyyah therefore, only one narration, that is of Ibn Tahman is apparently raise 'Atiyyah to the level of reliable narrators.

But when we look at other narration from Ibn Ma'een then his view becomes clearer and based on them and opinion of majority of senior scholars of hadith we can dismiss this report of Ibn Tahman as Shaadh or odd report.

28 Tarikh Ibn Ma'een by Al-Duri (no.2446)

29 Muqaddimah (p.124-125) Ibn Sallah, Fath al-Mughith (2/118-119) Al-Sakhawi, Tadreeb ar-Rawi (1/407) Al-Suyuti.

30 Riwayah of Ibn Tahman (no.256)

Hence, Ibn ‘Adi narrates in “Al-Kamil” through ‘Ali b. Ahmad b. Sulaiman from Ibn Abi Maryam who said: I asked Yahya bin Ma’een regarding ‘Atiyyah al-‘Awfi so he said, “He is weak except that his narrations are to be written [for corroboration].”³¹

‘Ali bin Ahmad bin Sulaiman, the shaykh of Ibn ‘Adi, is Ibn as-Saiqal also known as ‘Allaan al-Misri. He was Thiqah and well known narrator.³² The second narrator is Ibn Abi Maryam. His full name is Ahmad bin Sa’d bin Muhammad bin Hakam, well known as Ibn Abi Maryam. He was also a reliable student of Ibn Ma’een.³³

Al-‘Uqaili also narrates from Ja’far bin Ahmad from Muhammad bin Idrees who relates from the book of Abul Waleed Musa bin Abi al-Jarud that Yahya bin Ma’een said regarding ‘Atiyyah that he was weak [Da’eef].³⁴

Muhammad bin Idrees is Abu Hatim al-Razi, the Imam, and Abul Waleed ibn Abil Jarud is also reliable. However, Ja’far bin Ahmad bin Mahboob, the shaykh of al-‘Uqaili, seems Majhool al-Haal as I could not trace any statement of reliability in his favor. Taqi al-Din al-Faasi mentioned him “Al-‘Iqd al-Thamin”³⁵ but did not mention any statement of Tawthiq in his favor. However this statement coincides with the previous one. Allah knows best.

As it can be seen there are apparently opposite views reported from Ibn Ma’een, so to reject the one which is supported by several other senior Hadith scholars and choose the one in which he is alone is pure injustice and following of whim.

31 Al-Kamil (7/84)

32 See, Siyar (14/496) of Dhahabi, Tarikh Ibn Yunus (1/355), Al-Thiqaat (7/182) by Ibn Qutlubagha.

33 See Siyar (12/311), Ikmal Tahdheeb al-Kamal (1/42-43) by Mughaltay bin Qaleej.

34 Al-Du’afa (3/359) by Al-‘Uqaili

35 Al-‘Iqd al-Thamin (3/271-272)

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35 Al-‘Iqd al-Thamin (3/271-272)

OPINION OF IBN SA'AD

Besides Ibn Ma'een, Ibn Sa'd also declared 'Atiyyah to be Thiqah.

He said about him:

“He was Thiqah if Allah wills. He has fair narration and some of the people do not take him as reliable [Hujjah].”³⁶

However, he was not of the level of Hushaim, Sufyan, Yahya al-Qattan, Ahmad, Abu Zur'ah, Abu Hatim, Daarqutni etc who considered him weak. So his opinions are not acceptable against vast majority of scholars of Rijal as pointed out by 'Allamah Al-Mu'allimi in his notes on Fawaid al-Majmu'ah.³⁷

DID TIRMIDHI CONSIDER 'ATIYYAH RELIABLE?

The first thing that need to understand here is that the term Hasan was not same for Tirmidhi as it is for late coming scholars.

He himself clarified this terminology in his 'Ilal al-Sagheer where he said while defining Hasan hadith in his book:

“All narrations in whose chain there is no narrator who is accused of lying and the hadith is not Shaadh [odd] and along with that it has been narrated through other routes in similar way.”

So here he clearly said the hadith which is Hasan according to him must have the following conditions:

1. It must not have any narrator who is accused of lying.
2. It must not be an odd narration.
3. It must have been narrated through other chains in similar way.

