Content Analysis of Mahdism Narrations in the Book of *Başā'ir al-Darajāt*

Moslem Kamyab[*]

Assistant Professor, Department of Current Studies, Mahdism and Future Studies Research Center, Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy, Qom, Iran.

Abstract

The book "*Başā'ir al-Darajāt*" by *Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Ṣaffār*, as one of the oldest surviving sources from the early period of the Lesser Occultation, can be explored with a Mahdism approach. In this source, 37 narrations, without repetition, address the issue of Mahdism. Since diverse Mahdavi topics are evident in these narrations, this research seeks, using the "Content Analysis" method, to first identify the main and sub-topics of the Mahdism narrations in *Başā'ir al-Darajāt* and then categorize and analyze the main categories. From examining the collection of narrations, 9 main topics were extracted in the form of 44 concepts; the conduct of Imam Mahdi (AS) in the era of reappearance, the Imam's inheritance, the purpose of the reappearance, the Imam's

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[*] Email: m.kamyab@isca.ac.ir

companions, and the blessings of the era of reappearance are among the most important topics in this collection of narrations. The central theme of the *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* narrations refers to the era of reappearance and beyond. This indicates the application of the element of selectivity by *Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Ṣaffār* in compiling this work. The existence of some isolated narrations and their lack of transmission until the era of *Allamah Majlisī* indicates that these narrations were distant from the common discourse of Shia hadith scholars; although the essence of the themes can be traced in other hadith legacies.

Keywords: Mahdism, Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Ṣaffār, Content Analysis.

Introduction

Since ancient times, Shia narrations have had a significant impact on Mahdism thought. These narrations, in terms of quantity and quality, have been organized with different approaches and based on the authors' viewpoints. The book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, written by *Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Ṣaffār*, is one of the works that contains some of the Mahdism narrations. Examining its Mahdism narrations, considering the antiquity of the text, will lead to a clear and comprehensive picture of this book in the subject of Mahdism in the early centuries.

The present study aims to examine the narrations of Mahdism in the book "*Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*" and analyze their general outlines. The main research questions are:

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- Based on quantitative analysis, what are the frequency of narrations attributed to the Imams and their main topics?

- From a qualitative perspective, what are the characteristics of the content of Mahdism narrations in this work?

- Does this work follow a unified discourse on the subject of Mahdism, or does it have a multi-thematic approach?

- Given the age of this work, what impact have the narrations of "*Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*" had on later texts?

The present article, using the "Content Analysis" method, attempts to examine the Mahdism narrations of *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* with regard to the aforementioned questions.

1. Research Background

Numerous studies have been conducted on the book "*Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*." Some of them can be mentioned as general background. Andrew Newman, a contemporary orientalist, in his book "The Formative Period of Twelver Shī'ism: Hadīth as Discourse between Qum and Baghdad," analyzes Shia Hadith in the third century AH and focuses his research on three books: "*Maḥāsin al-Barqī*," "*Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt Ṣaffār*," and "*al-Kāfī Kulaynī*." He believes that the hadiths of *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* reflect the specific needs of the Shias of Qom in that period, and the miraculous image that *Ṣaffār* presents of the Imams is far from the original foundations of Imamism (Newman, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 253). After him, the book "A Study on *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*" by Majid Jafari Rabbani has been published. In this work, the author introduces *Ṣaffār*, his shaykhs and students (Jafari Rabbani,

2014 AD/1394 SH: 23-47) and the credibility of the book (ibid: 221-244); then, he refers to topics such as the intellectual-cultural origin of *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, the impact of this book on later sources, the characteristics of the position of Imamate, and the knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) (ibid: 51-179), and finally, he refers to *Ibn al-Walīd*'s view on exaggeration (ibid: 247). In general, it can be said that this work has diverse bibliographical discussions but does not go into details.

In another article entitled "Examining the Accuracy of Attributing Exaggeration in the Hadiths of *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*," it is shown that most of the narrations in this book are found in "*Kitāb al-Ḥujjah*" of *al-Kāfī*. The authors, through analyzing the chain of narration and text of the narrations in the chapter on "The Power of the Imams," have not found any clear contradiction between them and the verses of the Quran (Parvin Bahadorzadeh et al., 2019 AD/1398 SH). Another work entitled "The Position of *Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Ṣaffār* and the Book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* in the Shi'a Hadith Heritage," with numerous pieces of evidence, confirms the attribution of this book to *Ṣaffār* (Rahimi, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 81-114). "An Examination of the Religious Authority of the Ahl al-Bayt in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*" is another article that re-examines the scientific authority of the Imam in the book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* (Aḥmadi Foroushani and Kalbasi, 2024 AD/1403 SH: 119-139).

The most specific background is an article entitled: "Explaining the Scarcity of Hadiths on Mahdism and Occultation in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*," in which the authors, by mentioning several hypotheses and

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invalidating them, have concluded that *Ṣaffār* had other works on the subject of Mahdism and Occultation in which he narrated his hadiths on Mahdism. The considerable volume of related hadiths narrated from *Ṣaffār* in later hadith collections is among the authors' evidence for this claim (Mollanouri; Ghafourinejad, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 67).

Despite all these descriptions, it must be noted that the current study only aims to examine the selection of hadiths on Mahdism and analyze the "Quantitative" and "Qualitative" content of these narrations in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, which has not been previously addressed. By quantitative analysis, we mean identifying themes and analyzing the narrations statistically, which will be aided by qualitative analyses.

2. Research Method

The present study has been carried out using content analysis. This method is quantitative in nature, through which the qualitative content of sources is examined.

Some consider this method to be a method of analyzing data. This method was first used in communication sciences, but it is now used in various text analyses. The content analysis method enables the researcher to prepare, express, and evaluate an independent text without interference or prejudice (Khanifar and Moslemi, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 77). In the scientific definition of the content analysis method, it should be said that "It is a method by which the messages of a text can be described objectively and systematically." (ibid., 79)

In this method, after segmenting the sentences, the extraction,

coding of main and sub-topics, and their categorization are carried out, and finally, the main theme will be discovered with the title of "Category."

3. Character Analysis of *Ṣaffār Qummī*

Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Farūkh Ṣaffār Qummī is considered one of the most prominent hadith scholars of the Minor Occultation period. Although the exact date of his birth is not known, his death is recorded in the year 290 AH (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 354). All the great Shi'a *Rijālīs* have emphasized his reliability and high scholarly position (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 354; Ibn Dāwūd Ḥillī, 1963 AD/1383 AH: 307; Ḥillī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 157).

