

In the name of
God



The Journal of Hadith Studies and Researches

Vol. 3, No. 2, Spring 2026

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Publisher:

- ☐ University of Quran and Hadith.

15 Khordad Blvd., Nobahar Square, after Jihad Settlement, Dar al-Hadith
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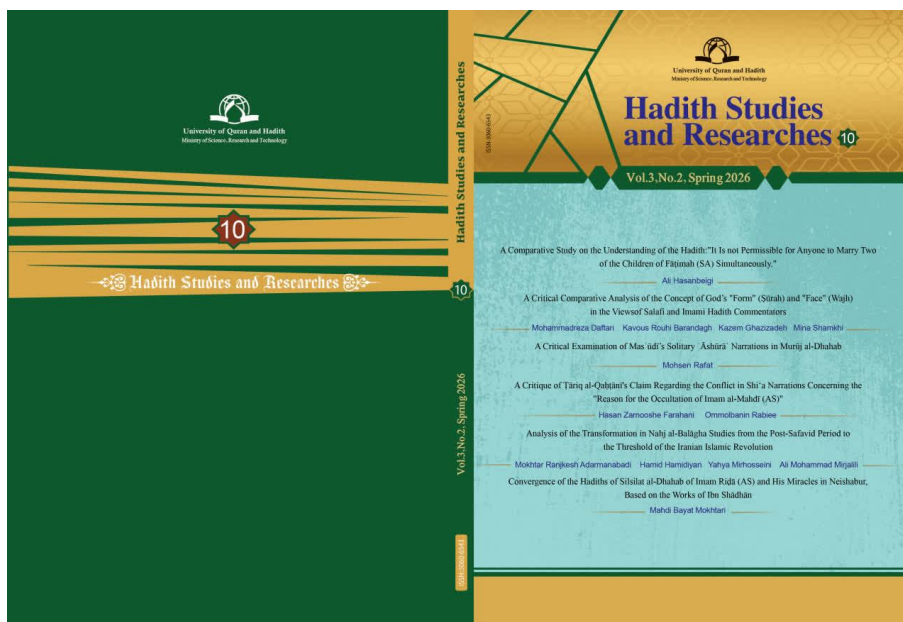


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A Comparative Study on the Understanding of the Hadith: "It Is not Permissible for Anyone to Marry Two of the Children of Fāṭimah (SA) Simultaneously."

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(Received: October 2025, Accepted: April 2026)

DOI: 10.22034/HSR.2026.52203.1120

Abstract

Due to the significance of hadith in Islamic sciences such as jurisprudence, exegesis, theology, and history, its understanding requires the application of proper principles of hadith interpretation. This paper aims to provide a methodical understanding of the hadith: "It is not permissible for anyone to marry two of the children of *Fāṭimah* (SA) simultaneously" in light of the Qur'an, with a focus on the perspectives of Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī*, an *Akḥbārī* scholar, and

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Wahid Behbahani, a *Uṣūlī* scholar. Research indicates that no independent study has yet been conducted on this subject. This hadith forms the basis of the *Akḥbārī* ruling on the prohibition of marrying two women from the descendants of the Prophet simultaneously, while *Uṣūlīs* have deemed such marriage disliked (*Makrūh*). After examining the chain of narration (*Isnād*) and text (*Matn*) of the hadith, and comparing it with the Qur'an using a descriptive-analytical method, it was found that Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī* considers the *Isnād* authentic and believes that the text, based on its apparent meaning, indicates prohibition. Consequently, marrying two women from the descendants of the Prophet simultaneously is considered haram. On the other hand, Wahid Behbahani maintains that such marriage is not prohibited. By tracing the historical development of the prohibition, beginning with Shaykh *Ja'far Baḥrānī* and later Shaykh *Ḥurr 'Āmilī*, and comparing Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī*'s view with that of Wahid Behbahani, the author concludes that: "The *Isnād* of the hadith is weak; considering the contextual indicators and the distinction between hardship and harm, the *Matn* does not indicate prohibition." Therefore, it can be argued that Wahid Behbahani's perspective is more consistent with the Qur'an and established scholarly principles.

Keywords: Qur'an, Marriage with Two Fāṭimah's Descendants, Understanding Hadith, Akḥbārīs, Uṣūlīs.

Statement of the Problem

- 4 After the Qur'an, hadith is the second most important source of

knowledge for Muslims. Its position has necessitated the development of disciplines such as *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*, hadith criticism, and the science of *Rijāl*. Accordingly, the understanding and evaluation of hadith has always been a central concern for both *Uṣūlī* and *Akḥbārī* Shia scholars.

One notable hadith that has attracted the attention of both schools is: "It is not permissible for anyone to marry two of the descendants of *Fāṭimah* (SA) simultaneously."

This hadith forms the basis for rulings by Shia jurists and hadith scholars (Behbahani, n.d.: 168; Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 109 and 547). Therefore, it is essential to examine different viewpoints on this hadith to provide a systematic understanding if it is accepted.

Since Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī*,¹ as an *Akḥbārī* scholar, has offered a

1. Shaykh Yūsuf Baḥrānī, known as *Ṣāḥib al-Ḥadā'iq* (1107–1186 AH), was one of the great scholars and is regarded as a moderate *Akḥbārī*. He was well-versed in jurisprudence and hadith. *Ṣāḥib al-Ḥadā'iq* was born in 1107 AH in a village in Bahrain called *Māḥūz*. He learned grammar and syntax from his father. After the Khārijites took control of Bahrain, Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī* migrated with his family to *Qaṭīf*. Around the year 1169 AH, he traveled to Iraq and chose *Karbala* as his place of residence. In *Karbala* he engaged in teaching, writing, and responding to legal questions. He passed away in 1186 AH, and his funeral prayer was led by Wahid Behbahani. He was buried in *Karbala*. Several works remain from him, some of which are as follows:

1. *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nāḍirah ilā Aḥkām al-Itirah al-Tāḥirah*;
2. *al-Durrar al-Najafīyyah min al-Multaqaṭāt al-Yūsufīyyah*;
3. *al-Risālah al-Muḥammadīyyah fī Aḥkām al-Mīrāth al-Abadīyyah*;
4. Treatise on the rituals of Ḥajj;
5. *'Aqd al-Jawāhir al-Nūrāniyyah fī Ajwibat al-Masā'il al-Baḥrāniyyah*;

different understanding than *Uṣūlī* scholars, this paper first examines his reasoning for the prohibition of marrying two women from the Prophet's descendants. It then presents Wahid Behbahani's¹ *Uṣūlī*

←6. *Risālat al-La'ālī al-Zawāhir fī Tammat 'Aqd al-Jawāhir*;

7. A marginal commentary on *Madārik al-Aḥkām*;

8. *Risālah Qāṭi'at al-Qawl wa-l-Qīl fī Najāsāt al-Mā' al-Qalīl*;

9. *Risālat al-Kunūz al-Mawdū'ah fī Itmām al-Ṣalāh fī al-Ḥaram al-Arba'ah*;

10. *al-Risālah al-Ṣalawātiyyah*;

11. *Mi'rāj al-Nabīh fī Sharḥ "Man Lā Yaḥḍuru al-Faqīh"*;

12. *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn*.

(A'ālā Buzurg Ṭihirānī, 2009 AD/1430 AH: 9, 830; Amīn, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 10, 317; Subḥānī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 12, 437-439)

1. Muhammad Baqer Behbahani, known as Wahid Behbahani (1116–1208 AH), was born in 1116 AH in the city of Isfahan, five years after the death of *Allāmah Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī*. He lived for a period in the city of Behbahan, and this residence caused him to be known as "Behbahani." Wahid Behbahani is remembered as the reviver of the science of *Uṣūl* in the 13th century AH. After some time, he traveled to *Karbala*. The seminaries of *Karbala* and *Najaf* at that time were dominated by the *Akḥbārīs*. Wahid Behbahani, through teaching and writing, undertook a critique of the *Akḥbārī* School and revived the *Uṣūlī* tradition. He passed away in 1208 AH in *Karbala* and was buried there. Wahid Behbahani left behind 45 written works, some of which are as follows:

1. *al-Mafātīḥ* (in jurisprudence);

2. A marginal commentary on the Book of Purity and Prayer from *Madārik al-Aḥkām*;

3. A commentary on *Rijāl* by *Mīrzā Muḥammad Akḥbārī*;

4. *al-Fawā'id al-Ḥā'iriyyah*;

5. A treatise on the permissibility of marrying two women from among the descendants of the Prophet (Sādāt), written as a refutation of the view of Shaykh *Yūsuf al-Bahrānī*;

6. A detailed treatise on the permissibility of marrying two women from among the Sādāt (also a refutation of al-Bahrānī);

7. A shorter treatise on the same issue (again refuting *Bahrānī*);

(Ṣadr, n.d.: 5, 227-228, 230).

perspective, which permits such marriages. Finally, each rationale is evaluated individually.

1. Research Background

The issue of prohibiting marriage with two women from the Prophet's descendants, as mentioned in some hadiths (Ibn Bābawayh, 1965 AD/1385 AH: 2, 590; Ṭūsī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 7, 462), was not addressed by jurists until the 11th century AH. In other words, no jurist issued a ruling based on it. In the 11th century AH, Shaykh *Ja'far Baḥrānī*, an *Akḥbārī* scholar, addressed this hadith and ruled the marriage impermissible (Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 109,547; Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 15, 93). In the 12th century AH, Allamah *Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī* regarded such marriage as disliked (Majlisī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 12, 462). Subsequently, other *Akḥbārī* and some *Uṣūlī* scholars supported Shaykh *Ja'far Baḥrānī*'s ruling (Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 109 and 547; Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 2010 AD/1430 AH: 14, 701; idem, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 17, 99).

Later *Uṣūlī* and contemporary scholars, by declaring such marriages unacceptable, followed Allamah *Majlisī*'s approach (Ṭabāṭabā'ī Yazdī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 2, 837; Mohseni, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 8, 152). On the other hand, Wahid Behbahani and many *Uṣūlī* scholars assessed the *Akḥbārī* position and ruled the marriage permissible (Wahid Behbahani, n.d.: 168; Khansari, 1969 AD/1390 AH: 2, 95; Ṣadr, n.d.: 5, 456; Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 15, 93; Najafi, 1988 AD/1367 SH: 29, 392-393; Ḥakīm, 1983

AD/1404 AH: 14, 264; Khu'ī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 442).

Research shows that this topic appears in later hadith collections like "*Wasā'il al-Shī'a*" and jurisprudential works; however, no book, article, or thesis has been written on it independently. As noted, no comparative study has yet been conducted on this issue, and this paper addresses this gap.

2. Polygyny in Islam

According to Islamic teachings, a Muslim man may have more than one wife, provided he observes justice. The Qur'an says:

"And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two, three, or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry] only one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable to prevent you from injustice." (al-Nisā': 3)

On the other hand, some hadiths prohibit simultaneous marriage with two women from the Prophet's descendants. For instance, Shaykh *Ṣadūq* and Shaykh *Ṭūsī* report that it is not permissible for a man to marry two women from the descendants of the Prophet simultaneously. The two narrations are as follows:

1) Hadith from *Ibn Bābawayh*: "Ḥammād reports: I heard Imam *Ja'far Ṣādiq* (AS) say: "It is not permissible for anyone to marry two women from the descendants of *Fāṭimah* (SA) simultaneously, because she will be informed and it will cause her distress." I asked: "Will she be informed?" He replied: "By God, she will." (Ibn

2) Hadith from Ṭūsī: "Alī bin al-Ḥasan reported from *Sindīyy ibn Rabī'* from *Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Umayr* from a man of our companions that he said: "It is not permissible for anyone to marry two women from the descendants of *Fāṭimah* (SA) simultaneously, because she will be informed and it will distress her." I asked: "Will she be informed?" He said: "By God, she will." (Ṭūsī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 7, 462)

First, the views of Shi'i scholars regarding the chain of transmission will be presented, and then their views concerning the content and meaning of the hadith will be discussed.

2.1. Evaluation of the Hadith Chain (*Isnād*)

Shia scholars have evaluated the *Isnād* of this hadith according to their respective methodologies.

2.1.1. Weakness of the Hadith Chain

Some past and contemporary scholars consider the *Isnād* weak. For example, Allamah *Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī* notes that the hadith reported by Shaykh Ṭūsī is weak due to unknown narrators. He comments under the hadith in *Tahdhīb*: "Unknown." (Majlisī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 12, 462) The phrase "From a man among our companions" indicates the narrator is unknown, and his reliability cannot be confirmed.

Wahid Behbahani considers the chain of narration (*Isnād*) of the hadith reported by Shaykh *Ṣadūq* and Shaykh Ṭūsī to be weak. Regarding the hadith transmitted by Shaykh *Ṣadūq*, he used the term "Narration not authentic." (Wahid Behbahani, n.d.: 176) After

comparing the *Isnād* of the hadith reported by Shaykh Ṭūsī with that of Shaykh Ṣadūq, he considered the former weaker and wrote:

"The Isnād of the hadith reported by Shaykh Ṭūsī is weaker compared to the hadith transmitted by Shaykh Ṣadūq." (ibid.)

Ayatollah Khu'ī, a contemporary jurist, also regarded the *Isnād* of both hadiths (those transmitted by Shaykh Ṣadūq and Shaykh Ṭūsī) as weak. He explained that the hadith reported by Shaykh Ṣadūq is weak due to the unknown narrator "*Muḥammad ibn Alī Mājīlūyah*," and the hadith reported by Shaykh Ṭūsī is weak because of the unknown "*Sindīyy ibn Rabī'.*" (Khu'ī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 442)

Shaykh Muḥammad 'Āṣif Muḥsinī, a student of Ayatollah Khu'ī, also considers the *Isnād* of Shaykh Ṣadūq's hadith weak and unreliable due to the presence of *Abu Ahmad al-Ash'ari* in the chain, writing that: "In the *Isnād* of this hadith, *Abū Aḥmad Ash'arī* appears, and it is difficult to trust him." (Muḥsinī, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 8, 152)

2.1.2. Authenticity of the Hadith Chain

Some scholars, however, support the authenticity of the hadith. For example, Allamah Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī considers the *Isnād* of the hadith reported by Shaykh Ṭūsī strong and classifies it as authentic (Majlisī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 8, 128).

Shaykh Ja'far Baḥrānī (1014–1088 AH)¹ also believed that the

1. Shaykh Ja'far Baḥrānī (1014–1088 AH), the son of *Kamāl al-Dīn*, was born in 1014 AH. He studied the religious sciences for a time in Shiraz and later traveled to Hyderabad, India. He passed away in Hyderabad in 1088 AH (Shaykh Aqa Bozorg Tehrani, 2009 AD/1430 AH: 8, 110).

hadith reported by Shaykh *Ṣadūq* is authentic and consequently serves as a *Mukhaṣṣiṣ* (specific qualifier) of the Qur'an (Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 15, 93; Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 109 and 547).

Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī*, author of *Ḥadā'iq*, similarly held that the *Isnād* of Shaykh *Ṣadūq*'s hadith is authentic (Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 109 and 545).

2.1.3. Analysis of the Hadith Text

The meaning and content of these two hadiths have been subjects of discussion from past to present. It appears that three distinct interpretations have been proposed regarding these hadiths, outlined below.

2.1.3.1. Prohibition (*Ḥarām*)

As noted earlier, some hadith scholars and jurists have interpreted the two hadiths as indicating prohibition. They argue that "*Lā Yaḥillu*" (it is not permissible) is a prohibitive expression, which implies a ruling of *haram* (Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 547). Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī* is also a supporter of this prohibitive interpretation (Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 109, 547). His perspective will be discussed in detail separately.

2.1.3.1.1. Dating the Approach that Prohibits Marriage with Two Women from among the *Sādāt*

Shaykh *Ja'far Baḥrānī* (1014–1088 AH) appears to be among the first scholars to assert the prohibition of marrying two women from the descendants of the Prophet simultaneously. He considered the hadith

reported by Shaykh *Ṣadūq* authentic and consequently treated it as a *Mukhaṣṣis* of the Qur'anic ruling on marriage (al-Nisā': 3), which generally permits marrying up to four women.

Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī* (d. 1186 AH), known as *Sahib al-Ḥadā'iq*, cited Shaykh *Ja'far Baḥrānī* in his treatise on the prohibition of marrying two women from the descendants of the Prophet, titled "*al-Ṣawārim al-Qāṣima li Ṣuhūr al-Jāmi'ayn Bayna Bintayn min Wuldi Fāṭimah*." He writes that the hadith is authentic, and because there is no contradictory evidence, it serves as a *Mukhaṣṣis* of the general Qur'anic ruling, thus rend marriage to two women from the descendants of the Prophet prohibited (Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 15, 93).

Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī* further reports that Shaykh *Ja'far Baḥrānī* considered the hadith transmitted by Shaykh *Ṣadūq* authentic and therefore a *Mukhaṣṣis* of the Qur'an (Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 109, 547). Two contemporaries of Shaykh *Ja'far Baḥrānī*, namely Shaykh *Nāṣir Jārūdī Qaṭīfī* (12th century AH scholar) and Shaykh *Ḥurr 'Āmilī* (1033–1104 AH), were also supporters of the prohibitive view (Baḥrānī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 298; Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 15, 93).

Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī*, as a supporter of the prohibitive approach, clarifies that until the time of Shaykh *Ḥurr 'Āmilī* (1033–1104 AH), who ruled the marriage impermissible; this issue had not been discussed by previous jurists and hadith scholars. Agha Bozorg Tehrani notes, quoting Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī*, that no earlier or later

12 scholars expressed an opinion on this issue until Shaykh *Ḥurr 'Āmilī*

issued his ruling (Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 15, 93).

Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī*, in his work *al-Ḥadā'iq*, traces the discussion of the prohibition of marrying two women from the descendants of the Prophet to the 11th century AH with Shaykh *Ḥurr 'Āmilī* (1033–1104 AH), author of *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, and notes that prior scholars had not addressed the issue (Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 109 and 545). He continues that since Shaykh *Ḥurr 'Āmilī*, the topic has been discussed and has been both accepted and contested in his era (Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 542-543 and 545).

From Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī*'s report, it is understood that many contemporary scholars of his time supported the prohibitive approach. It is noteworthy that Shaykh *Ḥurr 'Āmilī* in *Wasā'il al-Shī'a* merely presents the chapter title "Ruling on Marrying Two of the Descendants of *Fāṭimah*" and reports the two hadiths, without providing any indication of prohibition in the text (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 14, 387-388).

In another work, under the title "*Fī Tahṛīm al-Jam'*", Shaykh *Ḥurr 'Āmilī* enumerates cases of prohibited marriages, one of which is marrying two women from the descendants of the Prophet simultaneously (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 7, 188).

According to another report by the 13th-century scholar *Muḥammad ibn 'Abd 'Alī Qaṭīfī*, the discussion of prohibiting marriage with two women from the descendants of the Prophet emerged after 1100 AH among scholars (Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 20, 33; 12, 320).

Akhund Mulla Muhammad Ja'far Isfahani, known as *Karbasi* **13**

(alive until 1150 AH), also held that marrying and contracting marriage with two women from the descendants of the Prophet is haram according to the hadith transmitted by Shaykh *Ṣadūq*; since the hadith has no contradiction, it cannot be interpreted merely as disliked (Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 109 and 547).

Shaykh *Khalaf Baḥrānī* (1285–after 1338 AH), a student of Akhund Khorasani, also supports the prohibitive approach. In his treatise "*Qaṣḍ al-Sabīl fī Ibṭāl Qawl Man Yuḥallil wa Yuḥarrim bilā Dalīl*," he attempts to demonstrate through rational and Shariah-based proofs the prohibition of marrying two women from the descendants of the Prophet (Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 2009 AD/1430 AH: 14, 701; 1982 AD/1403 AH: 17, 99).

2.1.3.2. Dislike (*Makrūh*)

Some scholars and hadith experts have treated the prohibition of marrying two women from the descendants of the Prophet simultaneously with caution, interpreting it as disliked rather than strictly *haram*. For example, Allamah *Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī*, after considering the *Isnād* of the hadith reported by Shaykh *Ṭūsī* as weak, wrote: "I have not seen any scholar issue a ruling of prohibition based on this hadith. Now it seems that the prohibition in the hadith should be interpreted as dislike." (Majlisī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 12, 462)

He also described the hadith transmitted by Shaykh *Ṣadūq* as rare and recorded it under the section "Rare Prohibitions in Marriage" (*Nawadir al-Manāhī fī al-Nikāḥ*) (Majlisī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 101,

14 27). However, other scholars have firmly considered marrying two

women from the *Sādāt* simultaneously as dislike. They argue that although the phrase "*Lā Yaḥillu*" (it is not permissible) is a prohibition, the continuation "*Iann Dhālika Yablughuhā fa Yashuquqū 'alayhā*" (this will reach her and cause her hardship) provides context, showing that the prohibition in the hadith should be interpreted as disliked.

The reasoning is that there is a distinction between *Mashaqqat* (hardship) and *Īdhā'* (harm). In religious teachings, causing harm is forbidden, but merely causing hardship is not strictly prohibited, although it is better to avoid it. Therefore, in these two hadiths, it is better not to marry two women from the descendants of the Prophet.

Sayyid Muḥammad Kāẓim Ṭabāṭabā'ī Yazdī, author of *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqā*, also considers it *Makrūh* (Ṭabāṭabā'ī Yazdī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 2, 837). Shaykh Muhammad 'Āṣif Muḥsinī, after distinguishing between *Mashaqqat* and *Īdhā'*, holds the view that causing harm to *Fāṭimah* (SA) is forbidden, but causing her hardship is not, and therefore the hadith should be interpreted as *Makrūh* (Muḥsinī, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 8, 152).

2.1.3.3. Permissibility

Some jurists believe that marrying two women from the *Sādāt* simultaneously is permissible. *Wahid Behbahani* and his son, Agha Muhammad Ali Kermanshahi (1144–1216 AH), defended this position in a treatise titled "*Risālah fī Ḥilliyat al-Jam' Bayna Fāṭimiyatayn*." (Khansari, 1969 AD/1390 AH: 2, 95; Ṣadr, n.d.: 5, 456; Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 15, 93) In this treatise, Wahid Behbahani

presented arguments supporting the authenticity and permissibility of marrying two women from the *Sādāt* simultaneously (Wahid Behbahani, n.d.: 168).

Muhammad Hasan Najafi, known as *Ṣāhib al-Jawāhir*, notes under the hadith reported by Shaykh Ṭūsī that no early or later jurist has described such a marriage as disliked, let alone forbidden. Therefore, the general rules of the Qur'an and Sunnah indicate its permissibility, and this hadith should be considered anomalous (*Shādhah*) and thus disregarded (Najafi, 1988 AD/1367 SH: 29, 392-393). Sayyid Muḥsin Ḥakīm also supports the permissibility (Ḥakīm, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 14, 264).

Sayyid Abul Qāsim Khu'ī, a contemporary jurist, after considering the *Isnād* of the hadiths transmitted by Shaykh Ṣadūq and Shaykh Ṭūsī as weak, also supports the permissibility, stating: "These two reports do not qualify as evidence for makruh, let alone haram." (Khu'ī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 442)

2.1.4. Shaykh Yūsuf Baḥrānī's Approach to the Hadith on Prohibition of Marrying Two Women from the *Sādāt*

Shaykh Yūsuf Baḥrānī, author of *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nāḍirah* and known as *Ṣāhib al-Ḥadā'iq*, was an *Akhbārī* scholar and a supporter of the prohibition of marrying two women from the *Sādāt*. He considers Shaykh Ḥurr 'Āmilī and Shaykh Ja'far Baḥrānī as supporters of the prohibitive view. In explaining his reasoning, he writes: "The apparent meaning (*Mutabādir*) of "*Lā Yaḥillu*" is prohibition, therefore marrying two women from the *Sādāt* is haram." (Baḥrānī, 1943

AD/1363 AH: 23, 547) In other words, he relies on the direct implication of *haram* from the expression of prohibition (*Lā Yaḥillu*).

2.1.5. Wahid Behbahani's Approach to the Hadith on Prohibition of Marrying Two Women from the *Sādāt*

Wahid Behbahani, a contemporary of Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī* and residing with him in Karbala, rejected Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī*'s view that marrying two women from the *Sādāt* is forbidden. He believed that such a marriage is permissible and valid. He offered several reasons for his position:

A) Consensus of Jurists (*Ijmā'*)

He writes: "My brother, know that marrying two women from the *Sādāt* is undoubtedly valid and agreed upon by Shi'a scholars. The evidence for permissibility is that jurists have not classified this marriage among disliked marriages, and all Muslims throughout history have practiced such marriages." (Wahid Behbahani, n.d.: 168)

B) Principle of Original Innocence (*Aṣḥat al-Barā'ah*)¹

This principle indicates that in cases of doubtful prohibition,² if there is

1. Whenever there is doubt about the real religious duty, whether something is prohibited (*Ḥarām*) or obligatory (*Wājib*), the basic principle is that the legally responsible person is judged to be free of obligation. This principle is called the Principle of Exemption (*Aṣḥat al-Barā'ah*). In other words, when a person doubts whether something is obligatory or forbidden, the rule is that no duty is binding upon them. This rule is known as the Principle of Exemption (Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 3, 67; Meshkini, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 46).
2. A prohibitive doubt is when a legally responsible person is unsure whether something is prohibited or not, for example, when one is unsure whether smoking is forbidden, disliked, permissible, or recommended (Subḥānī, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 2, 112; Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 3, 68; Meshkini, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 47).

no proof of prohibition, the default ruling is permissibility (ibid.).

C) Principle of Continuity (*Aṣl al-Istiṣhāb*)¹

This principle supports the permissibility of marrying two women from the *Sādāt*. Wahid Behbahani writes: "We are certain that at the beginning of Islam, marrying two women from the *Sādāt* was not forbidden. Now there is doubt whether it has been prohibited or not. The principle of continuity maintains the previous certainty and disregards later doubts." (ibid.)

D) The General Wording of Qur'anic verses such as:

"If you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphans, then marry those women who seem good to you, two, three, or four; but if you fear that you will not be just, then marry only one, or those whom your right hands possess. That is more suitable so that you do not commit injustice," (al-Nisā': 3) and "Marry off the single among you and the righteous among your male and female servants. If they are poor, God will enrich them from His bounty; and God is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing," (al-Nūr: 32) indicate the permissibility of polygyny without restriction, whether those women are from the descendants of the Prophet (*Sādāt*) or not (Wahid Behbahani, n.d.: 168).

Likewise, the verses that enumerate the categories of prohibited

1. Whenever a ruling, subject, or attribute was known with certainty in the past and later becomes doubtful, the judgment is that it continues as before; this is called continuity (*Istiṣhāb*). For example, if we are certain that person A owed a debt to person B, and now the debtor claims to have repaid it, we do not abandon the earlier certainty. Instead, we judge that the debt still remains (Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 3, 28; Meshkini, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 33).

marriages, such as: "Forbidden to you are your mothers, daughters, sisters, paternal aunts, maternal aunts, daughters of your brother, daughters of your sister, your foster mothers who nursed you, your foster sisters, the mothers of your wives, your stepdaughters under your guardianship from wives you have consummated marriage with... and that you marry two sisters simultaneously, except what has already passed; surely God is Forgiving, Merciful," (Qur'an 4:23) also imply the permissibility of marrying two women from the *Sādāt*. In particular, the phrase "That you marry two sisters together" suggests that marriage to two women from the descendants of the Prophet is allowed; for if such a marriage were forbidden, why would the Qur'an restrict the prohibition specifically to two sisters? (Wahid Behbahani, n.d.: 169).

E) *Mutawātir* (widely transmitted) hadiths also indicate the permissibility and validity of marrying two women from the *Sādāt*. Wahid Behbahani writes that in the *Mutawātir* narrations concerning prohibited and disliked marriages, there is no reference to the prohibition or dislike of marrying two women from the *Sādāt* (ibid: 169).

F) If such a marriage were forbidden, prominent Imami Shi'a figures, such as 'Alī ibn Ja'far, the son of Imam Ja'far Ṣādiq, who was highly esteemed, would not have engaged in it; yet it is reported that he had two wives from the *Sādāt* (ibid: 174).

G) Prohibition in transactions does not necessarily imply invalidity. Wahid Behbahani argues that even if the hadith is accepted, since the prohibition relates to a transactional matter (marriage contract), it does not prove the invalidity of a marriage with two women from the *Sādāt* (ibid: 221).

3. Evaluation of the Two Views

Before evaluating the positions of Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī* and Wahid Behbahani regarding the permissibility or impermissibility of marrying two women from the *Sādāt*, it is necessary to explain the process of understanding hadith texts.

3.1. The Process of Textual Understanding and the Need for Contextual Indicators

Since a speaker may not always intend the literal meaning, the textual meaning (intended usage)¹ and the speaker's real intent do not always coincide. Therefore, when encountering a text, the audience sometimes sees these two as aligned and sometimes not. In the latter case, discovering the speaker's true intent depends on contextual indicators. In other words, what is understood from the text is not necessarily the speaker's final intention; uncovering that intention requires reliance on contextual evidence (Kāzīmī, 1978 AD/1409 AH: 4, 716-717; 'Irāqī, 1951 AD/1371 AH: 183-184; Khu'ī, 1979 AD/1410 AH: 1, 446; Ḥakīm, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 4, 209; Meshkini, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 30; Subḥānī, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 53; Jadidinejad, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 213, 230; Hasan Beigi, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 27).

3.2. Contextual Indicator

Linguistically, indicator means accompaniment or the bringing

1. Operational intent refers to the use of words to bring the meanings of those words into the mind of the listener, whether the speaker is serious in conveying the statement or speaking jokingly, whether speaking with equivocation or intending to express the real meaning. In other words, operational intent is the act of presenting a meaning in the listener's mind through the use of words.

together of two things (Zabīdī, n.d.: 9, 308; Ibn Fāris, n.d.: 852). Its technical meaning refers to something that accompanies speech and indicates the intended meaning of the statement (Sharīf Jurjānī, n.d.: 146; Ma'lūf, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 1, 625; Badī' Ya'qūb, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 522).

It should be noted that one author writes: "I did not find a technical definition for the term contextual indicator (Babaei, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 121). However, as observed, the authors of *"Mu'jam al-Ta'rīfāt, al-Munjid, and Mawsū'at al-Naḥw wa al-Ṣarf"* have indeed provided technical definitions of indicator. Nevertheless, the various types of indicator must be derived from works on literature and the principles of jurisprudence (Hasan Beigi, 1988 AD/1367 SH: 55).

3.3. Conceptualizing Context

Context refers to the specific position of a word or sentence created by its association with surrounding words or sentences. In other words, it is the broader environment that surrounds speech, including preceding and following language as well as the situational circumstances (Hasan Beigi, 1988 AD/1367 SH: 117-118).

4. Evaluating the Views of Shaykh Yūsuf Baḥrānī and Wahid Behbahani

It was mentioned that Shaykh Yūsuf Baḥrānī considers the hadith concerning marriage with two women from among the descendants of the Prophet to indicate prohibition. He believes that, first, the chain of transmission of the hadith on this issue is sound; second, the

denotation of the hadith fully establishes the prohibition of marrying two women from among the descendants of the Prophet. This is because the immediate meaning understood from "*Lā Yaḥillu*" in the hadith, "It is not permissible for anyone to combine two women from the descendants of *Fāṭimah* (SA). Indeed, such a thing reaches her and causes her distress." I said: "It reaches her?" He replied: "By God, yes," (Ṭūsī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 7, 462) is prohibition (Baḥrānī, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 23, 109, 545).

The explanation is that although "*Lā Yaḥillu*" is formally a declarative (informative) sentence, it functions here as a performativity expression (that is, in the position of issuing a ruling). Scholars of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* state that a declarative sentence used in the position of performativity instruction (particularly prohibition) carries even stronger force (Muṣaffar, n.d.: 1, 67). Therefore, the expression "*Lā Yaḥillu*" is a prohibition, and what first comes to mind from a prohibition is forbiddingness. Scholars of *Uṣūl* have explicitly said that the spontaneous meaning that comes to mind is a sign of literal meaning (ibid: 24). In other words, interpreting the prohibition in "*Lā Yaḥillu*" as dislikedness would be figurative, and as long as there is no contextual indicator in the wording, the statement, drawing on the spontaneous meaning that comes to mind, is carried according to its literal sense.

It should be recalled that the method for discovering the speaker's true intent depends on contextual indicators. In other words, the only tool for grasping the intended meaning of the speaker is the presence

of an indicator, and indicator has various types. On the other hand, it is correct that without a contextual indicator one cannot interpret a text figuratively; however, one must pay attention that if a statement is accompanied by a connected contextual indicator, then one must abandon the literal meaning and, following the indicator, attempt to uncover the speaker's intended meaning.

It appears that in the hadith under discussion, given the contextual indicator found in the phrasing "Indeed, such a thing reaches her and causes her distress," (*Inna Dhālika Yabluḡhuhā fa Yashuqqu 'Alayhā*), and considering the difference between the concepts of distress and harm, this hadith does not signify the prohibition of marrying two women from among the *Sādāt*.

Therefore, it seems that the view of those scholars who hold that such a marriage is not forbidden is more acceptable, for the reasons that follow.

A) The two hadiths used to support prohibition are weak; even *Majlisī* considered the report transmitted by Shaykh Ṭūsī weak.

B) The apparent meaning of these two hadiths, which seem to indicate the prohibition of marrying two women from among the *Sādāt*, conflicts with the apparent meaning of the Qur'an, which allows men, provided that justice is observed, to marry more than one woman, whether they are from the *Sādāt* or not. Therefore, considering the contextual indicator and the distinction between distress and harm, the hadith does not indicate the prohibition of marrying two women from the *Sādāt*.

In other words, even assuming that the chains of transmission of these two hadiths are valid, the contextual indicator and the distinction between distress and harm show that "*Lā Yaḥillu*" is not being used in its literal sense of issuing a prohibition, but rather in its figurative sense, indicating dislikedness, which is the speaker's, intended meaning.

Given these two considerations, Wahid Bihbahani's view, permitting marriage with two women from among the *Sādāt*, is defensible, since his view is consistent with Qur'anic verses, widely transmitted hadiths, and the practical legal principles such as the Principle of Exemption and the Principle of Continuity.

Conclusion

This study examined the hadith: "It is not permissible for anyone to marry two women from the descendants of *Fāṭimah* simultaneously." First, the chain of transmission and then the content of the hadith were analyzed based on scholarly views. The historical analysis shows that the prohibitive approach gained supporters only from the eleventh and twelfth centuries AH, following the rise of the *Akḥbārī* School.

Three views exist regarding marrying two women from the *Sādāt*: Prohibition, dislike and permissibility.

Among these, the view of dislike has many supporters among *Uṣūlī* scholars, who argue that although the prohibition wording suggests *haram*, contextual evidence and the distinction between harm and hardship lead to interpreting it as dislike. Shaykh *Yūsuf Baḥrānī*

24 supports prohibition, relying on the apparent meaning of "*Lā Yaḥillu*"

Wahid Behbahani, *Ṣāhib al-Jawāhir*, *Ḥakīm*, and *Khu'ī* support permissibility due to the weakness of the hadith's chain and the Qur'an's general permission for marriage.

The analysis shows that the first view suffers from the weakness of the chain and neglect of contextual evidence and the distinction between hardship and harm, preventing "*Lā Yaḥillu*" from clearly indicating prohibition. The second view overlooks the hadith's weakness but rules dislike. The third view, citing both the hadith's weakness and its conflict with Qur'anic general principles, ultimately concludes that marrying two women from the descendants of *Fāṭimah* is permissible.

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A Critical Comparative Analysis of the Concept of God's "Form" (*Ṣūrah*) and "Face" (*Wajh*) in the Views of Salafi and Imami Hadith Commentators

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(Received: October 2025, Accepted: April 2026)

DOI: 10.22034/hsr.2026.52230.1127

Abstract

The study of the so-called *Khabarī* attributes has long been a subject of investigation among Muslim scholars. Accordingly, based on

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certain Qur'anic verses and narrations, God is described by the attribute of "Face" (*Wajh*), and according to some narrations, He is also described by the attribute of "Form" (*Ṣūrah*). Reliance on the literal meanings of these two attributes gives rise to ambiguities such as anthropomorphism (*Tajsīm*) and assimilation (*Tashbīḥ*). Therefore, examining exegetical and hadith-commentarial theories is necessary in order to clarify a view consistent with the principles of divine unity (*Tawḥīd*). In this regard, hadith commentators of the two intellectual traditions of Salafism and Imami Shi'ism, in accordance with their distinct doctrinal foundations, have offered explanations of these two attributes. Clarifying and critically evaluating these views is essential for identifying the correct position concerning the divine attributes. For this reason, the present study examines the attributes of "Form" and "Face" in the Qur'an and narrations, with a focus on the perspectives of Salafi and Imami hadith commentators. Adopting a comparative approach, it analyzes and critiques the exegetical and hadith-commentarial views of Sunni, Salafi, and Shi'i scholars, and seeks to identify the sound interpretation of these two attributes. The findings indicate that Salafis, by accepting the apparent meaning of the text in the narration "God created Adam in His form" (*Khalaqa Allāhu Ādama 'alā Ṣūratih*), refer the pronoun "His form" (*Ṣūratih*) to God and, based on the principle of adherence to the literal meaning, regard the "Face of God" as visible on the Day of Resurrection. In contrast, Imami commentators, relying on an interpretive approach, understand "Form" as the manifestation of divine attributes in the human being, and interpret "Face" either as the luminous reality of the

Prophet or as the divine essence without any literal, corporeal meaning. Consequently, the perspective of Imami hadith commentators is more consistent with Qur'anic- and Sunnah-based principles of divine unity, whereas the literalist Salafi approach leads to numerous rational challenges, such as anthropomorphism and assimilation.