From this we can conclude that all the narration which has been declared Hasan by Tirmidhi does not contain any liar. This proves that 'Atiyyah is not accused of lying and this is not the topic of dispute here. Rather our claim is only that 'Atiyyah Awfi is weak and commits errors while narrating and hence he is not to be relied on when his narration is not backed up by other truthful narrators.

36 Tabaqat (6/305)

37 Fawa'id al-Majmu'ah (p.69) Shawkani, published with footnotes of al-Mu'allimi.

An example would make it even clearer. Under hadih (no.10, no.637) Tirmidhi said regarding the narrator Ibn Lahee'ah that he is weak. But in the same book he declared his narrations to be Hasan. See Hadith (40&1589).

OPINION OF AL-'IJLI

The famous book of Al-'Ijli has reached us through different renditions. The most famous and authoritative is the copy of Hafiz Al-Haythami who arranged it. Then we have a copy of 'Allamah Subki and another one which is the incomplete portion of the original work. The entry of 'Atiyyah is only found in the copy of Al-Subki. Even Ibn Hajar did not mention anything from Al-'Ijli in the entry of 'Atiyyah in "Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb". Assuming that the entry is preserved accurately let us see what Imam 'Ijli has to say regarding 'Atiyyah. Hence it is mentioned there that Al-'Ijli stated:

"Atiyyah al-'Awfi was a Kufan Taba'i. He was Thiqah but not strong."³⁸

The first thing that must be noted here is that two apparently opposite verdict is combined in one statement. The term Thiqah indicates that the narrator is strong but along with that Al-'Ijli has also added the statement that he was not strong. This suggests us that the term Thiqah here does not mean that the narrator is strong, which is generally understood, rather Thiqah here means the narrator is truthful while narrating but still he would commit mistakes while. Besides that, it is to also clear that Al-'Ijli was lenient in making Tawthiq of narrators especially those from the category of Tabi'un. Hence, we see him praising people like Asbagh bin Nabatah and 'Umar bin Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas in the same book which only indicates that he was lenient while using the term Thiqah.

OPINION OF IBN SHAHEEN

Some people produce Ibn Shaheen as one of the scholars who declared him Thiqah. This is an error as Ibn Shaheen wrote a book in which he summarized views of some selected scholars. So in his Thiqat he listed ‘Atiyyah as he found Ibn Ma’een declaring him Thiqah in the narration of Ibn Tahman. Hence he said in “Tarikh Asma al-Thiqaat”:

“Atiyyah al-‘Awfi, there is no problem in him [لا بأس به].

It was said by Yahya.”³⁹

Here he is clearly attributing this view to Yahya. While when we check “Tarikh Asma Al-Du’afa” he has again mentioned ‘Atiyyah among weak narrators. He said in that book:

“Atiyyah Awfi, he has been weakened by Ahmad and Yahya.”⁴⁰

Looking at his books we can easily conclude that his intention was mainly to collect opinions of scholars not to scrutinize them and give his own verdict. Hence to bring his statement as an evidence of reliability of ‘Atiyyah is pure ignorance. Also he was not the Imam in the field of ‘Ilm al-Jarh wa al-Ta’deel.

Al-Dhahabi records in Siyar that Al-Dawudi said regarding Ibn Shaheen:

“I saw Ibn Shaheen once sat with Al-Daarqutni but could not speak anything (in front of him).”

Al-Dhahabi added:

“That person was not specialized in this field but he was from the narrators of Islam.”⁴¹

39 P.172

40 P.148

41 Siyar A’alam al-Nubala (16/434)

Hence, from above discussion it is clear that only Ibn Sa'd made clear and undisputed praise on 'Atiyyah. So to rely on him and leaving other scholars greater than him indicates the ignorance such people. Let us now move on to the opinion of some other scholars who, although not counted among the early scholars, but their opinion and conclusion carry a lot of weight due to their expertise in this field.

OPINION OF IMAM DHAHABI

Undisputedly Al-Dhahabi is one of the greatest scholars of this field alongside very few other scholars of late generation. According to Al-Dhahabi 'Atiyyah was a weak narrator and he announced his view in more than one book.⁴² In fact, in two of his books he even claimed there is an agreement of scholars regarding his weakness.⁴³

This he claimed probably to show that there is no valid Tawthiq available in his favor.