Of the 38 works attributed to *Ṣaffār* (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 354), only the valuable book "*Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*" has reached us. There are no exact statistics on the transmission of narrations by him and its impact on the Shi'a heritage; however, 837 narrations from him are recorded in the sources of the Four Books. *Kulaynī* has 60 narrations (50 in *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*); *Shaykh Ṣadūq* in *Man Lā Yaḥduruhū al-Faqīh* has 20 narrations, and *Shaykh Ṭūsī* in his two works, *Tahdhīb* and *Istibṣār*, has transmitted 757 narrations from *Ṣaffār*. The scarcity of narrations from *Ṣadūq* in *Man Lā Yaḥduruhū al-Faqīh* does not mean that he was not connected to *Ṣaffār*'s hadith heritage; because *Ṣadūq*, in his other works, has transmitted nearly 650 narrations from *Ṣaffār* through other hadith scholars.

Although *Ṣaffār* did not directly meet the impeccable Imam (in person), he transmitted valuable hadiths through correspondence with

Imam *'Askarī* (AS) (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 5, 239; 7, 402) and also through great narrators such as: "*'Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā, 'Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan al-'Alawī, 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad, Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim, Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā ibn 'Ubayd, Ali ibn Ismā'īl, and Mu'āwīyah ibn Ḥakīm.*" (Mamaqani, n.d.: 3, 103; Khu'ī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 16, 265)

The nature of his works, which are written with a jurisprudential approach, indicates that he was known as a jurist. In some cases, his jurisprudential opinions have remained in the works after him, such as the permissibility of reciting the words of *Qunūt* in Persian (Ṣadūq, 1894 AD/1314 AH: 1, 316).

In addition to jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), Ṣaffār's theological discourse is of great importance due to its foundation on the principle of the system of Imamate and its transmission to later periods. For example, his reports on the narrations of the "Twelve Imams" are praiseworthy as a valuable historical document. *Kulaynī* narrates a tradition in *al-Kāfī* regarding the Twelve Imams, in which all the Imams are mentioned by name. The narrator of this tradition is *Ṣaffār Qummī*, from *Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid Barqī*, who heard it from *Barqī* ten years before the beginning of the occultation (*Ghaybah*) of Imam Zaman (AJ) (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 526).

4. Attribution of the Book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*

Baṣā'ir is the plural of *Baṣīrah*, meaning knowledge and proof (Ibn Fāris, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 254), and *al-Darajāt* is derived from *Darajah*, meaning ranks and status (Lisān al-'Arab, 1993 AD/1414

AH: 2, 267). In the title of the book, the word *Baṣā'ir* is added to *al-Darajāt*, and this addition is in the sense of the preposition "*Li*" (for), meaning insights that pertain to the ranks of individuals (Ahl al-Bayt) (Rabbani, 2015 AD/1395 SH: 120).

Najāshī and *Shaykh Ṭūsī*, in their works, have attributed the book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* to *Ṣaffār* and have mentioned their chains of transmission to that book (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 354; Ṭūsī, n.d.: 408). This work has been narrated through *Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā* in Qom (Hosseini, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 3, 471). Among later scholars, *Allamah Majlisī*, while considering the book authentic, attributes it to *Ṣaffār* and states: "The book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* is among the reliable primary sources from which *Kulaynī* and others have narrated." (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 1, 27) He has narrated numerous traditions from it. Also, *Shaykh Ḥurr 'Āmilī*, while considering the book reliable, attributes it to *Ḥasan ibn Ṣaffār*, with the difference that he believes there are two versions, a small and a large one (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 30, 153).

5. General Outlines and Status of Mahdism in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*

Some authors of that era tried to convey their writing style and method to others; however, in the current version of *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, there is no introduction from the author explaining his method. This work is written with a completely hadith-based approach. No explanation from the author is seen in it; one can only understand from the chapters of the book that the author intended to prove the knowledge and special status of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS).

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The manner, in which the chapters are organized and named, presented as sentences, reflects the author's understanding of the traditions pertaining to the chapters. There is no specific order governing the arrangement of the chapters. The beginning of the book, before delving into the knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), is dedicated as an introduction to the value of knowledge (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 2), and at the end, after mentioning the ranks of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) with titles such as "Regarding Submission to the Family of Muḥammad (AS) in What Has Come From Them," (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 520) the discussion concludes.

Based on the conducted investigations, it can be stated that *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* consists of ten main sections, none of which have specific titles. This work begins only with "Part One" and ends with "Part Ten." Each part contains numerous chapters, the largest of which is Part One with 24 chapters. The total number of chapters in this work amounts to 189, and the number of narrations varies depending on the writing style. In the research of Koucheh Baghi, 1881 narrations, Moallem 1901, Zakizadeh 1894 and Abdollahi 1878 narrations have been counted. The reason for the difference in the number of narrations is the existence of similar and repetitive narrations in some chapters; so that some researchers have considered these narrations in their statistics and others have refrained from mentioning them.

5-1. The Thematic Focus of the Narrations Concerning Mahdism in *Baṣā'ir*

1) Some of these narrations are reports whose contents include all the

Ahl al-Bayt (AS) including Imam Mahdi (AJ). Such as the narrations on the necessity of a divine authority (*Ḥujjah*) in every era, which can be seen in various chapters of this work (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 488-489). Or narrations that explicitly mention the existence of the Twelve Imams (cf. Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 280, 319, 320; 372).

2) Special and specific reports of the Mahdism doctrine, which, after removing duplicates include 37 narrations. These reports are not placed in specific chapters; only in the fifth part, there is a chapter entitled "Chapter Concerning the Imams from the Family of Muḥammad (AS) that when they appear and rule according to the rule of the Family of David" which refers to the judicial conduct of Imam Mahdi (AJ) by quoting four narrations (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 258). The rest of the narrations are placed in different chapters.

In this work, the narrations related to Mahdism can be divided into two general categories based on their level of reliability.