Keywords: Form of God, Face of God, Salafism, Imami Shi'ism, Hadith commentators.

Statement of the Problem

The *Khabarī* attributes of "Form" (*Şūrah*) and "Face" (*Wajh*) in Islamic religious texts, especially the Qur'an and hadith, have been central topics in theological discourse. Due to their apparent indication of corporeality or resemblance between God and His creatures, they have generated extensive debates among Shi'i and Sunni exegetical, hadith, and theological schools, particularly Salafism. The significance of this research lies in clarifying the theoretical foundations of sectarian differences, contributing to a more precise understanding of religious texts through the examination of hadith-commentarial theories, and strengthening comparative inter-sectarian analysis grounded in the principles of divine unity. This study may also help resolve sectarian misunderstandings and offer a coherent interpretation consistent with divine transcendence.

Although numerous studies have addressed report-based attributes such as "Form" and "Face," including:

- Ahmad Pakatchi's article "The Hadiths on the Creation of Adam in **31**

His Form: Challenges of Understanding in the Second and Third Hijri Centuries," which analyzes the chains and texts of the hadith and examines how theologians' views influenced its transmission by hadith scholars; however, it does not elaborate the theological and hadith-commentarial views of both sects, especially Salafi and Imami commentators, on the concept of "Form" in this narration.

- Mohammad Javad Rudgar's article "The Perfect Human as the Face of God," which examines the concept of the Perfect Human as a manifestation of the Face of God from mystical and Qur'anic perspectives; its approach is primarily theological and does not address hadith commentators' interpretations of narrations involving "Face."
- Mansour Pahlavan and Mostafa Azarkhashi's article "An Investigation of the Text and Chains of the Hadith "Indeed God Created Adam in His Form," which studies Shi'i and Sunni sources, the chains of transmission, and *Ibn 'Arabī*'s interpretation with a focus on the unity of being. While it questions the attribution of the pronoun "his form" to God, its focus remains on *Ibn 'Arabī*, and it does not comparatively evaluate other Salafi and Shi'i hadith commentators.

A review of these studies shows that no research has yet specifically compared and critiqued the views of Salafi and Imami hadith commentators on these two attributes with the aim of identifying the sound position. Therefore, the present study seeks, through a comparative analysis of exegetical and hadith-commentarial interpretations in these two schools, to answer the following

- 1) What views do Salafi and Imami hadith commentators hold regarding the report-based attributes of "Form" and "Face," and upon which intellectual and exegetical foundations are these views based?
- 2) To what extent are these views consistent with the principles of divine unity and transcendence?

Accordingly, adopting a comparative approach, this study evaluates, based on the apparent meanings of verses, narrations, and rational arguments, the views of Sunni hadith commentators from the third to the tenth centuries AH,¹ Salafi commentators from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries AH,² and prominent Imami hadith

1. The most well-known Sunni hadith commentators cited in the article, such as ‘Abdullāh ibn Muslim, known as Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276 AH); Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, known as Ibn Fūrak (d. 406 AH); Qāḍī ‘Iyād ibn Mūsā (d. 544 AH); Mubārak ibn Muḥammad, known as Ibn al-Athīr (d. 606 AH); Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurtubī (d. 671 AH); Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 676 AH); ‘Abd Allāh al-Bayḍāwī (d. 685 AH); Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Fayūmī (d. 770 AH); Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Kirmānī (d. 786 AH); ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad, known as Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (d. 795 AH); ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī, known as Ibn al-Mulqin (d. 804 AH); Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī, known as Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852 AH); and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), lived within this time span.
2. The selection of this time period for Salafism is due to the presence of the most prominent hadith commentators of the Salafi school during this era, such as: Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm, known as Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH); Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, known as Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751 AH); Muḥammad al-Albānī (d. 1420 AH); ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Bāz (d. 1420 AH); Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthaymīn (d. 1421 AH); Abū Zayd Bakr ibn ‘Abd Allāh (d. 1428 AH); ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Rājiḥī (d. 1432 AH); and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Āl al-Shaykh (d. 1447 AH).

commentators from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries AH,¹ with the aim of purifying the concept of God from anthropomorphism and assimilation and clarifying the true meaning of these attributes in light of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

1. Clarification of Key Concepts

In this section, we briefly examine the lexical meanings of these two attributes from the perspective of lexicographers, and also clarify the important terms used in this study.

1.1. The Lexical Meaning of "Form" (*Şūrah*)

In Arabic, *Şūrah* denotes the shape or perceptible form of a thing. Some lexicographers define it as "The form and constitution upon which a thing exists," meaning the particular quality or configuration with which a being is created. In certain lexicons, *Şūrah* encompasses both sensory and non-sensory meanings, including material form as well as inner or spiritual states. It is also derived from the root (ş, w, r), meaning manifestation or disclosure; thus, *Şūrah* is that which reveals the reality of a thing outwardly. Consequently, while the term primarily signifies shape or form, its semantic scope extends beyond physical appearance to include abstract and non-material meanings.

1. The most well-known Imami (Twelver Shi'i) hadith commentators cited in the article, such as Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, known as Mullā Şadrā (d. 1045 AH); Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī (d. 1070 AH); Mullā Şāliḥ Māzandarānī (d. 1080 AH); Mullā Khalīl Qazvīnī (d. 1089 AH); Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1090 AH); Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1110 AH); Mīrzā Jawād Malikī Tabrīzī (d. 1343 AH); Rūḥ Allāh Khomeini (d. 1409 AH); and Ḥasan Ḥasan-Zādeh Āmulī (d. 1442 AH), belong to this period.

1.2. The Lexical Meaning of "Face" (*Wajh*)

The word *Wajh* derives from the root (w, j, h). Lexicographers note that its primary usage refers to the human facial organ containing the eyes, nose, and mouth, so named because of its visibility (Ibn Fāris, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 6, 88). From this meaning, the sense of "Direction" or "Orientation" developed, since a person's turning toward something occurs by means of the face (Farāhīdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 4, 66). Some scholars also maintain that *Wajh* is used metaphorically to denote "Essence" or "Reality," such that "The face of a thing" signifies its core or true nature. Overall, lexicographers agree that the fundamental meaning of the term is "Face or orientation," and other usages, such as side, direction, cause, honor, and essence, derive from this primary sense (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1995 AD/1412 AH: 855).

In general, lexicographers agree that this term has a single fundamental meaning, namely, "Form and the direction one faces," and that its other usages, such as "Side," "Direction," "Cause," "Honor," and "Essence," all ultimately derive from this same root meaning.

1.3. The Concept of Absolute Transcendence

Absolute transcendence in Islamic theology means that the divine essence is completely and unconditionally free from any resemblance, similarity, or comparison with created beings, not only from corporeal attributes, but also from any limitation, essence, quality, direction, time, or place. Accordingly, any description that implies limitation,

composition, or similarity to contingent beings is negated of God's essence (Sobhani, 2008 AD/1429 AH: 2, 189). Some exegetes hold that expressions such as "There is nothing like unto Him" (al-Shūrā: 11) entail a double negation of resemblance, indicating not merely the denial of corporeal attributes, but the negation of any ontological similarity between Creator and creation, thereby affirming God's absolute transcendence from all created characteristics (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2010 AD/1390 SH: 18, 195).

1.4. The Concept of Anthropomorphism and Incarnation

The concept of *Tashbīh* (anthropomorphism) refers to the attribution of any kind of similarity between the divine essence, attributes, or actions and those of created beings (Qāḍī Hamadānī, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 176). In Imami thought, the negation of anthropomorphism is articulated as an epistemological principle that applies both to the divine essence and to the divine attributes. Accordingly, Shī'ī theologians, by emphasizing the negation of any resemblance between God and creation, reject any attribution to God of corporeal, spatial, temporal characteristics, or psychological states that belong to created beings (Shaykh Mufīd, 1996 AD/1413 AH: 38-40; 'Allāmah Ḥillī, 2000 AD/1417 AH: 298-300).

Some Sunni scholars also maintain that anthropomorphism often arises from a simplistic reception of the apparent meanings of the texts, and that the task of the theologian is to preserve the faith of the common people while simultaneously preventing the attribution of corporeal meanings to God (Ghazālī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 54–57). On

this basis, the theologian must avoid any form of likening God to creation in theological discussions.

The concept of *Tajsīm* (Incarnation) refers to the attribution of corporeality, spatial location, directionality, or material characteristics to the divine essence (Shaykh Muḥīd, 1996 AD/1413 AH: 34–35). Accordingly, some Imami scholars hold that any form of bodily delimitation entails contingency, and they conclude that Incarnation negates true divinity and results in change and composition within the divine essence (Sayyid Murtaḍā, 1994 AD/1411 AH: 1, 289–292). A number of Sunni theologians also explicitly state that God cannot be encompassed within the categories of body or accident; therefore, any anthropomorphic or corporeal conception of God must be rejected (Ashʿarī, 1998 AD/1415 AH: 23). Thus, it appears that, from the perspective of Muslims, accepting Incarnation with respect to God is incompatible with divine unity, and consequently, God must be negated of all corporeal conceptions.

1.5. Interpretation (*Taʿwīl*)

The concept of *Taʿwīl* is among the key notions whose interpretation varies according to the intellectual foundations of different schools of thought. From the Salafi perspective, *Taʿwīl* means diverting a word from its apparent meaning to a non-apparent meaning based on rational or subjective indications (Ibn Taymīyya, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 3, 35–37). In other words, they consider *Taʿwīl* to be a departure from the apparent indication of the text.

From the perspective of rationalist thinkers, *Taʿwīl* refers to **37**

figurative meanings that conform to the intent of the Lawgiver. Within this framework, *Ta'wīl* does not represent a departure from the text, but rather a restoration of the text to a rationally intelligible meaning (Qāḍī Hamadānī, 1960: 7, 120).

The Ahl al-Ḥadīth also maintain that *Ta'wīl* signifies a departure from the apparent and immediately understood meaning of a word and carrying it to another meaning within the framework of the text itself, in a manner consistent with the apparent meanings of the scriptural texts (Ibn Qutaybah, 2002 AD/1419 AH: 29–31; Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 24).

Mystics consider *Ta'wīl* to be the uncovering of the inner and allusive layers of the text, which exist longitudinally alongside the apparent meaning and do not conflict with it (Qushayrī, 1966: 68).

Accordingly, the concept of *Ta'wīl* differs across the intellectual contexts of rationalism, Ahl al-Ḥadīth, and mysticism. Therefore, Shī'ī hadith commentators, in accordance with their intellectual commitments, adopt a distinct understanding of *Ta'wīl*.

1.6. Salafism

Salafism refers to a school that, in belief and practice, claims adherence to the Prophet (PBUH), the Companions, the Followers (*Tābi'ūn*), and the Followers of the Followers, collectively referred to as the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* (the righteous predecessors) ('Abd Allāh, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 106; Subḥānī, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 4, 10). Based on this definition, adherents of the Salafi movement believe in returning, both doctrinally and practically, to the period prior to the formation of the

four Sunni legal schools, and for this reason are called Salafis.

Salafis regard themselves as continuators of the path of the righteous predecessors and, with regard to the *Khabarī* attributes, emphasize the principle of affirmation without modality (Ibn Taymīyya, 2005 AD/1425 AH: 3, 391). According to this foundation, it appears that from the Salafi perspective, every attribute mentioned in the Qur'an or an authentic hadith must be affirmed without inquiry into its modality or resort to interpretive reinterpretation.

1.7. Imamiyah

Imamiyah refers to the school that believes in the imamate of twelve impeccable Imams (AS) after the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), and regards the imamate as a divine office designated through explicit textual appointment (*Naşş*) (Shaykh Mufīd, 1996 AD/1413 AH: 39; Shahrastānī, 1996 AD/1413 AH: 1, 146).

In Imami thought, the report-based attributes constitute one of the most significant theological issues, as they are directly related to the question of divine transcendence and unity. For example, some theologians and hadith commentators of this school have consistently maintained that any understanding of these attributes must be compatible with the principle of divine unity and the immateriality of the divine essence, since God is a Necessary Being and is free from corporeality, spatial location, and change (Shaykh Şadūq, 1956 AD/1376 AH: 1, 68).

Based on this definition, Imami scholars have sought to resolve the ambiguities arising from the apparent meanings of scriptural texts

concerning the report-based attributes and to clarify the true intent of these expressions in a manner befitting the divine station.

2. Critical Comparative Analysis of the Attribute of "Form" (*Ṣūrah*) from the Perspective of Salafi and Imami Hadith Commentators

In this section, we first briefly examine the narrations containing this attribute in the hadith corpora of both sects, and then proceed to analyze and critique the views of hadith commentators regarding these narrations.

2.1 Examination of Narrations Attributing "Form" to God in the Hadith Corpora of Both Sects

At the outset, it should be noted that a survey of Sunni and Shi'i hadith collections reveals that all narrations in which God is described using the term "Form" are as follows:

- God manifested Himself to His Prophet during the Ascension (*Mi'rāj*) in the most beautiful form: "... From *Ibn 'Abbās*, who said: "The Messenger of God (PBUH) said: "My Lord came to me tonight in the most beautiful form." (Tirmidhī, 1996 AD: 5, 282)
 - According to other narrations in Sunni hadith collections, God created Adam in His own form: "... In the hadith of *Ibn Ḥātam* from the Prophet (PBUH), he said: "When one of you fights his brother, let him avoid the face, for God created Adam in His form." (Ibn Ḥajjāj, 1954 AD/1374 AH: 4, 2017)
 - According to another narration, God will appear to the people of the
- 40 Hereafter in a form that they all recognize: "From *Abū Hurayrah*,

who said: ... "Then God will come to them in the form that they recognize, and He will say: "I am your Lord." They will say: "You are our Lord," and they will follow Him..." (Ibn Ḥanbal, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 13, 144)

- A narration similar to the above reports is also transmitted in Shi'i hadith collections; however, the Imam's companion attributes it to Sunni sources and asks the Infallible Imam about its true meaning, whereupon the Imam explains the narration: "From *Muḥammad ibn Muslim*, who said: "I asked *Abū Ja'far* (AS) about what they narrate, that God created Adam in His form. He said: "It is a created, originated form, which God selected and chose above other diverse forms, and He attributed it to Himself just as He attributed the *Ka'bah* to Himself and the Spirit to Himself, saying: "My House" and "I breathed into him of My Spirit." (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 134; Shaykh Ṣadūq, 1977 AD/1398 AH: 103)

2.2. Elaboration of Sunni Hadith Commentators' Views on the Narrations of "God's Form"

Some Sunni hadith commentators have interpreted these narrations according to their apparent meaning and maintain that God possesses a form without being likened to His creation (Ibn Qutaybah, 2002 AD/1419 AH: 317). Others have gone even further by removing the restriction of non-likeness, asserting that one should not strike the human face because, according to the narration, it corresponds to the form of God (Bayḍāwī, 2012 AD/1433 AH: 2, 488; Qurṭubī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 6, 597). These commentators interpret the hadith in a

completely literal manner and consequently affirm the attribution of form to God.

Mu‘tazilite scholars consider such attribution to entail corporeality for God and, while accepting the narration, interpret the attribution of form as metaphorical or allegorical, referring to divine knowledge and power (Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, 2000 AD/1417 AH: 2, 91). A number of Ash‘arite commentators have similarly subjected the narration to interpretive reinterpretation (Ibn Fūrak, 1985: 56; Nawawī, 1972 AD/1392 AH: 16, 166).

Regarding the hadith "My Lord came to me tonight in the most beautiful form," some have suggested that the meaning may be that God came to the Prophet while the Prophet himself was in his best state and condition. Another possibility is that it means: "My Lord came to me while I was in the most beautiful form and condition." Thus, the word *Ṣūrah* may denote either physical appearance or spiritual state and quality. However, it has been explicitly stated that under no circumstances can the "Outward human form" be attributed to the divine essence, since God is transcendent and exalted above such descriptions (Ibn Athīr, 1846 AD/1367 AH: 3, 58; Suyūṭī, 2003 AD/1424 AH: 3, 243).

Some Sunni commentators, with regard to the narration "Then God will come to them in the form that they recognize," explicitly state that what is meant by "Form" in this narration is not a corporeal or created form, but rather a sign that God creates in that specific situation to make Himself known to the believers, such that certain knowledge is attained (Nawawī, 1971 AD/1392 AH: 16, 3). Nevertheless, the nature

2.3. Comparative Analysis of Salafi and Shi'i Hadith Commentators' Views on the Concept of "God's Form"

According to one of the prominent Salafi commentators, the referent of the pronoun "His Form" in the narration is the very form that God chose for Adam and upon which He created him. He emphasizes that this expression never implies resemblance or equivalence between God and created beings; rather, the apparent meaning of the narration must be accepted without questioning its modality. In his view, interpreting the narration as referring to Adam's own form or returning the pronoun to someone other than God contradicts the apparent meaning of the hadith and constitutes a form of negation of the divine attributes (Ibn Taymīyya, 1975 AD/1406 AH: 5, 183; idem, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 6, 391).

Some followers of *Ibn Taymīyya*, following their teacher, emphasize that this narration is among the most important proofs of the perfection of Adam's creation and his superiority over other beings. They believe that the pronoun in *Şūratih* refers to God and that the meaning is that God has a form appropriate to His essence, upon which Adam was created (Ibn Qayyim Jawziyyah, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 3, 25). Some Salafi commentators explicitly state that this hadith, like other texts concerning divine attributes, must be accepted according to its apparent meaning (Abū Zayd, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 2, 115). Another commentary states that Adam's creation upon a form attributed to God does not entail real resemblance to created beings;

rather, it merely affirms an attribute for God whose modality is unknown (Rājiḥī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 1, 241).

Regarding the narration "My Lord came to me tonight in the most beautiful form," some Hanbali commentators consider the phrase "in the most beautiful form" to belong to the category of report-based attributes and reject any interpretation that entails sensory or corporeal resemblance, while nevertheless accepting the term *Ṣūrah* itself as an attribute established by the text (Abū Ya'ālā, 1980 AD/1411 AH: 1, 161–163). In the same vein, some Salafi commentators maintain that "form" in this narration is an attribute whose true reality is unknown to us and whose knowledge is entrusted to God, without implying corporeal form or material composition (ibid: 5, 527).

According to further elaboration, some Salafi commentators argue that rejecting the narration on the pretext of fearing Incarnation constitutes a departure from the methodology of the Salaf, just as interpreting it into purely philosophical or metaphorical meanings is likewise inconsistent with the method of the Companions and the Followers (Ibn Qayyim Jawzīyyah, 2010 AD/1431 AH: 94). Some contemporary commentators also believe that God's coming to the Prophet (PBUH) occurred in a dream, and therefore, even in this scenario, the modality of vision and the reality of the "Form" remain among the unseen matters beyond human comprehension (Albānī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 1, 176–178).

A number of Salafi commentators, with regard to the narration "Then God will come to them in the form that they recognize," (*fa Ya'tīhim Allāhu fī al-Şūrati allatī Ya'rifūnah*) maintain that the believers' recognition on the Day of Resurrection is a certain and divinely granted recognition; therefore, it does not result from perceiving a corporeal form. Accordingly, the term "Form" refers to a quality whose reality lies beyond the reach of human reason (Ibn Taymīyya, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 6, 394).

In the later period, a group of Salafi commentators have preserved this same framework and emphasize that "Form" in this hadith does not signify a physical or corporeal form, but rather an attribute through which God manifests Himself to His servants on the Day of Resurrection (Ibn Bāz, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 3, 35-46). In any case, according to Salafi commentators, the modality of "Form" in these narrations remains unknown.

In contrast, Imami hadith commentators have explained the concept of God's "Form" only within the context of the hadith "God created Adam in His form" (*Khalaqa Ādama 'alā şūratih*). Based on their intellectual foundations, they have offered diverse interpretations of "Form." A group of rationalist Shi'i hadith commentators believe that the meaning of Adam's creation upon the divine form is the complete manifestation of the human being through divine power and knowledge. In other words, just as the human face is the primary means by which a person is recognized and through which one

appears and is identified, the human being is likewise a sign and locus of manifestation of divine perfections (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1962 AD/1383 AH: 3, 194).

However, text-oriented and traditionist Shi'i hadith commentators hold various views on this matter. Some of them, at the outset, transmit the same explanation given by the Sixth Imam (AS) in the narration reported by Shi'i traditionists (Mullā Ṣāliḥ Māzandarānī, 1962 AD/1382 SH: 3, 218; Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 2, 84). Nevertheless, Mullā Ṣāliḥ Māzandarānī and Majlisī each present a different interpretation of this hadith.

The former commentator refers the pronoun "His Form" to Adam and maintains that the meaning is that God created him instantaneously and in a complete manner, without requiring passage through the stages of semen and clot (*'Alaqa*) (Mullā Ṣāliḥ Māzandarānī, 1962 AD/1382 AH: 11, 128), a view endorsed by some hadith commentators with mystical inclinations (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 1, 207).

At the same time, the latter commentator understands the hadith to mean creation according to divine attributes and perfections, which in no way implies corporeality for God (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 11, 128). In elaborating this same meaning, some other text-oriented commentators return the pronoun to God but explain that the intent is that Adam was made a manifestation of the divine names and attributes, and that a ray of divine knowledge and power was entrusted

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Shi'i and Salafi Commentators' Views on the Attribute of "Form"

Axis of Comparison	Salafi Hadith Commentators' View	Shi'i Hadith Commentators' View
Referent of the pronoun " <i>Şūratih</i> "	Refers to God	Some refer it to God (as the locus of divine attributes), others to Adam (as having been created complete)
Meaning of "Form"	A real attribute of God, without a known modality	Manifestation of divine perfections; locus of divine names and attributes
Method of interpretation	Acceptance of the apparent meaning of the hadith without interpretation, with emphasis on transcendence and negation of resemblance (<i>Bilā Kayf</i>)	Interpretive explanation as manifestation of divine attributes or Adam's complete creation, with emphasis on negating divine corporeality
Doctrinal implications	Affirmation of the attribute of "form" for God and rejection of interpretive reinterpretation	Emphasis on Adam as a manifestation of divine attributes (knowledge, power), negation of corporeality, and affirmation of human dignity as the locus of divine perfections

2.4. Critique and Evaluation of Salafi and Shi'i Hadith Commentators' Views on the Attribute of "Form"

At the outset, it should be noted that some scholars argue that this hadith has been interpreted by *Ibn 'Arabī* and most Sunni hadith commentators in a manner that refers the pronoun "*Şūratih*" to God and considers the human being as created upon the divine form. However, they challenge this interpretation and argue that the pronoun does not refer to God, and that aligning this hadith with the doctrine of the Unity of Being (*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*) is incompatible with the indications of Qur'anic verses and narrations. Consequently, they identify the best interpretation of this hadith as viewing the human

form as that of a distinguished created being, and therefore do not regard the hadith as implying anthropomorphism with respect to God (Pahlavan and Azarkhashi, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 18–20). The view of these authors closely resembles that of text-oriented and traditionist Imami hadith commentators.

However, the aforementioned claim is open to critique from two perspectives. First, it must be noted that this view is not exclusive to Sunni scholars, as some Imami hadith commentators with mystical inclinations also believe that this hadith signifies the creation of the human being as the vicegerent of God (*Khalīfat Allāh*). Accordingly, the meaning of "Form" in this narration is not a material or corporeal shape, but rather the manifestation of divine attributes within the human being (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1967 AD/1387 SH: 3, 119; Hasanzadah Amoli, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 60). In other words, the human being, as the manifestation of all divine attributes, such as knowledge, power, and will, is potentially capable of actualizing these attributes.

In the same vein, some Imami hadith commentators have understood the return of the pronoun to God as indicating the manifestation of divine power and knowledge in the human being. On this basis, the human form is presented as a sign of the manifestation of divine perfections.

Second, attributing the doctrine of ontological unity (*Waḥdat al-Wujūd al-‘Aynī*) to *Ibn ‘Arabī* on the basis of the hadith “*God created Adam in His form*” is incorrect. This interpretation, which sometimes leads to identifying the Creator with creation, is rejected both by *Ibn ‘Arabī* himself and by Imami hadith commentators with mystical inclinations. With a mystical reading of the hadith, Ibn ‘Arabī

considers the referent of the pronoun "His" in "His Form" to be God, and accordingly understands "Form" as the manifestation of God in the human being (Ibn 'Arabī, n.d.: 2, 459, 490). As a result, this interpretation has no connection with identifying God with creation.

Elsewhere, he maintains that the human being is the comprehensive reality of the entire cosmos; thus, according to the hadith "God created Adam in His form," the human being is considered the locus of manifestation of divine perfections (ibid: 2, 346). Some rationalist Shi'i hadith commentators also emphasize that created beings are manifestations of divine attributes and aspects, without implying anything about the divine essence itself (Mullā Şadrā, 1958 AD/1378 SH: 41), a view likewise endorsed by some hadith commentators with mystical tendencies (Maleki Tabrizi, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 251). This distinction prevents misunderstandings regarding the Unity of Being and underscores the ontological distinction between Creator and creation.

The Salafi position, which affirms the attribute of "Form" for God through adherence to the apparent meaning of the text and rejection of any interpretive reinterpretation, implicitly leads to divine corporeality and limitation. Imami scholars argue that this approach, due to its failure to clarify the nature of "Form," falls into anthropomorphism and is incompatible with the principles of monotheism (Subḥānī, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 3, 153).

3. Critical Comparative Analysis of the Attribute of "Face" (*Wajh*) from the Perspective of Salafi and Imami Hadith Commentators

At the outset of this discussion, it should be noted that "Face" (*Wajh*) **49**

is among the attributes attributed to God in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, such as the verse "Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God," (al-Baqarah: 115) and the narration indicating vision of the Face of God:

"From *Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq* regarding the verse: "For those who do good is the best reward and more," (Yūnus: 26) he said: "The increase is gazing upon the Face of God." (Ibn Rāhawayh, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 3, 793)

Given the attribution of this attribute to God in the Noble Qur'an, after a brief lexical examination of the term, we will first examine the views of exegetes from both sects regarding the manner of its attribution to God, and then proceed to a detailed discussion of hadith commentators' perspectives.

3.1. Elaboration of Sunni Exegetes' Views on the Divine Face

This attribute is attributed to God in several Qur'anic passages, including: "Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God. Indeed, God is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing," (al-Baqarah: 115) and "Everything is perishing except His Face." (al-Qaṣaṣ: 88)

Some Sunni exegetes hold that "Face" in verse 88 of *Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ* functions as a substitute (*badal*) for the pronoun "He," (Ṭabarī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 10, 323) while the majority interpret "Face" as referring to the divine essence itself (Bayḍāwī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 4, 187; Qurṭubī, 1944 AD/1364 AH: 4, 17), thereby exalting God above any corporeal meaning.

50 One Ash'arite exegete, in interpreting "The Face of God,"

emphasizes the negation of corporeal meaning and presents several possible interpretations: first, that it refers to the divine essence; second, that it signifies direction and sincerity of intention in actions; and third, that "Face" refers to the attributes of perfection and signs through which God is known (Fakhr Rāzī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 25, 20–22). Thus, Fakhr al-Rāzī consistently accepts the Qur'anic expression while interpreting it in ways compatible with divine transcendence and majesty.

Mu'tazilite exegetes likewise regard "Face" as a form of rational metaphor indicating the permanence of the divine essence (Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 3, 437). Others, through mystical interpretations, understand "The Face of God" as His essence manifested within created beings (Ibn 'Arabī, n.d.: 3, 156). In other words, all existing beings are "*The Face of God*" and manifestations of the divine essence.

3.2. The Views of Salafi and Imami Exegetes on the "Face" (Wajh) of God

Salafi exegetes, in their interpretation of the verse "...Everything will perish except His Face...", (al-Qaṣaṣ: 88) maintain that all created beings will be annihilated and only God will remain; thus, the term *Wajh* (Face) here signifies divine permanence. However, they emphasize that this expression constitutes a real name and attribute of God and should not be interpreted metaphorically as meaning divine pleasure or action (Ibn Taymīyya, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 3, 25).

Salafi commentators further assert that the verse "...Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God..." (al-Baqarah: 115) indicates the all-

encompassing divine presence. That is, wherever believers may be on earth, when they face the direction determined by God, they are in fact turning toward His Face. This, in their view, signifies the greatness and omnipresence of the divine essence (Ibn Taymīyya, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 6, 32). At the same time, some exegetes of this school reject interpretive readings such as identifying *Wajh* with the Qiblah or divine pleasure, considering such interpretations characteristic of theological speculation. They argue that *wajh* in this verse is an attribute ascribed to God and must be affirmed according to its apparent meaning (Ibn Qayyim Jawzīyya, 2003 AD/1424 AH: 3, 143).

In Imami narrative exegeses (Tafsīr Ma'thūr), reports cited under verse 28:88 interpret the divine Face as the religion of God and the Imams (AS) (Abū Ḥamza Thumālī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 259; Qummī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 2, 147). However, other exegetes, such as Ṭabarī, understand *Wajh* as a reference to the divine essence (*Huwa*) (Ibn Sulaymān, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 6, 90; Shaykh Ṭūsī, n.d.: 8, 84; Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 SH: 7, 421).

From the perspective of some Shi'i commentators, the verse "Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God" (al-Baqarah: 115) means that in every direction one faces, the true orientation and ultimate destination is toward the divine essence. According to them, *Wajh* here denotes the aspect through which beings are connected to God. On this basis, every entity represents a degree of existence, and all levels of existence ultimately culminate in Absolute Being, namely God. Thus, whichever direction one turns toward, its inner reality and truth is the divine Face (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1941 AD/1361 AH: 1, 64–65).

In a more precise explanation, these exegetes understand *Wajh* as referring to the divine names of beauty and majesty that encompass all beings. Accordingly, every existent is a mirror reflecting one aspect of the divine Face, and turning toward any being is, in reality, an encounter with the manifestation of God in that being. Hence, the verse guides its audience away from imagining God as spatially confined and toward recognizing His transcendence of space and His sustaining, all-encompassing presence (ibid: 1941 AD/1361 AH: 2, 393).

Nevertheless, some later Imami exegetes have considered it insufficient to limit *Wajh* exclusively to the divine essence. They argue that, based on its lexical meaning, *Wajh* refers to that through which one encounters another; hence the human face is called *Wajh* because people recognize one another through it. Accordingly, whatever pertains to God and through which humans encounter and know Him is considered the Face of God, such as the divine attributes through which humans come to know Him (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2010 AD/1390 SH: 7, 101–105). In other words, God encounters His creation through these very attributes.

3.3. The Views of Sunni Hadith Commentators on the "Face"

Sunni hadith commentators believe, based on transmitted reports, that believers will certainly behold the divine Face on the Day of Resurrection (Ibn Rajab Ḥanbalī, 2008 AD/1429 AH: 1, 28; Fayūmī, 2018 AD/1439 AH: 15, 150). Others, while acknowledging the weakness of some reports concerning the vision of the Face, argue that numerous authoritative textual sources necessitate affirming this

vision; therefore, denying it constitutes a deviation from the path of *Ahl al-Sunna* (Ibn Hajar, 1959 AD/1379 AH: 8, 347).

Some Sunni commentators propose two possible interpretations of *Wajh* without committing definitively to either: first, interpreting it as the divine essence; second, understanding it in its literal sense as a Face distinct from other faces or forms (Kirmānī, 1980 AD/1401 AH: 25, 119; Ibn Mulaqqin, 2008 AD/1429 AH: 29, 621). It appears that Sunni commentators seek to affirm the apparent meaning of the term while explaining it in a manner that avoids anthropomorphism.

3.4. A Comparative Analysis of Salafi and Shi'i Hadith Commentators on the "Face of God"

Salafi hadith commentators interpret the narration "Looking at the Face of God" (*al-Nazar ilā Wajh Allāh*) in a literalist manner, grounded in the acceptance of textual evidence without allegorical interpretation. They maintain that beholding the divine Face in the Hereafter is among the greatest blessings granted to the inhabitants of Paradise and that this vision will be an objective and real event, based on definitive Qur'ānic and prophetic texts. In this interpretation, *Wajh* is understood as God's real Face, not as a metaphor for reward or blessing. Believers will see God in a manner befitting His essence, without comprehending its modality (Ibn Taymīyya, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 6, 468; Ibn Qayyim Jawzīyya, 2003 AD/1424 AH: 1, 183).

These commentators insist on affirming the apparent meaning of the hadith, even though its modality remains unknown and incomparable to the vision of created beings. They stress that seeing

the divine Face in the Hereafter is not a matter of inner unveiling or spiritual vision but an actual seeing with the eyes, which constitutes the highest honor bestowed upon the faithful in Paradise (Ibn ʿUthaymīn, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 3, 132; Ibn Bāz, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 4, 122). In this regard, they emphasize that the vision of God's Face in the Hereafter is established by mass-transmitted texts and represents one of the greatest blessings of Paradise (Āl Shaykh, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 654).

Text-centered Imami hadith commentators, drawing upon narrations interpreting the meaning of the divine Face, believe that *Wajh Allāh* refers to the prophets and the divine proofs through whom humans establish a relationship with God and are therefore called His Face (Majlisī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 3, 263; Qazwīnī, 2008 AD/1429 AH: 2, 400). Others, like Sunni and Imami exegetes, understand *Wajh* as referring to the divine essence itself (Mullā Şāliḥ Māzandarānī, 1962 AD/1382 SH: 3, 162; Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 309).

According to one rationalist commentator, *Wajh Allāh* is the luminous reality of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), which constitutes the first emanation and direct manifestation of the divine essence. This light stands in relation to God as a face to an essence or as a shadow to its source, akin to the sun's illumination. Just as the sun shines everywhere through its light, the existence of God permeates the universe through this Muhammadan Light (Mullā Şadrā, 1941 AD/1361 SH: 2, 393). In other words, the Face of God is the luminous reality of the Prophet of Islam, the first divine manifestation through which all existence is connected to God.

Table 2.

3.5. Critical Evaluation of Salafi and Shi'i Hadith Commentators' Views on the "Face of God"

Some researchers argue that Sunni scholars interpret *Wajh Allāh* as the absolute divine essence, viewing all beings as determinations and manifestations of that single essence, such that multiplicity is merely conceptual and illusory, and no real distinction exists between Creator and creation. They maintain that the verse cited by Sunnis, "Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God," (al-Baqarah: 115) is ambiguous (*Mutashābih*) and cannot serve as a basis for asserting ontological identity, as it conflicts with definitive verses affirming divine transcendence and the distinction between Creator and creation, such as "There is nothing like unto Him." (al-Shūrā: 11) (Jalaliyan Sedaqati, 2023 AD/1402 SH: 29–31)

However, in critiquing this claim, two points must be considered. First, interpreting the attribute of *Wajh* as the divine essence is not exclusive to Sunni thought; some Shi'i hadith commentators with mystical inclinations likewise hold that *Wajhullāh* denotes the absolute divine essence. According to this view, *Wajh* does not imply a material or corporeal form but rather the divine essence or perfect attributes that are present and attentive everywhere (Khomeini, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 66; Hasanzadeh Amoli, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 73). This interpretation emphasizes the distinction between God and creation and categorically rejects anthropomorphism.

56 Second, the concept of the unity of existence (*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*)

has been understood in various ways. In one sense, it is taken to mean union, whereby the existence of God and that of creatures are imagined as two distinct realities that converge at a certain point (Jawādī Āmulī, 2018 AD/1398 SH: 2, 338–345). In another sense, it denotes identity between God and created beings, such that the entities of the world are considered identical with the divine essence (ibid: 3, 112–123). A third interpretation understands it as divine indwelling within created beings (Subḥānī, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 5, 287–290). According to yet another understanding, beings are manifestations and disclosures of divine attributes (Ibn ‘Arabī, n.d.: 2, 123).

As discussed earlier, *Ibn ‘Arabī* and some Shi‘i hadith commentators with rational or mystical inclinations do not uphold the identity or union of Creator and creation. Rather, they maintain that beings are manifestations of divine attributes, which does not entail ontological identity or union with the divine essence. This distinction refutes misconceptions surrounding *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* and affirms the existential separation between Creator and creation.

From another perspective, accepting the Salafi commentators’ view, due to their lack of explanation regarding the nature of *Wajh*, implicitly leads to attributing corporeality or limitation to God. Imami scholars argue that this position contradicts the principles of monotheism, as the rejection of interpretation necessarily entails accepting a form of corporeality for God (Subḥānī, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 2, 126).

Thus, while Salafi hadith commentators emphasize affirming the apparent meaning and the actual vision of the divine Face in the

Hereafter, Imami hadith commentators, adopting an interpretive approach, understand *Wajh* either as the luminous reality of the Prophet and the divine friends or as referring back to the divine essence itself. Accordingly, the fundamental difference between the two approaches lies in the Salafi adherence to the literal sense of the texts and the Imami inclination toward interpretive readings of the divine attributes.