OPINION OF HAFIZ IBN HAJAR

AL-'ASQALANI

Authors like Mahmud Sa'eed Mamduh have counted Ibn Hajar among those who consider 'Atiyyah to be reliable. Hence, Ibn Hajar said in his lessons on al-Adhkar:

“Weakness in 'Atiyyah is due to his Shi'i leaning and due to his Tadlees. But he himself is truthful [Saduq]. Bukhari has narrated his narrations in Al-Adab al-Mufrad, Abu Dawud has recorded several of his narrations while remaining silent on its status and Tirmidhi has also deemed some of his narrations to be Hasan, some of which are solely narrated by 'Atiyyah.”⁴⁴

It is to be noted that Hafiz Ibn Hajar is not denying the weakness of 'Atiyyah altogether. However, he is claiming that the cause of weakness of 'Atiyyah is either his Shi'i leaning or Tadlees.

42 Al-Kashif (2/27), Al-'Ibar (1/104), Siyar (5/325), Meezan (3/79).

43 Al-Mughni fi Al-Du'afa (2/436), Deewan al-Du'afa (p.276)

44 Nataij al-Afkar (1/267) Ch.54 by Ibn Hajar.

He contradicted himself in “Taqreeb” where he said about ‘Atiyyah: “He was truthful who would commit a lot of mistake and he was a Shi’i and Mudallis.”

In Tabaqat al-Mudalliseen he said regarding him:

“A known Taba’i who had weak memory and he was well known for worse type of Tadlees.”

Here he is clearly saying that weakness in ‘Atiyyah is due to his memory. So there is apparent contradiction and in Nataij al-Afkar he is apparently strengthening the case of ‘Atiyyah. However, in such cases we need to go back to the original works of the author instead of collected lectures of him. Hence we have seen that Hafiz Ibn Hajar weakened ‘Atiyyah in Taqreeb and Tabaqat al-Mudallis. In fact, if we go back to his most authoritative and beloved book, which is Fath al-Bari, we see that he has clearly declared ‘Atiyyah a weak narrator. Hence, he said about him, “There is weakness in him”⁴⁵

while at another place in the same book he said, “Atiyyah is weak.”⁴⁶ Note that there are other books in which Hafiz Ibn Hajar weakened ‘Atiyyah al-‘Awfi but only Fath al-Bari is enough to conclude his final opinion on this matter as this book remained under his supervision. Also, his student Al-Sakhawi mentioned that Ibn Hajar was not satisfied with most of his books except for Fath al-Bari, its Muqaddima, al-Mushtabih, Tahdheeb and Lisan al-Mizan.⁴⁷

45 Fath al-Bari (9/66)

46 Fath (12/30)

47 Al-Jawahir wa ad-Durar (2/659) by Shams ad-Din al-Sakhawi

CRITICISM WITH REASON AND CRITICISM WITHOUT REASON

Some of the innovators have raised an objection that since Jarh on 'Atiyyah is not explained and Ibn Ma'een and others have made Tawthiq on him therefore all the criticism or Jarh are to be rejected. However, it is application of a rule at a wrong place.

In case of 'Atiyyah al-'Awfi Jarh takes precedence for following reasons:

- The criticism against him is reported from several scholars while the praise is reported only from Yahya bin Ma'een and Ibn Sa'd. The praise of Ibn Ma'een can be rejected in light of his criticism on 'Atiyyah in other narrations as it coincides with the criticism of vast majority of senior scholars. As for the statement of Ibn Sa'd then he himself cannot stand against the scholars who have criticized 'Atiyyah.
- When Jarh is done by a senior scholar of this field with a well known term then we do not look whether it is explained or not and accept it as such. See Ikhtisar 'Ulum al-Hadith (p.95) by Ibn Kathir.
- Explained criticism [i.e. Jarh Mufassar] is necessary when the narrator reliability is already established through testimony of scholars and there are enough praises to tackle the criticisms. In case of 'Atiyyah, his weakness was widely accepted and only Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'een, in one narration, praised him, while other reports suggest that Ibn Ma'een also considered him to be weak. Hence we see, before Ibn Sa'd, scholars like Sufyan Thawri, Hushaim and Yahya bin Sa'eed al-Qattan used to consider 'Atiyyah as a weak narrator. I have named not less than 17 scholars of this field who made Jarh on 'Atiyyah while those who praised him do not exceed 3 even if show leniency here. Therefore in such cases, explained Jarh is not required as there is no comparison.