Category 1: "Narrations with authentic chains of transmission (*Isnād*), numbering 11." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 77, 175[1], 162, 186, 258, 259[2], 297, 510, and 515) The main narrators are prominent Shia figures who are explicitly declared trustworthy (*Tawthīq*), such as *Zurārah ibn Aʿyun, Abān ibn Taghlib, Ḥurayz ibn ʿAbdullāh, Yaʿqūb ibn Yazīd, Abū ʿUbaydah al-Ḥadhdhāʾ, Muʿāwīyah ibn Wahab, ʿAbdullāh ibn Miskān, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿĀmir Ashʿarī, and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Khaṭṭāb.*

1. In this page there is two narrations.
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Category 2: "Weak narrations, numbering 26." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 21, 24, 28, 70, 84, 106, 141, 152, 155, 184 [two narrations], 189 [two narrations], 193, 199, 254, 264, 311, 356, 359, 386, 409, 490, 493, 505, 506) Some of the narrators of these hadiths are considered weak in hadith sources, such as *Mūsā ibn Sa'dān* (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 404), *Muḥammad ibn Hārūn* (Ḥillī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 254), *Salama ibn Khaṭṭāb* (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 188), *Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Daylamī* (Ṭūsī, 1961 AD/1381 AH: 343), *Zīyād ibn Mundhir* (Ṭūsī, n.d.: 204), and *'Abdullāh ibn Qāsim Ḥaḍramī* (Ḥillī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 236). The main reasons for weakening these narrators are issues of exaggeration or inclination towards deviant currents.

Others are considered unknown (*Majhūl*) or neglected (*Muhmal*) in Shia biographical evaluation (*Rijāl*) sources, such as: "*Muḥammad ibn Fayḍ, Rufayd Mawlā Abi Hurayra, Shu'ayb ibn Ghazwān, Abu 'Abdullāh Rīyāḥī, Abī Ṣāmit Ḥulwānī, Ali ibn Hāshim al-Burayd, Rabī' ibn Muḥammad al-Makkī, Manī' ibn Ḥajjāj Baṣrī, and Abū Sa'īd Khurāsānī.*"

6. Quantitative Analysis of Narrations in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* by *Ṣaffār*

The quantitative analysis refers to the frequency of words and topics discussed in the text, which helps the article's author to become familiar with the structure of the elements and components used. The output of quantitative analysis paves the way for qualitative analysis. Some instances of quantitative analysis are presented below.

6-1. Assessing the Frequency of Imams as Narrators of Hadiths

The results obtained from the content analysis of Mahdism hadiths in the main table show that out of a total of 37 hadiths narrated in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, the majority of them (21 hadiths) are narrated from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS), and in second place, 12 hadiths are narrated from Imam *Bāqir* (AS). The Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and Imam Ali (AS) are each in the next rank with one hadith. Among these, only one hadith is reported from *Muḥammad ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥasan* without attribution to an impeccable Imam (AS); however, since it is included in the hadith texts, it is mentioned in the statistics.

The majority of narrations from the two Imams *Ṣādiqayn* (AS) occurred during a time when the Shi'a scientific movement took shape due to internal conflicts within the Umayyad dynasty and the transfer of power to the Abbasids. The topic of Mahdism also experienced significant growth under the influence of this atmosphere. By examining the hadiths, a part of the scientific movement is presented in the form of dialogues and questions from narrators to the Imam, such as: "I asked" (*Sa'altu*) (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 77, 505), "I asked him" (*Sa'altuhū*) (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 405), "We were with him" (*Kunnā 'Indahū*) (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 417); "Some people from Kufa asked permission to enter upon him" (*Ista'dhana 'alayhi Unāsun min ahl al-Kūfa*) (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 175); "A man recited before *Abī 'Abdillāh*" (*Qara'a Rajulun 'alā Abī 'Abdillāh*) (ibid: 193); "I said to *Abī 'Abdillāh*" (*Qultu li Abī 'Abdillāh*) (ibid: 152); "I said to him (AS) after I met him" (*Qultu lahū*
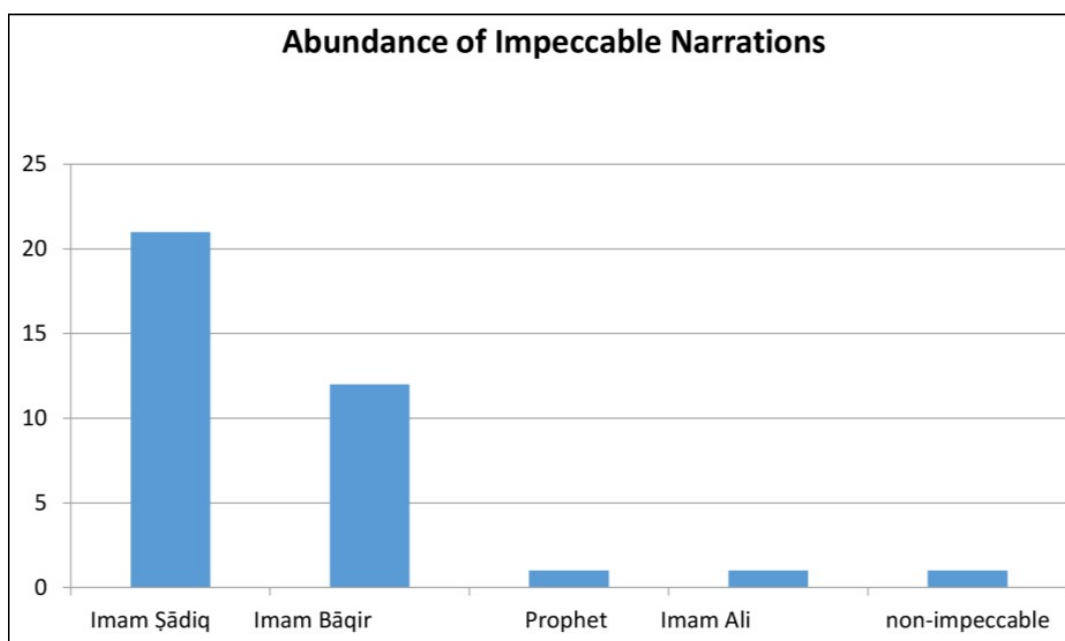
(AS) baʿda mā Laqītuhū) (ibid: 295); "A man from Balkh entered upon him" (*Dakhala ʿalayhi Rajulun min Ahl Balkh*) (ibid: 141). Therefore, the questioning nature of the narrators can be considered a product of the free scientific environment of that era.

Furthermore, during the Abbasid rule, they misused their relative kinship with the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and tried to portray their uprising as a Mahdawi revolution and their government as the promised government of justice. To this end, they tampered with the hadiths that foretold the emergence of Imam Mahdi (AS) and, while distorting them on topics such as the lineage and ancestry of the Awaited Mahdi, fabricated hadiths. The hadiths "Al-Mahdi is from the descendants of Abbas" (Ibn Ḥammād, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 356) and "*al-Manṣūr, al-Mahdī, and al-Saffāḥ* are from the descendants of Abbas" (Ibn Ḥammād, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 1, 400) were fabricated with the aforementioned purpose. This is despite the fact that these hadiths contradict the definitive and widely transmitted hadiths of both groups (Shi'a and Sunni) which consider Imam Mahdi to be from the progeny of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) (cf. Suyūṭī, 1965 AD/1385 AH: 79-81, etc.; Safi Golpaygani, n.d.: 191).