Conclusion

The main findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Salafi hadith commentators, relying on the principle of "*Bilā kayf*" (affirmation without asking how) and adhering to the apparent meaning of the textual sources, interpret the pronoun *Ṣūratihī* in the hadith "God created Adam in His image" (*khalāqa Ādam ‘alā ṣūratihī*) as referring to God. They regard *Wajh* as a real divine attribute whose modality is unknowable. According to this view, Adam was created upon an image befitting the divine essence, without resemblance to created beings. Regarding the attribute of "Face," Salafi scholars affirm the literal and ocular vision of the divine Face in the Hereafter and consider it a real and concrete blessing for the inhabitants of Paradise. The foundations of this position are strict adherence to the apparent meaning of hadith texts and the avoidance of allegorical interpretation. In contrast, Imami hadith commentators, adopting an interpretive approach, understand *Ṣūrah* as the manifestation of divine attributes in the human being or as referring to the unique mode of Adam's creation. They sometimes

return the pronoun *Şūratihī* to Adam (in the sense of instantaneous and direct creation) and at other times to God (in the sense that Adam is the locus of manifestation of divine names and attributes), while consistently rejecting any notion of corporeality. With regard to *Wajh*, Imami commentators interpret it as either the luminous reality of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) or the divine essence itself, stripped of any literal or physical meaning, and present it as the mediating means through which creation relates to the Creator. The epistemological basis of this approach lies in interpreting ambiguous texts (*Mutashābihāt*) in light of definitive Qur'ānic verses (*Muḥkamāt*) and the narrations of the Infallible Imams.

2) A comparative analysis of Shi'i and Salafi hadith-commentary approaches demonstrates that the Imami position grounded in Qur'ānic interpretation, the tradition of the Infallibles, and rational principles, exhibits a deeper coherence with the doctrines of divine monotheism and transcendence. By rejecting literalist readings and interpreting the attribute of *Şūrah* as the manifestation of divine attributes in humanity and the attribute of *Wajh* as the divine essence or the divine representatives, this approach remains safeguarded from the pitfalls of anthropomorphism and Incarnation.

Conversely, the Salafi method, while faithful to the literal wording of hadith texts and cautious about interpretation, faces significant challenges due to the absence of a systematic theological and rational explanation. This lack renders it vulnerable to corporealist or limiting interpretations that conflict with the principle of divine transcendence.

Therefore, from a scholarly and theological perspective, the Imami interpretive approach emerges as more coherent and more consistent with both revealed texts and rational foundations.

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A Critical Examination of *Mas ‘ūdī*’s Solitary ‘*Āshūrā*’ Narrations in *Murūj al-Dhahab*

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(Received: October 2025 , Accepted: April 2026)

DOI: 10.22034/hsr.2026.52198.1118

Abstract

The account of the martyrdom of *Ḥusayn* (AS) in *al-Mas ‘ūdī*’s *Murūj al-Dhahab* (d. 346 AH) holds a special place among extant ‘*Āshūrā*’ sources due to both its antiquity and the author’s stature in Islamic historiography. Part of *al-Mas ‘ūdī*’s report reflects the concise narrations of earlier authorities, while another part contains solitary reports found only in his transmission. An analysis of these unique reports, constituting the central problem of this study, shows that some of them suffer from textual inconsistencies and conflict with established historical and transmitted accounts. Nevertheless, these

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reports influenced later historians' narratives. Hence, *al-Mas'ūdī's Maqtal* is at once a valuable source and a subject of caution and scrutiny. Using a descriptive-analytical method and a critical approach, this article seeks to clarify *al-Mas'ūdī's* method and perspective in narrating the events of '*Āshūrā*' and, through comparison of his unique reports with other historical and narrative sources, to evaluate their content reliability. The findings show that assessing *al-Mas'ūdī's* solitary narrations is only possible through historical-narrative analysis; without such scrutiny, parts of '*Āshūrā*' literature remain confused and ambiguous. Accordingly, this study reexamines and evaluates these unique reports.

Keywords: *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, '*Āshūrā*' Narrations, Solitary Reports, Text Criticism.

Introduction

The study of historical narrations among Muslims is regarded as part of religious knowledge. The writing of *Maqtal* literature, especially the *Maqtal* of Imam Ḥusayn (AS), as a morally instructive view of history spread among various Islamic sects. Among the Shi'a, however, it acquired particular significance as a religious duty aimed at preserving the objectives of the Karbala event, expressing religious sentiments, and adopting a model of resistance against oppression. Numerous reports and many *Maqtal* works written over time attest to this importance. Beyond political and religious motives that distorted the recounting of this great event, the intermingling of some *Maqtal* works with authors' emotions or preconceptions often failed to present

a clear, contradiction-free picture. Hence, the quest to recover the true image of this historical episode and to analyze reported distortions has been a concern of religious scholarship. Prominent scholars such as *Muḥaddith Noori* addressed this issue in works like "*Lu'lu' wa Marjān*." Among roughly forty principal *Maqṭal* works now available (For more information cf. Rahman Setayesh and Rafat, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 81), besides primary historical sources and works of merits literature, there are reports questionable either in transmission or in meaning, sometimes inconsistent with Imam Ḥusayn's (AS) objectives. One well-known source is *al-Mas'ūdī's Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn*. This article analyzes modes of engagement with the 'Āshūrā' uprising and the channels through which distortions entered *Maqṭal* literature, focusing on *al-Mas'ūdī's* narrations.

The main research questions are:

- Which narrations in this book count among the earliest 'Āshūrā' reports, and what criteria identify them?
- What are the characteristics of *al-Mas'ūdī's* unique narrations, and how can their historical-narrative structure and credibility be assessed?

The author critiques the reported events using criteria such as hadith evidence, historical testimony, and rational considerations. Although this study benefits from a general scholarly background, a focused examination of *al-Mas'ūdī's* 'Āshūrā' narrations has not previously been the main subject of research. Existing works mostly address his historiographical method rather than these specific reports.

Among the works that can be mentioned are "Sources of Islamic

History," (Jafariyan, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 174-179) "The Historiographical Method of *al-Murūj al-Dhahab* and *Ma'ādin al-Jawāhir* by *al-Mas'ūdī*," (Masoumi, 2020 AD/1399 SH) and "History as a Process of Thought in *al-Murūj al-Dhahab* and *al-Tanbīh wa al-Ashrāf* by *al-Mas'ūdī*." (Vasei and Saeidi, 2010 AD/1389 SH) In the existing literature, there is no book or article that directly and centrally addresses the research questions of this study. Even regarding *al-Mas'ūdī*'s historical reports, whether at a general level or specifically in connection with the 'Āshūrā-related narrations of *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn* (AS) with the relevant characteristics, no independent research has been conducted.

1. Mas'ūdī: Biography and Works

Abul Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn Mas'ūdī was a prominent historian and geographer whose works in Islamic history and geography are considered key sources widely used by researchers. He was born in Baghdad in the late 3rd century AH, though his family originally hailed from Kūfah. He became a renowned historian and traveler of the 4th century AH, residing first in Baghdad and later in Egypt, where he passed away in 346 AH (Ziraklī, 1980: 4, 277). His lineage traces back to *'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd*, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). *Jumhūratu Ansāb al-'Arab* records his lineage as follows:

"*'Alī ibn Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Zayd ibn 'Utbah ibn 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd.*" (Ibn

The earliest biography of *Mas'ūdī* can be found in *al-Fihrist* by *Ibn Nadīm*, his contemporary. *Ibn Nadīm* writes:

"He is from the people of the Maghreb and a descendant of 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd," (*Ibn Nadīm*, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 188) and he lists several of *Mas'ūdī*'s works, such as *Murūj al-Dhahab* (*ibid*: 188). *Ibn Nadīm* does not mention his religious affiliation. Notably, while *Ibn Nadīm* describes him as a "*Maghribī*," *Yāqūt* in his biography, based on *Mas'ūdī*'s own statement in the second volume of *Murūj al-Dhahab* that he was born in Babylon, considers him a native of Baghdad who later resided in Egypt (*Ḥamawī*, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 13, 91). It is possible that *Ibn Nadīm*'s reference to "*Maghribī*" meant "Egyptian," which would resolve the apparent discrepancy (*Jafariyan*, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 1, 136; *ibid.*, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 174).

Later scholars who wrote about him include *Najāshī* (1945 AD/1365 AH: 254), *Ibn 'Idris Ḥillī* (1989 AD/1410 AH: 1, 615), *Yāqūt Ḥamawī* (1993 AD/1414 AH: 13, 91), *Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs* (1948 AD/1368 AH: 126), *Allāmah Ḥillī* (1990 AD/1411 AH: 100, no. 40; *Ibn Dāwūd*, 1922 AD/1342 AH: 241, no. 1018), *Dhahabī* (1992 AD/1413 AH: 15, 569; also 1989 AD/1410 AH: 25, 341), *Sibkī* (n.d.: 3, 456), among others. In addition, many Orientalists have written extensively on *Mas'ūdī*'s historical works and biography; these have been listed by *Fuat Sezgin* (*Sezgin*, n.d.: 1, part 2, 178-179).

Mas'ūdī studied under great teachers such as *Muḥammad ibn Khalaf ibn Ḥayyān*, known as *Wakī'* (*Mas'ūdī*, n.d.: 254); *Aḥmad ibn Sa'īd al-Dimashqī*, from whom he learned *al-Akhhār al-Muwaffaqiyyāt* of *Ibn* **71**

Zubayr (ibid.: 3, 121); *Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī* (ibid.: 232);¹ *Ibn Durayd* (ibid.: 2, 215, 228); *Ibn al-Anbārī* (ibid.: 4, 196); *Ṣūlī* (ibid.: 4, 189), and others.

There is considerable disagreement regarding his religious affiliation. Some consider him among the Sunni scholars; others regard him as a devout Twelver Shī'ah,² some as Mu'tazilī (Dhahabī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 15, 569; also 1989 AD/1410 AH: 25, 341; 'Asqalānī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 4, 225), or as Shāfi'ī (Sibkī, n.d.: 3, 456). There are strong arguments against his being a Shī'ah, for example, in *Murūj al-Dhahab*, he considers the idol-worshipping *Azar* as Abraham's father, similar to the Sunni view (Mas'ūdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 1, 56; 2, 237). He also praises *Abū Bakr* (2, 298) and *Umar* (2, 305). He does not mention the event of *Ghadīr* in *Murūj*, and in *al-Tanbīh wa al-Ashrāf*, he locates it at the end of the Hudaybiyyah peace treaty, not as the *Ḥujjat al-Balāgh* (Mas'ūdī, n.d.: 221). *Mas'ūdī* does not consider post-Prophetic events as certain or fixed (ibid: 2, 426), whereas major Sunni scholars accept them.

The coincidence of two scholars named *Mas'ūdī* has caused some Sunnis and many Shī'ah to assume that the author of *Athbāt al-Wasīyah* is the same as the author of *Murūj al-Dhahab*, leading to the belief that

1. *Mas'ūdī* cites a report from *Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī* in only one instance using the expression "*Ḥaddathanā Abū Ja'far ...*" From this, it may be inferred that he also studied under him, especially since he held *Ṭabarī* in high esteem and praised him in the introduction to his book (cf. idem, Mas'ūdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 1, 23–25).

72 2. The proponents of this view will be discussed below.

Mas'ūdī of **Murūj** was Shī'ah¹ and that both works belonged to *Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn Mas'ūdī* (Najāshī, 1945 AD/1365 AH: 254; Ibn 'Adris, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 1, 615; Ibn Ṭāwūs, 1948 AD/1368 AH: 126; *ibid.*, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 31; Ḥillī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 100, no. 40; Ibn Dāwūd, n.d.: 241, no. 1018; Dhahabī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 15, 569; *ibid.*, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 25, 341; 'Asqalānī, 1969 AD/1390 AH: 4, 225; Nūrī, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 1, 115–127; Baḥrānī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 2, 448; *ibid.*, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 16; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 1, 18; 102, 61; Tafreshi, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 3, 252; Qummī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 4, 165; *ibid.*, n.d.: 3, 185; Aqabozorg Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 1, 85, 110; Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1965 AD/1385 AH: 2, 180). Others reject this identification with convincing reasons (Shubayri Zanjani, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 201–228; also cf. Jafariyan, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 175–176).

A look at *Murūj al-Dhahab* shows that his Shi'i inclinations were quite extensive; however, he cannot be considered a Twelver Shi'i. Moreover, the titles of some of the works² attributed to him indicate that his Shi'ism should be regarded as the Iraqi type (cf. Ja'fariyan,

1. *Allamah Majlisī*, when recounting the events of 'Āshūrā', considers him among the scholars of the *Imāmī* School (cf. Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 44, 310).
2. Among the works attributed to him are: *al-Istibṣār fī al-Imāmah wa Waṣf Aqāwīl al-Nās fī Dhālik min Aṣḥāb al-Naṣṣ wa al-Ikhtiyār wa Ḥujaj Kull Farīq Minhum* (Mas'ūdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 277); *al-Ṣafwah fī al-Imāmah* (*ibid.*: 2, 277); *al-Intiṣār fī al-Imāmah* (*ibid.*: 3, 193); *Ḥadā'iq al-Adhhān fī Akhbār Āl Muḥammad, upon whom be blessings and peace* (*ibid.*: 2, 54, 425; 3, 77, 343, 440; 4, 63); and *Mazāhir al-Akhbār wa Zarā'if al-Āthār li-l-Ṣafwah al-Nūriyyah wa al-Dhurriyyah al-Zakiyyah Abwāb al-Raḥmah wa Yanābī' al-Ḥikmah* (*ibid.*: 2, 382, 425; 4, 65).

2003 AD/1382 SH: 175-176). This refers to those who considered Imam ‘Ali (AS) superior to ‘*Uthmān* and, despite possessing Shi‘i tendencies, transmitting the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt, and showing hostility toward the Umayyads and later the Abbasids, did not fit within any of the established Shi‘i sects, whether Zaydi, Imami, or Isma‘ili (cf. Ja‘fariyan, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 22-24).

A number of works have been attributed to *Mas‘ūdī*, including: *Akhhbār al-Zamān min Abādat al-Ḥadathān min al-Umam al-Māḍiya wa al-Jīl al-Mamālik al-Dā‘ira* (Mas‘ūdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 1, 17, 26, 45, 49, 50, 62, 63, 68, 71, 79, 81, 84, 87, 100, 111, 135, 143, 146, 166, 186, 192, 197, 209, etc.), *al-Kitāb al-Awsaṭ* (ibid.: 1), *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma‘ādin al-Jawhar fī Tuḥaf al-Ashrāf min al-Mulūk wa Ahl al-Dirāyāt* (ibid.: 1, 26), *Kitāb Funūn al-Ma‘ārif wa Mā Jarā fī al-Duhūr al-Sawālif*, *Kitāb Dhakhā‘ir al-‘Ulūm wa Mā Kāna fī Sālif al-Duhūr*, *Kitāb Naẓm al-Jawāhir fī Tadbīr al-Mamālik wa al-‘Asākir*, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf*, *al-Maqālāt fī Uṣūl al-Diyānāt*, and others (cf. ibid., n.d.: 1). The number of his works is such that some sources have attributed as many as forty-eight titles to him.¹

2. Features of *Murūj al-Dhahab* and *Mas‘ūdī’s* Historiographical Method

A careful study of *Murūj al-Dhahab* shows that one of the defining

1. For the study of Mas‘ūdī’s works, cf. Najāshī, 1945 AD/1365 AH: 254; Ziriklī, 1980: 4, 277; Qummī, n.d.: 3, 185; Hādī Ḥusayn Ḥammūd; Mahdavi Damghani, 1974 AD/1353 SH; Shakouri, 1996 AD/1375 SH; Kamran Moqaddam, 1972 AD/1351 SH; Askari, 1997 AD/1376 SH; and Valavī, 1996 AD/1375 SH.

characteristics of *Mas'ūdī's* historiographical method is the introduction of rational argument into the sphere of historical discussion. Until his time, Muslim historians had generally written history on the basis of transmitted reports and chains of narration, a tendency not unrelated to the dominance of tradition-based in jurisprudence and Hadith studies. The sources of *Mas'ūdī's* historiography are numerous and diverse (cf. *ibid*: 1, 79, 94, 147, 194, 348; 2, 159, 198, 215; 3, 418, 470; 4, 292, etc.), and this multiplicity constitutes another distinctive feature of both *Mas'ūdī* and his works, namely, their comprehensiveness. In accordance with the subject matter, he presents various viewpoints in theological and philosophical discussions. In some passages he even addresses the social psychology of peoples or offers analyses resembling the psychology of the masses (*ibid*: 2, 34–35, 38, etc.). Moreover, *Mas'ūdī* engages with subtle scholarly discussions, including topics such as dreams and visions (*ibid*: 2, 175), the psychological effects of colors on human beings (*ibid*: 1, 217–218), the biology of birds (*ibid*: 1, 188), and music and its influence on humans (*ibid*: 1, 321), all of which are noteworthy in their own right. Thus, it may be said that *Mas'ūdī's* work is not limited to historical reports alone; rather, it reflects numerous cultural, sectarian, theological, and literary issues, often drawing upon sources that are no longer extant.

An important stylistic feature of *Mas'ūdī's* writing is the clarity of his expression, the avoidance of ambiguity and unnecessary complexity, and his reluctance to employ obscure or difficult vocabulary except when accompanied by explanation. He appears to

have favored this style consciously, as he praises authors who display similar characteristics (ibid: 1, 24; 2, 263; 3, 43; 4, 109).

Although *Murūj al-Dhahab* is not *Mas'ūdī's* most extensive work, it is the most substantial of his surviving writings and has been printed repeatedly. One of its notable features is that the author does not arrange events in strict chronological order, unlike *Ṭabarī*, who died thirty-six years before *Mas'ūdī*, and who organized his history year by year. *Mas'ūdī's* method in *Murūj al-Dhahab* appears to follow that of another Shi'i historian, *al-Ya'qūbī* (Mahdavi Damghani, 1974 AD/1353 SH: 111). Another similarity between the two lies in their avoidance of detailed chains of transmission in reporting historical events. For this reason, *Mas'ūdī's* method may be described as analytical historiography. In assessing the accuracy of earlier beliefs and reports concerning phenomena and events, he consistently applies the criterion of reason, examining them through various methods and thereby attempting to correct the views of his predecessors. This approach is evident throughout his works; wherever necessary, he employs it fully in order to present realities as they are. *Mas'ūdī* applies this method both in the study of natural and geographical phenomena and in the examination of beliefs, ideas, historical reports, and, more broadly, socio-cultural events. He makes considerable efforts to uncover the roots of phenomena such as ideas, events, peoples, and other historical developments. For instance, when addressing popular claims about the existence of mythical beings such as the *Nasnās*, he rejects them on rational grounds and regards them as

76 products of popular imagination (*Mas'ūdī*, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2,

208). It seems that his central concern was to open a pathway to reality amid a mass of statements and reports, a logical and rational approach that would minimize error. Although the structure of his work is historical rather than hadith-based, his omission of chains of transmission has limited the possibility of Isnad-based evaluation by later scholars. His method instead consists of composing accounts through comparison, synthesis, and harmonization of diverse narratives. The numerous sources he utilized should not be overlooked; owing to his extensive travels, *Mas'ūdī* sought to benefit from the information he gathered from various regions. As a result, he encountered a vast number of reports and therefore adopted a concise style, emphasizing brevity while carefully examining different accounts and selecting those that were widely accepted and considered reliable for inclusion in his work.

Mas'ūdī provides a list of the chapters of his book in the introduction. The work begins with the story of creation and the origins of the world, and then proceeds to the history of various nations, lands, royal dynasties, and the historical geography of the world. His perspective in these discussions is not purely historical; rather, he approaches the past from multiple angles, presenting a body of information encompassing history, geography, the history of sciences, calendars, religions, and beliefs. After these sections, he turns to the birth of the Prophet and enters into Islamic history, organizing the narrative according to the caliphates, with events discussed under the name of each caliph. The latest year mentioned in the work is 346 AH (Jafariyan, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 177-178).

3. Mas'ūdī and Maqtal al-Ḥusayn (AS)

In *Murūj al-Dhahab*, Mas'ūdī presents a concise account of Imam Ḥusayn's uprising. This report has several features. First, it is presented without a source citation or a chain of transmission. His report resembles those of *Ya'qūbī* and *Dīnawarī* (cf. Asgari and Rafat, 2019 AD/1399 AH: 55). Mas'ūdī appears to have arranged his account based on historical narrative works, but after removing the Isnads, he shaped the material according to his own critical approach. Second, his account of events in Medina and Kūfa is more detailed than his account of Karbalā' and the Day of 'Āshūrā' (Mas'ūdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 54-60). A closer examination reveals similarities in some places with the report of *Abū Mikhnaf*, especially regarding events in Mecca and the advice given by *Ibn 'Abbās*, *Ibn Zubayr*, and *Abū Bakr ibn Hishām*, though differences also exist (cf. Mas'ūdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 54-56; Bilādhurī, 1976 AD/1397 AH: 3, 161; Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 383). His report of the Imam's journey from Mecca to Karbalā' likewise resembles 'Ammār Duḥanī's account, with minor variations (cf. Mas'ūdī, 1978 AD/1409 AH: 3, 54-59; Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 347, 349, 351, 389). Another point is that Mas'ūdī's perspective and stance are not clearly revealed through his report. Unlike *Ibn Sa'd* in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, who displays his doctrinal inclinations, Mas'ūdī does not make his intellectual or sectarian position explicit in his narrative (cf. Rafat, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 126-128; Rafat and Rahman Setayesh, 2023 AD/1402 SH: 290-291). Rather, like other historians, he strives to

record events according to his historical method with great subtlety, paying less attention to doubtful or highly questionable reports.

4. Unrealistic and Distorted Reports in *Murūj al-Dhahab*

4.1. Muslim's Arrival in Kūfa on 5 *Shawwāl*

Mas'ūdī writes that the Muslim departed Mecca in mid-*Ramaḍān* and arrived in Kūfa on the 5th of *Shawwāl* (*Mas'ūdī*, 1978 AD/1409 AH: 3, 54). No earlier sources mention a specific date. According to this timeline, his total travel time would have been about twenty days, far shorter than the usual duration required to travel from Mecca to Medina¹ and then to Kūfa. Even excluding the time needed to send a messenger back to Mecca and receive a reply, the journey would still be unrealistically short. Given the approximate 1,400-km distance between Mecca and Kūfa, he would have had to travel about 70 km per day, not counting days spent in Medina, an implausible pace, especially considering reported delays and consultations along the way (*Ṭabarī*, *ibid*: 5, 354). Even assuming the accuracy of the report concerning Muslim's ill omen-taking, his request to resign, and the confusion he and his companions experienced midway on the journey (cf. Rafat, 2017 AD/1397 SH: 14), after departing from Medina he sent a messenger to Mecca in order to seek instructions from the Imam (AS) (*Dīnawarī*, 1948 AD/1368 1368 AH: 230). If we add to this the time required to find a messenger, dispatch him to Mecca, obtain the

1. *Dīnawarī*, 1948 AD/1368 AH: 230; *Dīnawarī* writes: "Muslim went from Medina [towards Mecca] to visit his family."

Imam's reply, and for the messenger to return from Mecca, together with the period Muslim himself remained in Medina and the time he needed for rest, his journey would certainly have exceeded one month. In other words, even if we exclude the time spent by Muslim's envoy traveling to and from Mecca, the duration of Muslim's own journey from Mecca to Kufa would amount to less than ten days. Covering such a distance within that time frame would ordinarily have been impossible.

4.2. Error Regarding the Governor of Mecca

Mas'ūdī mentions only two figures, *Ibn 'Abbās* and *Abū Bakr ibn Ḥārith ibn Hishām*, who tried to dissuade the Imam from going to Iraq (cf. Ibn Sa'd, 1993 AD/1414 AH: Khāmisā 1, 442-450). He then states that *Abū Bakr* went to *Ḥārith ibn Khālīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ ibn Hishām Makhzūmī*, calling him the governor of Mecca (*Mas'ūdī*, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 54-56). However, earlier reports identify the governor as 'Amr ibn Sa'īd ibn al-ʿĀṣ Umayyad (cf. Bilādthurī, 1976 AD/1397 AH: 5, 299; Dīnawarī, 1948 AD/1368 AH: 244; Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 338).

4.3. The Meeting of *Ḥurr ibn Yazīd* with Imam *Ḥusayn* at *Qādisīyya*

Mas'ūdī places the meeting between *Ḥurr* and the Imam in *Qādisīyya* and reports that *Ḥurr* informed him of Muslim's martyrdom (*Mas'ūdī*, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 60-61). Other sources place the encounter near *Qādisīyya*, about three miles away (Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 389), however, in another narration by *Ṭabarī*, the place of the

meeting is explicitly stated as "Qādisīyah." (ibid: 5, 401)

It should be noted that the expression "Three miles from *Qādisīyyah*" does not indicate a great geographical distance from *Qādisīyyah* itself; rather, it refers to a nearby area. Nevertheless, some sources use the phrase the "Arrival of *Ḥurr* from the region of *Qādisīyyah*," indicating that the encounter did not take place within *Qādisīyyah* proper (Balādhurī, 1976 AD/1397 AH: 3, 170; Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 401; Mufīd, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 2, 78; 'Asqalānī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 2, 71), but rather in its vicinity, namely, the area of *Dhū Ḥusam* (Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 400; Abū Mikhnaḥ Kūfī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 168; Ibn Athīr, 1965 AD/1385 AH: 4, 46).

Apart from the above point, another issue, also reported by Ṭabarī with certain variations (Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 389, 397), requires examination. What *Mas'ūdī* relates suggests that the Imam decided to continue his journey solely out of sympathy for and solidarity with the brothers of Muslim. However, in critiquing this narration, which appears to contain problematic elements, several points deserve attention:

First, a comparison of *Mas'ūdī*'s unsourced report with other narrations that possess chains of transmission indicates that the transmitter of this report is 'Ammār Duhnī. Due to the "Unknown" status of certain transmitters in the chain and the weakness of others, the Isnad is considered weak. In these reports, the narration of 'Ammār precedes that of Abū Mikhnaḥ. Although the chain explicitly states that

‘*Ammār* transmitted it from Imam *Bāqir* (AS), several issues merit scrutiny.

"*Zakariyyā ibn Yaḥyā al-Ḍarīr* narrated to me; he said: *Aḥmad ibn Janāb al-Maṣīṣī*, known as *Abū al-Walīd*, narrated to us; he said: *Khālīd ibn Yazīd ibn Asad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Qasrī* narrated to us; he said: ‘*Ammār al-Duhnī* narrated to us; he said: I said to *Abū Ja‘far ...*" (Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 347)

Khaṭīb Baghdādī, in *Tārīkh Baghdād*, mentions *Zakariyyā ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ayyūb Abū ‘Alī al-Ḍarīr*, but does not clarify his biographical reliability (Khaṭīb Baghdādī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 8, 459). *Haythamī*, in *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, refers to him under several traditions and explicitly states: "I do not know him." (Haythamī, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 4, 303; 5, 20, 47, 156; 10, 126, 138) Elsewhere he writes: "The chain of transmission of *Ṭabarānī*’s *al-Kabīr* is sound and its narrators are from the transmitters of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, except for *Zakarīyyā ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ayyūb al-Ḍarīr*, whom *Khaṭīb* mentioned; a group narrated from him, yet no one has spoken about him [in terms of reliability]." (ibid: 7, 274–275) Other biographical scholars likewise make no mention of him; therefore, he is regarded as unknown.

In contrast, *Aḥmad ibn Janāb Maṣīṣī* has been considered trustworthy and reliable (Mizzī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 1, 283; Ibn Ḥajar ‘Asqalānī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 19; idem, 1994 NAD/1415 AH: 1, 31).

Regarding *Khālīd ibn Yazīd al-Qasrī*, *Ibn ‘Adī* states: "Not all of his narrations are followed, and no in chain or in text ... in my view he is weak." (Dhahabī, 1962 AD/1382 AH: 1, 647) Others have

likewise judged him weak (Ibn 'Ajamī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 108).

As for 'Ammār Duhnī (d. 133 AH), he was regarded by Sunni scholars such as *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, according to *Najāshī* and *Tafreshi*, as trustworthy, and he has been described as reliable (Najāshī, 1945 AD/1365 AH: 411; Tafreshi, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 3, 316; Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, 2000 AD/1415 AH: 1, 708; Dhahabī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 6, 138; idem, 1962 AD/1382 AH: 3, 170). *Mu'āwiya*, the son of 'Ammār Duhnī, is counted among the eminent companions of Imam *Bāqir* (AS) and Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS). In Shi'i hadith collections, only a limited number of narrations from 'Ammār have been preserved (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 314; Ṭabarī Āmulī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 172; Kulaynī, 1968 AD/1388 AH: 2, 99, ḥadīth 30; Mufīd, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 73; Ṭūsī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 230; idem, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 462; Ṭabarī Āmulī, 1963 AD/1383 AH: 223).

Khū'ī has presented both textual and rational arguments for his Shi'i affiliation, which are noteworthy (Khū'ī, 1952 AD/1372 SH: 12, 253–254).

Considering the biographical status of the transmitters, the chain of transmission is deemed weak, and the text of the report cannot be relied upon unless its meaning is corroborated by other narrations of similar content.

Moreover, in general, the narration of 'Ammār Duhnī in historical works is transmitted in an extremely concise form; comparison with other reports makes its brevity and existing ambiguities even more apparent.

Second, it appears that the transmitters sought to portray all individuals associated with the Imam, whether prominent figures or even his own sons, as though they were constantly attempting to dissuade him from his decision, while the Imam steadfastly maintained his position in every instance.

Third, how could life be described as tolerable for the Imam after the martyrdom of Muslim, his special envoy, yet portrayed as unbearable after the martyrdom of Muslim's brothers? Such a statement seems entirely incongruous with the Imam's stature.

Fourth, the Imam's insistence on proceeding toward Kūfa even after the letters of the Kūfans had effectively lost their binding force, following the news of the killing of Muslim, *Hānī*, and *ʿAbd Allāh ibn Yaqtar*, demonstrates that the principal motive for his movement toward Iraq was not the Kūfan letters. Although it is true that he did not wish to provide his opponents with a pretext, since returning midway might have led to accusations of breaking his pledge, this was only a secondary factor. His primary motive was his awareness that refusal to pledge allegiance would lead to his martyrdom. Iraq, given its transformative potential in the aftermath of his martyrdom and its status as a center of Shiʿism and opposition to Umayyad rule, was the most suitable place for his blood to be shed.

Fifth, the Imam repeatedly declared: "If you dislike my coming, I shall return to where I came from ..." (Balādhurī, 1976 AD/1397 AH: 3, 177; Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 411)

This did not imply abandoning the uprising; rather, he meant that
84 he would not enter Kūfa as a captive. It signified a possible change of

route, not a renunciation of the movement itself.

Thus, even assuming the authenticity of the aforementioned narration (which was also recorded by figures such as *Shaykh Mufīd* and others), the Imam's renewed decision was not merely out of compassion for Muslim's family, but rooted in higher objectives. It may also be understood as a test of the courage and loyalty of his companions at a critical juncture.

4.4. The Alleged Non-Presence of Syrians in the Battle Against Imam *Ḥusayn* (AS)

Mas'ūdī is the earliest historian to assert that all those who confronted Imam *Ḥusayn* (AS) at Karbalā' were Kūfans and that no Syrians were present. He writes: "All those who attended the killing of *Ḥusayn* and fought and killed him were exclusively from the people of Kūfa; no Syrian was among them." (*Mas'ūdī*, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 61)

Accordingly, in this 'Āshūrā' analysis, *Mas'ūdī* presents a view different from that of other historians. A survey of earlier historical works reveals no trace of this report or claim. It appears that *Mas'ūdī* was the first to transmit such an account. *Sibt ibn al-Jawzī*, in *Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣṣ*, citing *Mas'ūdī*, writes: "Eighty-one persons from among them were killed, and no one from the people of Syria (ahl al-Shām) was present at the fighting against *Ḥusayn*; rather, all of them were from the people of Kūfa who had written to him." (*Sibt ibn Jawzī*, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 226)

In later sources such as *al-Dam'ah al-Sākibah* and *Nāsikh al-Tawārīkh*, this claim is emphasized and even, citing *Abū Mikhnaf*, the

non-presence of *Ḥijāzīs* is added: "The army reached eighty thousand cavalry from the people of Kūfa; none among them was Syrian or *Ḥijāzī*. They marched until they encamped near the camp of *Ḥusayn* (AS)." (Behbahani, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 4, 261; Sepehr, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 2, 340) This report is drawn from the well-known but unreliable *Maqtal* attributed to *Abū Mikhnaf* (cf. *Abū Mikhnaf*, *ibid*: 51-52). If this attributed *Maqtal* dates to the late fourth or fifth century AH (cf. Hosseini, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 193-194), or is considered a work of *Ibn Ṭāwūs* (cf. Kohlberg, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 78-80), or even a Safavid-era fabrication (*ibid*: 89), and if we accept that *Mas'ūdī* died in 346 AH (Ziriklī, 1980: 4, 277), then *Mas'ūdī*'s uniqueness in transmitting this claim becomes evident.

Although *Mas'ūdī*'s report is not directly echoed in earlier authoritative sources, evidence exists both for and against his analysis. Two approaches, affirmative and negative, have been proposed, each requiring careful examination. While some historical reports may suggest the presence of individuals or even troops from Syria, none explicitly records the arrival of a Syrian army under a Syrian commander.

Evidence Cited for the Presence of Syrians

Ibn Sa'd (d. 230 AH) reports that "A man from the people of Syria called out to '*Alī Akbar ibn al-Ḥusayn*'" (*Ibn Sa'd*, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 5, 1, 470). *Ibn 'Abd Rabbih* (d. 328 AH) writes that a man from the people of Syria saw '*Abd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan*', described as one of the most handsome of people, and said, "I will kill him." (*Ibn 'Abd*

Rabbih, *ibid*: 5, 125) *Qāḍī Nu'mān* (d. 363 AH), citing Imam *Sajjād* (AS), relates that "A man from the people of Syria came, lifted me onto his shoulders, and wept..." He reportedly treated the Imam kindly, sheltered him in his tent, and initially refrained from delivering him to 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Ziyād. However, when *Ibn Zīyād* offered three hundred dirhams for anyone who would find him, the Syrian, fearing punishment, handed him over bound, apologizing to the Imam (Maghribī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 156).

Ibn A'tham Kūfī (d. 314 AH), regarding *Alī Akbar* (AS), writes that he continued fighting and killing many until the "People of Syria cried out because of him." He then returned to his father wounded and said: "O father, thirst has exhausted me and the weight of the armor has wearied me. Is there any water?" (*Ibn A'tham Kūfī*, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 5, 115)

Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588 AH), in *al-Manāqib*, reports concerning *Qāsim ibn al-Ḥasan* that the "People of Syria wrested him from Ḥusayn's hand." (*Ibn Shahrāshūb*, 1959 AD/1379 AH: 4, 106) Elsewhere, he explicitly states that *Ibn Zīyād* dispatched *Shimr ibn Dhil Jawshan* with four thousand men from the people of Syria to Karbalā' (*ibid*: 4, 98).

Although most sources do not explicitly state that Shamir's forces were Syrians, an important issue arises: Shamir was the first prominent commander to arrive at Karbalā' after 'Umar ibn Sa'd, and his arrival on the Day of *Tāsū'ā'* appears to have finalized the decision for battle. This raises questions. If Shamir was the first

commander to arrive after *ʿUmar ibn Saʿd*, why did the certainty of battle only materialize after his arrival?

Two possibilities are proposed: either Shamir had gone from Karbalāʾ to report *ʿUmar ibn Saʿd*'s hesitation to *Ibn Zīyād* and returned with final orders; or he initially came with his Kūfan tribal contingent and later returned on *Tāsū ʿā*ʾ with reinforcements from Syria. Even if Syrians were present, it seems unlikely that they would have arrived without a designated commander, unless *Ibn Zīyād* appointed Shamir over them.

Some scholars also cite a narration from *Shaykh al-Ṣadūq*'s *al-Amālī* describing Shamir and *Sinān ibn Anas* arriving "With a group of Syrians" and standing over Imam Ḥusayn (Ṣadūq, 1956 AD/1376 SH: 163). Additionally, Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) uses the term "Ahl al-Shām" in describing *Tāsū ʿā*ʾ: "It is the day on which *Ḥusayn* (AS) and his companions were besieged in Karbalāʾ, and the cavalry of the people of Syria gathered against him." (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 4, 147) *Shaykh Ṭūsī* similarly cites a tradition referring to "Those from the people of Syria who assisted in killing *Ḥusayn*." (Ṭūsī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 667)

Reports also indicate that *Ibn Zīyād* mobilized Kūfans by threatening them with the arrival of Syrian troops and harsh reprisals (cf. Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 5, 49-50). The very existence of such fears suggests that reports about Syrians circulated in historical memory and may have informed *Masʿūdī*'s analysis, even

Evidence against the Presence of Syrians

Other scholars interpret "*Ahl al-Shām*" not as literal residents of Syria, but as forces politically aligned with the Syrian-based Umayyad government. Thus, "Shamir with the people of Syria" may simply denote the Umayyad army, not troops physically dispatched from Syria.

The only source explicitly stating that *Ibn Zīyād* sent Shamir with four thousand Syrians is *Ibn Shahrāshūb*'s *al-Manāqib* (4, 98). Other sources confirm Shamir's dispatch but do not describe his forces as Syrians. No reliable historical record identifies a Syrian commander at Karbalā'. Had an independent Syrian force arrived, its commander's name would likely have been preserved. *Abū Mikhnaḥ* and others, in describing 'Umar ibn Sa'd's army on the morning of 'Āshūrā', make no mention of Syrians and identify Shamir merely as commander of the left flank (Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 422).

Similarly, *Qādī Nu'mān*'s account conflicts with more reliable reports that Imam *Sajjād* (AS) remained with the captives. *Ibn Zīyād*'s statement, "Did God not kill 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn?," suggests he believed him already dead (Maghribī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 157), making earlier pursuit unlikely.

