



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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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 *Tāriq al-Qaḥṭānī*, a Salafī-Wahhabi writer and professor of creed (Salafī 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'āruḍ*), 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

108 narrations concerning various causes of the occultation, without

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; Dirāsātun Taḥlīlīyyatun 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-Hamadānīyyu Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu Qāla Ḥaddathanā 'Alīy ibn Ibrāhīma ibn Hāshim 'an Abīhi 'an Ṣāliḥ ibn al-Sindīyy 'an Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Qāla: Dakhaltu 'alā Mūsā ibn Ja'farin fa Qultu lahu yā ibn Rasūlillāhi Anta al-Qā'imū bil Ḥaqqi fa Qāla Anā al-Qā'imū bil Ḥaqqi walākinna al-Qā'ima Alladhī Yuṭahhiru al-Arḍa min A'dā'illāhi 'Azza wa Jall wa Yamla'uhā 'Adlan kamā Mullī'at Jawrā wa Zulman huwa al-Khāmisu min Wuldī lahu Ghaybatun Yaṭūlu Amaduhā <u>Khawfan 'alā Nafsihī</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-'Atṭār Raḍiyallāhu 'anhū 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 Rī'ābin 'an Zurāra Qāla Sami'tu Abā Ja'fara Yaḳūlu: Inna lil Qā'imi Ghaybatan Qabla Ṣuhūrihi Qultu wa lima Qāla Yakhāfu wa Awma'a bi Yadihī ilā Baṭnihī 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 'Alīyu ibn Aḥmaḍa 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." (Ḥillī, 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 Muḥammadin annahū Qāla: "Fī al-Qā‘im Sunnatun min Mūsā wa Sunnatun min Yūsufā wa Sunnatun min ‘Īsā wa Sunnatun min Muḥammad fa amā Sunnatu Mūsā fa Khā‘ifun Yatarakhabu wa amā Sunnatu Yūsufā fa inna Ikhwatahu Kānū Yubāyi‘ūnah wa Yukhatībūnah wa lā Ya‘rifūnah wa amā Sunnatu ‘Īsā fa al-Sīyāḡatu wa amā Sunnatu Muḥammadin 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-Muzaḥḥarū ibn Ja'fari ibn al-Muzaḥḥari al-Alawīyy Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu Qāla Ḥaddathanā Ja'faru ibn Mas'ūd wa Ḥaydar ibn Muḥammadi al-Samarqandī Jamī'an Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn Mas'ūd Qāla Ḥaddathanā Jabrā'ilu ibn Aḥmada 'an Mūsā ibn Ja'farin al-Baghdādī Qāla Ḥaddathanī al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammadi al-Ṣayrafi 'an Ḥanāni ibn Sadīr 'an Abīhi 'an Abī 'Abdillāhi Qāla: "Qāla inna lil Qā'imī minnā Ghaybatan Yaṭūlu Amaduhā faQultu lahu wa lima Dhāka Yā ibna Rasūlillāh qāla innallāha 'Azza wa Jall Abī illā an Yujrī fīhi Sunnana al-Anbiyā fī Ghaybātihim wa annahu lā budda lahu yā Sadīru min Istīfā'i Madadi Ghaybātihim Qālalāhu Ta'ālā la Tarkabunna Ṭabaqan 'an Ṭabaqin ay Sunnana man Kāna		