Also during that period, the title of Mahdi was applied to the Abbasid caliphs. *Manṣūr Dawānīqī* named his son Mahdi (cf. Isfahani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 1, 360 and 361). The *Mahdi ʿAbbāsī* also carried out actions intended to present him as the awaited Mahdi (Yaʿqūbī, 1942 AD/1362 AH: 2, 395). With this in mind, it seems that

one of the objectives of the Ṣādiqayn (AS) was to clarify the position of the real Mahdi.
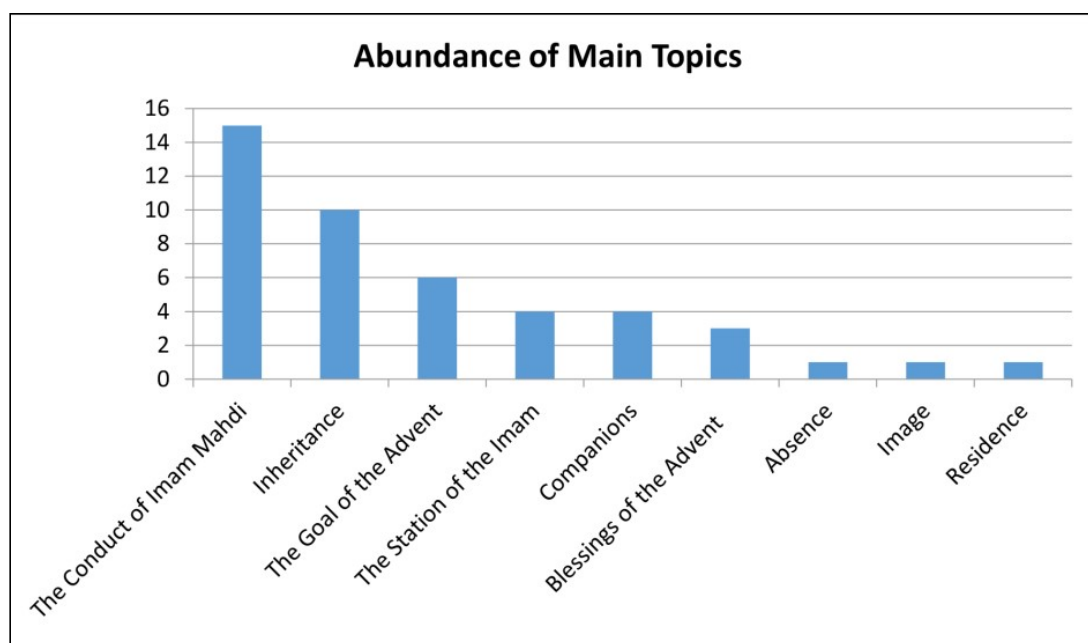
The frequency of narrations from the Impeccable Imams can be observed in the chart below:

Abundance of Impeccable Narrations

[Bar chart showing: Imam Ṣādiq ≈21, Imam Bāqir ≈12, Prophet ≈1, Imam Ali ≈1, non-impeccable ≈1. Y-axis from 0 to 25.]

6-2. Main Topics of *Ṣaffār*'s Narrations

The 37 narrations on Mahdism in the book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* include 44 sub-topics, categorized into 9 main topics. The first statistic pertains to the topic of "The Imam's conduct during the era of the Reappearance." Narrations concerning the Imam inheriting from the prophets and successors of the Prophet rank second. Other topics, such as the purpose of the Reappearance and the status of Imam Mahdi, are ranked subsequently. The importance of these narrations as the first specific reports in written Imami sources is noteworthy.

The frequency of the main topics can be observed in the chart below.

Abundance of Main Topics

A bar chart showing the abundance of main topics. The y-axis ranges from 0 to 16 in increments of 2. The bars represent:
- The Conduct of Imam Mahdi: 15
- Inheritance: 10
- The Goal of the Advent: 6
- The Station of the Imam: 4
- Companions: 4
- Blessings of the Advent: 3
- Absence: 1
- Image: 1
- Residence: 1

7. Content Analysis of the Narrations in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*

In the quantitative analysis, the types of main reports were mentioned, but in the content analysis, the narrations are explained and clarified based on a logical sequence:

7-1. The Status of Imam Mahdi

In several narrations, *Ṣaffār* refers to the status of Imam Mahdi (AJ). One category of narrations is dedicated to the issue of the Imam's appointment. In a narration, he quotes Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) as saying: "The matter of Imamate is a covenant and command from the Messenger of God for *Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib* and a man after a man until it reaches its owner." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 470, 471) This narration is consistent with other narrations which state that the status of Imamate is by divine decree from the Lord and its communication by the Holy Prophet of Islam.

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Another category of *Ṣaffār*'s narrations is dedicated to the knowledge of the Imam, especially the knowledge of the Imam of the Age (AS) regarding diseases during the era of the Reappearance. In a narration, it is stated that Imam Ali (AS) used to inform people of the cause of their illnesses and the time of their death, but this type of information stopped from the time of Imam *Sajjād* (AS) until the era of the Reappearance. *Aṣbagh ibn Nubāta* says that Imam Ali used to tell people the time of their illness and death. *Sa'd ibn Ṭarīf* asked Imam *Bāqir* (AS) why they did not provide this information, and the Imam replied that this matter was closed from the time of Imam *Sajjād* (AS) until the reappearance of the *Qā'im* (AS) (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 264).

This narration is uniquely reported in *Ṣaffār*'s *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*. The knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) regarding all the conditions of their Shia is confirmed by other narrations. However, the notion that this knowledge is lifted until the time of Imam Mahdi's (AJ) advent is found only in this specific narration.

7-2. Character Analysis of Imam Mahdi in *Ṣaffār*'s Narrations

Although *Ṣaffār*'s narrations do not explicitly mention Imam Mahdi's (AJ) life and character, such as his lineage or birth, the words used in the narrations do allude to his name and titles to some extent. In general, *Ṣaffār*'s narrations use three terms: *Qā'im* (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 21, 28, 152, 155, 184, 189, 193, 264, etc.), *Mahdī* (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 70, 106), and *Ṣāḥib* (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 408-409). The first title comprised of the phrases

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"*Yaqūmu Qā'imunā*," "*Qāma Qā'imunā*," "*Inna Qā'imunā*," and "*Liqā'imunā*," has a high frequency (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 21, 28, 184, 264). In a way, the title *Qā'im* is attributed to the Ahl al-Bayt in the narrations. This indicates that the final *Qā'im* will be from the family of the Ahl al-Bayt. This is consistent with other various narrations that consider Imam Mahdi (AJ) to be from the Ahl al-Bayt and from the descendants of Ali (AS) and Fatima (AS) (Ṣadūq, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 286; Ṭūsī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 187).