The term "A man from the people of Syria" in *Ibn 'Abd Rabbih*'s account may reflect political affiliation rather than geographic origin (Ṭabarī 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 447), especially since the named killer in parallel reports ('*Amr ibn Sa'd ibn Nufayl al-Azdī*') was not Syrian (Ṭabarī 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 468). Given that this individual was from the *Azd* tribe and not from the Syria, the expression "A man from the Syria" in *Ibn 'Abd Rabbah*'s text, if not a correction or distortion,

means a member of an army affiliated with the government of the Levant, not a person who actually came from the Syria.

Thus, many expressions in the reports indicate that *ʿUmar ibn Saʿd*'s army was under the authority of the Syrian-based caliphate. Since Syria was the seat of Umayyad rule under *Yazīd*, attributing the army to "Syria" may denote political allegiance rather than geographic origin, just as in the Battle of *Ṣiffīn* the forces of Imam *ʿAlī* (AS) were called "Iraqis," though not all were residents of Iraq (ibid: 4, 557).

Kūfa itself had been established as a major garrison city (cf. Dīnawarī, 1948 AD/1368 AH: 123-124). It appears that *Masʿūdī*'s analysis regarding the absence of Syrians in the battle against Imam *Ḥusayn* (AS) is derived from a report concerning the number of troops of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam *ʿAlī* (AS), in the Battle of *Ṣiffīn*. After Imam *ʿAlī* established Kūfa as the center of his rule and chose it as the capital of his government, historical sources report that the number of Kūfan soldiers in the Battle of *Ṣiffīn* was 65,200 (Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 80). However, figures such as *Masʿūdī* report the number of Imam *ʿAlī*'s forces at *Ṣiffīn* as 90,000 (*Masʿūdī*, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 375). In other words, considering this large number of Kūfan troops and the improbability of *Yazīd* assembling an army in Syria and dispatching it to Kūfa within ten days, *Masʿūdī* arrived at his conclusion.

Nevertheless, *Masʿūdī*'s analysis regarding the absence of Syrian troops may be considered defensible. During the time of Imam *Ḥusayn* (AS), given the demographic composition and social structure of Kūfa, as well as the purpose for which the city had been

established, a significant portion of Kūfa naturally consisted of groups descended from slaves and *Mawālī*. According to historical sources, they included about twenty thousand armed fighters, harsh and mercenary individuals who functioned as the government's security forces and were willing to commit any crime (for example, see the report of the martyrdom of Ḥujr ibn 'Adī: Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 259). They were known as *al-Ḥamrā'* (Dīnawarī, 1948 AD/1368 AH: 288, 293), to the extent that Kūfa itself came to be known as "*Kūfat al-Ḥamrā'*." (Āli Yāsīn, n.d.: 72) Moreover, *Ibn Ziyād*'s army did not feel the need to recruit forces from Syria. It should also be added that the shortest route between Syria and Kūfa is approximately 923 kilometers (Muhammadi Reyshahri, *ibid*: 8, 227). Considering the time required for travel, military equipment, rest periods, and related factors, it seems unlikely that, from the second of *Muḥarram*, when Imam *Ḥusayn* was forced to halt in the land of Karbalā', until the ninth of *Muḥarram*, a large number of Syrian troops could have traversed this distance and reached the area.

4.5. The Number of Imam *Ḥusayn*'s Companions

It is necessary to distinguish between different expressions:

- 1) There is a difference between the "Companions of Imam *Ḥusayn* in general" and the "Companions of Imam *Ḥusayn* on the Day of 'Āshūrā'."
- 2) Likewise, a distinction must be made between the terms the "Martyrs of the *Ḥusaynī* uprising" and the "Martyrs of *Ṭaff*."

The reason for this distinction is that the scope of the "Imam's

companions in general" is broader than that of "His companions on the Day of 'Āshūrā'." Among his companions were individuals who were martyred in Baṣra, Kūfa, or in the prisons of *Ibn Zīyād* and his father. There were also those who wished to assist him but were unable to accompany him, such as *Ṭirmāḥ* (Balādhurī, 1976 AD/1397 AH: 3, 172; Ṭabarī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 406). Similarly, the term "Martyrs of the *Ḥusaynī* movement" is broader than the "Martyrs of *Ṭaff*," since some individuals in the first category, such as *Sulaymān ibn Razīn* (Ibn Namā', 1985 AD/1406 AH: 27; Ibn Ṭāwūs, 1928 AD/1348 AH: 38), the Imam's envoy to the nobles of Baṣra, were martyred before Karbalā'. Others, including *Muslim ibn 'Aqīl*, *'Abd Allāh ibn Yaḡṭur*, *Qays ibn Mushir al-Ṣaydāwī*, *Hānī ibn 'Urwa*, and *'Abd al-A'lā ibn Yazīd al-Kalbī*, were martyred in Kūfa.

An important clarification is that the scope of the "Imam's companions on the Day of *Ṭaff*" is itself broader than the "Martyrs of *Ṭaff*," since some of those who fought alongside the Imam on the Day of 'Āshūrā' were not killed on that day. Among them was *Ḥasan al-Muthannā* and others.

Historically, there is significant disagreement among sources regarding the exact number of the Imam's companions at the event of *Ṭaff*. This disagreement is sometimes so great that the "Number of companions present" has been confused with the "Number of martyrs." For example, some historians inferred the number of the Imam's companions from the number of severed heads brought by tribes to *Ibn Zīyād*, although this method cannot serve as an accurate

measure of all those present (Shāwī, 1966 AD/1386 AH: 4, 184-185).

The reported numbers of companions in historical sources are as follows:

A) Sixty persons: The view of *Damīrī* in *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā* (2003 AD/1424 AH: 1, 92);

B) Sixty-one persons: The view of the *Shi'ī* *Mas'ūdī* in *Ithbāt al-Waṣiyya* (2005 AD/1426 AH: 166);

C) Seventy persons: The opinion of *Dhahabī* in *Duwal al-Islām* (1999: 1, 54) and *Diyār Bakrī* in *Tārīkh al-Khamīs* (n.d.: 2, 227). *Ibn Abbār* also recorded the number as more than seventy, both infantry and cavalry (1986 AD/1407 AH: 104);

D) Seventy-two persons: The well-known view reported by *Ibn Sa'd* in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (1989 AD/1410 AH: Fifth 1, 475), *Balādhurī* in *Ansāb al-Ashraf* (1976 AD/1397 AH: 3, 187), *Dīnawarī* in *al-Akḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* (1948 AD/1368 AH: 256: thirty-two cavalry and forty infantry), *Ṭabarī* (quoting *Abū Mikhnaḥ*, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 5, 422), *Ibn A'tham* in *al-Futūḥ* (1990 AD/1411 AH: 5, 101), *al-Khuṣaybī* in *al-Hidāya al-Kubrā* (1998 AD/1419 AH: 202), *Shaykh al-Mufīd* in *al-Irshād* (1992 AD/1413 AH: 178),¹ *Ṭabarī Āmulī* in *Dalā'il al-Imāma* (1992 AD/1413 AH: 178), *Ibn Fattāl* in *Rawḍat al-Wā'iẓīn* (1955 AD/1375 AH: 1, 184), *Ṭabrisī* in *I'lām al-Warā* and *Tāj al-Mawālīd* (1970 AD/1390 AH: 240; 2001 AD/1422 AH: 86),

1. [Shaykh Mufīd writes in another place: "When Zuḥr ibn Qays came to Yazīd with the heads of the martyrs, he said: ... Ḥusayn ibn Ali came to us with eighteen of his family and sixty of his followers..." which according to this narration will be seventy-eight people, cf.: Ibid: 2, 118]

Ibn Jawzī in *al-Muntaẓam* (1991 AD/1412 AH: 5, 338), *Ibn Athīr* in *al-Kāmil* (1965 AD/1385 AH: 4, 59), *Nuwayrī* in *Nihāyat al-Arab* (2002 AD/1423 AH: 20, 438), *Ibn Kathīr* in *al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya* (2001 AD/1422 AH: 8, 178), *Maqrīzī* in *Imtā‘ al-Asmā‘* (1999 AD/1420 AH: 5, 364), *Ḥusaynī Mūsawī* in *Tasliyat al-Majālis* (1997 AD/1418 AH: 2, 275), and *‘Allāma Majlisī* in *Biḥār al-Anwār* (1982 AD/1403 AH: 45, 4).

Those who give the number as seventy-two generally count both cavalry and infantry together. It appears from historical and hadith sources that this number includes members of the Hāshimite family, thereby reaching seventy-two individuals. *al-Khuṣaybī* appears to be an exception, as his ambiguous wording suggests that, in addition to seventy-two companions, eighteen descendants of *‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib* were also among the Imam’s supporters (Khuṣaybī, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 202). By contrast, *Ṭabarī Āmulī* counts twenty-eight individuals from the Hāshimite family and the rest from among others (Ṭabarī Āmulī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 178). However, considering the recorded names of the martyrs of Karbalā’, this interpretation seems unlikely, and the Hāshimites should probably be counted in addition to the seventy-two companions.

E) Eighty-two persons: The view of *Ibn Shahrāshūb* in *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib* (1959 AD/1379 AH: 4, 98), *Shablanjī* in *Nūr al-Abṣār* (n.d.: 259), and *Yāfi‘ī* in *Mir’āt al-Janān* (n.d.: 1, 107);

F) Eighty-seven persons: The view of *Ibn Bi‘rī* in *Tārīkh Mukhtaṣar al-Duwal* (1992: 110, this number excludes seven sons of Imam ‘Alī

G) One hundred persons: The view of *Qarashī* in *Ḥayāt al-Imām al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī* (1974 AD/1394 AH: 3, 126);

H) One hundred and forty-five persons: Reported by *Ṭabarī* (quoting 'Ammār Duhanī) (1957 AD/1387 AH: 5, 389; Forty-five cavalry and a hundred foot soldiers), *Sibt ibn Jawzī* in *Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣ* (1997 AD/1418 AH: 222: Forty-five cavalry and a hundred foot soldiers.), *Ibn Namā'* in *Mathīr al-Aḥzān* (1985 AD/1406 AH: 54: Forty-five cavalry and a hundred foot soldiers), and *Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs* in *al-Luhūf* (1928 AD/1348 AH: 100, all describing forty-five cavalry and one hundred infantry. *Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs* attributes this report to Imam *Bāqir* (AS), and since *Ṭabarī* also transmits the report of 'Ammār Duhanī from Imam *Bāqir* (AS), these later authors appear to rely on the same narration;

I) Six hundred persons (five hundred cavalry and one hundred infantry): The view of *Mas'ūdī* in *Murūj al-Dhahab*.

Mas'ūdī writes that Imam *Ḥusayn* encountered the army of 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Zīyād, commanded by 'Umar ibn Sa'd, and turned toward Karbalā', at which time five hundred cavalry from among his family and companions accompanied him along with one hundred infantry. When the enemy forces grew numerous before him, he realized that there was no escape. *Mas'ūdī* further states that all those killed with Imam *Ḥusayn* on the Day of 'Āshūrā' numbered eighty-seven individuals.

From these two reports, it appears that, according to *Mas'ūdī*, the Imam's companions numbered six hundred until the eve of 'Āshūrā', but more than five hundred of them either fled beforehand, departed

during the night, or were captured, leaving only eighty-seven who were ultimately killed. This interpretation is based on *Mas'ūdī*'s own statement that when the opposing army became overwhelming, the Imam knew there was no escape. However, as noted earlier, most historical sources neither report the names of such a large number of those killed or captured nor mention such an account at all. Thus, *Mas'ūdī* alone makes this claim and does not himself provide the names corresponding to the number he reports. Nevertheless, based on the earlier argument, his statement may be interpreted as meaning that the figure of six hundred refers to the Imam's companions present at *Ṭaff*, while the eighty-seven refers specifically to the martyrs of *Ṭaff*. Even so, unlike sources such as *al-Ṭabaqāt* of *Ibn Sa'd* or the *History of Ṭabarī*, he does not list all the names of the martyrs or captives.

Conclusion

1. *Mas'ūdī*'s account of the martyrdom of Imam *Ḥusayn* in *Murūj al-Dhahab* is among the briefest yet most valuable *Maqatal* narratives. Though lacking chains of transmission, his careful selection of reports gives it weight. His narrative shows parallels with *Abū Mikhnaḥ* (events in Mecca) and with *'Ammār Duhnī*'s report (from Mecca to martyrdom).
2. Since *Mas'ūdī* lived and died in Egypt, his access to Iraqi written sources was likely limited; he probably relied on well-known oral reports. Despite its brevity, his account contains unique *'Āshūrā*'-related points worth studying, such as:

- An error regarding the governor of Mecca;
- Locating *Ḥurr ibn Yazīd*'s meeting with the Imam at *Qādisiyya*;
- Reporting 600 companions, differing from other sources.

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A Critique of *Ṭāriq al-Qaḥṭānī*'s Claim Regarding the Conflict in Shi'a Narrations Concerning the "Reason for the Occultation of Imam al-Mahdī (AS)"

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(Received: December 2024, Accepted: April 2025)

DOI: 10.22034/HSR.2025.51682.1046

Abstract

The occultation of Imam *al-Mahdī* (AS) is a key issue in Mahdavi thought, for which various reasons have been stated in Shia narrative sources. In an article entitled "*al-Ghaybah 'inda al-Shī'ah al-Ithnā*

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‘Asharīyyah wa Asbābuhā; Dirāsātun Taḥlīlīyyatun Naqdīyyah" written by *Ṭāriq ibn Sa‘īd ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Qaḥṭānī*," it is claimed, by adhering to these very narrations, that Shia narrations regarding the reason for the occultation are unreliable, contradictory, and irreconcilable. The present study, with the aim of responding to the doubts raised in the aforementioned article regarding the reason for the occultation of Imam *al-Mahdī* (AS) and using the descriptive-analytical method, first, while stating the claim made, examines the authenticity of the narrations' chains of transmission based on two approaches: "Narrator-centric and evidence-centric authentication." It demonstrates that, with the exception of one narration, the rest are capable of being considered authentic and sound. Then, by examining their implications, it concludes that since all the reasons for the occultation mentioned in the narrations are of the nature of incomplete causes (*causa sine qua non*) and not complete causes, therefore, a semantic reconciliation can be made between them, and there is no need to prioritize them over each other. In this way, we can consider some of them as the cause of the occurrence of the occultation and others as the cause of the continuation of the occultation, or consider one of the causes as the principle and the rest as its branches.

Keywords: Occultation, Causes of Occultation, Imam *al-Mahdī* (AS), *Ṭāriq al-Qaḥṭānī*, Resolving Contradictions in Narrations.

Introduction

The occultation of Imam *al-Mahdī* (AS) is one of the fundamental concepts in Shia thought, which has always been a subject of question

and challenge. In narrations, numerous reasons have been given for the occultation, including the preservation of the Imam's life, the readiness of human society, the examination and testing of believers, a secret among the divine secrets, and so on. Opponents of Shia Islam claim that these reasons are in conflict with each other. Among these opponents is Ṭāriq al-Qaḥṭānī, a Salafi-Wahhabi writer and professor of creed (Salafi theology) at the University of Medina, who, in an article entitled "*al-Ghaybah 'inda al-Shī'ah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah wa Asbābuhā; Dirāsātun Taḥlīlīyyatun Naqdīyyah*," has made the topic of occultation the focus of discussion and has attempted to link other Shia beliefs such as *Taqīyya* (dissimulation), *Badā'* (divine alteration of decree), and *Raj'ah* (return) to it, in order to ultimately challenge the Shia belief in Mahdaviyyat and Imamate (cf. Qaḥṭānī, 2017: 169-238).

The present study aims to examine and critique the claim of invalidity and contradiction in the narrations concerning the cause of the occultation (*Ghaybah*) of Imam *Mahdī* (AS), as presented in the third section of Qaḥṭānī's article (cf. Qaḥṭānī, 2017: 199-211). In this regard, it will focus on the following questions:

- 1) Based on which narrations has the claim of contradiction in the narrations related to the cause of the occultation of Imam *Mahdī* (AS) been formed?
- 2) What is the solution to resolve the contradiction between these narrations?

To this aim, we first categorize and report the narrations on which the claim of contradiction is based. Then, by examining the chain of transmission (*Sanad*) and text (*Matn*) of the narrations in question, **107**

considering the views of hadith commentators, and utilizing the principles of conflict resolution (*Ta'arud*), it will address the contradiction.

1. Background of the Research

The following articles can be mentioned in the background of this article: "A Reflection on the Narrations of the Secrets of the Occultation" (Rahimi Jafari, 2011 AD/1391 SH); "Examining the Efficiency of the Narrations of the Flow of the Tradition of Previous Prophets Concerning the Mahdī (AS) in the Analysis of the Occultation" (Pour Sayyid Aghaei et al., 1983 AD/1402 SH (a)); "A Rational Analysis of the Causes of the Occultation of Imam Zaman (AS); From Possibility to Analysis of Occurrence" (Pour Sayyid Aghaei et al., 1983 AD/1402 SH (b)); "Analyzing the Role of Freedom from Allegiance to Taghuts in the Cause of the Occultation of Imam Zaman (AS)" (Pour Sayyid Aghaei et al., 1983 AD/1402 SH (c)); "A Critical Examination of Singling Out the Reason for the Occultation of Imam Zaman (AS)" (Pour Sayyid Aghaei et al., 1983 AD/1402 SH (d)); "A Review and Narrative Analysis of the Dimensions of the Occultation and the Quality of the Relationship between the Occurrence of the Reappearance and It." (Elahi Nejad, 2017 AD/1397 SH) Some of the aforementioned articles have only examined the chain of transmission and text of one category of narrations concerning the cause of the occultation of Imam *Mahdī* (AS). In some others, explanations are given about the meaning of the

analysis of the chain of transmission and implication (*Dalālī*) and resolution of conflict between them. In another category of these articles, the issue of the possibility of rational analysis of the causes of the occultation has been examined. Therefore, none of the above scientific works have addressed the examination of the chain of transmission and implication of all narrations concerning the causes of the occultation of Imam *Mahdī* (AS) and the resolution of conflict between them with the aim of responding to the suspicions of Wahhabism, which requires a comprehensive explanation and response that the present research seeks to accomplish.

2. Research Method

The research method used in this article is descriptive and analytical. This means that, first, 15 narrations referenced by *Qaḥṭānī*, categorized under 11 general categories, fear of being killed, testing and purifying the Shias, the continuation of the traditions of the prophets, the emergence of believers from the loins of disbelievers, the punishment of Shias, assurance of the Shias' lack of doubt, freedom from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time, a secret from the divine secrets, having no friend or helper, the end of all the rule of all nations, and the perfection and refinement of souls for the acceptance of Imam *Mahdī* (AS), are categorized and reported. Then, based on two approaches, narrator-centric and context-centric validation, the chain of narrations are examined, and considering their validity, ultimately, a collective understanding will resolve the conflict between the narrations concerning the reason for the occultation of Imam *Mahdī* (AS).

3. Narrator-Centered and Context-Centered Validation of the Narrations Referenced by *Ṭāriq al-Qaḥṭānī*

The author of the article "*al-Ghaybah 'inda al-Shī'ah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah wa Asbābuhā; Dirāsatur Tahliṭiyyatun Naqdīyyah*," categorizes and reports 15 narrations indicating the reason for the occultation of Imam *Mahdī* (AS) under 11 categories, and claims that these 11 categories of narrations contradict each other (cf. Qaḥṭānī, 2017: 199-211). Subsequently, in two separate tables, we examine the validity and ruling of these narrations based on two approaches: "Narrator-centered and context-centered validation," to determine how many of the reasons for the occultation based on narrations will be considered valid or invalid according to each of these two approaches. It should be explained that in the narrator-centric approach, the status of the narrators determines the ruling on the narration, and the narration is deemed invalid due to the slightest defect in any part of the chain of narrators. However, in the context-centered approach, only the isolated reports of a weak narrator are rejected, meaning that if a weak narrator's narration is supported by other evidence, it is considered valid (for more information on the approaches to validating hadiths, cf. Hosseini Shirazi, 2018 AD/1398 SH: 86-87).

In the following table, in four columns, the reason for the occultation, the narrations related to that reason, the ruling on each narration based on the narrator-centric validation approach, and the reason for the ruling if it is weak are stated, respectively. It is worth mentioning that only the first two columns are taken from *Qaḥṭānī's*

110 article, and he only reported the general titles of the reasons for the

occultation and one or two narrations under each one, and he did not conduct any examination of the chains or texts of the narrations.

Therefore, the third and fourth columns are the result of the research work of the authors of the present article.

Table 1: Causes of the Imam Mahdī's (AS) occultation in Shia narrations and the ruling on each narration based on the narrator-centric validation approach

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
1. Fear of being killed	1.1. Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates from Imam Kāzim (AS) with a Sanad: "Ḥaddathanā Aḥmad ibn Ziyād ibn Ja'farin al-Hamadāniyyu Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu Qāla Ḥaddathanā 'Alīy ibn Ibrāhīma ibn Hāshim 'an Abīhi 'an Ṣāliḥ ibn al-Sindiyy 'an Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Qāla: Dakhaltu 'alā Mūsā ibn Ja'farin fa Qultu laḥu yā ibn Rasūlillāhi Anta al-Qā'imu bil Ḥaqqi fa Qāla Anā al-Qā'imu bil Ḥaqqi walākinna al-Qā'ima Alladhī Yuṭāhhiru al-Arḍa min A'dā'illāhi 'Azza wa Jall wa Yamla'uhā 'Adlan kamā Mul'i'at Jawrā wa Zulman huwa al-Khāmisu min Wuldī lahu Ghaybatun Yaṭūlu Amaduhā <u>Khawfan</u> 'alā <u>Nafsihi</u> Yartadda fihā Aqwāmun wa Yathbatu fihā Ākharūn." (Ibn Bābawayh, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2,361) (Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān said: "I went to Mūsā ibn Ja'far (AS) and said, "O! Son of the	Correct	

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	Messenger of God, are you the one who is upholding the truth?" He said, "I am upholding the truth, but the Qā'im who will cleanse the earth from the enemies of God and fill it with justice and equity as it is filled with injustice and oppression is the fifth of my descendants. He will have a prolonged occultation because he fears for himself, and during that occultation, some people will apostatize, and others will remain steadfast. Then he said, "Blessed are the states of our Shias who, during the occultation of our Qā'im, hold fast to our rope and are steadfast in their love for us and their disavowal of our enemies. They are from us, and we are from them. They have accepted us as Imams, and we have accepted them as Shias. So blessed are their states, and blessed are their states! By God, they will be of the same rank as us on the Day of Resurrection.") (Ibn Bābawayh, 1960 AD/1380 SH: 2, 43) 1.2. Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates from Imam Bāqir (AS) with a Sanad: "Ḥaddathanī 'Abdu l-Wāḥidi ibn Muḥammadi ibn 'Abdūsīn al-'Aṭṭār Raḍīyallāhu 'anhu Qāla Ḥaddathanā 'Alīy ibn Muḥammadi ibn Qutaybata 'an Ḥamdāna ibn Sulaymāna 'an		

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn 'an ibn Maḥbūbin 'an 'Alīy ibn Ri'ābin 'an Zurāra Qāla Sami'tu Abā Ja'fara Yaḡūlu: Inna lil Qā'imi Ghaybatan Qabla Ṣuhūrihi Qultu wa lima Qāla Yakhāfu wa Awma'a bi Yadihī ilā Baṭnihi Qāla Zurāra Ya'nī al-Qaṭl..." (Ibn Babawayh, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 481) (Zurārah said: "I heard Imam Bāqir (AS) say: "For the Qā'im, before his advent, there will be an occultation." I said, "Why?" He said, "He fears" - and he pointed to his stomach with his hand. Zurārah said: "He meant being killed.") (Ibn Bābawayh, 1960 AD/1380 AH: 2, 234)		
2. Testing and purifying the Shias	Nu'mānī narrates from Imam Riḍā (AS) with a Sanad: "Wa Akhbarnā 'Alīyū ibn Aḥmada Qāla Ḥaddathanā 'Ubaydallāhi ibn Mūsā Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn al-Ḥusayni 'an Ṣafwāna ibn Yaḥyā Qāla: "Qāla Abū l-Ḥasana al-Riḍā: Wallāhi lā Yakūnu mā Tamuddūna ilayhi A'yunikum Ḥattā Tamahḥaṣū wa Tamayyazū wa Ḥattā lā Yabqā minkum illā al-Andar, fal Andar." (Ibn Abī Zaynab, 1977 AD/1377 AH: 208) (That which you turn your eyes to (that which you await and look forward to) will not happen until you are purified and	Weak	Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī describes Ali ibn Aḥmad ibn Naṣr with the expressions "Weak, inconsistent, not to be regarded," (Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 82) and Ḥillī describes him with the expression "Abu al-Ḥasan, weak, inconsistent, not to be regarded." (Hillī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 235)

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	separated, and until there remains of you but the fewest) (Ibn Abī Zaynab, 1976 AD/1376 AH: 298).		Also, there is no information about ‘Ubaydallah ibn Mūsā in biographical evaluation books (Rijāl), which is technically called a neglected (Muhmal) person and narration (Māmaqānī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 1, 397).
3. The continuation of the traditions of the prophets	3.1. Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates from Imam Ṣādiq (AS): "Faḡad Ruwīya ‘an al-Ṣādiq Ja‘fari ibn Muḡammadin annahū Qāla: "Fī al-Qā‘im Sunnatun min Mūsā wa Sunnatun min Yūsufa wa Sunnatun min ‘Īsā wa Sunnatun min Muḡammad fa amā Sunnatu Mūsā fa Khā‘ifun Yatarakhabu wa amā Sunnatu Yūsufa fa inna lkhwatahu Kānū Yubāyi‘ūnah wa Yukhatībūnah wa lā Ya‘rifūnah wa amā Sunnatu ‘Īsā fa al-Sīyāḡatu wa amā Sunnatu Muḡammadin fal Sayfu." (Ibn Bābawayh, 1975 AD/1375 AH: 1, 28) In Imam Qā‘im (AS), there are traditions from Moses, Joseph, Jesus, and Muhammad (PBUH). His tradition from Moses is that he is fearful and awaiting [revelation/orders]. His tradition from	Weak	Shaykh Ṣadūq mentioned the narration without mentioning its chain of narrators.
		Muwaththaq	The Waqifite leanings of Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Ṣīrafi and Ḥanān ibn Sudayr.

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	Joseph is that his brothers bargained with him and spoke to him, yet they did not recognize him. His tradition from Jesus is traveling [wandering]. And his tradition from Muhammad (PBUH) is the sword (Ibn Bābawayh, 1980 AD/1380 AH: 1, 56). 3.2. Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) with a Sanad: "Ḥaddathanā al-Muẓaffāru ibn Jaʿfari ibn al-Muẓaffari al-Alawīyy Raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu Qāla Ḥaddathanā Jaʿfaru ibn Masʿūd wa Haydar ibn Muḥammadi al-Samarqandī Jamīʿan Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn Masʿūd Qāla Ḥaddathanā Jabrāʿīlu ibn Aḥmada ʿan Mūsā ibn Jaʿfarin al-Baghdādī Qāla Ḥaddathanī al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammadi al-Ṣayrafi ʿan Ḥanāni ibn Sadīr ʿan Abīhi ʿan Abī ʿAbdillāhi Qāla: "Qāla inna lil Qāʿimi minnā Ghaybatan Yaʿtūlu Amaduhā faQultu lahu wa lima Dhāka Yā ibna Rasūlillāh qāla innallāha ʿAzza wa Jall Abī illā an Yuḥyī fīhi Sunnana al-Anbiyā fī Ghaybātihim wa annahu lā budda lahu yā Sadīru min Istifāʾi Madadi Ghaybātihim Qālallāhu Taʿālā la Tarkabunna Ṭabaqan ʿan Ṭabaqin ay Sunnana man Kāna		

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	Qablakum.." (Ibn Bābawayh, 1995 AD/1395 AH: 2, 480) (Hanan ibn Sudayr narrates from his father, who narrates from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) that he said: "For our Qā'im, there is a period of occultation that will last a long time." I said, "O! Son of the Messenger of God! Why is that?" He said, "Because God Almighty wants to enact in him the traditions of the prophets (AS) during their periods of occultation. And O! Sudayr! There is no escape from the end of their periods of occultation." God Almighty said: "You shall surely travel from stage to stage (Quran 84:19)," meaning: the traditions of those who came before are enacted in you) (Ibn Bābawayh, 1980 AD/1380 AH: 2, 233).		
4. The emergence of believers from the loins of disbelievers	Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) with a Sanad: "Ḥaddathanā Ja'faru ibn Muḥammadi ibn Masrūr Raḍīyallāhu 'anhu Qāla Ḥaddathanā al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Āmirin 'an 'Ammihi 'Abdillāhi ibn 'Āmirin 'an Muḥammadi ibn Abī 'Umayrin 'amman Dhakarahu 'an Abī 'Abdillāhi Qāla: "Qultu lahu mā bālu Amīri al-Mu'minīna lam Yuqātil	Ṣaḥīḥun 'alā al-Taḥqīq and Mursal like a Musnad	Due to the presence of the phrase "From those who mentioned him," the chain of narration of the hadith is interrupted. However, because the transmitter of this interrupted narration is Muhammad ibn Abi

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	Mukhālifihi fil Awwal Qāla li-āyatin fī Kitābillāhi Ta'ālā law Tazayyalū la'adhabnā Alladhīna Kafarū minhum 'Adhāban Alīman Qāla Qultu wa mā Ya'nī bi-tazāyulihim Qāla wa-dā'i'u Mu'minūn fī Aṣlābi Qawmin Kāfirīn wa Kadhalika al-Qāimu lam Yazhar Abadan ḥattā Takhruja wadā'i'ullāhi 'Azza wa Jall faidhā Kharajatī zahara 'alā man zahara min A'dā'llāhi 'Azza wa Jall faqatalahum." (Ibn Bābawayh, 1995 AD/1395 AH: 2, 641) (The narrator says: "I said to Imam al-Ṣādiq (AS): "Why did Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) not fight his opponents in the beginning?" He said, "Because of a verse in the Holy Quran: "If they had been separated, We would have punished those who disbelieved among them with a painful punishment." (Quran 48:25) He says: "I said, "What is meant by their separation?" He said, "The separation of the deposits of believers that exist in the loins of the disbelieving people. Such is the case with Qā'im (AS); he will not appear until the deposits of God Almighty are brought forth. And when they are brought forth, he will overcome		‘Umayr, this interrupted narration is considered as connected.

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	the manifest enemies of God Almighty and destroy them.") (Ibn Bābawayh, 1980 AD/1380 AH: 2, 541)		
5. The punishment of the Shias	Nu'mānī narrates from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) with a Sanad: "Akhbaranā Muḥammadu ibn Hammāmin wa Muḥammadu ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Jumhūrīn Jamī'an 'an al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammadi ibn Jumhūrīn Qāla Ḥaddathanā Abī 'an Ba'ḍi rijālihi 'an al-Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar Qāla Abū 'Abdillāhi: "Khabarun Tadrihi Khayrun min 'Ashrin Tarwīhī inna likulli Ḥaqqin Ḥaqīqatan wa likulli Ṣawābin Nūran thumma Qāla inna wallāhi lā Na'uddu al-Rajula min Shi'atinā Faḡīhan ḥattā Yulḡani lahu fa Ya'rifa al-Laḡna inna Amīra l-Mu'minīna Qāla 'alā Minbar al-Kūfati inna min Warā'ikum Fitānan Muḡlīmata 'amyā'a Munkasifatan lā Yanjū min'hā illā al-Nawmatu Qīla yā Amīra l-Mu'minīna wa mā al-Nawmatu Qāla Alladhī Ya'rifu al-Nāsa wa lā ya'rifūnahu wa i'lamū annal Arḡa lā Takhlū min Ḥujatin lillāhi 'Azza wa Jall wa Lākinnallāha Sayu'mī Khalaqahu 'anhā bi Ḥulmihim wa Jawrihim wa Isrāfihim 'alā Anfusihim wa law Khalat	Weak	The hadith is interrupted due to the presence of the phrase "From some of his men" in its chain of narration.

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	al-Arḍu Sā'atan Wāḥidatan min Ḥujatin lillāhi la Sākhat bi-Ahlihā wa Lākinna Ḥujjata Ya'rifu al-Nāsa wa lā Ya'rifūnahu kamā Kāna Yūsufu Ya'rifu al-Nāsa wa Hum laḥū Munkirūn thumma Talā yā Ḥasratān 'alā al-'Ibādī mā Ya'tīhim min Rasūlin illā Kānū bihi Yastahzi'ūn." (Ibn Abī Zaynab, 1977 AD/1377 AH: 141) Mufaddal ibn 'Umar says: "Imam Ṣādiq (AS) said: "One piece of news that you understand is better than ten pieces of news that you merely narrate. Indeed, every right has a reality, and every correct action has a light." Then he said: "By God, we do not consider anyone from our Shia to be a jurist until he is told a coded speech and he understands that code. Indeed, Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) said on the pulpit of Kufa: "Verily, behind you are dark and turbid and obscure trials, from which no one will be saved except the <i>Numah</i> (someone who has no status among the people and whose worth is completely unknown and unrecognized)." It was said to him, "O! Amir al-Mu'minin, what is the <i>Numah</i>?" He said: "He is the one who knows the		

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	people, but the people do not know him. And know that the earth will not be empty of the Proof of God, the Mighty and Majestic, but God, the Almighty, will soon blind the eyes of His creation to him because of their oppression and injustice, and their excessiveness towards themselves. And if the earth remains empty of the Proof of God for even an hour, it will swallow its inhabitants. But that Proof knows the people, and they do not know him, just as Joseph knew the people (his brothers), and they did not know him." Then the Imam recited this verse: "Oh, woe to the servants! No messenger ever came to them but they used to ridicule him." (Ibn Abī Zaynab, 1956 AD/1376 AH: 198)		
6. Assurance of the Shia's unwavering faith	Kulaynī narrates from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) with a Sanad: "'Alī ibn Ibrāhīma 'an Abīhi 'an Muḥammadi ibn Khālīd 'amman Ḥaddathahu 'an al-Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar wa Muḥammadu ibn Yaḥyā 'an 'Abdillāh ibn Muḥammadi ibn 'Isā 'an Abīhi 'an ba'ḍi Aṣḥābihi 'an al-Mufaḍḍali ibn 'Umar 'an Abī 'Abdillāhi Qāla: "Aqrabu mā Yakūnūl 'Ibād min Allāhi Jalla Dhikruh wa Arḍā mā	Weak	The hadith is interrupted due to the presence of the phrase "From some of his companions" in its chain of narration.

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	Yakūnu ‘anhum idhā Iftaqadū Ḥujjatallāhi jalla wa ‘Azza wa lam Yaẓhar lahum wa lam Ya‘lamū Makānahu wa hum fī Dhālika Ya‘lamūna annahu lam Tabṭul Ḥujjatullāhi Jalla Dhikruhu wa lā Mithāquhu fa-‘indahā fa Tawwaqq‘ul Faraja Tabāḥan wa Masā’an fa inna Ashadḡa mā Yakūnu Ghadabullāhi ‘alā A‘dā’ihi idhā Iftaqadū Ḥujjatahu wa lam Yaẓhar lahum wa qad ‘Alima anna Awliyā’ahu lā Yartābūna wa law ‘Alima annahum Yartābūn mā Ghayyaba Ḥujjatuhu ‘anhum Ṭarfata ‘Aynin wa lā Yakūnu Dhālika illā ‘alā Ra’si Shirāri al-Nās." (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 333) (The time when the servants are closest to God – may His mention be glorified – and He is most pleased with them, is the time when they do not find the Proof of God – may He be glorified and exalted – among themselves, and his [existence] is not apparent to them, and they do not know his place [of residence], but at the same time they are certain that neither the Proof of God – may His mention be glorified – has disappeared, nor has His		

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	covenant [with the people] been nullified. You [our Shia] should await relief every morning and evening when such a situation arises; for the most severe times of God's wrath upon His enemies are when they have lost [and forgotten] His Proof and he is not apparent to them. And [God] knows that His friends do not doubt, and if it was clear to Him that they would doubt, He would not hide His Proof from them for the blink of an eye, and the appearance of the Proof is only [like a fiery lightning bolt] upon the worst of people) (Kulayni, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 2, 317).		
7. Freedom from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time	Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates from Imam Riḍā (AS) with a Sanad: "Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn Ibrāhīma ibn Ishāqa Raḍīyallāhu ‘anhu Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadānīyu Qāla Ḥaddathanā ‘Alīy ibn al-Ḥasanī ibn ‘Alī ibn Faḍḍālīn ‘an Abīhi ‘an Abī al-Ḥasanī ‘Alīy ibn Mūsā ai-Riḍā annahu Qāla: "Ka’annī bil Shī’ati ‘inda Faḍḍihim al-Thālitha min Wuldī Yaṭlubūna al-Mar’ā wa lā Yajidūnahu Qultu lahu wa lima Dhālika yabna Rasūlillāhi Qāla li anna Imāmahum	Muwaththaq	The Fathite leanings of Muhammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥamdānī and Ali ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ali ibn Faḍḍāl.