- The scholars of Hadith practically upheld the ruling of weakness and ignored statement of Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'een. They were best aware of the rules and guidelines of this field. Hence we see later expert scholars like Al-Dhahabi, Ibn Hajar, Ibn Katheer,⁴⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Rajab⁴⁹ and all those who came after Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'een they all declared 'Atiyyah to be weak. Surely they were well aware of the opinions of Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'een but still they ignored them indicating that their praise of 'Atiyyah are not sufficient to raise him to the level of trustworthy narrators.

48 Tafseer (2/312)

49 Sharh 'Ilal (2/884-885)

TADLEES OF ATIYYAH

While we are discussing this issue, one must remember that this is a separate topic. ‘Atiyyah is weak as a narrator with or without his Tadleees. However, if the accusation of Tadleees is proven then that would make his case even worse.

Basically ‘Atiyyah is accused of Tadlees ash-Shuyukh which means he would refer his shaykh in the narration with a name or Kunyah he is not known with. This is to hide the real identity of his teacher. This is Tadlees ash-Shuyukh while in Tadlees al-Isnad a narrator merely drops his shaykh from the Sanad and narrates from someone to make it appear as if he took directly from him. Now ‘Atiyyah reportedly would narrate through Muhammad bin Saaib al-Kalbi but instead of mentioning his name in the narration he would refer to him as Abu Sa’eed.

So the student who hear this from ‘Atiyyah would assume that he is narrating from Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri without realizing that he is narrating from al-Kalbi while referring to him as Abu Sa’eed. The objection raised on this is that the first and main source of this accusation is Al-Kalbi himself. Hence he said:

“Atiyyah gave me the Kunya of Abu Sa’eed.”⁵⁰

Imam Ahmad is also reported to have said:

“It has reached me that ‘Atiyyah would go to Al-Kalbi and take Tafsir (of Qur’an) from him. He would refer him with Kunyah Abu Sa’eed.”⁵¹

The objection on this statement of Imam Ahmad is that he did not mention who informed him about this and this story could have been originated from the same al-Kalbi who himself was a liar. The first person to raise suspicious on this allegation of Tadlees al-Shuyukh was Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali in “Sharh ‘Ilal al-Tirmidhi”. But still he considered ‘Atiyyah to be a well known narrator who was weak in Hadith in the same book.⁵²

50 Al-Kamil (7/84) by Ibn ‘Adi

51 Ibn ‘Adi (7/84)

52 Sharh ‘Ilal (2/884-885)

ANALYZING DEFENSE OF MAHMUD SA'EED MAMDUH OF 'ATIYYAH

Mahmud Sa'eed Mamduh is the student of Abdullah al-Ghumari. He is well known for his works against Shaykh Albani and other works in defense of Bid'ah and Tashayu'. Hence he wrote Tanbih al-Muslim and Al-Ta'reef in an attempt to demean scholarly value of Shaykh Nasirud Din al-Albani. He wrote Rafa' al-Minarah and Kashf al-Sutur in defense of different innovations related to Tawassul and Ziyarah. He also wrote Ghayat al-Tabjeel against the Sunni viewpoint of superiority of Abu Bakr over all other companions of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam). He was also involved in the publication of the fabricated section of Musannaf 'Abdur Razzaq which contained many utterly fabricated narrations including the narration about the creation of the Noor of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam). Although he later took back his endorsement to the book after realizing the shame it is causing to them in the world of knowledge.