However, in some cases, metaphorical expressions are used instead of titles. A narration from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) states: " *Inna Hādhal Amra Yaṣīru ila man Yulwa lahu al-Ḥanak*; This matter [of Imamate] will ultimately be given to the one whose chin is twisted for him." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 184) The phrase "*Yulwa lahū al-Ḥanak*" has several possibilities: twisting the chin is either a metaphor for following and obeying the Imam—as Muslims would bind their chins in preparation for battles—or a metaphor for denying the existence and advent of the Imam, or the enemies mocking and grimacing at that noble figure (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 3, 44; Mazandarani, 1962 AD/1382 AH: 5, 374). Considering the content of the narration, the "One" (*man*) is considered to be the *Qā'im* (ibid.).

Another topic that *Ṣaffār* mentions in his narrations is the appearance of the Imam. In a narration, *Abī Baṣīr* quotes Imam *Bāqir* (AS) as saying that the Imam has broad shoulders (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 189). This narration is consistent with other narrations in other sources (Nuʿmānī, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 215). However, the

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narrations in other sources address this topic with more details.

7-3. Occultation (*Ghaybah*)

In *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, there is no explicit narration about the Occultation and related terms. In an interpretive narration about God's saying, "A neglected well and a lofty palace," [22:45] it is narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (AS): "The neglected well is the silent Imam, and the lofty palace is the speaking Imam." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 505) Some, in explaining this hadith, believe that "Neglected Well" refers to the Imam who has disappeared and whose knowledge is not used (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1403 AH: 7, 91). In some Imami, Zaydi, and Ismaili sources, narrations have been mentioned in connection with the same verse. In these narrations, the Prophet of God is interpreted as "Lofty Palace" and Imam Ali as "Neglected Well" (Furāt Kūfī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 1, 274; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1959 AD/1379 AH: 3, 88; Ja'far bin Manṣūr bin Yaman: 50). The frequency of this transmission in the narrative sources indicates a discourse among the Twelver Shia and other sects. The difference is that "Neglected Well," by way of *Jary*[1] (application), has had multiple instances. In Ṣaffār's narration, Imam Mahdi (AS) is considered the same neglected well in terms of temporal continuity.

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1. *Jary*, in its essence, refers to extending the ruling of a specifically mentioned instance in the Quran to less apparent, unapparent, and newly emerging instances, and it is divided into two types: "Exemplar Expansion" and "Temporal Continuity." Exemplar expansion is the application of a verse to less apparent or unapparent instances contemporaneous with the verse's revelation, while temporal continuity involves applying the verse to newly emerging instances based on the verse's temporal continuity (Masoudi, 2023 AD/1402 SH: 28).

7-4. The Purpose of the Advent

The primary purpose of the advent is the manifestation of the Divine religion by Imam Mahdi (AS) and the elimination of enemies throughout the world. This objective is mentioned in several narrations in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* by *Ṣaffār*. In a narration, Imam *Bāqir* (AS), quoting God, states: "...And indeed, Mahdi is the one through whom I will grant victory to my religion and make my state manifest." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 70, and similar, cf. also 106) Moreover, in that era, we will witness compassion and the deepening of religious knowledge. Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) said in this regard: "Allah places His hand of grace upon the heads of his subjects," meaning that Allah places the hand of grace of Imam Mahdi (AS) upon the heads of his friends and subjects (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 181). It is evident that the obstacles in this path must be removed to achieve the divine goals. One of the obstacles is Imam's confrontation with stubborn and recalcitrant enemies, who will be held accountable in that era. In an interpretative narration regarding God's saying, "Until, when they rejoiced in what they were given, We seized them suddenly, and thereupon they were in despair,"[1] it is narrated from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS): "It means the time of the rise (*Qīyām*) of the *Qā'im*," meaning the time of the advent of *Qā'im* (AS) (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 78). Or in another report, God, after stating His help, refers to the issue of confronting and taking revenge on the enemies. Imam *Bāqir* (AS), quoting God, states: "And I will take revenge on my enemies through

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1. al-Anʿām: 44

Mahdi, and I will be worshipped through him." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 70, and similar, cf. also 1, 106)

7-5. The Inheritance of Imam Mahdi (AS)

The inheritance includes books, knowledge, and tools that belong to the Imams and were in the possession of Imam Ali (AS) at the time of the passing of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). According to narrations, this inheritance is now in the possession of Imam Mahdi (AJ). *Ṣaffār* mentions a number of these inheritances in his work, such as the armor of the Prophet of God, the *Muṣḥaf* (codex) of Imam Ali (AS), and the staff and stone of Prophet Moses (AS). Regarding the armor of the Prophet of God (PBUH), there are numerous narrations. It is narrated from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS): "Indeed, our *Qāʾim* is the one who, when he wears it (the armor), it will fit his size." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 175, 176, and 184) *Ṣaffār* has only mentioned this much in his source, but in other sources, "Armor" is mentioned as a sign of Imamate (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 389), and there are also references to its physical characteristics (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 331).

Another notable legacy highlighted by *Ṣaffār* is the staff of Prophet Moses. Imam *Bāqir* stated in this regard: "The staff of Moses is prepared for our *Qāʾim*. He will do with it what Moses used to do. That staff is awe-inspiring and devours the fabricated illusions of magicians." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 184) This narration, in addition to the issue of inheritance, points to the function and miraculous nature of this staff, which has been the focus of attention

in the period after *Ṣaffār* as well (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 231). Interestingly, *Ṣaffār* only refers to its function, while other sources mention the material of the staff (Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1959 AD/1379 AH: 2, 384) and its location (Nuʻmānī, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 238; al-Ghārāt, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 285).

Another report, which also has a miraculous aspect, is the stone of Prophet Moses. According to Imam *Bāqir* (AS), in every place they descend, a spring of water gushes forth from that stone, which satisfies the hungry and quenches the thirsty, and that same stone is their provision until they arrive in Najaf (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 189). This narration is mentioned in later sources through the chain of transmission of *Ṣaffār* and other chains (Kulaynī, 1983 AD/1407 AH: 1, 231; Nuʻmānī, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 238). Some commentators believe that this stone was in a rock in a mountain overlooking the desert, while others consider it a piece of stone that the Children of Israel carried with them, and Moses would strike it with his staff to make water flow.