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	Yaghību 'anhum Qultu wa limā Qāla liallā Yakūna fī 'Unuqihi liaḥadin Bay'atun idhā Qāma bil Sayfī. (Ibn Bābawayh, 1958 AD/1378 AH: 1, 273): "Ali ibn Faḍḍāl narrated from Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Riḍā (AS) that he said: "I see the Shia that when one-third of my descendants is lost and disappears from among them, they will wander in every inhabited place seeking him, but they will not find him." I asked, "Why, O! Son of the Messenger of Allah?" He said, "Because their Imam, who is meant to be Hazrat Qā'im (AS), will be hidden from their sight." I asked, "Why will he be hidden?" He said, "Because when he takes up the sword, no one will have a pledge of allegiance on his neck." [The translator says:] Apparently, the meaning is that if he takes up the sword, no one will break his allegiance. And Hazrat Riḍā (AS) has designated the third of his descendants as Hazrat Sahib al-Amr, rather, in many hadiths, he refers to him as "The third of my children." (Ibn Bābawayh, n.d.: 1, 208)		
8. A secret among the	Shaykh Ṣaḍūq narrates from Prophet with a Sanad: "Haddathanā Muḥammadu	Weak	There is no information about Ali ibn 'Uthmān

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
secrets of God	ibn Mūsā ibn al-Mutawakkili Raḍīyallāhu ‘anhu Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn Abī ‘Abdillāhi al-Kūfī Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn Ismā‘īla al-Barmaḳīyu ‘an ‘Alīyi ibn ‘Uthmān ‘an Muḥammadi ibn al-Furātī ‘an Thābitī ibn Dīnārīn ‘an Sa‘īdi bni Jubayrin ‘an ibn ‘Abbāsīn Qāla Qāla Rasūlullāhi: "Inna ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālibin Imāmu Ummatī wa Khalīfatī ‘alayhā min ba’dī wa min Wuldihī al-Qāimu al-Muntazaru Alladhī Yamla‘ullāhu bihi al-Arḍa ‘adlan wa Qistāan kamā Mul’i‘at Jawran wa zulman wa Alladhī ba‘athanī bil Ḥaqqi Bashīran inna al-Thābitīna ‘alal Qawli bihi fī Zamāni Ghaybatihī la A‘azzu min al-Kibrīt al-Aḥmar fa Qāma ilāhi Jābiruibni ‘Abdillāhi al-Anṣārī Qāla yā Rasūlullāhi wa lil Qāimi min Wuldika Ghaybatu Qāla ī wa Rabbī wa li Yumahiṣṣallāhu Alladhīna āmanū wa Yamḥaqa al-Kāfirīna yā Jābiru inna Hādhā al-Amra Amrun min Amrillāhi wa Sirrun min Sirrillāhi Maṭwiyyun ‘an ‘Ibādillāhi fa Īyyāka wa al-Shakka fīhi fa inna al-Shakka fī Amrillāhi ‘Azza wa Jall Kufrun" (Ibn Bābawayh, 1975 AD/1375 AH: 1, 288): "Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib after me		and Muhammad ibn al-Furāt in biographical evaluation books (rijal).

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	will be the Imam of the Ummah and my successor over them and the awaited Qā'im who will fill the earth with justice and equity as it has been filled with injustice and oppression is from his descendants. And I swear by God who sent me as a bearer of good news and a warner, those who remain steadfast in their belief in him during his occultation are rarer than red sulfur. Then Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari stood up and came forward and said: "Does the Qā'im who is from your descendants have an occultation? He said: "By God, it is so, so that in that occultation the believers are distinguished and the disbelievers are destroyed. O! Jabir! This matter is from the matters of God and a secret from the secrets of the Lord and hidden from the servants of God, beware of doubting in it, for doubt in the matter of God Almighty is disbelief." (Ibn Bābawayh, 1960 AD/1380 AH: 1, 537)		
9. Lack of helpers and supporters	9.1. Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates from Imam Ḥusayn (AS) with a Sanad: "Ḥaddathanā Abū al-Ḥasanī Aḥmadu ibn Thābitin al-Dawālībī bimidīnat al-Salām Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn al-Faḍli al-	Weak	Biographical information about the narrators who are in the chain of narration of the hadith is not available, and they

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	Nahwī Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Abdiṣamad al-Kūfī Qāla Ḥaddathanā ‘Alīy ibn ‘Āsimin ‘an Muḥammadi ibn ‘Alī ibn Mūsā ‘an Abīhi ‘Alīy ibn Mūsā ibn Ja‘fari ‘an Abīhi Ja‘fari ibn Muḥammadin ‘an Abīhi Muḥammadi ibn ‘Alīyyin" (Ibn Bābawayh, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 1, 537): "God Almighty gathers for him three hundred and thirteen men from the farthest points of the countries, the number of the companions of Badr, and with him is a sealed scroll in which the number of his companions is recorded by name, lineage, place of residence, occupation, language, and epithet, they are attacking in battles and striving in following him.)" (Ibn Bābawayh, 1960 AD/1380 AH: 1, 504) 9.2. Shaykh Ṭūsī narrates with a Sanad: "al-faḍlu ‘an Muḥammadi ibn ‘Alīyin ‘an Ja‘fari ibn Bashīrin ‘an Khālīd ibn Abī ‘Umarati ‘an al-Mufaḍḍali ibn ‘Umar Qāl: "Dhakarnā al-Qā‘ima wa man Māta min Aṣḥābinā Yantāziruhu faQāla lanā Abū ‘Abdillāhi: "Idā Qāma Utīyal Mu'minu fī Qabrihi fa Yuqālu lahu yā Hādḥā innahu Qad ṣahara Ṣāhibuka fain		are among the unknown and neglected narrators.
		Weak	Ibn al-Ghadha'iri introduces Muhammad ibn Ali Abu Sumayna as a liar and exaggerator (Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, 2001 AD/1380 AH: 94), and Najāshī and Ḥillī mention him as a weak narrator (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 332; Ḥillī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 254). Also, there is no information in biographical evaluation books (Rijal) about Khālīd ibn Abī ‘Ammārah.

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	Tasha an Talḥaqa bihi falḥaq wa in Tashā' an Tuqīma fī Karāmati Rabbika fa Aqim." (Ṭūsī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 459): "Mufaddal ibn Umar says: "We were talking about the Qā'im (AS) and that some of our companions have passed away while waiting for the Imam." Imam Ṣādiq (AS) said to us: "When the Qā'im (AS) rises, he comes to the grave of the believer and says to him: "O! Believer! Your friend and master has appeared, if you want to be in his service, join him, and if you want to remain in the honor of your Lord, stay." (Ṭūsī, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 771)		
10. The end of the rule of all nations	10.1. Shaykh Ṭūsī narrates from Imam Bāqir (AS) with a Sanad: "al-Faḍlu bnu Shādhāna 'an 'Alīyi ibn al-Ḥakami 'an Sufyān al-Jarīrī 'an Abī Ṣādiqin 'an Abī Ja'farin Qāla: Dawlatunā Ākhiru al-Duwal wa lan Yabqā ahlu baytin lahum Dawlatu illā Mulikū Qablanā liallā Yaqūlū idhā Ra'aw Sīratanā idhā Muliknā Sirnā mithla Sīratihā'ulā' wa Huwa Qawlullāhi 'Azza wa Jall wal 'Āqibatu lil Muttaqī." (Ṭūsī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 472): "Our reign is the last reign, and all the dynasties destined to	Weak	There is no information about Sufyān al-Jarīrī in biographical evaluation books (rijal).
		Weak	The chain of narration is suspended and not connected to an impeccable (AS).

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	rule the world have attained the throne before us, so that in our time, no one will say, "If we had also established a kingdom, we would have ruled like this group. What superiority do they have over us?" God says: "And the (best) end is for the righteous." 10.2. Shaykh Mufīd narrates: "Wa Rawā 'Alīyu ibn 'Uqbata 'an Abīhi Qāla: Idā Qāma al-Qāimu ḥakama bil 'Adli wa Irtifa'a fī Ayyāmihi al-Jawru wa āmānat bihi al-Subulu wa Akhrajati al-Arḍu Barakātihā wa Ruddā Kullu Ḥaqqin ilā Ahlīhi wa lam Yabqā ahlu dīn ḥattā Yuzhirū al-Islāma wa Ya'tirifū bil Īmān amā Sami'ta llāha ta'ālā Yaqūlu wa lahu Aslam man fī al-Samawāti wal Arḍ Ṭaw'an wa Karhan wa ilayhi Yurja'ūn wa ḥakama bayna al-Nāsi bi ḥukmi Dāwūda wa Ḥukmi Muḥammadin fa ḥīna idhin Tuzhiru al-Arḍu Kunūzihā wa Tubdī Barakātihā falā Yajidu al-Rajulu minkum Yawma idhin Mawḍi'an li Ṣadaqatihī wa lā li birrihi Shumul al-Ghinā Jami' al-Mu'minīn thumma Qāla inna Dawlatanā ākhiru al-Duwal wa lam Yabqā Ahlu Baytin lahum Dawlatu illā Malakū Qablanā liallā Yaqūlu idhā		

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
	Ra'aw Sīratanā idhā Maliknā Sirnā bi-Mithli Sīratihā'ulā' wa Huwa Qawlullāhi Ta'ālā wa al-'Āqibatu lil Muttaqīn." (Mufīd, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 2, 384): "When the Qā'im (AS) rises, he will command justice, and in his time, the foundation of tyranny will be completely destroyed, the roads will be safe, and the earth will manifest its blessings, and every right will be returned to its owner, and all the religious people of the world will convert to the religion of Islam and confess their faith in God, as the Almighty has said: "And to Him has surrendered whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they will be returned." (The Holy Quran, 3:83) All beings in the heavens and the earth become Muslim willingly or unwillingly, and you will also return to Him, and he will spread the rule of David and Muhammad among the people, and he will rule in appearance and in essence." (Mufīd, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 2, 705)		
11. The perfection and refinement of souls for the	Kulaynī narrates from Imam Bāqir (AS): "al-Ḥusāynu ibn Muḥammadin 'an Mu'allā ibn Muḥammadin 'an al-Washā'	Weak	There is no information about Mawla Labnī Shaybān in biographical

Cause of Occultation	Narration Supporting Cause of Occultation	Ruling on Narration Based on Narrator-Centered Validation Approach	Reason for Commandment
acceptance of Imam Mahdi (AS)	'an al-Muthannā al-Ḥannāṭi 'an Qutaybata al-A'shā 'an ibn Abī Ya'fūrīn 'an mawlā li banī Shaybān 'an Abī Ja'farīn Qāla: Idā Qāma Qā'imunā Waḍa'a llāhu Yadahu 'alā Ru'ūsi al-'Ibādi fa Jama'a bihā 'Uqūlahum wa Kamalat bihī Aḥlāmu'hum." (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 25): "Imam Bāqir (AS) said: "When our Qā'im rises [to reform the affairs of all the people of the world], God will place His [mercy] hand on the heads of the servants; in this case, He will gather their [scattered] minds [in a positive and useful point] and through it, their intellects will be perfected." (Kulaynī, 2017 AD/1397 SH: 1, 96)		evaluation books (Rijal).

3.1. Narrator-Centric Validation Summary

Based on the narrator-centric validation approach, which is visible in Table 1, out of the 15 narrations examined, 10 narrations are weak, two narrations are reliable (*Muwaththaq*), one narration is *Mursal* in the ruling of *Musnad*, and two narrations are *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Therefore, through narrator-centric validation, only four causes – fear of being killed, the continuation of the traditions of the prophets, the emergence of believers from the loins of disbelievers, and freedom

from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time – are considered valid, and other causes will not be considered valid. Therefore, if we want to resolve the conflict among the causes of occultation, we only need to resolve the conflict among the four causes: fear of being killed, the continuation of the traditions of the prophets, the emergence of believers from the loins of disbelievers, and freedom from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time.

However, in order to create another opportunity to validate the remaining 10 weak narrations and two reliable narrations (these two narrations were also considered valid according to the narrator-centric validation approach), we decided to examine them once again, this time based on the evidence-based validation approach.

The following table presents a report of this validation method. Due to space limitations, only one supporting narration is mentioned under each narration, and other supporting narrations are referenced.

Table 2: Judgment of Narrations Based on the Evidence-Based Validation Approach

Narration Number	Reason for Occultation	Narration Commandment	Supporting Narrations
2	Testing and Purifying the Shia	Correct	In the book al-Ghaybah of Nu'mānī, in the chapter "What afflicts the Shia of examination, division, and dispersion during the occultation, until only the very few who were described by the Imams (AS) remain," 19 other narrations with the same content as this narration are found (Ibn Abī Zaynab,

Narration Number	Reason for Occultation	Narration Commandment	Supporting Narrations
			1977 AD/1397 AH: 201).
3.1.	The Enactment of the Prophets' Traditions	Correct	1. Ḥaddathanā Abī wa Muḥammadu ibn al-Ḥasanin Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhumā Qālā Ḥaddathanā ‘Abdullāhi ibn Ja‘farin al-Ḥimyarīyyu ‘an Muḥammadi ibn ‘Īsā ‘an Sulaymāni ibn Dāwuda ‘an Abī Baṣīrin Qāl: "Sami‘tu Abā Ja‘faran Yaqūlu fī Ṣāḥibi ḥādhā al-amri arba‘u Sunan min Arba‘ati Anbiyā‘i Sunnatun min Mūsā wa Sunnatun min ‘Īsā wa sunnatun min Yūsufa wa Sunnatun min Muḥammadin fa ammā min Mūsā fa Khā‘ifun Yatarqabu wa ammā min Yūsufu fal ḥabsu wa ammā min ‘Īsā fa Yuqālu innahu māta wa lam Yamut wa ammā min Muḥammadin fa al-Sayfu." (Ibn Bābawayh, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 1, 326) (For studying other supporting narrations, cf. Ibn Abī Zaynab, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 164; Ibn Bābawayh, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 350; Ṭūsī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 424; Ṭabarī Āmilī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 532).
3.2.	The Enactment of the Prophets' Traditions	Correct	Ḥaddathanā al-Muẓaffaru ibn Ja‘fari bni al-Muẓaffari al-‘Alawīyyin Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu Qāl: "Ḥaddathanā Ja‘faru ibn Mas‘ūd wa Ḥaydaru ibn Muḥammadin as-Samarqandiyyu jamī‘an Qālā: "Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn Mas‘ūd Qāl: "Ḥaddathanā Jibrā‘īlu ibn Aḥmada ‘an Mūsā ibn Ja‘fari al-

Narration Number	Reason for Occultation	Narration Commandment	Supporting Narrations
			Baghdādiyyin Qāl: "Ḥaddathanī al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammadi al-Ṣayrafiyyin 'an Ḥanān ibn Sadīrin 'an Abīhi 'an Abī 'Abdillāhi Qāl: "Qāla inn lil Qā'imi minnā Ghaybatan Yaṭūlu Amaduhā fa Qultu lahu wa limā Dhālika yabna Rasūlillāhi Qāl: "Inn Allāha 'Azza wa Jall abā illā an Yujrī fihī Sunnan al-Anbiyā'i fī Ghaybātihim wa annahu lā budda lahu yā Sadīru min istifā'i mada Ghaybātihim Qāl: "Allāhu 'Azza wa Jall Latarkabunna Tabaqan 'an ṭabaqin ay Sunanan 'alā Sunani man Kāna Qablakum." (Ibn Bābawayh, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 1, 245). (For studying other supporting narrations, cf. Rāwandī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 955; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 2, 424; Hurr 'Āmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 5, 103; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 51, 142).
4	The emergence of believers from the loins of disbelievers	Correct	1. Ḥaddathanā Ja'faru ibn Muḥammad ibn Masrūrīn Raḥimahullāhu Qāl: "Ḥaddathanā al-Ḥusāynu ibn Muḥammadi ibn 'Āmirin 'an 'Ammihi 'Abdillāhi ibn 'Āmirin 'an Muḥammadi ibn Abī 'Umayrin 'amman Dhakarahu 'an Abī 'Abdi llāhi Qāl: "Qultu lahu mā bālu Amīri l-Mu'minīna lam Yuqātil Fulānan wa Fulānan wa Fulānan Qāl: "Li-āyatin fī Kitābillāhi 'Azza wa Jall law Tazayyalu la'adhabnā

Narration Number	Reason for Occultation	Narration Commandment	Supporting Narrations
			allaDhīna kaFarū minhum ‘adhāban Alīman Qāl: "Qultu wa mā Ya’nī bi Tazāyulihim Qāl: Wada’i’u Mu’minīna fī Aṣḥabi qawmin Kāfirīna wa kadhālika al-Qāimu lan Yazhara abadan ḥattā Takhruja Wada’i’ullāhi Ta’ālā fa idhā Kharajatī Zāhara ‘alā man zāhara min." (Ibn Bābawayh, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 1, 147). (For further supporting narrations, cf. Qummī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 2, 316; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 2, 425; Hurr ‘Āmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 5, 106; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 97).
5	Punishment of the Shia	Correct	1. Muḥammadu ibn Yaḥyā ‘an Ja’fari ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ‘an Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāhi ‘an Muḥammadi ibn al-Farajī Qāla: "Kataba ilayya Abū Ja’farin idhā Ghadiballāhu Tabāraka wa Ta’ālā ‘alā Khalqihī Nahḥānā ‘an Jiwārihim." (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 343)
6	Assurance of the Shia's lack of doubt	Correct	1. Akhbaranā Muḥammad ibn Hammāmin ‘an ba’ḍi Rijālīhi ‘an Aḥmada ibn Muḥammadi ibn Khālidi ‘an Abīhi ‘an Rajulin ‘an al-Mufaḍḍali ibn ‘Umar ‘an Abī ‘Abdi llāhi annahu Qāla: "Aqrabu mā Yakūnu Hādhihīl-‘Iṣābatu min Allāhi wa Arḍā mā Yakūnu ‘anhum idhā Iftaqadū ḥujjatallāhi fa ḥujiba ‘anhum wa lam Yazhar lahum wa lam Ya’lamū bimakānihī wa hum

Narration Number	Reason for Occultation	Narration Commandment	Supporting Narrations
			fi Dhālika Ya'lamūna wa Yūqinūn annahu lam Tabṭul Ḥujjatullāhi wa lā Mīthāquhū fa'Indahā Tawakka'ū al-Faraja ṣabāḥan wa Masā'an fa inna Ashadda mā Yakūnu Ghadabu llāhi 'alā A'dāihī idhā Iftaqadū ḥujjatuhu fa-lam Yazhar lahum wa qad 'alima llāhu 'azza wa jall annā awliyā'ahu lā Yartābūna wa law 'alima annahum Yartābūna mā Ghayyaba ḥujjatuhu tarfata 'Aynin 'anhum wa lā Yakūnu Dhālika illā 'alā ra'si Shirār al-Nās (Ibn Abī Zaynab, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 161). (For further supporting narrations, cf. Ibn Bābawayh, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 337 and 339; Ṭūsī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 457; Ṭabrsī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 430).
7	Freedom from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time	Correct	1. Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn Ibrāhīma ibn Ishāqa Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu Qāla: "Ḥaddathanā Aḥmadu ibn Muḥammadin al-Hamdānī Qāla: "Ḥaddathanā 'Alīyu ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī bni Faḍḍālīn 'an Abīhi 'an Abī al-Ḥasan 'Alī bni Mūsā ar-Riḍā annahu Qāla: "Ka annī bil Shī'ati 'inda faqdhīhim al-Thālith min Wuldī kal Ni'ami Yaṭlubu al-Mar'a falā Yajidūnahu Qultu lahu wa limā Dhālika yabna Rasūlillāhi Qāla li ann Imāmahūm Yaḡṭbu 'anhum fa Qultu wa limā Qāla li allā Yakūna li aḥadin fi 'unqihī

Narration Number	Reason for Occultation	Narration Commandment	Supporting Narrations
			bay'atun idhā Qāma bil Sayfī." (Ibn Bābawayh, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 480). (For further supporting narrations, cf. Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 5, 69; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 51, 152).
8	A secret from the divine secrets	Correct	Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn Mūsā ibn al-Mutawakkili 'an Muḥammadi ibn Abī 'Abdillāhi al-Kūfiyyi, 'an Muḥammadi ibn Ismā'īla al-Bar makī, 'an 'Aliyyi bni an-Nu'māni, 'an Muḥammadi ibn al-Furātī, 'an Ṭābit ibn Dīnār, 'an Sa'īdi ibn Jubayrin, 'an Ibn 'Abbāsin, Qāla: "Qāla Rasūlullāhi: "Inna 'Aliyyi ibn Abī Ṭālibin Imāmu ummatī wa Khalīfatī 'alayhim ba'dī, wa-min waladihī al-Qā'imu al-Munṭazaru al-Mahdiyyu alladhī Yamla'ullāhu 'Azza wa Jall bihī al-Arḍa 'adlan wa Qiṣṭan kamā mulī'at Jāwran wa Zūlman." Wa Alladhī Ba'athanī bil Haqq Nabīyyā, innā al-Thābitayna 'alā al-Qawli bihī fī Zamāni Ghaybatihī la A'azzu mina al-Kibrīt al-Aḥmar. Faqāma ilayhī Jābiru ibn 'Abdillāhi al-Anṣārī, faQāla: "Yā Rasūlullāhi, wa lil Qā'imi min Waladika Ghaybah?" Faqāla: "Ay wa Rabbī, la Yumahhiṣannallāhu alladhīna āmanū wa Yamḥaqa al-Kāfirīn. Yā Jābir, innā Hādhā al-Amra min Amrillāhi, wa Sirrun min sirrillāhi Maṭwiyyun 'an 'Ibādihi, fa Iyyāka wa al-

Narration Number	Reason for Occultation	Narration Commandment	Supporting Narrations
			Shakka fī Amrillāhi, fa-innahu Kufr." (Ḥurr 'Amilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 5, 76). (For further supporting narrations, cf. Ṭabrisī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 424; Ibn Ṭāwūs, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 494; Arbilī, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 2, 521; Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 5, 272; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 38, 126).
9.1.	Having no friend or helper	Correct	Ḥaddathanā Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alīyyu bni Thābit al-Dawālīnī Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu bi Maḍīnat al-Salām Sanata Ithnatayn wa Khamsīna wa Thalāthimi'ati Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn 'Alīyyi ibn 'Abdi al-Ṣamadi al-Kūfī Qāla Ḥaddathanā 'Alīyyu ibn 'Āsimin 'an Muḥammadi ibn 'Alī bni Mūsā 'an Abīhi 'Alī ibn Mūsā 'an Abīhi Mūsā ibn Ja'farin 'an Abīhi Ja'fari ibn Muḥammadin 'an Abīhi Muḥammadi ibn 'Aliyyin 'an Abīhi 'Alīyyu ibn al-Ḥusayn 'an Abīhi al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī bni Abī Ṭālibin Qāla: "... Rijālun Musawwamatun Yajma'ullāhu Ta'ālā lahu min Aqāṣī al-Bilādi 'alā 'Iddati ahlī Badrin Thalāthimi'atin wa Thalāthata 'Asharana Rajulan ma'ahu Ṣaḥīfahun Makhtūmah fihā 'Adad Uṣṣābiḥī bi Asmāihim wa Ansābihim wa Buldānihim wa ṭabā'i'ihim wa Ḥulāhum wa Kunāhum kadādūn Mujdiddūn fī Ṭā'atihi." (Ibn Bābawayh, 1958 AD/1378 AH: 1, 59).

Narration Number	Reason for Occultation	Narration Commandment	Supporting Narrations
			(For further supporting narrations, cf. Ṭabrisī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 400; Rāwandī, 1988 AD/1409 AH (b): 361; Ḥurr ‘Āmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 2, 327; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 36, 204; 52, 309).
9.2.	Having no friend or helper		Wa Qāla Mūsā ibn Ja‘far: "Idhā Qāma al-Qā'imu Utīyā al-Mu'minu fī Qabrihi fa Yuqālu lahu yā Hādhā innahu Qad Ḥahara Ṣāhibu ka fain Tashā an Talḥaqa bihi Falḥaq wain Tashā an Tuqīm fī Karāmati Rabbika fqum." (Rāwandī, 1988 AD/1409 AH (a): 3, 1166). (For further supporting narrations, cf. Ṭabarī Āmulī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 479; Nīlī Najafī, 1981 AD/1360 SH: 36; Ḥurr ‘Āmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 5, 202; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 53, 91).
10.1. and 10.2.	The end of the rule of all nations	Correct	Wa Rawā ‘Alīyu ibn ‘Uqbata ‘an Abīhi Qāla: "Idhā Qāma al-Qā'imu ḥakama bil ‘Adli wa Irtafa’a fī Ayyāmihī al-Jawru wa āmanat bihi al-Subulu wa Akhrajati al-Arḍu Barakātihā wa Ruddā kullu Ḥaqqin ilā Ahlihī wa lam Yabqa ahlu Dīnin ḥattā Yuḏhirū al-Islāma wa Ya’tarifū bil Imāni. Amā Sami’tallāha Ta’ālā Yaqūlu wa lahu Aslama man fī al-Samāwāti wa al-Arḍi ṭaw’an wa Karhā wa Ilāhi Yurja’ūn. Wa ḥakama bayna al-Nāsi bi-

Narration Number	Reason for Occultation	Narration Commandment	Supporting Narrations
			ḥukmi Dāwūda wa ḥukmi Muḥammadin faḥīn'aidhin Tuḥīru al-Arḍu Kunūzihā wa Tubdī Barakātihā falā Yajidu al-Rajulu minkum Yawma'idhin Mawḍi'an liṣadaqatihi wa lā libirrihi Shumūli al-Ghinā Jamī'a al-Mu'minīn. Thumma Qāla: "Inna Dawlatana ākhīru al-Duwali wa lam Yabqa Ahlu Baytin lahum Dawlatu illā Malakū Qablanā liallā Yaḡūlū idhā ra'aw Sāratana idhā Malaknā sirnā bimithli Sīratihā Ulā'ika wa Huwa Qawlullāhi Ta'ālā wa al-'āqibatu lil Muttaqīn." (Mufīd, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 2, 384). (For further supporting narrations, cf. Ṭabrisī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 462; Irbilī, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 2, 465; Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 5, 136; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 332).
11	Perfection and refinement of souls to accept Imam Mahdi (AS)	Correct	Al-Ḥusaynu ibn Muḥammadin, 'an Mu'allā ibn Muḥammadin, 'ani al-Washā'i 'an al-Muthannā al-Ḥannāṭi 'an Qutaybata al-A'shā 'an ibn Abī Ya'fūrīn 'an Mawlā li Banī Shaybāna 'an Abī Ja'farīn Qāla: "Idhā Qāma Qā'imunā, waḍa'a llāhu yadahu 'alā ru'ūsi al-'Ibādi, fa Jama'a bihā 'Uqūlahum wa Kamalat bihi Aḥlāmuhum." (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 25). (For further supporting narrations, cf. Ibn

Narration Number	Reason for Occultation	Narration Commandment	Supporting Narrations
			Bābawayh, 1975 AD/1395 AH: 2, 675; Rāwandī, 1988 AD/1409 AH(a): 2, 840; Ḥillī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 1, 319; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 2, 456; Hurr ‘Āmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 5, 61; Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 80).

3.2. Summary of Evidence-Based Validation

Based on the evidence-based validation approach, as shown in Table 2, all 12 narrations examined are considered valid and sound. Therefore, through evidence-based validation, narrations concerning 11 reasons for the occultation, fear of being killed, testing and purifying the Shias, the continuation of the prophets' traditions, the emergence of believers from the loins of disbelievers, the punishment of the Shias, assurance of the Shias' unwavering faith, liberation from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time, a secret among the divine secrets, lack of helpers and supporters, the end of the rule of all nations, and the perfection and refinement of souls for the acceptance of Imam Mahdī (AS), are deemed credible. Therefore, if we want to resolve the conflict among the reasons for the occultation, we must reconcile all 11 reasons mentioned.

3.3. Examining the Implications of Narrations Indicating the Reasons for the Occultation of Imam Mahdī (AS) and Resolving the Conflict Among Them

Given that, according to the evidence-based validation approach, all 11 reasons for the occultation of Imam Mahdī (AS) are acceptable, it

is now time to resolve the existing conflict among them by examining the implications of the related narrations. By carefully examining the overall meaning of these 11 reasons, we can initially categorize them into two main groups: "The first group includes reasons that preclude the possibility of a material and apparent analysis of the occultation, with the occultation being "A secret among the divine secrets" falling into this category." The second group includes reasons that allow for a material and apparent analysis of the occultation, including fear of being killed, testing and purifying the Shias, the continuation of the prophets' traditions, the emergence of believers from the loins of disbelievers, the punishment of the Shias, assurance of the Shias' unwavering faith, liberation from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time, lack of helpers and supporters, the end of the rule of all nations, and the perfection and refinement of souls for the acceptance of Imam Mahdī (AS) all falling into this category.

Therefore, we face two levels of conflict among the narrations related to the reason for the occultation (*Ghaybat*). The first level is the conflict between narrations that consider the reason for the occultation a secret among God's secrets (in other words, negate the possibility of finding a material and apparent cause) and narrations that state a material and apparent cause for the occultation. The second level is the conflict among narrations that offer various material and apparent reasons for the occultation.

Resolving the conflict at the first level is possible by reconciling the two sets of narrations.

This means that in addition to being able to state material and

apparent reasons for the occultation of Imam Mahdī (AS), a comprehensive understanding of the reasons for the occultation may not be possible for humans before the Imam's reappearance or even fundamentally possible in the material world. Therefore, the reason for the occultation is a secret among God's secrets. This issue can be analyzed in the following ways:

Firstly, the narrations that consider the occultation "A secret among God's secrets" speak from a macro and theological perspective. In this view, the reality of the occultation is beyond ordinary human understanding, and no one except God fully comprehends its ultimate wisdom. However, this does not preclude the presentation of more specific reasons for the occultation.

Secondly, it is possible that the purpose of some narrations is to explain the reality of the occultation at a level that the general public can understand. However, other narrations that emphasize the occultation being a "Divine Secret" speak at a level of knowledge that is beyond general comprehension and accessible only to those with spiritual insight and the saints of God.

Thirdly, a longitudinal relationship can be established between these two conflicting sets of narrations. For example, preserving the Imam's life, which is one of the reasons for the occultation, falls under a higher wisdom, which is the divine will.

Fourthly, narrations that mention reasons for the occultation may refer to changeable and social conditions, meaning that if society becomes ready, these reasons will be eliminated. However, narrations

142 that consider the occultation a "Divine Secret" refer to an aspect that is

beyond human access and influence, and the reappearance will not occur until God wills it.

Therefore, there is no contradiction between these two sets of narrations; rather, they can be analyzed at different levels and layers.

To resolve the conflict at the second level, it can be said that although these causes appear different and even conflicting, if we examine them from a more precise angle and using philosophical concepts, we can reconcile them by considering each as a part of a more complex whole. In the following, we will use the philosophical division of cause into complete and incomplete, or general and specific, to resolve the conflict between the causes of the occultation of Imam Mahdī (AS).

3.4. Complete and Incomplete Cause (General and Specific Cause)

A cause is either sufficient for the realization of the effect, and the existence of the effect is not dependent on anything else besides it; in other words, assuming its existence, the existence of the effect is necessary, in which case it is called the "Complete Cause." Or it is such that although the effect cannot be realized without it, it alone is not sufficient for the existence of the effect, and one or more other things must be added to it in order for the existence of the effect to become necessary, in which case it is called the "Incomplete Cause." (Misbah Yazdi, 2022 AD/1401 SH: 2, 33)

The aforementioned difference between the complete and incomplete cause has also been expressed with similar terms regarding the general and specific cause. In this way, the general concept of **143**

cause refers to an entity upon which the realization of another entity depends, even if it is not sufficient for its realization. The specific concept of cause refers to an entity that is sufficient for the realization of another entity. In other words, the general term of cause refers to an entity without which the realization of another entity is impossible, and the specific term refers to an entity with whose existence the realization of another entity becomes necessary. As can be seen, the first term is more general than the second, because it includes conditions and preparations and other incomplete causes, unlike the second term (Misbah Yazdi, 2022 AD/1401 SH: 2, 29).

Accordingly, in explaining the conflict between the causes of the occultation of Imam Mahdī (AS), it can be said that the complete cause of the occultation includes a complete set of various historical, political, social, religious, and divine factors that led to the occultation, and this set of factors together constitutes the complete cause of the occultation. However, each of the causes of the occultation that have been mentioned in various narrations is only an incomplete cause. Therefore, by considering all the causes of the occultation as incomplete causes, the conflict between them is resolved.

One Arab researcher has also pointed to this issue, writing: "It is possible that the occultation has more than one cause, and each cause is part of the main reason. Consequently, these causes can be combined so that, in total, they all form the complete cause." (al-Hūdār al-Iḥsā'ī, 2022 AD/1443 AH: 2, 50)

144 Furthermore, considering two stages for the occurrence and

continuation of the occultation of Imam Mahdī (AS), he divides the causes of the occultation under these two stages, writing: "The occultation has two stages: "The stage of occurrence, which is the beginning of the occultation, and the stage of continuation, which is the persistence of the occultation. Some of the reasons mentioned in the narrations, such as fear of being killed, freedom from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time, and the implementation of the traditions of the prophets, relate to the stage of occurrence of the occultation, which can be combined in this way: "If the Imam were manifest and did not go into occultation, he would be forced to pledge allegiance to the tyrant, but he would never pledge allegiance, and because he would not pledge allegiance, he would be killed, and for this reason, he went into occultation, and this occultation is from the traditions of the prophets when fearing death. In contrast, some other reasons relate to the stage of continuation and persistence of the occultation, which can be combined in this way: "The occultation has continued due to the disloyalty of the people, because the Imam did not find helpers, and because he did not find helpers, he is waiting and watching for believers to emerge from the loins of disbelievers to help him." (al-Hūdār al-Iḥsā'ī, 2022 AD/1443 AH: 50 and 51 - with some summarization and alteration)

Of course, another Arab researcher has attempted to consider one of the reasons as the complete cause, while regarding the remaining reasons as incomplete causes and aspects of the complete cause. He writes: "All the reasons for the occultation, in truth, point to one matter, and that is lacking a helper. The difference lies only in the

manner of expressing this truth by the infallible Imams (AS). For example, occultation due to fear of being killed clearly indicates a lack of helpers; for if the Imam had helpers, he would never fear being killed. Occultation due to the non-acceptance of allegiance to the tyrant also indicates the absence of sufficient helpers to repel the allegiance to the tyrant. Allegiance due to testing and purification also indicates the necessity of providing helpers with specific characteristics to aid the Imam. Occultation due to the continuation of the traditions of the prophets also shows that one of the reasons for the occultation of the prophets was the lack of a helper and supporter, etc." (‘Abdul Wāḥid, 2017 AD/1438 AH: 142 and 143 - with abridgment) In our opinion, this view cannot be correct, because establishing a connection between all the aforementioned reasons with the issue of "Lacking a helper" is not easily possible and leads to artificiality. It is better to consider all the reasons as incomplete causes, which together form the complete cause of the occultation.

Conclusion

1. Based on the source-criticism approach, out of the 15 narrations examined, 10 narrations are weak, two narrations are reliable, one narration is *Mursal* (interrupted) in the ruling of *Musnad* (connected), and two narrations are *Ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic). Therefore, through source-criticism, only four reasons are considered valid: "Fear of being killed, the continuation of the traditions of the prophets, the emergence of believers from the loins of disbelievers, and freedom from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time.

The other reasons will not be considered valid. Therefore, if we want to resolve the conflict between the reasons for the occultation, we only need to resolve the conflict between the four reasons: "Fear of being killed, the continuation of the traditions of the prophets, the emergence of believers from the loins of disbelievers, and freedom from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time."

2. Based on the corroborative validation approach, all 12 reviewed narratives are considered authentic and sound. Therefore, through corroborative validation, narratives pertaining to 11 reasons for the occultation (*Ghaybah*), fear of being killed, testing and purifying the Shi'a, the enactment of prophetic traditions, the emergence of believers from the loins of disbelievers, the punishment of the Shi'a, assurance of the Shi'a's unwavering faith, liberation from the yoke of allegiance to the tyrants of the time, a secret from God's secrets, the lack of helpers and supporters, the end of the rule of all nations, and the perfection and refinement of souls for the acceptance of Imam Mahdī (AS), are deemed valid. Consequently, if we aim to resolve the conflict between the reasons for the occultation, we must resolve the conflict among the aforementioned 11 reasons.
3. The contradiction in the narratives concerning the reason for the occultation of Imam Mahdī (AS) can be resolved through semantic combination. This is achieved by considering all the reasons for the occultation as incomplete causes, thereby resolving the contradiction between them.

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Analysis of the Transformation in *Nahj al-Balāgha* Studies from the Post-Safavid Period to the Threshold of the Iranian Islamic Revolution

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(Received: October 2025, Accepted: April 2026)

DOI: 10.22034/HSR.2026.52192.1117

Abstract The tradition of writing commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāgha* is

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a mirror reflecting the intellectual, political, and social transformations of Islamic societies. Despite numerous bibliographic studies, a systematic analysis of this trajectory in relation to its discursive contexts remains absent. Employing the "Social history of knowledge" approach and drawing on Skinner's contextual hermeneutic method, this study investigates the metamorphosis of this tradition during the neglected period from the fall of the Safavids to the eve of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. The findings indicate that this trajectory experienced two clearly distinct stages. First, the "Period of stagnation," (post-Safavid to the eve of the Constitutional era) during which, under the dominance of Akhbārism and political despotism, *Nahj al-Balāgha* shifted from a comprehensive text to a "Mirror for princes," serving the function of "Consolidating power" and advising rulers; second, the "Period of renaissance," (from the Constitutional era to the Revolution) in which, with the emergence of the Samarra School and the encounter with modernity, an "Epistemic rupture" occurred. In this era, *Nahj al-Balāgha* became a tool for the "Delegitimization of despotism" and the "Foundation of political theology." Methodologically, there was also a fundamental shift from "Sequential-lexical commentary" to "Systematic analysis" aimed at extracting a coherent intellectual school from *Nahj al-Balāgha*. The study concludes that developments in commentary writing constitute a key indicator for tracing the transition of Shi'i thought from "Individual ethics" to "Political jurisprudence" in the modern period.