He wrote in defense of 'Atiyyah al-'Awfi in "Rafa' al-Minarah fi takhrij ahaadith at-Tawassul wa az-Ziyarah". Most of his objections have already been answered so I will be briefly pointing out at his flawed and deceptive methodology:

- He falsely claimed [p.183 & 208] that the Jarh Imam Ahmad made on 'Atiyyah is solely due to his Tadleees because he mentioned the incident of Al-Kalbi after calling him weak. This is a deception as Imam Ahmad never said in his comment that this incident is the reason for weakness of 'Atiyyah. He said as reported by 'Abdullah, "Atiyyah is weak in Hadith." Then 'Abdullah narrate that his father also said, "It has reached me that he would go to al-Kalbi learn Tafsir from him..."⁵³ Just because he mentioned Tadleees after weakening him doesn't mean he said that to point out reason for weakness.
- He accused [p.192] As-Saaji of having Nasb [i.e. grudge against Ahlul Bayt] just because he lived in Basra and this mentality was

every scholar who lived in Basrah must be a Nasibi!! Interestingly how he found it easy to accuse anyone, from the scholars of Islam, of ignorance and misguidance just when he does not want to accept their views. No one among scholars ever claimed that Al-Saaji was a Nasibi or influenced from them. Rather he was declared as an Imam, Hafiz, Muhaddith of Basra and its Mufti etc.⁵⁴

- He assumed [p.198-199] without evidence that Ibn ‘Adi had relied on the statement of Ibn Ma’een in which he weakened ‘Atiyyah, and because Ibn Ma’een’s that statement is rejected [according to Mahmud Sa’eed] therefore Ibn ‘Adi was wrong in judgement. So Ibn ‘Adi is merely a blind follower while Ibn Shaheen is Imam of Jarh and Ta’deel?
- He out of ignorance took [p.207] Yahya bin Sa’eed al-Qattan as Yahya bin Ma’een while quoting from Tarikh as-Saghir [which is actually Al-Tarikh al-Awsat] where Ibn al-Madini is narrating from Yahya. Now any student who studies Hadith and Rijal will know Ibn Madini would narrate from his Shaykh, Yahya al-Qattan not his contemporary Yahya bin Ma’een.
- Going further [p.209] with previous blunder he even claimed Yahya al-Qattan made Tawthiq of him based on his statement “Abul Widak preferable to me than ‘Atiyyah.” Mahmud Sa’eed concluded that since Abul Widak is reliable then ‘Atiyyah must also be. This is falsehood as I have already proved that Yahya made Jarh on ‘Atiyyah. All this indicate exposes the false conclusions the he often come up with.
- What exposes this even more is his claim [p.209] that Abu Hatim made Tawthiq of ‘Atiyyah since he compared between ‘Atiyyah and Abu Nadhra and said, “Abu Nadhra is preferable to me.” In fact, Abu Hatim clearly made Jarh on ‘Atiyyah at no less than two places as I have quoted in the section on “statement of scholars on ‘Atiyyah”. Therefore, it proves that comparison between two narrators does not mean they must be of the same level.

54 Siyar (14/197), Tabaqat ash-Shafi’iyyah by Ibn al-Subki (3/299)

55 Al-Jarh wa At-Ta’deel (8/241). Also see (6/383).

- He claimed [p.208-209] that Al-Bazzar made Tawthiq of ‘Atiyyah as he said regarding him, “Great scholars have narrated from him.” I wonder how that can be a statement of Tawthiq since we know that many great scholars of Hadith have narrated from well known weak narrators. That would have been a statement of Ta’deel if the narrator was considered Majhool or an accused of lying but as far as weak narrators are concerned than it is common knowledge that scholars, with the exception of very few, would narrate from all.
- He even claimed [p.209] that Ibn Khuzaimah considered him Thiqah since he included his narration in his “Sahih”. This is again falsehood as I have made it clear earlier that he weakened him in the same book after quoting his narration.

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the discussion we can say that 'Atiyyah is weak but his narrations can be used for corroboration as he himself was truthful. But when he is alone in narrating something that is odd then his narration should be rejected without giving a second thought. He had shi'i leaning and he was accused of Tadles except that accusation of Tadlees is disputed among scholars. However, regardless of his Tashayyu' and Tadles he was still a weak narrator. Allah knows best.



Imaam Ali al-Madeeni said:

"Understanding of the meanings of Hadeeth is Half Knowledge, and Awareness of the narrators is Half Knowledge"

[Al-Muhaddith al-Faasil (1/320), Chain Saheeh]