7-6. Companions of the Imam

There are many narrations regarding the number and nature of the Imam's companions. In *Baṣāʼir al-Darajāt*, a narration from *Abān ibn Taghlib* from Imam *Ṣādiq* (PBUH) states: "Soon, 313 people will come to this very mosque of yours, meaning the Masjid al-Haram." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 311) This narration is also reported in other sources, including *Nuʻmānī* (Nuʻmānī, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 313) and *Kamāl al-Dīn Ṣadūq* (Ṣadūq, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 671), through

other chains of transmission from *Abān*. Thus, *Ṣaffār*, like others, refers to this discourse.

However, *Ṣaffār*, in a lengthy narration, mentions companions of Imam Zaman (AS) in a remote city, who are awaiting the reappearance of the *Qā'im* (the Awaited One) and are prepared in every way. Each of them lives for a thousand years, and humility and God-fearing are evident in their faces. They will emerge with the Imam and have the ability to destroy enemies. With weapons made of special iron, they can split mountains in two. The Imam will fight with them against India, Daylam, Turkey, Rome, Berber, and Persia, inviting people of every creed to monotheism and the guardianship (Wilayah) of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS); those who refuse will be killed. In the end, no one but believers will remain between the East and the West (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 492).

This narration is among *Ṣaffār*'s unique reports. Only *Ḥasan ibn Sulaymān Ḥillī* in the eighth century AH, in his work "*Mukhtaṣar Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*," (attributed to *Saʿd ibn ʿAbdullāh Ashʿarī*) has narrated this report with slight differences (Ḥillī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 68). This indicates the existence of a specific discourse of such narrations at a point in the history of hadith in Qom.

7-7. The Conduct of the Imam

The foundation of Imam Mahdi's (AS) conduct and method will be based on the Quran and the Prophet's Sunnah. *Ṣaffār* refers to this fundamental principle in his narration. He narrates from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) that: "Imam Mahdi (AS) will speak to the people during his

uprising, and the Quran, which is the word of God, will confirm the words of Imam Mahdi (AS)." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 21 and 28)

The varieties of Mahdavi conduct are as follows:

7-7-1. The Imam's Combative Conduct with Opponents

Regarding Imam Mahdi's (AS) combative conduct with opponents, numerous narrations have been reported in various sources. *Ṣaffār*, in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, refers to this subject in several narrations. In a narration from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS), we read: "The *Qā'im* will act among the Arabs according to what is in the Red *Jafr* - slaughter." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 152 and 155) The Red *Jafr* is a source of knowledge from the impeccable Imams (AS) that has been entrusted to all Imams (AS) and includes the rules of war, military matters, and defense affairs.

One of the issues discussed in *Jafr al-Aḥmar* is the subject of murder (Reyshahri, 2013 AD/1393 SH: 9, 105). This interpretation can be a symbol of the power of Imam al-Mahdi (AS) in confronting his enemies. There are numerous indications in narrations that prove this type of confrontation. In another narration from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) it is stated: "When Imam Mahdi rises, God will grant him physiognomy, then he will command that the disbelievers be seized by their foreheads and feet, and taking hold of their forelocks and feet, he will put them to the sword." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 356)

The emergence of *Dajjāl* is another topic in this book. *Ṣaffār* only mentions the principle of *Dajjāl*, and in a narration from Imam *Bāqir* (AS) he says that *Dajjāl* will emerge from a fissure in a specific desert

(Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 259). Or, in another narration, Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) said: "Ask me before you lose me... even about the emergence of *Dajjāl*." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 297) Therefore, it becomes clear that the discourse of *Dajjāl* has been generally discussed and has been the focus of attention in Shia texts, especially from the time of *Ṣadūq* onwards. *Ṣadūq* addressed this issue by creating a new chapter entitled "*Hadith al-Dajjāl wa mā Yattaṣil bihi min Amr al-Qā'im*" (The Hadith of *Dajjāl* and what relates to it from the matter of *al-Qā'im*) and narrated two narrations from Sunni narrators (Ṣadūq, ibid: 2, 525 and 526). He points out that the Sunnis believe in the news of *Dajjāl* but do not pay attention to the news of *Qā'im* (AS) (Ṣadūq, ibid: 2, 529). *Ṣadūq*'s goal in doing this was to confront critics. After him, hadith scholars such as *Shaykh Ṭūsī* also mentioned *Dajjāl*, but did not elaborate on it (Ṭūsī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 436).

Thus, it can be said that the explanation and details of the narrations of *Dajjāl* are more visible in Sunni texts, so that the most narrations exist in early and non-rigorous Sunni texts such as "*al-Fitan*" by *Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād* (Ibn Ḥammād, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 20, 30, 32, 35, etc.).

7-7-2. The Judicial Conduct of Imam Mahdi

Regarding the explanation of the governmental conduct of Imam Mahdi (AS) and the policies of his government, there are several reports in the book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*. *Ṣaffār*, by dedicating an independent chapter, points to the type of judgment of Imam Mahdi as

the most important discussion of Mahdism. In this regard, it is narrated from Imam *Bāqir* (AS) that: "When the *Qā'im* of the family of Muḥammad rises, he will judge according to the judgment of David and Solomon, and he will not ask for evidence or proof from the people." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 259) In some hadiths, this type of judgment has been considered the characteristic of all Imams (ibid: 258; 452). In these hadiths, not requiring evidence is introduced as an indicator. In order to determine whether this category of narrations refers to the knowledge of the Imam or indicates the advancement of sciences in the Mahdavi era, different reports have been presented (cf. Rey Shahri, 2013 AD/1393 SH: 9, 393).

These types of narrations have been reflected in subsequent sources such as the book *al-Kāfī* in independent chapters (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 397). Later hadith scholars, in addition to narrating *Ṣaffār*'s narrations, have pointed to other types of judgment narrations, such as: appointing judges and having a covenant in their possession (Nu'mānī, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 319), the judgment of women (ibid: 239), and judgment about religions (ibid: 237).