Keywords: History of Thought, Commentary Writing, Samarra School, Constitutionalism, *Nahj al-Balāgha*, Post-Safavid.

Introduction, Problem Statement, and Significance

Writing commentaries on foundational and classical texts is less a purely explanatory or scholarly activity than a hermeneutical act reflecting the intellectual horizon and epistemic needs of each era, linking the "Horizon of the text" to the interpreter's "Horizon of meaning." In this context, *Nahj al-Balāgha*, as a text encompassing theological, ethical, political, social, and literary dimensions, has been subject to diverse readings throughout Shi'i history. The central problem of this study is a fundamental "Functional shift" in how *Nahj al-Balāgha* was read, reviewed, and consulted between the fall of the Safavids and the eve of the Iranian Islamic Revolution.

The present study examines the evolution of *Nahj al-Balāgha*'s use and the writing of commentaries on it during this sensitive and neglected period, from the fall of the Safavids (around 1135 AH) to the threshold of the Islamic Revolution. Since this era marks Iran's transition from a traditional society to approaching modernity, amid decisive historical events, studying the transformation in the understanding of a classical text in this context gains added importance.

Unlike earlier studies that have mainly adopted bibliographic or descriptive approaches, this research focuses on an analytical gap: how key concepts of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, such as justice, governance, and the rights of the people, were redefined in the commentators' mentalities across these two periods.

Accordingly, the main hypothesis is that the tradition of commentary writing on *Nahj al-Balāgha* underwent a "Functional

metamorphosis" during the period under discussion. In the post-Safavid period, up to roughly the mid-Naseri era, under the dominance of the discourse of monarchy, *Nahj al-Balāgha* was largely reread within the framework of individual ethics and "Mirror-for-princes" literature, functioning as *Nasihāt al-molouk*, advice to rulers aimed at softening their conduct (i.e., changing their behavior). However, in the Renaissance period (from the eve of the Constitutional era onward), driven by the Samarra School and the encounter with modernity, the reading of the text shifted from a purely ethical-individual model toward an applied model within political theology. In this transition, *Nahj al-Balāgha*, through political agency, became a source for "Producing constitutional legitimacy" and "Delegitimizing despotism." (structural change) The study shows that, contrary to common assumptions, this politicization of the text did not arise solely from secular intellectual movements but was rooted in the "Social Ijtihad" emerging from the Samarra and Najaf schools, which activated the latent potentials of *Nahj al-Balāgha*.

1. Research Methodology

In terms of purpose, this paper is fundamental; in nature, it is historical-analytical, organized within the framework of the "Social history of knowledge." In this approach, historical texts (here, commentaries and related works on *Nahj al-Balāgha*) are analyzed as "Responses to the crises of their time."

1.1. Data Collection and Selection

156 The research population may include all commentaries, translations, and

annotations on *Nahj al-Balāgha* and related works accessible during the period from 1135 AH (the fall of Isfahan) to the threshold of the Islamic Revolution (early 1970s). However, given the abundance of manuscripts, purposive sampling was employed. The selection criteria for works of the stagnation period were the comprehensiveness of the text and its authoritative status; for the later period, the degree of citation and social impact, as well as representation of the dominant discourse, guided selection. Thus, works that merely reproduced earlier material or were unavailable were excluded, while those containing interpretive innovation or reflecting the political orientation of their time (such as Lahiji's commentary, *Khūṭ's Minhāj al-Barā'a*, 'Abduh's commentary, and Motahhari's *A Journey through Nahj al-Balāgha*) were chosen as units of analysis.

1.2. Data Analysis Method

To examine the texts, the study employed the technique of "Contextual thematic analysis." Accordingly, particular attention in some works was given to their introductions and conclusions, as well as sections related to political sermons and the letter to *Mālik Ashtar*. The methodological assumption is that in a book's introduction and in the choice of key vocabulary for explaining political concepts, the commentator, consciously or unconsciously, reveals his "Horizon of expectations" and the needs of his time (such as demands for justice, rule of law, or advice to rulers).

1.3. Theoretical Framework (Skinner's Contextual Hermeneutics)

To provide a deeper analysis of the transformation in commentaries on

Nahj al-Balāgha, this study draws on the methodological framework of the Cambridge School, particularly Quentin Skinner's ideas. In explaining his method, Skinner emphasizes the distinction between "Lexical meaning" and "Illocutionary force." From his perspective, understanding a political thought text is not achieved merely by reading it; rather, the researcher must discover what action the author was performing, within his historical context, by writing the text (Skinner, 2002: 1, 82).

Based on this approach, historical texts such as commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāgha* should not be viewed as collections of timeless truths detached from their context; rather, they are "Speech acts" written to intervene in a specific debate or respond to a political crisis (Skinner, 1969: 48). Skinner emphasizes that to understand any political statement, one must identify the author's "Intention" in its practical sense, not in a psychological sense, and namely whether the author is affirming the status quo, criticizing it, or proposing an alternative (Skinner, 2002: 1, 99).

Accordingly, the application of this method in the present research treats the shift in the approach of commentators on *Nahj al-Balāgha* and those who consulted it during the two periods of "Stagnation" and "Renaissance" as a change in "Strategies of agency":

1) In the period of stagnation, the dominant act of commentators and readers was "Admonition," within the tradition of mirror-for-princes literature, aimed at softening the power of rulers.

2) During the Renaissance, the study of *Nahj al-Balāgha* (influenced by the Samarra School and constitutionalism) shifted toward the

"Delegitimization" of despotism and the establishment of new theoretical foundations.

1.4. Operational Definitions of Key Concepts

To avoid semantic ambiguity, the core concepts used in this research are defined within the selected theoretical framework (contextual) as follows:

- Epistemic rupture: Borrowing loosely from Gaston Bachelard's conceptualization, this refers to a sudden and fundamental change in the "System of questions." In other words, commentators in the Renaissance period not only offered different answers but posed fundamentally different questions compared to the previous period (for example, shifting from 'How should a ruler be advised?' to 'From where does a ruler's legitimacy derive?').
- Functional shift: This concept refers to a change in the "Social function of the text." Here, it denotes the transition of *Nahj al-Balāgha* from an "Intra-communal and ethical" text (for the spiritual refinement of elites) to an "Outward-oriented and political" text (for mobilizing the masses and shaping constitutional law). This shift encompasses not only commentators in the strict sense but all users and interpreters of *Nahj al-Balāgha*'s concepts.
- Systematic analysis: This term refers to the transition from a "Reductionist" method, explaining the text, sermon by sermon, in isolation, to a "Holistic" approach. In systematic analysis, the commentator attempts to assemble puzzle-like pieces from different parts of *Nahj al-Balāgha* (sermons, letters, and aphorisms) to extract a coherent intellectual school or an "Ideology" on a specific subject.

2. Literature Review

Despite valuable bibliographic studies that introduce and describe works related to *Nahj al-Balāgha*, most remain at a descriptive and cataloging level, typically answering the question ‘What works have been written?’ The question of "Why" and "How" these writings evolved, namely, the relationship between the structure and motives of these texts and the political-social discourses dominant in each era, remains a significant analytical gap.

Research on works related to *Nahj al-Balāgha* can be classified into three main categories: First category: Bibliographic and cataloging works.

This group includes works such as "*Masādir Nahj al-Balāgha*" (Sayyid ‘Abd al-Zahrā al-Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb), "Commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāgha*," (Ḥusayn Jumu‘a ‘Āmilī) "*Nahj al-Balāgha* Bibliography," (Reza Ostadi) "Sun Fountain," (Mostafa Delshad Tehrani, 2013 AD/1392 SH) and "*Nahj al-Balāgha* through the Centuries." (Abd al-Aziz Tabatabaei) These works introduce manuscripts, commentators, and authors. They form the foundation of historical research but, by nature, generally lack content-based and discursive analysis of the contexts in which commentaries emerged.

Second category: Studies focused on a single commentary or commentator.

These investigations offer in-depth analysis of a specific work (such as the commentaries of Lahiji, *Khū’ī*, or ‘*Abduh*). However, this

160 approach does not provide a comprehensive and continuous picture of

the tradition's "Evolutionary trajectory" as a whole.

Third category: Historical-analytical studies.

These works attempt to analyze the commentary tradition within a specific historical context. The thesis, "The Place of *Nahj al-Balāgha* in the Political Thought of the Safavid Era," (Maryam Amouei) and the article, "Analysis of the Development of Commentary Writing on *Nahj al-Balāgha* in the Safavid Period," (Ranjesh et al.) are examples that focus on the Safavid era. While these studies confirm a functional transformation in the use of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, the research gap addressed by the present study remains, since both limit their analysis to the Safavid period.

The blind spot in existing research is the absence of a continuous analysis of the "Transitional period" (from the fall of the Safavids through the Qajar and Constitutional eras to the eve of the Islamic Revolution). Many studies overlook the post-Safavid period due to the scarcity of works and, after mentioning major commentaries such as *Khū'ī's Minhāj al-Barā'a* in the Qajar period, jump directly to the Islamic Revolution. By focusing on this "Missing link," the present study argues that understanding contemporary *Nahj al-Balāgha* scholarship is impossible without recognizing the "Discursive turn" that occurred in the Samarra School and the Constitutional era, namely the shift from individual ethics to political interpretation.

3. Commentary Writing from the Post-Safavid Period to the Pre-Constitutional Era

Commentary writing up to the Safavid era passed through three major phases:

- First phase: Formation and early stage, from the compilation of *Nahj al-Balāgha* until the early 7th century AH (around 610 AH).
- Second phase: Flourishing of classical commentary writing, from the early 7th century to the 9th century AH (610–900 AH).
- Third phase: Transformation in the style of commentaries, roughly concurrent with the Safavid era (906–1135 AH) (Ranjesh et al., 2025 AD/1404 SH).

After the fall of Isfahan (1135 AH), Iran entered a period of political instability (Afsharid and Zand dynasties), followed by Qajar despotism. In this context, the commentary tradition declined, a stage that may be termed the fourth phase: the period of stagnation. The following sections examine this phase and the subsequent period up to the eve of the Iranian Islamic Revolution (the fifth phase).

3.1. Cultural-Social Context of the Stagnation Period and Major Commentaries

Politically, this era was marked by weak and unstable governments, insecurity, economic disorder, the despotism of certain rulers, policies of fear and intimidation, and external pressures, producing a difficult situation in Iran (Ravandi, 1975 AD/1354 SH: 2, 438-582). Religious and scholarly centers also experienced decline and, with few exceptions, lacked vitality (Paktachi, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 9, 763).

This unsettled condition, marked by fluctuations, persisted until the late Naseri era (1275 SH/1313 AH). In the present study, this

162 historical span, sharing general and similar characteristics, is treated as

a distinct period, and commentary writing on *Nahj al-Balāgha* is examined independently within it. Within this setting, the tradition of commentary on *Nahj al-Balāgha* entered a phase of relative decline and functional shift lasting roughly 180 years (from the fall of Isfahan to the eve of the Constitutional movement), which can be termed the period of stagnation. Although the limited commentaries produced reflected the social needs of their time, they did not bring about a major transformation in the field.

Some of the most important commentators of this period, whose works represent its general features, are listed below.

Table 1. Typology of commentaries and notable works of the stagnation period (post-Safavid to Naseri)

Dominant feature: reproduction of tradition, selective writing, and the dominance of the "Mirror-for-princes" paradigm

No.	Commentator / Author (Death)	Title of Work	Typology	Discursive Function and Distinctive Feature
1	Mirza Muhammad Baqer Lahiji (1832 AD/1248 AH)	Commentary an translation of Nahj al-Balāghah	Comprehensive Commentary (Persian)	Legitimizing the monarchy; written by order of the Qajar Shah with Mirror for Princes (<i>Andarznamah</i>) approach and promoting kingly ethics.
2	Sayyid Abdullah Shubbar (1817 AD/1232 AH)	<i>Nukhbat al-Sharhayn</i>	Summary and Selection	Imitation and repetition; a selection from two classical commentaries without specific discursive innovation.
3	Mirza Ibrahim Dunbali Khoei (1907 AD/1325 AH)	<i>a-Durrah al-Najafīyyah</i>	Interwoven Commentary (Arabic)	Facilitation; summarizing complex theological discussions for the traditional seminary audience (influenced

No.	Commentator / Author (Death)	Title of Work	Typology	Discursive Function and Distinctive Feature
				by the <i>Akhbārī-Uṣūlī</i> atmosphere).
4	Mirza Ahmad Waqar Shirazi (1881 AD/1298 AH)	<i>Rumūz al-Imārah</i>	Poetic Translation (Letter 53)	Court literature; translation of the Covenant of <i>Mālik Ashtar</i> to be presented to Qajar princes for teaching the etiquette of leadership.
5	Muhammad ibn Husayn Hamadani (1891 AD/1308 AH)	<i>Hidāyāt al-Husām</i>	Thematic Commentary (Letter 53)	Traditional statecraft; focusing on the Covenant of <i>Mālik Ashtar</i> as a text for "Regulating the relationship between the King and the Subject."

3.2. Characteristics of Commentary Writing in the Stagnation Period

Commentaries of this period shared common dominant features, often rooted in the historical and socio-cultural context. Among the most important:

3.2.1. Noticeable Decline in Commentary Writing (Quantity and Quality) and the Emergence of a Stagnation phase

During this period, there was a clear reduction in the production of commentaries and works on *Nahj al-Balāgha*. A general survey of bibliographies indicates that fewer than 30 commentary-related texts were produced over roughly two centuries, most of them selective works or focusing on specific sections of the text. Bibliographic analysis shows that, in addition to previously mentioned works, about eleven commentaries were devoted to the letter of *Mālik Ashtar*

sermon, two to Letter 31, and two critical studies of earlier commentaries, while the remainder consisted of selected texts, brief or abridged commentaries, and free translations. Therefore, the lack of producing fresh and strong content, reliance on multiple or selective abridgments of earlier commentaries, and less commitment to writing commentaries are considered among the characteristics of this period. Analyzing this relative hiatus cannot be completed merely by "Counting the small number of works"; rather, one must ask why, in the interval between the fall of Isfahan and the emergence of the Samarra school, the production of distinguished commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāgha* (unlike the Safavid era) stopped or became greatly diminished. This research considers two main factors involved: first, the political instability, disordered atmosphere, and social turmoil in Iran previously mentioned; second, the "Dominance of *Akhhbārī* thought" over scholarly centers in the 11th and 12th centuries AH.

During this period, the *Akhhbārī* current, following prominent figures such as Mirza Muhammad Amin Astarabadi (d. 1036 AH), regarded rational and Ijtihadi interpretations of religious texts as forbidden or at least undesirable and emphasized "Pure textualism." Since *Nahj al-Balāgha* is a text rich in metaphors, complex theological sermons on divine unity, and rational discussions, commenting on it required the tools of "Reason" and "Ijtihad." The dominance of *Akhhbārī* thinking, which considered the "Apparent meanings of narrations" sufficient, effectively closed the door to analytical commentary writing. By framing the debate as **165**

"Reason/transmission" and rejecting the "Rational and philosophical sciences" in favor of strict textualism, the *Akhhbārī* approach led to a kind of "Intellectual stagnation" in scholarly circles. By discrediting "Ijtihad" and emphasizing "Caution" in understanding texts, this current practically blocked any interpretive innovation (including analytical commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāgha*) and directed scholars solely toward collecting narrations (hadith compilations) (Kermaninasab and Abutalebi, 2024 AD/1403 SH: 54-55).

Thus, it is observed that in this period the scholarly efforts of scholars shifted, rather than toward "Commentary and explanation" (which flourished in the revival period under the *Uṣūlīs*), toward "Narrative compilations," completing hadith encyclopedias, or producing "Literal translations." Therefore, the "Hiatus" of this period did not mean neglect of the words of Imam Ali; rather, it was the product of a "Macro-level outlook" that confined understanding of the text to its transmission and did not permit entry into the spheres of "Political critique" or "System-building." In fact, the dominance of *Akhhbārī* discourse, by promoting a kind of "Superficiality" and "Avoidance of rational reflection," also cast its shadow over the broader cultural and artistic life of society, shifting audience taste from "Deep analysis" to "Literalism." This, in turn, compelled commentators on *Nahj al-Balāgha* to produce simpler, narrative works rather than argumentative commentaries in order to gain visibility (Alizadeh et al., 2023 AD/1402 SH: 560).

166 After a long time, this epistemic lock was broken with the victory

of the *Uṣūlī* school (through Vahid Behbahani and later Shaykh Ansari in Najaf), and subsequently in the Samarra school.

3.2.2. Abridgment and Selective Writing

As is evident from statistics on concise commentaries of this period, writing abridged works and selectively explaining passages of *Nahj al-Balāgha* was the prevailing trend of the era. Thus, commentaries that selectively addressed sections of *Nahj al-Balāgha* constituted the dominant form of writing related to it. The commentary of Nawab Lahiji, one of the notable commentaries of the period, although written by royal command and by a distinguished scholar, in many instances sufficed merely to translate the phrases of *Nahj al-Balāgha*; his reliance on translation in Letter 53 serves as clear evidence of this claim (Nawab Lahiji, n.d.: 270-281).

This approach may have stemmed from a "Change of audience," "Social difficulties" (which shifted priorities across social strata), and the commentators' and writers' concern for "Deliberate simplification" in produced texts. Such a tendency paved the way for transforming the text's function from a specialized theological source into a general moral-ethical text.

3.2.3. Imitation, Extensive Use of Earlier Commentaries, and a Lack of New Content Production

In this period, commentators and researchers of *Nahj al-Balāgha* drew on the legacy of the 7th and 8th centuries, especially the two commentaries of *Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd* and *Ibn Maytham*, through abridgment, translation, combination, and critique. An example of

such works is *Nukhbat al-Sharḥayn* by Sayyid ‘Abdullāh Shubbar (Ostadi, 1980 AD/1359 SH: 43).

Lahiji likewise sometimes used the opinions and statements of *Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd* and *Ibn Maytham* in his commentary, quoting or critiquing them in accordance with his Shi‘i perspective (Nawab Lahiji, n.d.: 26, 132, 290).

Similarly, the commentary *al-Durra al-Najafīyya* by Dunbuli Khuei, which abridges and selects from *Ibn Maytham*’s commentary to facilitate understanding of *Nahj al-Balāgha* (Dunbuli Khuei, n.d.: 2), represents another instance of reliance on earlier commentaries and summarization during this period.

These approaches show that the hiatus was not an era of producing new thought or extensive content in *Nahj al-Balāgha* studies, but rather a period of rearranging and simplifying the legacy of the past for new audiences.

3.2.4. Political Patronage of Commentaries on Nahj al-Balāgha

A number of well-known commentaries of this era were written at the suggestion of rulers or to gain their favor. Mirza Muhammad Baqir Lahiji composed his commentary and translation in the name of Fath Ali Shah Qajar and by his order (Nawab Lahiji, n.d.: 2). Nasr Allah Dezfuli wrote the book "*Mazhar al-Bayyināt*" (a translation of *Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd*’s commentary) by the order of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (Aqa Buzurg Tehrani, 2024 AD/1403 SH: 21, 168). Muhammad Ibrahim Nawab Bada’i Negar (1299 AH) wrote a commentary and translation of the

168 Covenant of *Mālik Ashtar* in the name of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar.

Likewise, Muhammad b. Abdullah Nuri sent "*Hidāyat al-Sulūk*," together with the Covenant of *Mālik Ashtar*, to Naser al-Dīn Shah (Jafari, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 4, 505). Mirza Ahmad Vaqar (1298 AH) translated and commented on the covenant under the title "*Rumūz al-Imāra*" for Ehtesham al-Dawla and Farhad Mirza; in its introduction, after verses on divine unity and praise of the Prophet, he devoted several pages to praising the king, Moʿtamad al-Dawla, and Ehtesham al-Dawla (Vaqar Shirazi, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 11-18).

When numerous works are produced in this manner, by command or patronage of rulers, it indicates that the text was defined within the structure of power (for example, as advice to the king), rather than formed against that structure.

3.2.5. The Dominance of the Advice-literature Approach

The reduction in comprehensive commentaries in this period did not mean a complete halt to reflection on *Nahj al-Balāgha* or to writing about it; rather, the orientation of these reflections shifted in accordance with the needs and conditions of the time. The turbulent period after the Safavids was marked by political instability and despotism. In such an atmosphere, the tradition of "Mirror-for-princes" literature or "Statecraft manuals," rooted in the late Safavid era, was produced in forms suited to contemporary needs. In this context, the Covenant of *Mālik Ashtar*, being the most complete and coherent Shiʿi text on governance, justice, and the rights of subjects, became a focal point. The large number of independent writings on this covenant in this period (comprising about one-third of all writings

related to *Nahj al-Balāgha*) shows that *Nahj al-Balāgha* was increasingly reread by thinkers as a "Practical charter for reforming government" through selective interpretation.

These commentaries and translations, often dedicated to kings, princes, and government elites, represented efforts by scholars and literati to present an Alavid model of just governance to contemporary rulers in a manner suitable to the closed and authoritarian climate of the time. This approach prepared the ground for the emergence of a broader socio-political reading of *Nahj al-Balāgha* in the following period. The "Advice-oriented" reading of *Nahj al-Balāgha* in this era is not based merely on quantitative data (the frequency of commentaries on the Covenant of *Mālik Ashtar*) but on analysis of the "Interactive context between commentator and ruler." Unlike the Constitutional period, when commentaries were written to critique the structure of power, in the hiatus period most texts, especially prominent commentaries (such as Lahiji's commentary, *Maḥṣar al-Bayyināt*, and *Rumūz al-Imāra*), were produced within a patronage relationship.

Content analysis of these works, particularly their prefaces, shows that commentators, assuming the "Legitimacy of monarchy," reread *Nahj al-Balāgha* as a "Charter of the ethics of governance." In this interpretation, the aim of the text and its commentary was not to change the structure of government but to "Educate a just ruler" and "Stabilize power." For example, in Lahiji's commentary, he explicitly states that he wrote it not from personal motivation but by "Order of the ruler." While offering abundant praise of the Qajar shah and using

laudatory expressions such as the "Sultan of Islam, God's shadow over mankind," "...May God strengthen the pillars of his rule...", he interprets the words of Imam Ali as instruments for "Strengthening the kingdom," "Care of subjects," and benefiting that era (Nawab Lahiji, n.d.: 2, 169). This approach is also evident within the commentary itself. For instance, in translating the wisdom "*Man Malaka Ista'thara*," he writes: "Whoever becomes king should choose everything, that is, select the best of all things." (Nawab Lahiji, n.d.: 308) Likewise, in translating the wisdom "*al-Sultān Waza'atu Allah fī Arḍih*," he writes: "Kings are God's restrainers and overseers on God's earth." (Nawab Lahiji, n.d.: 322)

The frequent use of the word "King" in translating and explaining the phrases of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, alongside terms such as "Imam," "Governor," and "Ruler," clearly demonstrates this approach. Examples include: "...Appointed by the Imam and the king...", (Nawab Lahiji, n.d.: 48) "Among those rights is the right of the governor and king over the subjects, and the right of the subjects over the governor and king, a duty that God has made obligatory...", (Nawab Lahiji, n.d.: 193) and so on.

Lahiji's translation in explaining one of the famous phrases of Sermon 216 "The subjects will not be righteous except through the righteousness of the rulers, and the rulers will not be righteous except through the uprightness of the subjects"¹ is noteworthy in this regard: "So the condition of the subjects cannot be set right except by the rectification of the king's affairs, and the king's affairs cannot be

1. This Sermon in the Lahiji Commentator is Sermon 207.

rectified except by the correctness and uprightness of the subjects' condition; that is, the condition of the subjects, agriculture, cultivation, trade, and the like, will not prosper except through the king's just governance, fairness, adjudication, authority, repelling enemies, and the king's supervision of the subjects; and the army will not be complete except through the obedience and compliance of the subjects with the king's commands and prohibitions." (Nawab Lahiji, n.d.: 193)

This tendency is also evident in Muhammad ibn Husayn Hamadani's commentary titled "*Hidāyāt al-Ḥussām*," written in 1308 AH (Hezar, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 147). In the introduction, he explicitly states that the book's purpose is to present the etiquette of governance for the ruling sultan of Kermanshah. After recounting a dream connected to the idea of writing the book, the author writes in the preface: "...I inferred that a book on the etiquette of governance, containing sound principles and firm regulations, should be written and presented to his joyful presence, so that, God willing, it may serve as a model for the governors of the ages and the rulers of lands..." (Hamadani, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 11-13)

From this perspective, the focus on the Covenant of *Mālik Ashtar*, alongside a small number of relatively complete commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāgha* in this period, should not be seen as accidental; rather, it was a conscious attempt to reproduce the Iranian-Islamic tradition of "Mirrors for princes," in which "Justice" and "Respect for the rights of subjects" were defined as ethical virtues necessary for the

4. Commentary Writing in the 14th Century: The Era of the Renaissance (From Roughly the Constitutional Period until Before the Islamic Revolution)

The earliest signs of change in the thoughts and behavior of the Iranian people had already appeared during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah, before the Constitutional Revolution (Shamim, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 310), and gradually expanded and deepened due to various political, domestic, and foreign factors. The emergence of reformist ideas in the mid-Qajar period, encounters with the Western world, exposure to the Industrial Revolution and its advances through foreign contacts, resistance to foreign colonial influence that had long overshadowed Iran (Madani, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 1, 64), and struggles against internal despotism all contributed to these changes. The occurrence of major national movements, such as the Tobacco Protest and the Constitutional Revolution, which highlighted the role of the people and religious scholars, and the subsequent decline of the Qajar dynasty created a new, tense discursive environment in Iran. Consequently, in the late 13th and early 14th centuries AH, Iranian society and the Islamic world underwent profound intellectual and political transformations unlike those of the earlier period. In this dynamic context, *Nahj al-Balāgha* also emerged from the stagnation of the hiatus period and, through new intellectual readings, acquired an entirely new function and renewed attention.

4.1. The Samarra school and the transformation in attention to *Nahj al-Balāgha*

After the *Uṣūlī* School, through the efforts of Wahid Behbahani and **173**

Shaykh Ansari, succeeded in overcoming the rigidity of *Akhbārīsm* and reopening the door to Ijtihad and rationalism, the ground was prepared for the emergence of the Samarra school. The first signs of a “renaissance” in attention to *Nahj al-Balāgha* cannot be found solely in the fervor of the Constitutional Revolution; rather, their roots must be traced to pioneering intellectual centers in the late 13th century. Among these, the "Samarra school," under the leadership of Mirza Muhammad Hasan Shirazi (d. 1312 AH), played a key yet often overlooked role. Until the late 13th century AH, Samarra essentially had no Imami seminary for religious education. Mirza Shirazi's migration in 1291 AH from Najaf to Samarra turned the city into a base for Shi'i scholarship and the teaching of Shi'i jurisprudence and legal theory. The transfer of Mirza's scholarly circle, along with other prominent scholars from Najaf and Karbala, to Samarra over roughly twenty years, nearly a generation, transformed Samarra into a major center of attention for scholars and clerics (a serious rival to Najaf) as well as for domestic and foreign political actors (Paktchi, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 9, 763).

The personality and political ideas of Mirza Shirazi, as well as Samarra's position, reinforce the view that he and the Shi'i clergy of Iraq sought to play a more active role in the region's political developments rather than confining their activity to traditional areas of influence in southern Iraq (Paktchi, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 9, 763). In this context, after several years of consolidating Mirza's position in Samarra, the issue of the tobacco monopoly concession (the Régie contract) granted by Naser al-Din Shah and the subsequent tobacco

prohibition fatwa in 1309 AH, occurred.

The issuance of the tobacco prohibition fatwa and its impact on Iranian society, an example of the presence and influence of religious scholars (at that time centered first in Samarra and then Najaf) in Iran's political affairs (Madani, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 1, 64-76), elevated Mirza Shirazi's socio-political standing. The Shi'i religious authority in Samarra, previously regarded mainly for its scholarly and juristic prestige, after this event became a powerful socio-political actor, even in the eyes of colonial powers (Goli Zavarah, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 73). Consequently, his actions and programs in Samarra received increasing attention.

Mirza Shirazi, who stood at the center of public attention and domestic and foreign sensitivities, devoted special attention to *Nahj al-Balāgha*, and it is possible that his political ideas and conduct were influenced by its teachings. By his order, each day before the beginning of lessons in jurisprudence and legal theory, portions of *Nahj al-Balāgha* were read by one or two students. Over time, this practice led to the book being more widely discussed and increasingly emphasized in seminary settings (Educational System of the Samarra School, 1992 AD/1371 SH).

This approach represented a significant shift at a time when *Nahj al-Balāgha* was largely viewed as a source of advice to kings or limited to specialized theological discussion. The attention of a leading Shi'i authority to this work signified recognition of its social, political, and educational potential to shape a generation of aware and responsible scholars. In effect, the Samarra school, by linking

jurisprudence, politics, and Alavid ethics, prepared the ground for the transition from the concise, advice-oriented *Nahj al-Balāgha* of the Qajar period to the "Revolutionary *Nahj al-Balāgha*" of the Constitutional era, serving as a bridge between the two.

The students and disciples of Mirza Shirazi soon spread the attention of Mirza, and the method learned in the Samarra school throughout the regions where they were present. As a result, *Nahj al-Balāgha* was raised on a broader scale in the seminaries of Lebanon, Qom, and Isfahan, and its influence continued. This attention reached its peak during the Constitutional era, transforming *Nahj al-Balāgha* into an inspirational source for limiting despotism and articulating the nation's rights. With its numerous transformations, this era brought an end to the long previous period of stagnation and reshaped the historical trajectory of commentary writing.

4.2. Introducing Commentators of the Renaissance Era

Some of the commentators of this era and the types of their commentaries are introduced in Table 2.

Table 2. Typology of influential commentaries and works of the Renaissance period (from the Constitutional era to the Islamic Revolution)
Dominant features: pluralism, emergence of "Political Theology," consolidation of textual authenticity, and the beginning of "Systematic Analysis"

No.	Commentator / Author (Death)	Title of Work	Typology	Discursive Function and Methodological Innovation
1	Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh (d. 1905 AD/1323 AH)	<i>Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah</i>	Lexical-Literary Commentary	Unitarianism and Civilization-building; consciously transcending historical conflicts and introducing <i>Nahj al-</i>

No.	Commentator / Author (Death)	Title of Work	Typology	Discursive Function and Methodological Innovation
				<i>Balāghah</i> as a common Islamic heritage for the awakening of the Ummah.
2	Mīrzā Ḥabīb Allāh Khū'ī (d. 1906 AD/1324 AH)	<i>Minhāj al-Barā'ah</i>	Comprehensive Encyclopedia	Revival of Specialization; returning to the tradition of precise and <i>Ijtihādī</i> commentary with an engineered structure against superficiality.
3	Ākhūnd Khurāsānī (d. 1911 AD/1329 AH)	Commentary of the first Sermon	Seminary Lecture	Educational Formalization; introducing <i>Nahj al-Balāghah</i> into the Najaf seminary curriculum and linking jurisprudence with Alawid teachings.
4	Mirza Nā'īnī (d. 1936 AD/1355 AH)	<i>Tanbīh al-Ummah wa Tanzīh al-Millah</i>	Political Treatise (Applied)	Establishing Constitutional Law; citing <i>Nahj al-Balāghah</i> to "Delegitimize despotism" and prove the principles of Constitutionalism.
5	Nāẓim al-Mulk Ḍiyā'ī (d. 1933 AD/1352 AH)	<i>Siyāsatnāmah</i> (Poetic)	Political Translation (Contemporary)	Bureaucratic Reforms; translation of the Covenant by a diplomat to present a "Manifesto for modern state administration" (transition from advice to law).
6	Shaykh Ismā'īl Maḥallātī (d. 1924 AD/1343 AH)	<i>al-La'ālī al-Marbūṭah</i>	Jurisprudential-Political Treatise	Changing the Nature of Power; legal interpretation of the Covenant of <i>Mālik Ashtar</i> to prove the transformation of the "Owner-Ruler" to the "Trustee/Agent Ruler."

No.	Commentator / Author (Death)	Title of Work	Typology	Discursive Function and Methodological Innovation
7	Javād Fāḍil (d. 1961 AD/1340 SH)	‘Alī Speech (AS)	Free and Literary Translation	Public Literature; simplifying concepts for the general audience and the urban middle class with fluent and non-specialized prose.
8	Fayḍ al-Islām (d. 1985 AD/1364 SH)	Translation and commentary of <i>Nahj al-Balāghah</i>	Persian Interwoven Commentary	Popularization; making the complete text of <i>Nahj al-Balāghah</i> accessible to the general Persian-speaking public and removing it from the monopoly of the elite.
9	George Jordac (d. 2002 AD)	<i>Ṣawt al-‘Adālah al-Insānīyah</i>	Thematic Analysis (Trans-denominational)	Humanistic Approach; rereading <i>Nahj al-Balāghah</i> based on modern concepts of "Human Rights" and "Social Justice" (influential on Iran's intellectual sphere).
10	Sayyid ‘Abd al-Zahrā’ Ḥusaynī (d. 1993 AD/1414 AH)	<i>Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah</i>	Documentary Research	Defense of Authenticity; scientific response to doubts regarding the attribution of <i>Nahj al-Balāghah</i> and consolidating its narrative status.
11	Shahid Murtaza Mutahhari (d. 1979 AD/1358 SH)	Journey on <i>Nahj al-Balāghah</i>	Systematic Analysis	School-based System-building; transition from sequential commentary to "Extracting a worldview" and presenting <i>Nahj al-Balāghah</i> as a coherent socio-political "Ideology."

The data in Table 2 indicate a "Functional pluralism" in the history of commentary writing. In this period, *Nahj al-Balāghah* is

simultaneously active on several fronts:

- 1) Political front: (Naeini, Mahallati, Ziaei) that transforming the text into "Law."
- 2) Public front: (Fayḍul Islām, Javad Fazel) that bringing the text to the masses. Dozens of minor and selective commentaries were also produced, with the printing industry playing a role in their spread.
- 3) Scholarly-research front: (Khu'ī, 'Abd al-Zahrā Khaṭīb, Maadikhah) that strengthening documentary and thematic foundations.
- 4) Ideological front: ('Abduh, Jordac, Motahhari) that extracting from the text a "School of thought" for the modern world.

This diversity shows that in the Renaissance period, *Nahj al-Balāgha* shifted from a "Sacred shelf book" to a "Vibrant source of social knowledge."

4.3. Characteristics of Commentaries in the Renaissance Period (Transition from Traditional Methods to Modern Approaches)

This phase of commentary writing, reaching the threshold of the Iranian Islamic Revolution (early 1970s), should be described as a period of transition from traditional commentary methods to modern approaches. It has notable features, among the most important of which are the following.

4.3.1. Revival and Renewed Life of *Nahj al-Balāgha* and Its Commentaries and Translations

The Constitutional era up to the eve of the Islamic Revolution should be considered the era of "Revival and renewal" of *Nahj al-Balāgha*. **179**

This conclusion derives from preliminary statistical and geographical analysis of the commentaries produced in this period.

Abundance of works: After a period of relative stagnation, this era, lasting about 110 years (half the previous period), witnessed a surge in the number of commentaries, translations, selections, and studies related to *Nahj al-Balāgha*. According to available sources, roughly 150 commentaries, translations, and abridgments, partial, complete, or selective, were produced during this century-long period. Considering the shorter duration compared with the previous period, the increase is even more striking, indicating a "Return" and "Rediscovery" of *Nahj al-Balāgha*.

Geographical diversity: Writers and commentators from various parts of the Islamic world engaged in explaining and interpreting *Nahj al-Balāgha* in ways suited to their contexts. Linguistically, the works of this era also displayed greater diversity than earlier periods. Altogether, this demonstrates widespread geographical attention to *Nahj al-Balāgha* during the Renaissance.

4.3.2. Responsiveness to Contemporary Needs and a Socio-political Orientation

Commentaries of the Renaissance period were strongly influenced by the social issues and political approaches of their time.

Influence of political and social transformations: This period coincided with political and social movements, including constitutionalism in Iran, anti-colonial struggles in Arab countries, and the growth of social and political awareness across much of the

of *Nahj al-Balāgha* received particular attention, reflecting widespread concerns across the Islamic world. For example, in his commentary on Sermon 25, 'Abduh emphasizes the importance of unity and unified leadership, viewing attention to these as a cause of strength and reform of current affairs ('Abduh, n.d.: 1, 60). Similarly, Fayḍul Islām, in part of his commentary on the Covenant of *Mālik Ashtar*, writes:

"For this reason, whether a ruler is Muslim, like 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, or non-Muslim, like Anushirvan, every leader of a people must act so that a good name and noble remembrance remain as a legacy, so that people pray for him and thereby he may attain everlasting felicity." (Fayḍul Islām, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 5, 994)

Emphasis on practical concepts: This period should be seen as the beginning of greater attention to the practical application of *Nahj al-Balāgha*'s teachings, especially in its political and social dimensions. Social justice, the rights of the people, the duties of rulers, Islamic unity, and the necessity of Muslim awakening were recurring themes in the introductions and texts of the commentaries of this era. The writings of 'Abduh, Motahhari, and numerous monographs, particularly on the commentary on the Covenant of *Mālik Ashtar*, manifested in socio-political transformations, and their themes were transformed into revolutionary slogans or directives for governance. Even the choice of titles with political and modern connotations for such works in that period indicates a conscious effort to replace traditional monarchical models of rule with Alavid models of

governance. A look at the titles of some works related to the Covenant of *Mālik al-Ashtar* in this era clearly confirms this trend:

- "Book of Politics": Mirza Jahangir Khan Nazem al-Molk Zia'i (1973 AD/1352 SH);
- "Manual of Government": Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani (1934 AD/1314 SH);
- "The Foundations of Politics in Establishing Leadership": Shaykh Muhammad ibn Isma'il Vaezi Kajuri (1974 AD/1354 SH);
- "Manual of Government": Shaykh Muhammad Ali Vaez Tehrani Hemmat Abadi;
- "The Title of Leadership": Sayyid Ali Akbar, son of Sultan al-Ulama (1944 AD/1324 SH);
- "The Blessed Decree": Javad Fazel Amoli (1961 AD/1381 AH);
- "Muqtabas al-Sīyāsa wa Sīyāq al-Rīyāsa": Muhammad 'Abduh;
- "The Shepherd and the Flock": Tawfiq al-Fikiki, etc. (Ja'fari, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 4, 506).