7-7-3. Financial Conduct

Financial and economic affairs are one of the most important topics mentioned in the narrations of Mahdism. However, in the book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, only one instance is found in which the Imam mentions: "When you see the *Qā'im* giving one person one hundred thousand dirhams and another one dirham, this should not seem great to you, because the matter has been delegated to him." (Ṣaffār, 1983

AD/1404 AH: 1, 386)

The essence of this narration is to express the point that God has delegated the Sharia affairs of the era of advent to Imam Mahdi, and it refers to an example of financial discussions in the form of its explanation. The delegation of affairs has also been mentioned in several other sources. *Allamah Majlisī*, in a chapter entitled "Negating Exaggeration about the Prophet and the Imams," mentions its narrations by referring to earlier Shiite sources such as: "*ʿUyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, *Khiṣāl*, and *Amālī* of *Ṭūsī.*" (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 2, 261)

Nevertheless, the distribution of wealth in the Mahdavi narrative system and the practice of the Imam of the Age will be based on the principle of justice. Numerous narrations with themes of Mahdavi justice have appeared in Mahdavi sources, such as: "The *Qāʾim* will rise with truth and justice." (Nuʿmānī, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 274) Therefore, this narration should also be interpreted within the same framework of Mahdavi justice.

7-8. Blessings of the Era of Reappearance

It is obvious that with the establishment of the Mahdavi system, it is expected that an ideal world will take shape; a world overflowing with abundant material and spiritual blessings. According to this standard, *Ṣaffār* refers to parts of these blessings.

7-8-1. Social Blessings

In some narrations, emphasis has been placed on the social blessings of the era of Reappearance; in a narration from Imam *Bāqir* (AS) it is

stated: "At the time of the *Qā'im*'s (AS) appearance, each of our Shia will be braver than a lion and more agile than a spear, so that they will crush our enemies under their feet and kill them with the palm of their hand, and that will be the time of the descent of divine mercy and deliverance for the servants." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 24)

Ṣaffār has mentioned this narration in the chapter "Regarding the Imams of the family of Muḥammad (PBUH), their hadith is difficult and extremely difficult,"[1] (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 20) in which the Imam (AS) speaks of the difficulties of his time; then, the Imam (AS) addresses the physical and spiritual characteristics and the introduction of the existential perfections of the companions of Imam Zaman (AJ), and these difficulties will end with his rule.

Interestingly, in none of the narrations of "Difficult and extremely difficult hadiths" has attention been paid to this type of report, and others have not referred to the subject of Mahdaviat and the companions when narrating these narrations; however, the characteristics of the companions, such as their power and glory, have been reported in other narrations with various sources (cf. Kulaynī, 1407: 8, 294; Ṣadūq, 1395: 2, 653).

Technological Advancement

The main goal of the book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* is to demonstrate the sciences of the family of Muḥammad (AS). In this work, there are narrations about advanced tools in the possession of the Imam that

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1. "*Ṣaʿb*" means difficulty, and "*Mustaṣʿab*" refers to matters that are inherently difficult or that people consider difficult (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 4, 312).

allow travel to the heavens and various points on earth. *Ṣaffār* narrates from Imam *Bāqi*r (AS) that the Imam said: "A difficult cloud has been stored for your master. Undoubtedly, he rides upon the cloud and ascends with it to the heavens, traversing the heavens and the seven earths, the same earths, five of which are inhabited and the other two are desolate." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 408, 409) These narrations are only seen in the book *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ* of *Mufīd* (attributed to Mufīd, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 326) and were not mentioned in other sources until the time of *Majlisī* (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 52, 321 and 351). If we accept this type of narration, we can analyze it as the expansion of sciences in the era of the reappearance (of the Imam). In an era when ignorant people lived with minimal resources, this type of news and the ascent of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) to the heavens were considered miracles. Today, with the advancement of science, understanding this type of narration has become possible and will be realized in a perfected form in the era of the reappearance.

7-9. After the Reappearance

In the period after the reappearance, the issue of *Raj'at* (resurrection) and the presence of the saints of God is discussed in the narrations, including the emergence of *Dābbat al-Arḍ* (the beast of the earth). *Dābba* comes from the root "*Dabb*," meaning a movement on the ground that is lighter than walking. Therefore, anything that moves on the ground is called *Dābba* (Ibn Fāris, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 2, 263). Others have also defined *Dābba* and attribute it to any moving creature (Farāhīdī, 1984 AD/1405 AH: 8, 13; Rāghib, 1991 AD/1412

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AH: 306). This meaning is consistent with some verses of the Quran, such as the verse "And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is its sustenance." (al-Hūd: 6)

In Shi'a narrations, especially in *Baṣāʾir al-Darajāt* of *Ṣaffār*, this moving creature is introduced as Imam Ali (AS). In one expression, Imam Ali (AS) himself said: "Indeed, I am the owner of the staff and the branding iron and the *Dābba* that speaks to the people." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 199)

In another narration, it is addressed in the words of God: "He is the creature who speaks to them." (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 515) Based on related narrations that refer to *Dābbat al-Arḍ*, this relates to the period after the reappearance (of Imam Mahdi).

Another matter related to the period after the reappearance is the Imam's residence in the earthly realms. A narration refers to Jabir's meeting with Imam *Bāqir* (AS), where Jabir travels with the Imam in the higher realms. After touring the realms, he enters the five earthly realms where people's lives are similar to the world. Then the Imam tells him that each of the Imams, after passing away, resides in one of these realms until it reaches *Qāʾim* (AS), who will reside in this very world of ours (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 404). This narration is unique to *Ṣaffār in Baṣāʾir*, and a precise analysis of it has not yet taken shape, which could be the subject of an independent research in the future.

8. Assessing the Frequency of Main Categories in Mahdism Narrations

Ultimately, a qualitative analysis of the ten main topics raised in **143**

Mahdism narrations shows that these topics can be classified under four broader categories. Although the frequency of one category differs from other categories, and there is a significant distance between them, separating them is necessary, given that the nature of this research is bibliography and evaluation of narrations in this work:

A) Narrations of the Era of Reappearance: "This section refers to the initial period of Imam Mahdi's (AS) uprising, which includes the formation of the government and the rules governing that era. Out of the 37 narrations examined, 32 narrations (equivalent to 86%) are dedicated to this period."

B) Appointment of the Imam: "This category refers to the divinely ordained and God-given aspect of the Imamate, which *Ṣaffār* addresses in 3 narrations."

C) Occultation (*Ghaybah*): "This section includes only one report in which the Hidden Imam is alluded to metaphorically."

D) Imam's Residence: "This refers to the Imam's residence after his apparent life in realms known as terrestrial realms (as opposed to celestial realms)."

As observed, the central theme of the narrations in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* concerns the era of the advent and its aftermath. Therefore, it can be said that *Ṣaffār* employed selectivity in this book. His mindset is focused on the early advent and post-advent periods, with an approach emphasizing the status of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). Evidence of his selectivity is the presence of diverse and non-exclusive narrations by *Ṣaffār* concerning the era of the advent in other sources. For example, *Ṣadūq*, quoting his teacher Ibn Walid, reports narrations on

various topics such as the lineage of Imam Mahdi (Ṣadūq, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 1, 263); anticipation (Ṣadūq, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 645); steadfastness during the occultation (ibid: 1, 330), occultation (Ṣadūq, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 346); signs of the advent (ibid: 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 649); and allegiance to Imam Mahdi (ibid: 2, 671).