As an example, the following verses from the introduction to "Book of Politics" by Mirza Jahangir Khan Nazem al-Molk Ziaei clearly illustrate the aims and concepts intended by the commentators of that era:

"For this purpose, he composed it,

So that the rulers of the world; may learn the art of governance; from that preface of statecraft; the world is adorned with justice and fairness, delivering humankind from oppression; fortunate is that wise sovereign; who hangs this jewel upon his ear? He cherishes the

subjects by this measure; and thus excels over other kings." (Ja'fariyan, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 207–208) Moreover, the themes and concepts of *Nahj al-Balāgha* became central to the discussions and speeches of the Constitutional revolutionaries. In a passage reported by Nazem al-Islam Kermani about the content of one revolutionary gathering, it is stated: "Look at the book *Nahj al-Balāgha*, where *Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib* (AS) in conversation with his son Imam Hasan says: "O! My son, do not be the slave of another when God has made you free, that is, my son, do not be enslaved by anyone else, for God has created you free, and he also said [...] How long shall we wretches remain bound in servitude to the king, rulers, and ministers?" (Nazem al-Islam Kermani, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 1, 183)

Nahj al-Balāgha as a charter for movement and reform: Many commentators of this era viewed *Nahj al-Balāgha* as more than a purely historical text, considering it a living and inspiring book for solving contemporary societal problems, especially political reforms and revolutions confronting corruption and social stagnation. Thus, studies of *Nahj al-Balāgha* in this period clearly reveal reformist current and socio-political influences in its reinterpretation. On the one hand, many commentators and researchers of *Nahj al-Balāgha* were themselves revolutionaries and advocates of political and social reform, such as *Muhammad 'Abduh* in Egypt, *Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ* in Lebanon, and Martyr Motahhari in Iran. On the other hand, monographs (particularly during the Constitutional era) strongly reflected this orientation. The influence of *Nahj al-Balāgha* in Constitutional

literature extended beyond formal commentaries. For example, Mirza Na'ini's book "*Tanbīh al-Umma wa Tanzīh al-Milla*" (written 1327 AH), though not outwardly a commentary on *Nahj al-Balāgha*, made extensive use of its teachings and emphasized the practical application of its concepts in constitutionalism and the limitation of the ruler's authority. Drawing on the teachings of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, he stressed the necessity of justice (Naeini, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 55); presented the ruler's position as one of trusteeship rather than ownership, which would lead to the predation of subjects, and defined limits for it (Naeini, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 31, 33); and therefore described such a government as "Constitutional," "Responsible," and "Legal." (Na'ini, 1999 AD/1378: 35)

In this treatise he wrote: "It is self-evident that preserving order and safeguarding the domain and integrity of Islam is impossible except through organizing security and administrative forces and preparing internal and border capacities; and all these arrangements depend on correcting and regulating taxation, preventing its waste and misuse, and avoiding its expenditure on personal desires and tyrannical wills. The Master of the Successors, in the blessed decree issued to *Mālik Ashtar* when entrusting him with the governorship of Egypt, which contains general directives, stipulated regarding taxation: "Attend carefully to the matter of taxation in a way that benefits its people..." (Na'ini, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 122-123)

Another scholar of this era, Shaykh Isma'il Mahallati, in his **184** influential treatise "*al-La'ālī al-Marbūṭa*," clearly depicts the role of

the ruler using *Nahj al-Balāgha*. Whereas commentators of the period of stagnation read *Nahj al-Balāgha* and the Covenant of *Mālik Ashtar* as means of consolidating royal power, Mahallati, in discussing the necessity of consultation by the ruler, explicitly presents the letter of Amir al-Mu'minin to *Mālik Ashtar* as "The best evidence and document" proving the ruler's need to consult specialists and the limitation of his authority (Urvati Movaffaq and Raha'i, 2023 AD/1402 SH: 1016).

Citing the passage "Increase your study with scholars and your discussions with the wise," Mahallati shifts the nature of government in *Nahj al-Balāgha* from ownership to trusteeship and representation. Inspired by Alavid governance logic, he argues that the ruler is merely a trustee and guardian of people's rights, not their owner; therefore, if he departs from consultation and law (explicitly stated in the covenant), his legitimacy falls (Urvati Movaffaq and Raha'i, 2023 AD/1402 SH: 1021). This argument shows that within the paradigm of renewal, *Nahj al-Balāgha* is recognized as a tool for limiting power rather than justifying it, and thus stands in contrast to readings such as Lahiji's in the previous period, which regarded government as a divine gift and obedience as absolute.

4.3.3. Efforts to Universalize and Facilitate Access to *Nahj al-Balāgha*

Commentators of this era made special efforts to ensure public access to the teachings of *Nahj al-Balāgha*. Simplification of language: "Writing commentaries in clear, accessible language for broader audiences (in Iran, in Persian), a trend that had begun in earnest since

the Safavid period, became a common feature of this era. The book "Sayings of Ali" by Javad Fazel (1381 AH) and the translation and commentary of *Fayḍul Islām* (1405 AH) were among the works of this period that, with fluent prose and elegant style, attracted public attention and saw repeated printings. In addition, abridgements and selections of *Nahj al-Balāgha* passages were widely published and distributed.

Spread of translations: The complete translation, or translation of selected sections, of *Nahj al-Balāgha* and its commentaries into Persian and into international, non-Arabic languages (Urdu, French, English) increased during this period, with the aim of conveying its message to non-Arabic speakers and global audiences. One reason for this development was the expansion of international relations and the facilitation of exchanges among nations and intellectual traditions. In this period, roughly 80 translations (selected, partial, or complete) were produced¹. Of these, eight were in Urdu, four in English, three in French, one in Sindhi, one in Gujarati, and the remainder in Persian.

Increase in selections and thematic commentaries on specific sections: "Selecting and commenting on the most important and practically relevant parts of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, to facilitate study and focus on key messages, experienced a notable surge in this era. Examples include the commentary on the Covenant of *Mālik Ashtar* by Mirza Muhammad Hussein Isfahani, known as Forughi (1945 AD/1325 SH), and Muhammad Sadeq Tabrizi's commentary on Letter

31 of *Nahj al-Balāgha* titled "*Hudā al-Umam*." (Atardi, 2008 AD/1388 SH: 1, 554-555) The commentary of Akhund Khurasani on the first sermon of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, recorded by his student Abd al-Rasul Isfahani (Dirayati, 2023 AD/1402 SH: 214), should also be included in this category.

The abundance of thematic commentaries and selections had several causes, including: "The relevance of *Nahj al-Balāgha*'s themes to the needs and demands of the age; the political and social context; national awakenings and enlightenment movements; and the ease of publishing books due to industrial developments such as advances in printing and reproduction." Expansion of audiences and participation of diverse groups: "The writings of this period show that the audience of *Nahj al-Balāgha* expanded beyond seminarians and scholars. Numerous efforts were made to attract intellectuals, academics, and the general public to the text."

The production of commentaries or analyses by individuals with non-seminary expertise, such as in law and political science, demonstrates the entry of interested specialists from other disciplines into commentary writing, in line with their fields, thereby removing the book from the exclusive domain of religious academic centers. A prominent example is the work on *Nahj al-Balāgha* by Mirza Jahangir Khan Nazem al-Molk Zia'i, a diplomat. In addition to his poetic translation of Letter 53 under the title "*Siyasat Nameh*," he also versified Letter 31 under the name "*Haqiqat Nameh*." At the beginning of this poetic commentary, the following appears: "If you

are a man, heed this counsel, Strive to perfect your own being; know that from these counsels, good and evil, Refine all your morals thereby. Blessed is that noble youth who embraces this advice and discipline?" (Zia'i, 1952 AD/1331 SH: 14)

4.3.4. The Role of the Printing Industry in Generalizing the Use of *Nahj al-Balāgha*

Before this era, the general public mostly received its religious knowledge orally through sermons and speakers. However, the printing industry played an effective role in expanding literacy and raising the level of public thought and information. The growth of public literacy and printed works diversified the ways of acquiring knowledge and strengthened personal study in religious learning.

Printing, first widespread in Azerbaijan in Iran and later in Tehran, with lithography gradually replaced by typographic printing (Shamim, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 366), made the publication of works and books easier and broader possible. Naturally, this industrial leap led to greater abundance and accessibility of *Nahj al-Balāgha* commentaries and translations, as with other written works. Thus, the expansion of printing significantly contributed to the popularization of *Nahj al-Balāgha* and its commentaries among the general public, facilitating the spread of its teachings and concepts. Compared with earlier periods, when works were mainly manuscript-based and limited, this represented a major transformation brought about by industrial change in this era.

4.3.5. Diversity in Methodology and Approaches

188 The approaches and methods of commentary writing in this period

became highly diverse, moving beyond limited sequential or thematic commentaries. Continuation of the encyclopedic commentary tradition: Some commentaries continued the tradition of comprehensive works, producing detailed studies within a traditional framework including linguistic, literary, historical, theological, and philosophical discussions. An example is "*Minhāj al-Barā'a fī Sharh Nahj al-Balāgha*" by Mirza Habibollah Hashemi Khoei (1894 AD/1324 AH). Although the commentator passed away before completing it, the remainder was later finished by others. This work can be seen as representing efforts to revive the tradition of comprehensive commentary and scholarly specialization in the modern period.

Unlike the brief, translation-like commentaries of the Qajar era, Khu'ī presented a carefully structured methodology in the introduction to volume one, stating that each sermon would be analyzed across multiple layers, language, translation, grammar, subtle meanings, rhetorical truths, clarification of difficult concepts, explanation of structural complexities, grounding principles in Qur'anic verses, and embellishing chapters with narrations of the Imams, while also including many virtues and benefits absent from most previous commentaries (Hashemi Khoei, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 1, 6-9).

Emphasis on literary and rhetorical aspects: Some commentaries, especially in the Arab world, focused on the eloquence and rhetoric of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, the beauty of Imam Ali's speech, and the resolution of lexical difficulties. Examples include 'Abduh's commentary, "*Hall Lughāt Nahj al-Balāgha*" by Ejaz Husayn Badayuni, and the "Annotations

of *Marṣaʿfī*," who, like 'Abduh, wrote notes and lexical explanations (Atarodi, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 1, 508, and 554). Such works treated *Nahj al-Balāgha* as a text beyond sectarian belief and sometimes as a literary classic, contributing to its spread in non-Shi'i circles.

Reference to earlier commentaries (Shi'i and Sunni alike): "Commentators of this period, like those before them, paid special attention to classical works such as the commentary of *Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd* (Mu'tazili) and *Ibn Maytham Baḥrānī* (Shi'i) from the golden age of commentary writing, sometimes critiquing, completing, summarizing, or translating them." The emergence of analytical-thematic approaches: "Efforts to categorize and analyze the teachings of *Nahj al-Balāgha* thematically became evident in this period through works such as *A Survey of Nahj al-Balāgha* by Martyr Motahhari (1979 AD/1358 SH), and studies focused on specific topics, such as governance in the Covenant of *Mālik Ashtar*." Motahhari, presenting new and contemporary perspectives, wrote a series of concise thematic articles that later formed *A Survey of Nahj al-Balāgha*, a brief yet profound work that marked a turning point in the transition from sequential commentary to systematic analysis. With a philosophical outlook and by outlining a coherent intellectual framework based on *Nahj al-Balāgha*, he paved the way for thematic and ideological studies of the text in the contemporary period.

4.3.6. A More Serious Focus on Textual Authentication and the Defense of the Authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāgha*

190 Toward the end of this period, because of the growing circulation and

relative fame of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, doubts about it, especially questions of its chains of transmission and documentation, whose roots lay in earlier eras, were reinforced. The need to address these issues became so pressing that Martyr Motahhari, in the introduction to A Survey of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, counted it among the essential tasks surrounding the text, alongside clarifying the intellectual system of Imam Ali (AS) on various subjects (Motahhari, 2001 AD/1379 SH: 17).

The abundance of such doubts and the need to address them led to the emergence of documented, scholarly research aimed at proving the reliability and attribution of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, marking important foundational steps in consolidating its academic standing. The book "*Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāgha*" by Sayyid ‘Abd al-Zahra Husayni Khatib and "*Istinād*" by Imtiyaz Ali Khan Arshi are among the most successful and exemplary works in this field.

4.3.7. Using *Nahj al-Balāgha* as A Tool for Islamic Unity

One of the key reasons for the revival of *Nahj al-Balāgha* in this era was the special capacity and distinctive function that major reformers of the Muslim world attributed to it in promoting unity. At a time when the Muslim world faced the dual challenges of "Internal Decline" and "External Colonialism," thinkers such as Sayyid Jamal al-Din Asadabadi and his student Muhammad ‘Abduh sought a return to Islam’s authentic and rational sources to awaken Muslims and foster unity.

Although commentary writing by Sunni scholars was not unprecedented, the commentary of *Muhammad ‘Abduh*, had a major **191**

impact in introducing *Nahj al-Balāgha* to Sunni audiences and to non-Shi'i Arab countries, and after him the work continued to receive attention and further development (Amini, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 170). Likewise, the critical edition, research, and annotations of *Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ* influenced the spread of *Nahj al-Balāgha* to such an extent that today his edition is regarded as a standard text.

Perhaps one of the most important intellectual shifts of this period was the redefinition of *Nahj al-Balāgha* from a sectarian Shi'i text into a shared heritage for the entire Muslim community. Thus, 'Abduh's commentary was not merely a lexical explanation but a reformist project. In his introduction, he states that his goal was to acquaint the young Arab generation with their forgotten eloquence and wisdom so they could free themselves from blind imitation and intellectual decline ('Abduh, n.d.: 1, 11). He presents *Nahj al-Balāgha* as a supra-ethnic and supra-sectarian text embodying Islamic rationality, courage, and justice in their purest form, writing: "No seeker seeks anything but finds the best of it therein, and no aspiration crosses the mind but finds its most complete form within it." ('Abduh, n.d.: 1, 16) In his commentary, he avoids, as far as possible, entering sectarian disputes and explicitly notes that he does not attempt to Alavitate or criticize narrations concerning the question of the Imamate, leaving judgment to readers after considering known doctrinal principles and transmitted reports ('Abduh, n.d.: 1, 11). Where historical or disputed matters arise (Āli Kāsfīf al-Ghiṭā', 2012 AD/1433 AH: 11), he overlooks them, mentions the basic narrative

without judgment, or remains silent (cf. ‘Abduh, n.d.: 1, 25-32; 2, 17, 79). In practice, when possible, he interprets expressions in ways that relate to less controversial issues (Āli Kāsfī al-Ghiṭā’, 2012 AD/1433 AH: 43).

This approach transformed *Nahj al-Balāgha* from a specifically Shi‘i text into a shared heritage for the entire Muslim community and played an important role in intellectual rapprochement among schools of thought, using it as a tool to promote unity (cf. Hourani, 1983: 140-144). This reformist and unifying perspective had a deep and instructive impact on later researchers of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, both Shi‘i and Sunni, while also generating scholarly critique and discussion.

4.3.8. The Transition from Sequential Commentary to Systematic Analysis (The Systemic Approach)

One of the most important methodological breaks in this period was the shift from "Sequential, word-based commentary" to "Systemic, thematic rereading" (a holistic approach). In this perspective, *Nahj al-Balāgha* was no longer seen as a collection of scattered aphorisms but as pieces of a larger picture that must be assembled to form an intellectual school. This movement was not limited to a single figure but developed as an evolutionary process:

A) Political system-building: Mirza Na‘ini’s "*Tanbīh al-Umma*" may be considered an early step. Instead of line-by-line commentary, he conducted a comprehensive inductive reading of letters and sermons to extract the "Principles of Alavid governance" (such as supervision, equality, and consultation) in order to theorize

constitutionalism and a new political system (Na'ini, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 73ff.).

B) Human-social system-building (George Jordac): The well-known work Imam Ali (AS): The Voice of Human Justice although written outside Iran, belongs to the same period and re-reads *Nahj al-Balāgha* through broad concepts such as freedom, justice, and human rights; its translation gradually became well known in Iran.

C) Ideological system-building: This process reached maturity in Motahhari's A Survey of *Nahj al-Balāgha*. Motahhari sought to uncover a coherent "Social philosophy" and "Worldview" within the text. Instead of sequential commentary, he analyzed topics thematically and systematically, aiming to present an integrated picture of Ali's thought based on *Nahj al-Balāgha*: "Two tasks are now necessary regarding *Nahj al-Balāgha*: one is deep reflection on its content so that the school of Ali in the diverse issues raised in it becomes precisely clear, something the Islamic community greatly needs..." (Motahhari, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 17)

This systemic perspective laid the foundations of contemporary *Nahj al-Balāgha* studies and opened the way for extracting political, economic, and social theories from the text. Even within the same era, numerous early signs of this trend appeared, for example, Ayatollah Khamenei's lecture series in 1973–74 in Mashhad, where *Nahj al-Balāgha* was reread as a text for deriving the "General outline of Islamic thought" and principles of social struggle. The writing, compilation, and research of the large collection "Sun Culture" by Abdolmajid Mo'adikhah also began in this period (around 1972).

Therefore, the claim of "Systematic analysis" does not imply the disappearance of sequential commentaries; rather, it indicates the emergence of a new genre in the literature of engaging with *Nahj al-Balāgha*, aimed at uncovering the logic of governance, ontology, and other themes from Imam Ali's discourse. It can be seen as a methodological response to the era's need for "Establishing government" and "Administering society" based on the Alavid model. It should be noted that fully systematic commentaries are largely products of the post-Islamic Revolution period. Numerous works then appeared with titles such as Management in *Nahj al-Balāgha*, Economics in *Nahj al-Balāgha*, Sociology of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, and others, all rooted in the same systemic perspective. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that pre-revolution works planted the seeds of this type of scholarly research on *Nahj al-Balāgha*.

Conclusion

An examination of the evolution of commentary writing on *Nahj al-Balāgha* from the fall of the Safavid dynasty to the threshold of the Islamic Revolution reveals a trajectory closely intertwined with profound political, social, and intellectual transformations.

Discourse analysis and bibliographical study indicate a transformation in the relationship between "Text" and "Power." Moving beyond purely bibliographic approaches and employing a contextual framework, this research demonstrates that the history of commentary writing across these two and a half centuries was not a linear path but the scene of an epistemic rupture:

1. At the level of textual function (agency):

The findings show that during the period of stagnation (post-Safavid), amid widespread political and social weakness and under the dominance of *Akhhbārī* discourse and patronage structures, *Nahj al-Balāgha* functioned in a "Stabilizing" manner. Commentators of this era (such as Lahiji), by reducing the text to an "Ethical advisory manual," sought to "Soften despotism" rather than negate it. In the revival period (from the Constitutional era onward), however, with the emergence of the Samarra school and the entry of modern concepts, the text's agency changed. *Nahj al-Balāgha* raised from the positions of "Advice to the ruler" and "Stabilizing role" to a constitutive and revolutionary function, becoming a basis for "Judging the ruler," a source for producing political theology, and a means of delegitimizing structures of despotism.

2. At the methodological level:

The study reveals a fundamental transition from fragmented lexical interpretation to system-building and holistic analysis. The efforts of Mirza Na'ini (in extracting constitutional principles), George Jordac (in developing human rights concepts), and, ultimately, Martyr Motahhari (in articulating a worldview) all indicate attempts to transform *Nahj al-Balāgha* from a "miscellany of wisdom" into a "framework for governance."

3. Final implication:

The research concludes that the "Politicization" of *Nahj al-Balāgha* in the past century is not an intellectual innovation imposed from
196 outside but the product of a return to Ijtihad and an internal religious

response to the crisis of governmental effectiveness. This tradition of commentary writing serves as a mirror, showing how Shi'i rationality, when encountering modernity, sought not to reject it but to reread the Alavid heritage to formulate an indigenous model of justice and freedom suited to contemporary needs, thereby revealing the limitless capacities of Imam Ali's discourse.

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Convergence of the Hadiths of *Silsilat al-Dhahab* of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) and His Miracles in Neishabur, Based on the Works of *Ibn Shādhān*

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(Received: April 2025, Accepted: Mey 2025)

DOI: 10.22034/HSR.2025.51932.1077

Abstract

Faḍl ibn Shādhān Nīshābūrī (d. 260 AH/874 AD), who resided in Neishabur and was among the companions of Imam *Riḍā* (AS), severely criticized Dualism (Thanawīyyah), Trinitarianism (Tathlīthīyyah), Murji'ah, Khawārij, Ahl al-Hadith, Mu'tazilah, Zaidiyyah, Waqifiyyah, and Isma'iliyyah in his refutations. His refutations indicate the active presence of these theological groups in Neishabur. Therefore, the opponents and audience of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) upon his arrival in Neishabur were four groups: Zanadiqa (dualists and Manichaeans) and Thanawīyyah (dualists); Trinitarians; groups of the

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Caliphate school; and branches of Shi'ism. Imam *Riḍā* (AS), by reporting three Hadiths of *Silsilat al-Dhahab* – "Shafaqat" (compassion), "Faith" and "Ḥiṣn" (fortress) – to thousands of *Nīshābūrīans*, identified all those beliefs and religions as misguided and unstable. He sought to highlight the discourse of Shi'i thought. Undoubtedly, the selection of these Hadiths at that historical juncture arose from the exigencies of the time and habitat. In addition to theoretical-cognitive functions, Imam *Riḍā* (AS) presented at least four miracles and charismatic acts to establish his own legitimacy and that of the Shi'i school: "Planting a healing almond tree; determining the Qibla (direction of prayer) of Neishabur; causing a spring to flow; and healing an injured person." The author of these lines, by library-based collection of the aforementioned data and presenting it in an analytical-descriptive manner, has endeavored to provide a documented and insightful article.

Keywords: Imam *Riḍā* (AS); Neishabur; Hadiths of *Silsilat al-Dhahab*; Shi'i and non-Shi'i Sects; Miracles (*Karāmāt*).

Introduction

Undoubtedly, a prominent aspect of Neishabur's history within the timeline of Iran is the presence of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) in it. There are numerous well-supported reports regarding this. *Wāqidī* (130-207 AH/747-823 AD), who was born 18 years before Imam *Riḍā* (AS) and died five years after him, explicitly states: "*Wa lammā Kāna Sanatu Mi'tayn Ba'atha ilayhi al-Ma'mūn fa Ashkhaṣahū min al-Madīnah ilā Khurāsān li Yuwallīhī al-'Ahd Ba'dahū wa Alladhī Ashkhaṣahū*

202 *Firnās al-Khādīm wa Ibn Abī al-Ḍaḥḥāk*"; meaning that *Ma'mūn* sent

Firnās al-Khādim and *Ibn Abī al-Ḍaḥḥāk* to the Imam in the year 200 AH (815 AD) to bring him from Medina to Khurasan to appoint him as his successor (Ibn Jawzī: 315).

Ḥākim Nīshābūrī (321-405 AH/933-1014 AD), a renowned historian and Hadith scholar, clarified with the statement: "In the year 200 of the Hijra, Nishapur, by the arrival of His Holiness, became gardens of paradise" (1375 AH/1956 AD: 208), that the city of Neishabur was honored in the year 200 AH (815 AD) with the arrival of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) (Ja'fariyan: 299).

However, the preferred view of the author and some others is that the Imam was summoned in 200 AH (815 AD) and arrived in Neishabur a few months later, in 201 AH (816 AD) (Jafarian: 299).

It is not clear when exactly in the year Imam *Riḍā* (AS) entered Neishabur.

Based on circumstantial evidence such as the Imam's request for grapes out of season at Qadamgah Neishabur, and also the planting of an almond sapling in Neishabur which must necessarily be done during the cold season, as well as the alignment of the Hijri Qamari (Lunar) calendar with the Hijri Shamsi (Solar) calendar, it can be concluded that he arrived in Neishabur in early winter 201 AH (816 AD) / 195 SH (816 AD) (Ṣadūq, 1404 AH/1983 AD: 2, 141; Erfanmanesh: 134). Some have estimated the date of arrival as Tuesday, the seventh of Jamadi al-Awwal 201 AH (November 27, 816 AD), corresponding to December 5, 816 AD (Saeidi Zadeh: 102).

Others state Shawwal 201 AH (April/May 817 AD) and add that the journey of that revered figure from Medina to Neishabur took four

months (Noei: 174). *Ibn Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā Khuzā'ī*, without considering the circumstances, wrote that Imam *Riḍā* (AS) arrived in Neishabur on the tenth of Tir (132); based on this, the tenth of Tir is named "Day of Hadith *Silsilat al-Dhahab*" in the national calendar, and symbolic ceremonies are held annually on that day.

Did Imam *Riḍā* (AS) stay in Neishabur after his arrival, or did he merely pass through? *Wāqidī* wrote: "*Fa Aqāma bi Nīsābūr Muddatan wa al-Mamūnu bi Marw; Thumma Istad'āhu wa Wallāhu al-'Ahd Ba'da Wafātihi*;" (Ibn Jawzī: 315) meaning he stayed in Neishabur for a while, and Ma'mūn was in Marw, then he summoned him to accept the successorship.

Ḥākim Nīshābūrī refers to this statement twice: The first time he wrote: "*Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Mūsā ibn Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (AS) al-Riḍā Abū al-Ḥasan al-Imam al-Shahīd*, entered Neishabur in the year 200 AH (815 AD) and resided in that city for a period until Ma'mūn ordered his transfer to Marw, and then he was in Marw for a period until he was martyred in Sanabad Tus on Friday night, 21 Ramadan 203 AH (April 17, 818 AD), at the age of 49. (*Ḥākim Nīshābūrī*: 91)". He wrote in another place: "It was commonly known among the poor that he resided in Neishabur for four years, and "al-'Ilmu 'indallāh" (God knows best)." (*Ḥākim*: 208)

His latter statement implies that the Imam (AS) was in Neishabur from 200 AH to 204 AH, which is undoubtedly incorrect, and a maximum stay of a few months and days is closer to correctness. This **204** is because, according to the view of *Kulaynī* and *Mufīd*, the Imam was

martyred in Safar 203 AH (August/September 818 AD), and according to *Shaykh Ṣadūq*, 9 days before the end of Ramadan 203 AH (April 17, 818 AD), in Tus (Ṣadūq, 1404 AH/1983 AD: 2, 274; Majlisī: 49, 293). It is clear that his statement is among what he heard, and he was hesitant about its correctness, and the phrase "*al-ʿIlmu ʿindallāh*" is a sign of this claim. *Qundūzī Ḥanafī* also reported, quoting from Neishabur history, a stay of "Some days" with the statement: "*Wa fī Tārīkh Nīshābūr annahū Istaqāma bihā Ayyāman, Thumma Kharaja Yurīdu Baldata Marwshāhjān,*" after which *Ma'mūn* summoned him to Marw by message (1416 AH/1995 AD: 3, 122). *ʿAṭārudī* also explicitly stated Imam Riḍā (AS)'s stay in Neishabur (1406 AH/1985 AD: 1, 59; 1397 AH/1977 AD: 88). This article examines a part of Imam Riḍā (AS)'s theoretical and practical role in Neishabur and its reasons, considering the theological context of Neishabur.

1. Necessity and Method of Research

Shaykh Ṣadūq (d. 381 AH/991 AD) reported that when the Imam (AS) was departing from Neishabur, he narrated the sacred Hadith of *Silsilat al-Dhahab*, "*Lā Ilāha illā Allāh Ḥiṣnī faman Dakhala Ḥiṣnī Amina min Adhābī - Falammā Marrat al-Rāḥilatu, Qāla - bi Shurūṭihā wa Ana min Shurūṭihā*" (There is no god but Allah is My fortress, whoever enters My fortress is safe from My punishment - and when the conveyance passed, he said - with its conditions, and I am one of its conditions), through his pure fathers from the Prophet (PBUH). This Hadith implies the inseparability of monotheism and

Imamate. *Qundūzī Ḥanafī*, after mentioning the said Hadith, points out that the saying of Imam Ali, may Allah honor his face, in the book *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*: (Inna li "*Lā Ilāha illā Allāh*" *Shurūṭan wa Innī wa Dhurrīyyatī min Shurūṭihā*) (Indeed, "There is no god but Allah" has conditions, and I and my progeny are among its conditions), confirms and testifies to the content of the Hadith of *Ḥiṣn*, which states that belief in the Imam of Muslims and the Imamate of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) as being obligatory to obey are among the conditions of monotheism (*Āmidī*: 1, 220; *Qundūzī* : 3, 123).

Ḥākim Nīshābūrī (d. 405 AH/1014 AD) wrote that the Imam, standing on a podium and in the presence of thousands of people who had inkpots and pens, narrated the Hadith "*al-Ta'zīmu li Amri Allāh wa al-Shafaqatu 'alā Khalqi Allāh*" (Reverence for the command of Allah and compassion for the creation of Allah) in a chain of narration (*Mu'an'an*) through his esteemed fathers (AS) up to the Master of all beings (PBUH) (212).

Hafiz Isfahani (d. 430 AH/1038 AD) wrote that upon the arrival of Imam *Riḍā* (AS), a group of Neishabur scholars clung to the bridle of his mount and implored him to narrate a Hadith from his father. He then reported the Hadith "*al-Īmānu Ma'rifatun bil Qalbi wa Iqrārūn bil Lisāni wa 'Amalun bil Arkāni*" (Faith is recognition by the heart, affirmation by the tongue, and action by the pillars) through his pure fathers from the Prophet (PBUH) (1934 AD: 1, 138).

On the other hand, *Ṣadūq* and *Ḥākim Nīshābūrī* have reported some of Imam *Riḍā* (AS)'s miracles in Neishabur. The present study

206 attempts to explain the reasons for narrating the three Hadiths of

Silsilat al-Dhahab in Neishabur and their connection with the manifestation of at least four miracles, with an understanding of the Imam's continuous activity in the reality of society. The author, by library-based collection of data and presenting it in an analytical-descriptive manner, endeavors to provide a proper and robust explanation of Imam *Riḍā's* (AS) audience in Neishabur.

2. Research Background

Articles have been written about the Hadiths of *Hij̄n* and Faith; however, the topic of the compatibility of these Hadiths with the theological context of Neishabur has been overlooked. Moreover, the content relationship of these Hadiths with the issuance of miracles from the Imam (AS) has not been considered in any article. Tarkhan (1390 SH/2011 AD), in his article, explains the relationship between monotheism and Wilayah in the Hadith of *Silsilat al-Dhahab*, relying on philosophical-mystical discussions; Valavi and Bakhtiyari (1398 SH/2019 AD) have explored the reasons for Imam *Riḍā's* (AS) reliance on the Hadith of *Silsilat al-Dhahab* based on Fairclough's discourse analysis method; Heydari Nasab and Bayat Mokhtari (1399 SH/2020 AD) have analyzed the Hadith of *Silsilat al-Dhahab* of Faith and refuted *Ibn Hibbān*; Bahrami and Hakimi (1394 SH/2015 AD) have only discussed the Rijālī and Sanadi (chain of narration) aspects of the Hadith of *Silsilat al-Dhahab*. As observed, the approach of these researches differs from the present study.

Undoubtedly, the most robust and documented way to understand the cultural and theological conditions of Neishabur at the time of

Imam *Riḍā*'s (AS) arrival, which motivated his narration of the Hadiths of *Shafaqat*, *Ḥiṣn*, and faith, and the presentation of miracles, is to analyze the refutations of *Faḍl ibn Shādhān Nīshābūrī*, who was a contemporary and narrator of Imam *Riḍā* (AS). Therefore, the article comprises three sections: "*Faḍl* being a companion of Imam *Riḍā* (AS); Imam *Riḍā* (AS) and the theological schools of Neishabur; Imam *Riḍā*'s (AS) miracles as a support for his theological school."

3. *Faḍl* is a Companion of Imam *Riḍā* (AS)

Ṣadūq's works abundantly contain *Faḍl*'s narrations from Imam *Riḍā* (AS). His narrations from the Imam (AS) are not limited to the two extensive Hadiths: "*Ilal al-Sharāyi*" (Causes of Laws) and "The Imam's Letter to *Ma'mūn*," each of which is a book, and without exception, all jurists throughout history have used them as a source for their derivations (1385 AH/1965 AD: 93; 1404 AH/1983 AD: 2, 97). *Faḍl* also narrated many other Hadiths concerning monotheism, prophecy, Imamate, rulings, and so on, from the Imam (AS).¹

1 . Such as: "Faḍl ibn Shādhān said: "I heard al-Riḍā (AS) say in his supplication: "Glory be to Him who created the creation by His power, and perfected what He created by His wisdom, and placed everything of it in its place by His knowledge. Glory be to Him who knows the treachery of the eyes and what the hearts conceal, and there is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing."

B: "Fad

ḍl ibn Shādhān said: "I heard al-Riḍā (AS) say: "Practicing justice and benevolence is a sign of the continuation of blessings."

C: "Faḍl ibn Shādhān said: "A man from the Dualists asked Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Musa al-Riḍā (AS), and I was present, and said to him: "I say that the maker of→

Furthermore, the vast majority, almost by consensus, of scholars of *ʿIlm al-Rijāl* (science of narrators) and other specialists and religious researchers have explicitly stated that *Faḍl* is among the companions of Imam Riḍā (AS). Allamah Ḥillī, *Fāḍil Ardabīlī*, *ʿAbd al-Nabī Jazāyirī*, *Sayyid Ali Asghar Jabalaqi Boroujerdi*, *Sayyid Ḥasan Ṣadr*, *Fayḍ Kāshānī*, *Aqa Buzurg Tehrani*, *Nour Allah Shoushtari*, *ʿAbbās Qummī*, *Muhammad Taqī Shoushtari*, *Sayyid Abul Qasim Khoei*, *Musa Zanjani*, *Muhammad Ali Modarresi Tabrizi*, *Aziz Allah ʿAṭārudī*, *Muhammad Mahdi Najaf*, *Jaʿfar Subhani*, *Mortaza Motahhari*, and others, who represent a drop in the ocean of this field, have insisted on this point (Bayat Mokhtari: 1391 SH/2012 AD: 36).

4. Imam Riḍā (AS) and the Theological Schools of Neishabur

The theological audiences and opponents of Imam Riḍā (AS) in Neishabur were four groups: "Zanadiqa and Thanawīyyah (dualists); Trinitarians; Sects of the Caliphate school; Branches of Shi'ism."

4.1. Critique of Dualism, Manichaeism, and Christianity

The idea of dualism, Mazdaism, and Manichaeism had a long history

← the world is two. What is the proof that He is one?" He (AS) said: "Your saying that He is two is proof that He is one, because you did not claim the second except after establishing the one. So the one is agreed upon, and more than one is disputed."

D: "Faḍl ibn Shādhān said: "I heard al-Riḍā (AS) narrate from his father, from his forefathers, from Ali (AS): "The Messenger of God (PBUH) performed cupping while fasting in the state of ihram."

(Ṣadūq, 1883 AD/1313 AH: 4, 419; Ṣadūq, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 187; 2, 19, 25, 26, 106; Ṣadūq, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 58; Ṣadūq, 1978 AD/1398 AH: 137 & 269)

in the land of Neishabur. Therefore, *Ibn Shādhān*, in his books "*al-Radd 'alā al-Thanawīyyah*" (Refutation of Dualists), "*al-Nisbah bayn al-Jabrīyyah wa al-Thanawīyyah*" (The Relation between Jabariyyah and Dualists), "*al-Radd 'alā al-Dāmighah al-Thanawīyyah*" (Refutation of the Confounding Dualists), "*al-Radd 'alā al-Manānīyyah*" (Refutation of Manichaeans), and "*al-Radd 'alā al-Muthallathah*" (Refutation of Trinitarians) (Najāshī: 306; Ṭūsī, 1417 AH/1996 AD: 198; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1380 AH/1960 AD: 90; Aqa Buzurg, 1408 AH/1987 AD: 10/192, 222, and 229), criticized and refuted dualists, Manichaeans, and Trinitarians who were active in Neishabur.

Dualism refers to the followers of Zoroaster (660-583 BC), who lived in Iran (Tawfiqi, 1381 SH/2002 AD: 63). If the Zoroastrian religion considers "Ahura Mazda" as the one God and creator of "Ahriman" and "Holy Spirit," which stand against each other, the foundation of the monotheism of creation and lordship is shaken, and polytheism in actions occurs; however, if it considers Ahriman to be eternal, ancient, and on par with Ahura Mazda, they have fallen into the dark pit of essential polytheism (Motahari, 1350 SH/1971 AD: 285). Mani (216-274 AD) emerged between Christianity and the advent of Islam (Tawfiqi, 1381 SH/2002 AD: 67). Manichaeism is a mixture of Zoroastrian, Christian, Buddhist elements, and some of his own innovations. Mani's dualism is more explicit than Zoroastrian dualism. The Muslim military campaign in Iran was solely aimed at breaking the military power of the Sasanian state, and there is no

210 evidence of forced acceptance of Islam. Therefore, Muslims

considered Zoroastrians, like Christians, to be People of the Book, and they remained loyal to their religion by paying *Jizya* (poll tax). According to travelers' reports, the great fire temple of *Darab* was still lit until the fourth century AH (332 AH/943 AD) in Iran (Motahari, 1350 SH/1971 AD: 77).

The statement of Imam Riḍā (AS), "*Lā Ilāha illā Allāhu Ḥiṣnī faman Dakhala Ḥiṣnī Amina min Adhābī*," is a clear text and encompasses all levels of monotheism. Essential monotheism means denying any partner or equal to God, which is called the oneness of the divine essence, contained in the verse "*Wa lam Yakun lahū Kufuwan Aḥad*" (And there is none comparable to Him) (Surah al-Ikhlās: 4).

The second branch of essential monotheism is the belief in the denial of composition in God's essence, which is referred to in the verse "*Qul Huwa Allāhu Aḥad*" (Say, He is Allah, [who is] One) (Surah al-Ikhlās: 1) (Subhani, 1395 SH/2016 AD: 45). The view of dualism contradicts the oneness of the divine essence, and the view of trinity contradicts simplicity and the denial of composition. Both are involved in essential polytheism. Christians who believe in the three Hypostases, if they mean that Christ and the Holy Spirit are not created by God but each are eternal and possess an independent essence, this is a clear example of attributing partners and equals to God (clear essential polytheism). If they believe in the oneness of God and at the same time His composition from three parts, they are involved in hidden polytheism (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1362 SH/1983 AD: 275-279; Subhani, 1395 SH/2016 AD: 45-52).

4.2. Refutation of the Sects of the Caliphate School

Since the dominant religion at the time of the conquest of Khurasan was Sunni Islam, naturally, the people of the conquered lands first became acquainted with and accepted Sunni Islam. Although a few Muslims who participated in the conquests were familiar with and sometimes believed in the school of Ahl al-Bayt (AS), due to their minority status and the government's opposition to the spread of the Ahl al-Bayt school, the overall cultural face of the conquered lands was naturally Sunni culture. In this regard, Neishabur, at the time of Imam *Riḍā*'s (AS) arrival, was one of the most important centers of Sunni learning, and a collection of the greatest Sunni jurists and Hadith scholars were active in this city. Among the Sunnis, the Imamate refers to the outward aspect of governance, and the appointive nature of the Imamate is denied by the Sunni community. However, in the Shi'i school, the Imamate is one of the fundamental beliefs and an appointive institution (Kulaynī: 1, 277; Mufīd, 1413 AH/1992 AD: 49; Majlisī: 9, 193; Ḥillī, 1405 AH/1984 AD: 57-65). Approximately five hundred Hadiths have been narrated from Imam *Riḍā* (AS) concerning the Imamate (ʿAṭārūdī, 1406 AH/1985 AD: 1, 248-88).

A) *Khawārij*

One of the deviant movements during the time of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) was the "*Khawārij*." Therefore, *Faḍl* criticized them by writing books such as "*al-Radd ʿalā Yamān ibn Rabbāb al-Khārijī*" or "*al-Radd ʿalā al-Bayān [al-Yamān] ibn Riʿāb al-Khārijī*" and "*al-Radd ʿalā Yazīd*"

ibn Bazī‘ al-Khārijī" (Ṭūsī, 1417 AH/1996 AD: 198; Najāshī: 306). *Yamān ibn Rabbāb* was a theologian of the third century AH and a prominent figure among the *Khawārij* and his book "*Ithbāt Imāmat Abī Bakr*" (Proof of the Imamate of *Abū Bakr*) exists (Ibn Nadīm, 1381 SH/2002 AD: 227; Shahrastani, 1404 AH/1984 AD: 1, 148). The *Khawārij* do not consider the existence of a ruler necessary, and if needed, it is done through the free choice of Muslims; furthermore, being from Quraysh is not a condition for the Imamate (Subhani, 1423 AH/2002 AD: 137). Imam *Riḍā* (AS)'s statement, "*Bi Shurūṭihā wa Ana min Shurūṭihā*" (with its conditions, and I am one of its conditions), also contains a critique of the *Khawārij*, as it conditions the effectiveness of monotheism on the acceptance of the Imamate of Ahl al-Bayt.

B) *Murji'ah*

Ibn Shādhān, by writing the book "*al-Radd ‘alā al-Murji'ah*," (Ṭūsī, 1417 AH/1996 AD: 198; Najāshī: 306; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1380 AH/1960 AD: 90) considered the thought of the *Murji'ah* to be wrong and deviant. The common point of all *Murji'ah* sects is that actions are outside of faith and subsequent to it. Furthermore, faith is a simple matter and has no degrees or levels. Therefore, one who adheres to religious obligations cannot be considered more Muslim than those who commit major sins. Disobedience does not harm faith, and the faith of a transgressor is equal to the faith of the Prophet of God, prophets, saints, and the righteous (Ash‘arī, 1400 AH/1980 AD: 132-154; Subhani, 1423 AH/2002 AD: 73-77; Mashkur, 1384 SH/2005

AD: 401-407; Saberi, 1395 SH/2016 AD: 1, 95-116). Imam *Riḍā* (AS), by delivering the Hadith "*al-Īmānu Ma'rifatun bil Qalbi wa Qawlun bil Lisāni wa 'Amalun bil Arkāni*" (Faith is recognition by the heart, affirmation by the tongue, and action by the pillars), emphasized the refutation of the *Murji'ah*'s view and considered actions as part of the pillars of faith and faith as being capable of increase and decrease through actions.

C) Ahl al-Hadith

Ibn Shādhān criticized anthropomorphists (*Ḥashawīyyah*) and Ahl al-Hadith by writing books such as "*al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥashawīyyah*" and "*al-Radd 'alā Muḥammad ibn Karrām*" (Najāshī: 306; Ṭūsī, 1417 AH/1996 AD: 198). Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (164-241 AH/780-855 AD), the leader of Ahl al-Hadith, who was a contemporary of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) and *Faḍl*, and whose views had more influence among Sunnis than others, emphasizes in the phrases "*Nadīnu bi anna al-A'immat al-Arba'atu Khulafā'u Rāshidūna Maḥdīyyūna Fuḍalāl' lā Yuwāzīhim fī al-Faḍli Ghayruhum*" (We believe that the four Imams [*Abū Bakr*, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and Ali] are rightly-guided, virtuous caliphs, none can match their virtue), "*Wa Taḍlīli man Ra'ā al-Khurūja 'alayhim*" (and condemning those who advocate revolt against them), "*Wa Nadīnu bi Inkāri al-Khurūj 'alayhim bil Sayfi*" (and we believe in denying revolt against them with the sword), and "*Bi Ṭā'ati al-A'imma wa Naṣīḥat al-Muslimīn*" (and in obedience to the Imams and advising the Muslims) that the four imams after the Messenger of God [*Abū Bakr*, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and Ali] are the rightly-guided

caliphs, and no one reaches their eminence. Furthermore, their perfections are in the order of their caliphate, and revolting against rulers, even if they are tyrannical, is not permissible, and one must obey them (Ash‘arī, 1397 AH/1977 AD: 8-34; Subhani, 1423 AH/2002 AD: 23, 24, and 26). However, Imam Riḍā (AS), by stating "*Bi Shurūṭihā wa Ana min Shurūṭihā*" (with its conditions, and I am one of its conditions), deemed the salvation-bringing nature of monotheism in the world and the afterlife dependent on the exposition and Imamate of the infallible Imams (AS). By reporting the Hadith "*al-Ta‘ẓīmu li Amri Allāh wa al-Shafaqatu ‘alā Khalqi Allāh*" (Reverence for the command of Allah and compassion for the creation of Allah), he introduced the non-infallible caliphs, including the Umayyads, Abbasids, etc., who were not obedient to God's command and oppressed His servants, as incorrect.

D) Mu'tazilah

Ibn Shādhān thoroughly criticized the theological views of the Mu'tazilah by authoring books such as "*al-Radd ‘alā al-Aṣamm*" (Refutation of al-Aṣamm), "*al-Naqd alā al-Iskāfī fī al-Jism*" (Critique of al- *Iskāfī* on Corporeality), "*al-Radd ‘alā Ahl al-Ta‘īl*" (Refutation of the Deniers of Attributes), "*al-Wa‘īd*" (Threat), and "*al-Wa‘d wa al-Wa‘īd*" (Promise and Threat) (Ṭūsī, 1417 AH/1996 AD: 197; Najāshī: 306; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1380 AH/1960 AD: 90). They believe that the Prophet (PBUH) did not appoint anyone for the Imamate and left the selection of the Imam to the people. Furthermore, the Mu'tazilah do not consider impeccability, supreme knowledge, and

justice as conditions for the Imam (Mufīd, 1413 AH/1992 AD: 39; Mufīd, 1414 AH/1993 AD: 2, 22; Ḥillī, 1417 AH/1996 AD: 390; Maʿrūf al-Ḥasanī, 1421 AH/2000 AD: 195). The false ideas of the Mu'tazilah led to scholarly confrontations between the Shi'i Imams and their true companions. The debate between *Hishām ibn Ḥakam* and *ʿAmr ibn ʿUbayd*, one of the leaders of the Mu'tazilah, and Amr's condemnation in the matter of Imamate, is important historical evidence for the instability of Mu'tazili views on the Imamate (Maʿrūf al-Ḥasanī: 197). During the time of Imam *Riḍā* (AS), they debated various theological issues such as monotheism, God's attributes, and Imamate. Prominent figures of this group, such as *Sulaymān al-Marwazī* and *Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Samarqandī*, were among those who debated with Imam *Riḍā* (AS) on theological issues. *Ma'mūn* also considered himself a representative of the Mu'tazilah (Mortazavi, 1375 SH/1996 AD: 71). Imam *Riḍā* (AS), by adding the phrase "*Bi Shurūṭihā wa Ana min Shurūṭihā*" (with its conditions, and I am one of its conditions), sought to refute the Mu'tazilah's view and strengthen the Shi'i perspective.

4.3. Branches of Shi'ism

Among the active and deviant movements during the time of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) were the Zaidiyyah, Isma'iliyyah, and Waqifiyyah sects.

A) Zaidiyyah

Zaidiyyah is one of the main Shi'i sects, and its emergence dates back to the second century AH. After the martyrdom of Imam *Ḥusayn* (AS), some Alawids considered armed uprising as a strategy to

confront oppressors and as a condition for the Imamate. With the formation of this political thought during the period of Imam *Sajjād* (AS), the foundation of "Zaidiyyah" was laid. The Imamate according to Zaidiyyah does not conform to the Imami view; the term Imam in Zaidiyyah refers to the caliph. They believe in the permissibility of the Imamate of a less virtuous person (*Maḥdūl*) in the presence of a more virtuous one (*Fāḍil*), the non-necessity of the Imam's infallibility, and the belief in the Imam's uprising and struggle. They accepted the caliphate of the two Shaykhs (*Abū Bakr* and *ʿUmar*) and considered it legitimate based on the interest of Islam. According to the Imami School, the Prophet (PBUH) explicitly introduced twelve individuals from his progeny as Imams after him; however, from the Zaidiyyah perspective, the Messenger of God (PBUH) generally affirmed the Imamate of his progeny, and "Progeny" refers to all the children of Fatimah (AS), including those from *Ḥasan* and *Ḥusayn*. During the Imamate of Imam *Riḍā* (AS), they were among the important and active Shi'i groups (Şubḥī, 1985 AD: 3, 48; Sultani, 1390 SH/2011 AD: 20; Mashkur, 1384 SH/2005 AD: 214; Saberi: 2, 87-90). Imam *Riḍā*'s (AS) statement, "*Bi Shurūṭihā wa Ana min Shurūṭihā*" (with its conditions, and I am one of its conditions), is an allusion to and includes a critique of the Zaidiyyah, who suffered a significant deviation in the matter of the Imamate.

B) Isma'iliyyah

They believe in the Imamate of the first six Imams of the Twelver Shi'a, but after Imam *Şādiq* (AS), they believed in the Imamate of Isma'il or his son Muhammad. The pure Isma'iliyyah believes that

Isma'il did not die but went into occultation and will one day rule the earth; however, the Mubarakiiyyah believe in his death and the transfer of the Imamate to Muhammad. These split into two groups: "1) Qaramitah believe that Muhammad did not die and that he is the seventh and last Imam who will appear one day; 2) Fatimids accepted his death and continued the chain of Imamate in his progeny, saying that the seventh cycle of the world began with Muhammad, and after him, there are hidden and apparent Imams." (Shahrastani: 1, 192; Saberi: 2, 110-189)

Among the deviant movements at the time of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) in Neishabur was the "Isma'iliyyah" sect. *Faḍl* refuted that theological school by writing the book "*al-Radd 'alā al-Bāṭiniyyah wa al-Qarāmiṭah*." (Ṭūsī, 1417 AH/1996 AD: 198; Najāshī: 306). Imam *Riḍā*'s (AS) statement, "*Bi Shurūṭihā wa Ana min Shurūṭihā*" (with its conditions, and I am one of its conditions), implies the instability and invalidity of the Isma'iliyyah's belief.

C) Waqifiyyah

One of the severe deviations at the beginning of Imam *Riḍā* (AS)'s Imamate was the issue of denial. Some did not accept his Imamate and claimed that his father was the promised Mahdi who had gone into occultation. Therefore, they became known as "Waqifiyyah" or "Waqifah". According to narrations, worldly greed was one of the factors behind the deviation of the Waqifiyyah's founders. With the guidance of Imam *Riḍā* (AS), many reverted from their belief, but

218 some continued in denial and obstinacy. The Waqifiyyah were among

the active groups for about a century (Kashshī: 2, 760; Shoushtari: 7, 268; Rāwandī, 1409 AH/1988 AD: 2, 737).

Imam *Riḍā* (AS) first described the Waqifiyyah as bewildered, doubtful, heretical (*Zindīq*), infidel (*Kāfir*), polytheist (*Mushrik*), liar (*Kādhīb*), cursed, deserving of being killed, and not permissible to sit with them, through phrases such as: "*Ya 'īshūna Ḥayārī wa Yamūtūna Zanādiqah*" (They live in bewilderment and die as heretics), "*Ya 'īshūna Shukkākan wa Yamūtūna Zanādiqah*" (They live as doubters and die as heretics), "*Mal'ūnīna aynamā Thuqqifū Ukhidhū wa Quttilū Taqtīlan*" (Cursed wherever they are found, they shall be seized and slain with a [terrible] slaughter), "*Kadhhabū wa Hum Kuffārun bimā Anzala Allāhu 'Azza wa Jalla 'alā Muḥammad*" (They lied, and they are disbelievers in what Allah Almighty revealed to Muhammad), "*Innahum Kuffārun Mushrikūna Zanādiqah*" (Indeed, they are disbelievers, polytheists, heretics), "*Lā Tujālisuhum*" (Do not sit with them), etc. (Kashshī: 2, 756-761). Secondly, with the statement "*Bi Shurūṭihā wa Ana min Shurūṭihā*" (with its conditions, and I am one of its conditions), he explained their deviation on the matter of Imamate.

5. Miracles of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) as a Support for His Theological and Doctrinal System

Extraordinary events have emanated from the divine saints, which are called "Miracles" and "Charismatic acts."

Both refer to an extraordinary act whose performance is beyond the ability of ordinary individuals and is only possible by relying on a **219**

supernatural force. Based on this, Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) said: "*al-Mujizatu 'Alāmatu Allāh lā Yu'fihā illā Anbiyā'uh wa Rusulahū wa Hujajahū li Yu'rafa bihī Ṣidqu al-Ṣādiqi min Kadhibi al-kādhīb*" (A miracle is a sign from Allah, which Allah does not grant except to His prophets, messengers, and proofs, so that through it the truthfulness of the truthful may be known from the falsehood of the liar) (Ṣadūq, 1385 AH/1965 AD: 1, 122; Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1376 SH/1997 AD: 1, 386; Baḥrānī, 1413 AH/1992 AD: 1/42). In theological terminology, extraordinary deeds performed by prophets to prove prophethood are called "Miracles," and the same deeds, performed by non-prophets without claiming prophethood and challenge, are called "Karamah". The extraordinary deeds of the infallible Imams (AS), if not accompanied by a challenge, are Karamah.

Karamah and miracle occur by divine permission from the divine saints, and their difference lies in their naming; that is, the miracle of non-prophets is called Karamah (Subhani, 1395 SH/2016 AD: 260). It is narrated from Imams *Bāqir*, *Ṣādiq*, and *Kāzīm* (AS): "The Greatest Name has 73 letters. The Greatest Name that *Āṣif ibn Barkhīyā* knew, by virtue of which he brought the throne of Balqis from Yemen to Jerusalem to Sulayman (AS) in less than the blink of an eye, was one letter out of those 73 letters. And with us, the Imams (AS), there are 72 letters of the Greatest Name, and only one letter of it is exclusive to the pure essence of God." (Saffar, 1362 SH/1983 AD: 228; Ḥuwayzī: 4, 88; Baḥrānī, 1415 AH/1994 AD: 4, 217; Haydari, 1429 AH/2008 AD: 155) The occurrence of Karamah is possible and a sign of the

220 greatness of the divine saints before God. *Ṭūsī* writes: "*Qīṣṣatu*

Maryama wa Ghayrihā Tu'ī Lawāza Zuhūrihī 'alā al-Ṣāliḥīn" (The story of Maryam and others indicates the permissibility of its appearance from the righteous); meaning that the story of Maryam's (AS) table spread and others proves that the performance of Karamah by righteous individuals is possible. Allamah Ḥillī, in his explanation of the aforementioned statement, also adds the story of the transfer of the Queen of Sheba's throne and the miracles of Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) (1417 AH/1996 AD: 475). Ṭūsī, in another book, mentions Karamah with the condition that it is not accompanied by a challenge (1416 AH/1995 AD: 89). The main factor for the status of Karamah is pure servitude and humility before God Almighty. The verse "*Subḥāna alladhī Asrā bi 'Abdihī Laylan min al-Masjid al-Ḥarām...*" (Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram...) (Surah al-Isrā': 1), which contains the Prophet (PBUH)'s ascension (miraj) and is one of his greatest miracles, indicates the role of the Prophet (PBUH)'s servitude in his reaching this status. Divine proximity is achieved through servitude with knowledge to the extent that God addressed the Prophet (PBUH): "*Abdī Aṭ'inī Ḥattā Ajaluka Mithlī idhā Qulta li Shay'in Kun fa Yakūn*" (My servant, obey Me until I make you like Myself, when you say to a thing "Be," it is) (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1384 AH/1964 AD: 361; Ḥā'irī, 1385 AH/1965 AD: 1, 33; Hashimi Khu'i: 15, 361). And Imam Ṣādiq (AS) said: "*al-'Ubūdīyyatu Jawharatun Kunhuhā al-Rubūbīyyah*" (Servitude is a jewel whose essence is Lordship) (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1378 SH/1999 AD: 2, 1121; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1374 SH/1995 AD: 4, 365). This means that servitude brings a person to perfection and makes him a manifestation

of the attributes of glory and beauty, so that he can perform acts such as cosmic disposal and become the possessor of Karamah. In this regard, in addition to theoretical-cognitive functions in Neishabur, four karamah have emanated from Imam *Riḍā* (AS). These Karamah testify to the authenticity and legitimacy of the Shi'i school and the explicit appointment (*Manṣūṣ*) of the Imamate of its twelve Imams.

5.1. A Healing Tree

Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Hākim Nīshābūrī*, and *Ibn Shahr Āshūb* wrote that after the arrival of Imam *Riḍā* (AS), the officials chose a suitable place for him. The Imam was pleased with the residence provided by the servants. He settled in the western part of the city, in the "Ballas Abad" alley, in the Kahlan area, which was part of the "Fuzz" neighborhood of Neishabur. He planted an almond sapling in a corner of that house or gave it to one of his servants to plant. That sapling bore fruit in the first summer. People sought blessings from it. All parts of the tree, including leaves, blossoms, bark, and fruit, were a source of healing for the sick. A sick person would eat a kernel for healing and recover their health. Someone suffering from eye pain would place a kernel on their eye and improve. A pregnant woman experiencing difficult labor would eat a kernel of the almond nut and find relief. A pet animal suffering from colic would recover if a twig from the tree's branch was rubbed on its belly.

Years later, the tyrannical ruler of Neishabur decided to build a palace. The tree was inside his palace, and he ordered the tree to be cut down. The construction of the building was not yet finished when

that tyrannical ruler, the architect, carpenter, worker, and everyone involved in that work, died. After some years, another tyrannical ruler intended to rebuild the same palace. He was told of the past events, but he did not listen. As they dug the foundation of the wall, they cut the tree's root which was in the ground. His building was not yet constructed when all those people perished in a short period. *Shaykh Ṣadūq* wrote with details that Hamdan, who cut the branches of the tree, became blind. *Ibn Hamdan*, who cut the trunk of the tree, lost all his wealth, which was seventy to eighty thousand dirhams. *Abul Qāsim* and *Abū Ṣādiq*, the sons of *Ibn Hamdan*, one of whom was in charge of the properties and gardens of the ruler of Khurasan, and the other was a clerk in the financial department of Neishabur, decided to rebuild the house. They cut the tree's root which was in the ground and spent twenty thousand dirhams. Both were afflicted with severe illnesses, and their deaths occurred within less than a year (Ṣadūq, 1404 AH/1983 AD: 2, 141; Ḥākim Nīshābūrī: 209; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1376 AH/1956 AD: 3, 455). Apparently, these individuals cut the tree and its roots with the intention of disrespect; otherwise, it is unlikely that they would have been afflicted with these calamities.

5.1.1. The Reality of Tabarruk (Seeking Blessings)

Shaykh Ṣadūq and *Ḥākim Nīshābūrī* explicitly stated that all parts of the almond tree were blessed. What is Tabarruk? Tabarruk (seeking blessings) comes from the root "*Barak*" meaning growth, increase, abundance, and happiness; and *Tabrīk* (blessing) is a prayer for having them. *Tabarruk* means becoming blessed, acquiring blessings, seeking

good fortune, and an increase in bounty (Fīrūz Ābādī, 1415 AH/1994 AD: 3, 293). Without a doubt, the realm of the supernatural is different from the realm of normal daily life, but it can influence or manifest in it. *Tabarruk* is in fact the influence of the sacred on non-sacred elements and the elevation of their quality. The clear characteristic of *Tabarruk* in the Quran is its attribution to God and its perception as something from Him and by His will; *Tabarruk* originates only from Him, and the intermediaries are also authorized by Him. It is necessary for human attention to be directed first to God and then to the intermediary. The transfer of blessings and being blessed is based on the desire and attention of the blessed essence, either inherently or incidentally. That is, God or someone like the divine saints (*Awliyā' Allāh*) who has the power to bless, consciously blesses someone or something. This can be done by mere intention, or by placing a hand on a person or object, or through a good prayer and seeking blessings for someone or something. The good prayers of saints and divine figures can be placed within this category of blessing transfer. What causes *Tabarruk* is the attention from God or a sacred person which causes the flow of blessings (cf. Mousavi Bojnourdi, 1386 SH/2007 AD: 14, entry *Tabarruk*).

In *Tawassul* (seeking intercession) and *Tabarruk*, a person seeks to receive well through another being. Therefore, these two have many conceptual and practical similarities. *Tawassul* means making religious luminaries a medium before God to achieve a desire; *Tabarruk* means seeking material and spiritual good and blessings that

224 God has placed in humans or some objects. Shi'i theologians consider

the transfer of divine mercy and blessings possible through cosmic channels such as the souls of prophets and saints, with differences in rank. Touching a saint or touching a blessed element can lead to being blessed. Touching the Black Stone (*Hajar al-Aswad*) or touching the shrine (*Darīh*) of the graves of the impeccable Imams and saints, which are blessed due to their connection with the buried sacred personality, causes *Tabarruk*. Likewise, seeking blessings by touching the Prophet (PBUH) or parts of his body such as hair and nails, and objects like cups, garments, leftover ablution water, and remains of food and drink that were in contact with him (Ahmadi Mianaji, 1422 AH/2001 AD: 19-26, 75-76, 128-142).

5.1.2. *Tabarruk* in the Quran and Sunnah

Derivatives of the root "*Baraka*" have appeared 30 times in the Holy Quran. Therefore, *Tabarruk* primarily has a Quranic root and also has a strong basis in narrations. The Quran reports the blessedness of certain places. Regarding Masjid al-Haram, it states: "*Inna Awwala Baytin Wuḍi'a lil Nāsi lalladhī bi Bakkata Mubārakan wa Hudan lil 'Ālamīn*" (Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at *Bakkah* - blessed and guidance for the worlds) (Āli 'Imrān: 96). Regarding Masjid al-Aqsa, it is stated: "*al-Masjid al-Aqṣā Alladhī Bāraknā Hawlah*" (the Farthest Mosque whose surroundings We have blessed) (al-Isrā': 1). Some verses report the blessedness of God's saints. Regarding Abraham (AS) and his son Isaac (AS), it says: "*Wa Bāraknā 'alayhi wa 'alā Ishāqa*" (and We blessed him and Isaac) (al-Ṣāffāt: 113). From the words of Jesus (AS), it is quoted: "*Wa Ja'alanī Mubārakan aynamā Kuntu*" (and He has

made me blessed wherever I am) (Maryam/31). Some verses report the blessedness of objects. When Prophet Jacob (AS) became blind from his separation from Joseph (AS), the Holy Quran explicitly states: "*Falammā an Jā'a al-Bashīru Alqāhu 'alā Wajhihī fartadda Baṣīran Qāla alam Aqul Lakum Innī A'lamu min Allāhi mā lā Ta'lamūn*" (Then when the bearer of good tidings arrived and cast it over his face, he returned seeing. He said, "Did I not tell you that I know from Allah that which you do not know?") (Yūsuf: 96); he placed his son's shirt on his eyes and regained his sight. Seeking healing through Joseph's shirt is an example of *Tabarruk* with objects that are in some way related to the divine saints.

Regarding the history of *Tabarruk* during the time of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and the practice of Muslims, a few narrations from Sunni sources will suffice:

1) *Bukhārī* writes in the account of the "Treaty of *Ḥudaybiyyah*": "Whenever the Prophet performed ablution, his companions would rush to snatch the drops of his ablution water" (*Bukhārī*: 4, 193);

2) He also narrates in "*Bāb Khātam al-Nubuwwah*" (Chapter of the Seal of Prophethood) from *Sā'ib ibn Yazīd*: "My aunt took me to the Prophet (PBUH) and said, "My sister's son is ill." The Prophet performed ablution and prayed to God for blessings for me, and when he finished ablution, I drank from his ablution water" (*Bukhārī*: 4, 186);

3) He also narrated in the chapter "*Ṣifāt al-Nabī*" (Characteristics of the Prophet) from *Abū Juhayfah*: "People would wipe the Prophet's hands on their faces, and I also took his hand and wiped it on my face,

226 and his hand was sweeter than musk" (*Bukhārī*: 4, 188);

4) Historically, there is no doubt that the Prophet's companions sought blessings and healing from his remaining relics and blessed grave after his demise. So much so that Bukhari dedicated a section in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* to mention this topic and explicitly stated the companions' and others' seeking of blessings from the Prophet's remaining after his demise (Bukhārī: 4, 82);

5) *Ibn Hibbān Bustī*, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, opened a chapter titled "*Dhikr mā Yustaḥabbu lil Mar'i al-Tabarruk bi al-Ṣāliḥīn wa Ashbāhihim*" (Mention of what is desirable for a person to seek blessings from the righteous and their likes) (Ibn Hibbān: 2, 317) and a chapter titled "*Dhikr Ibāḥat al-Tabarruk bi Wuḍū' al-Ṣāliḥīn min Ahl al-'Ilm*" (Mention of the permissibility of seeking blessings from the ablution water of the righteous among the people of knowledge) and collected Hadiths in this regard (Ibn Hibbān: 4, 82);

6) Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (AS) says: "Three days after the Prophet's burial, a Bedouin Arab came and threw himself on the Prophet's grave, sprinkled the dust of his grave on his head, and began to speak to the Prophet, saying: "O! Prophet of God, you spoke and we listened, you received truths from God and we received from you." Among the things God revealed to you is this: "*Wa law Annahum idh Ḍalamū Anfusahum Jā'ūka Fastaghfarū Allāha wa Istaghfara lahum al-Rasūlu la Wajadū Allāha Tawwāban Raḥīmā*" (And if, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you, [O! Muhammad], and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Accepting of Repentance and Merciful) (al-Nisā': 64). Now I have wronged myself, so ask

forgiveness for me from God!' Suddenly, a voice was heard: "Your sins have been forgiven!" (Muttaqī al-Hindī: 2, 386; Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī: 12, 381)

Prophets and Imams, because they are at the peak of knowledge and servitude and are under the special grace of the Lord, deserve respect and influence. Seeking blessings from them is not worshipping them. They do not have an independent status or possession in relation to God.

5.2. Observing the *Ka'ba*

Ḥākim Nīshābūrī wrote: And among the other glories of Neishabur is that one day, Imam Riḍā (AS) wanted to pray in a gathering, and the direction of his *Qibla* was different from the usual *Qibla* in Neishabur. A person asked him, "Is the *Miḥrāb* (prayer niche) in the correct *Qibla* direction?" The Imam took his hand and pointed with his finger, and the door of the Kaaba was seen directly in front of them. That place remains designated until now and is located on the *Qibla* side of the public road that passes in front of the ancient fortress. The intention is that from then on, the *Qibla* of Neishabur was determined in the direction of Imam Riḍā's (AS) gaze. (Ḥākim Nīshābūrī: 210).

5.2.1. Pre-existence of the Infallibles and Witnesses to Deeds

Allamah Majlisī, in the chapter "*Arḍ al-A'māl 'alayhim al-Salām wa Annahum al-Shuhadā' alā al-Khalq*" (Presentation of deeds to them, peace be upon them, and that they are witnesses over creation) (Majlisī: 23, 333-354), mentioned several verses and 75 narrations stating that the Imams (AS) are always witnesses to our deeds,

228 whether alive or dead. Furthermore, the collection of Hadiths about

the luminous creation of Ahl al-Bayt (AS) has been interpreted as referring to the luminous and pre-existing creation of the Prophet (PBUH) and the impeccable Imams (AS). According to these narrations, God created the light of Ahl al-Bayt from His own light thousands of years before the creation of Prophet Adam (AS), the heavens, and the earth, and placed them in His Throne to engage in praising and glorifying God. After creating Prophet Adam (AS), God placed the lights of Ahl al-Bayt in Adam's loins, and they were transmitted from generation to generation through pure loins and wombs until they were born into the world (cf. Touran).

5.3. Healing an Injured Person

Ṣafwānī narrated: "A caravan was traveling from Khurasan to Kerman. They captured a man whom the thieves thought was wealthy and tortured him to extract his money. They kept him in freezing conditions for a long time and also tortured him by filling his mouth with ice and tying it shut, severely injuring his tongue and mouth. A woman among them took pity on him and freed him. He headed towards Khurasan and heard that Imam *Riḍā* (AS) was in Neishabur." During his journey, he was told in a dream one night: "The son of the Prophet has entered Khurasan, ask him about your illness, perhaps he will guide you to a healing medicine". He said: "In the dream, I went to the Imam and asked for a remedy". The Imam said: "Crush some cumin, thyme, and salt, and put it in your mouth two or three times; you will be cured". The man woke up and paid no attention to his dream, and did not prepare the medicine until he reached the gates of **229**

Neishabur. He was told: "The Imam (AS) has left Neishabur and is now at *Rabāt Sa'd*."

He went to the Imam at *Rabāt Sa'd* and said: "My tongue and mouth are ruined, and I have a speech impediment, and I can hardly speak. Guide me to a medicine that will remedy my condition". The Imam said: "*Alam U'allimuka?! Idhhab Fasta'mil mā Waṣaftuhū laka fī Manāmika*" (Did I not teach you?! Go and use what I described to you in your dream). The man said: "O! Son of the Messenger of God, if you deem it appropriate, please repeats it for me". The Imam (AS) said: "Crush cumin, thyme, and salt, and put two or three times of it in your mouth; you will be cured". The man said: "I used it and was cured." (Ṣadūq, 1404 AH/1983 AD: 2, 228; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1376 AH/1956 AD: 3, 455; Baḥrānī, 1413 AH/1992 AD: 7, 63; 'Aṭārudī, 1406 AH/1985 AD: 1, 60; Irbilī, 1405 AH/1984 AD: 3, 108)

The exact location of "*Rabāt Sa'd*" is not clear; three possibilities are suggested.

A) Between seven and fourteen kilometers east of Neishabur, there are three villages in order: "*Sa'dābād*," "*Sa'dī*," and "*Sa'īdābād*," which are likely one of these three;

B) Mawlawī, quoting farmers of Qadamgah, stated that "*Rabāt Sa'd*" existed south of the current Qadamgah (1382 SH/2003 AD: 321);

C) Some believe that *Rabāt Sa'd* is the same as "*Rabāt Sang*," which is now located at the intersection of the Torbat Heydariyeh-Mashhad road and the old Farfaith road (Mīlānī, 1426 AH/2005 AD:

5.3.1. Seeing the Prophet (PBUH) and Imams (AS) in Dreams

Imam Riḍā (AS) narrated from the Messenger of God (PBUH): "*Man Ra'ānī fī Manāmihi faqad Ra'ānī li anna al-Shayṭāna lā Yatamaththalu fī Ṣūratī wa lā fī Ṣūratī Aḥadin min Awṣiyā'ī wa lā fī Ṣūratī Wāḥidatin min Shī'atihim wa inna al-Ru'yā al-Ṣādiqata Juz'un min Sab'in Juz'an min al-Nubuwwah*" (Whoever sees me in his dream has truly seen me, for Satan does not appear in my form, nor in the form of any of my successors, nor in the form of any of their Shi'a, and indeed the truthful dream is one part of seventy parts of prophethood) (Ṣadūq, 1413 AH/1992 AD: 2, 584; Tanukhi, 1364 SH/1985 AD: 1, 179; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1416 AH/1995 AD: 14, 1550; Fattāl Nīshābūrī: 1, 233; Ṭabrisī, 1417 AH/1996 AD: 2, 71). In Sunni sources, the Hadith: "*Man Ra'ānī fī Manāmihi faqad Ra'ānī Haqqan fa inna al-Shayṭāna lā Yatamaththalu bī*" (Whoever sees me in his dream has truly seen me, for Satan does not appear in my form), is narrated from *Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī* and *Ibn Mas'ūd* (Ṭabarānī, 1415 AH/1994 AD: 3, 238; Zamakhsharī, 1412 AH/1991 AD: 5, 294). Based on these Hadiths, Satan does not have the power to appear in the form of the Prophet and the Imams. Therefore, the individual who saw Imam Riḍā (AS) in a dream and was prescribed herbal medicine by him was indeed the actual and real Imam Riḍā. Hence, inspirations received in dreams, if they command the performance of obligations and avoidance of prohibitions, or if they recommend a desirable or permissible act, can be considered by the Imam depending on the individuals' circumstances, and thus the dream is considered valid. Given that an infallible Imam would never guide someone, even in a

dream, to commit a sin or a forbidden act, or to abandon an obligation, this point can serve as a good indicator for distinguishing cases where an individual doubts whether the person they saw in a dream was a divine being or Satan.

5.4. Flowing of a Spring in Deh Sorkh

Ṣadūq and others have narrated: "When Imam *Riḍā* (AS) left Neishabur and reached "Deh Sorkh," they said: "O! Son of the Messenger of God, it is noon, will you not pray?" The Imam dismounted from his conveyance and said: "Bring water," but they replied: "We have no water." Then he dug the ground with his hand and pushed away the soil, and a spring gushed forth. Everyone performed ablution, and that spring still remains." (*Ṣadūq*, 1404 AH/1983 AD: 2, 147; *Qummī*, 1423 AH/2002 AD: 31) This spring, located between Neishabur and Mashhad, is known as "Chashmeh Riḍā" or "Chashmeh Imam." *Ibn Shahr Āshūb* and *Baḥrānī* have listed this event among the miracles and *Karāmah* of Imam *Riḍā* (AS) (*Ibn Shahr Āshūb*, 1376 AH/1956 AD: 3, 455; *Baḥrānī*, 1313 AH/1895 AD: 7, 132).

Conclusion

A) Many of *Faḍl*'s 180 works, who was among the companions of Imam *Riḍā* (AS), were written to confront deviant sects such as dualists, Trinitarians, anthropomorphists, Murji'ah, Ahl al-Hadith, Mu'tazilah, Isma'iliyyah, Mu'attilah (deniers of divine attributes), **232** Waqifiyyah, and Ghulāt (extremists). These refutations indicate that

these groups were active during the period of the Imam's entry into Neishabur. Therefore, the Imam, by reporting the three Hadiths of *Silsilat al-Dhahab* – *Shafaqat*, Faith, and *Ḥiṣn* – proved and established the deviation and instability of all of them.

B) The three Hadiths, whose chain of narration includes the Ahl al-Bayt and links back to the Prophet (PBUH), demonstrate the legitimacy of the Imams (AS). Furthermore, by highlighting the signifiers and the inseparability of monotheism and Imamate in the Hadith of *Ḥiṣn*, other discourses were rejected.

C) At least four charismatic acts (Karamah) emanated from Imam Riḍā (AS) in Neishabur, which attest to the originality and legitimacy of the Shi'i school and the explicit appointment (*Manṣūṣ*) of the Imamate of its twelve Imams.

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