Furthermore, *Shaykh Ṭūsī* reports some of *Ṣadūq*'s narrations with different chains of transmission from *Ṣaffār* (cf. Ṭūsī: 163).

A graph measuring the frequency of the four general categories in the collection of narrations from *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* by *Ṣaffār*

Frequency of Main Category
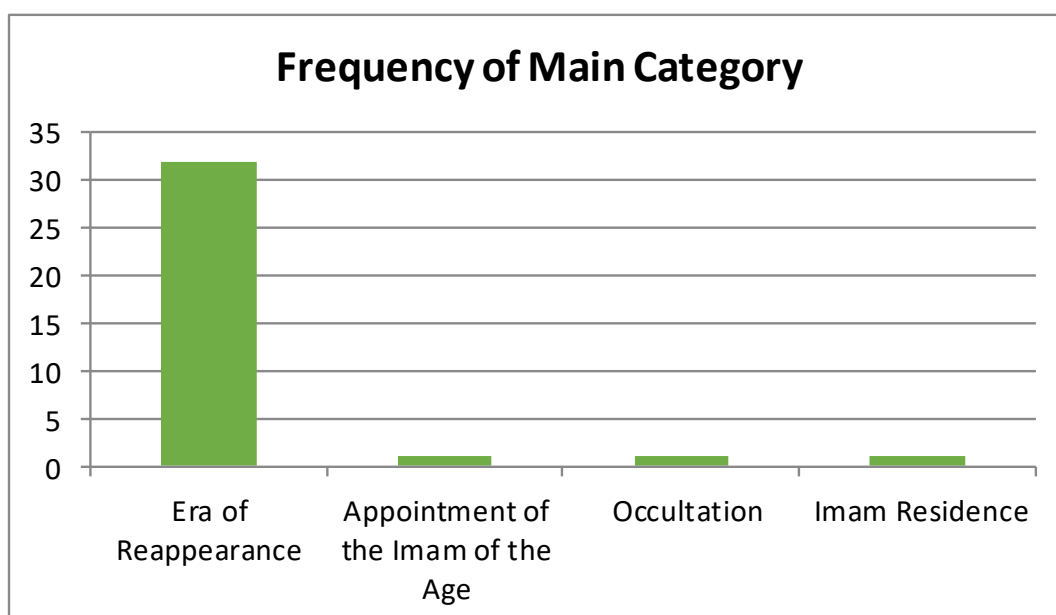
9. Influence of the Narrations of *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* by *Ṣaffār* on Other Texts

One of the merits in the field of bibliography is the influence or lack of influence of narrations in later periods. By examining the hadith sources after *Baṣā'ir* and comparing them with this book, it can be deduced that some of *Ṣaffār*'s narrations had a direct impact on the

works of other hadith scholars. Of the 37 narrations on Mahdism by *Ṣaffār*, 26 narrations (approximately 68%) are mentioned in primary sources, including: *Mukhtaṣar Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* by *Sa'd ibn 'Abdullāh* (4 narrations), *al-Kāfī* by *Kulaynī* (13 narrations), Works of *Ṣadūq* (4 narrations), and *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ* attributed to *Mufīd* (5 narrations).

However, the remaining 11 narrations did not receive attention until the 5th century AH, and only 2 of them were transmitted during the medieval period in *Rāwandī*'s *al-Kharā'ij wa al-Jarā'iḥ*. The other 9 narrations are reported in Safavid-era hadith collections such as *Allamah Majlisī*'s *Biḥār al-Anwār* and *Shaykh Ḥurr al-'Āmilī*'s *Ithbāt al-Hudāt*. The themes of these nine narrations revolve around the Imam's knowledge (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 478, 262), the Imam's actions based on *Jifr Aḥmar* (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 152, 155), the Quran confirming the Imam's words (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 28), confrontation with enemies during the time of reappearance (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 77), and the very existence of the *Dajjāl* (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 149, 297). Although *Ṣaffār*'s exact expressions are not found in other sources, and his narrations are considered unique, this type of literature has been used in some other sources about Imam Mahdi and other Imams (see, in order of the above nine themes: Nu'mānī, 1977 A/1397 AH: 37; Kulaynī , 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 197; Ṭūsī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 188; Nu'mānī, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 234; Ṣadūq, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 1, 155, Ṣadūq, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 525 and 526). Thus, it seems that the unique narrations of *Baṣā'ir* can be consistent with other narrations.

It is worth mentioning that some of these works are rooted in the Qom school of hadith. It seems that this volume of narrations reflects the prevalent discourse among the Qom hadith scholars. This is especially evident in the chain of narrations, in which prominent figures of the Qom school, such as *Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad* is common between *Barqī* and *Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā* (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 24, 70, 71, 106, 155, 175, 220, 471 (two narrations), 478), *Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim* (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 189), and *ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿĀmir Ashʿarī* (ibid: 175) are included in the chain of transmission of 12 narrations of Mahdism from *Ṣaffār*.

Conclusion

Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Farūkh Ṣaffār Qummī is considered one of the prominent hadith scholars and well-known narrators during the Minor Occultation period. One of his most important surviving works is the book *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, which, based on hadith, seeks to prove the knowledge of the Imams (AS). The narrations related to Mahdism in this book are also organized within this framework.

In this research, all narrations related to Mahdism found in this work were collected and analyzed using content analysis. These narrations were transmitted from four impeccable Imams, with Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) accounting for 62% and Imam *Bāqir* (AS) accounting for 32% of all narrations, representing the highest frequency in transmitting Mahdavi narrations.

Content analysis of *Ṣaffār*'s narrations, as shown in the relevant table, revealed that approximately 44 points and themes can be **147**

extracted from these narrations, which, in a broad categorization, can be expressed in the form of 9 main topics. The most important of these topics include: the conduct of Imam Mahdi, the Imam's inheritance, the purpose of the advent, and the blessings of the era of the advent. All nine topics were placed within four fundamental axes, including narrations about the era of the advent, the appointment of the Imam, the occultation, and the Imam's residence; however, the main axis was the narrations about the era of the advent.

It is noteworthy that not all of *Ṣaffār*'s reports are reflected in later sources, and at least 32% of these narrations are not found in any other source. However, in the Middle Ages, especially during the era of *Allamah Majlisī*, these narrations were considered in comprehensive hadith compilations.

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