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	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 Dhakarahū '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
	Mukhālīfīhi fīl 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 Kharajati zahara 'alā man zahara min A'dā'illāhi '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 Šādiq (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 Tadrīhi Khayrun min 'Ashrin Tarwīhī inna likulli Ḥaqqin Ḥaqqiqatan wa likulli Ṣawābin Nūran thumma Qāla inna wallāhi lā Na'uddu al-Rajula min Shi'atinā Faqīhan ḥattā Yulḥani lahu fa Ya'rifa al-Laḥna inna Amīra l-Mu'minīna Qāla 'alā Minbar al-Kūfati inna min Warā'ikum Fitānan Muẓlīmata 'amyā'a Munkasifatan lā Yanjū min'hā illā al-Nawmatu Qāla yā Amīra l-Mu'minīna wa mā al-Nawmatu Qāla Alladhī Ya'rifu al-Nāsa wa lā ya'rifūnahu wa i'lamū annal Arḍa lā Takhlū min Ḥujatin lillāhi 'Azza wa Jall wa Lākinnallāha Sayu'mī Khalaqahu 'anhā bi Ḍulmihim 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 bihī 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 Ibrāhīm 'an Abīhi 'an Muḥammadi ibn Khālīd 'amman Ḥaddathahu 'an al-Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar wa Muḥammadu ibn Yaḥyā 'an 'Abdillāh ibn Muḥammadi ibn 'Īsā 'an Abīhi 'an ba'ḍi Aṣḥābihi 'an al-Mufaḍḍali ibn 'Umar 'an Abī 'Abdillāhi Qāla: "Aqrabu mā Yakūn ul '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 Yazhar 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 Tabāhan wa Masā'an fa inna Ashadḡa mā Yakūnu Ghadabullāhi 'alā A'dā'ihi idhā Iftaqadū Ḥujjatuhu wa lam Yazhar lahum wa qad 'Alima anna Awliyā'ahu lā Yartābūna wa law 'Alima annahum Yartābūn mā Ghayyaba Ḥujjatuhu 'anhum Tarfata '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 ‘anhū Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥamadāniyu Qāla Ḥaddathanā ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasanī ibn ‘Alī ibn Faḍḍālīn ‘an Abīhi ‘an Abī al-Ḥasanī ‘Alī 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 Dhālīka 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 Ṣadūq narrates from Prophet with a Sanad: "Ḥaddathanā 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-Barmaqīyu '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 Wuldhī 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 lī Yumahhiṣṣallāhu Alladhīna āmanū wa Yamḥaqa al-Kāfirīna yā Jābiru inna Hādhā al-Amra Amrun min Amrillāhi wa Sirrun min Sirrillāhi Maṭwiyyun 'an 'Ibādillāhi fa Iyyāka 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 ‘Alīyīn ‘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 Hādhā innahu Qad zahara Ṣāhibuka fain	Weak	are among the unknown and neglected narrators. 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 'Alīyī ibn al-Ḥakamī '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 Ahlihi wa lam Yabqā ahlu dīn ḥattā Yuzhirū al-Islāma wa Ya'tirifū bil Imān amā Sami'ta llāha ta'ālā Yaqūlu wa lahu Aslam man fī al-Samawāti wal Arḍ Taw'an wā 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 Sīratānā idhā Maliknā Sīrnā 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 Qurān, 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 Labni 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-Ḥannāfi ‘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 Yaḳūlu fī Ṣāḥibi ḥādḥā 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 Yuḳālu 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; Tūsī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 424; Ṭabarī Āmilī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 532).
3.2.	The Enactment of the Prophets' Traditions	Correct	Ḥaddathanā al-Muzaḥḥāru ibn Ja‘fari bni al-Muzaḥḥāri 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 fīhi 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; Ḥurr '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; Fayd Kāshānī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 2, 425; Ḥurr ‘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. Akhbarānā 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
			fī Dhālika Ya'lamūna wa Yūqinūn annahu lam Tabṭul Ḥujjatullāhi wa lā Mithāquhū 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 Yaẓhar lahum wa qad 'alima llāhu 'azza wa jall annā awliyā'ahu lā Yartābūna wa law 'alima annahum Yartābūna mā Ghayyaba ḥujjatuhu ṭarfata '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-Hasan 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 Nī'ami Yaṭlubu al-Mar'a falā Yajidūnahu Qultu lahu wa limā Dhālika yabna Rasūlillāhi Qāla li ann Imāmahūm Yağību 'anhum fa Qultu wa limā Qāla li allā Yakūna li aḥadin fī '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 waladīhī al-Qā'imu al-Muntaẓaru al-Mahdiyyu alladhī Yamla'ullāhu 'Azza wa Jall bihī al-Arḍa 'adlan wa Qisṭan kamā mulī'at Jāwran wa Zūlman." Wa Alladhī Ba'athanī bil Ḥaqq Nabīyyā, innā al-Thābitayna 'alā al-Qawli bihī fī Zamāni Ghāybatihī 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 'Ibādihī, 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 'Amilī, 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 Madīnat al-Salām Sanata Ithnatayn wa Khamsīna wa Thalāthimi'ati Qāla Ḥaddathanā Muḥammadu ibn 'Alīyyi ibn 'Abdi al-Ṣamādī al-Kūfī Qāla Ḥaddathanā 'Alīyyu ibn 'Asīmīn 'an Muḥammadi ibn 'Alī bni Mūsā 'an Abīhi 'Alī ibn Mūsā 'an Abīhi Mūsā ibn Ja'farīn 'an Abīhi Ja'fari ibn Muḥammadīn 'an Abīhi Muḥammadi ibn 'Alīyyin 'an Abīhi 'Alīyyu ibn al-Ḥusayn 'an Abīhi al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī bni Abī Ṭālibīn Qāla: "... Rijālun Musawwamatun Yajma'ullāhu Ta'ālā lahu min Aqāṣī al-Bilādi 'alā 'Iddati ahli Badrin Thalāthimi'atin wa Thalāthata 'Asharana Rajulan ma'ahu Ṣaḥīfahun Makhtūmah fihā 'Adad Uṣṣḥābihī 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 Ṣahara 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 Ayyāmihi al-Jawru wa āmanat bihi al-Subulu wa Akhrajati al-Arḍu Barakātiḥā wa Ruddā kullu Ḥaqqin ilā Ahlihī wa lam Yabqa ahlu Dīnin ḥattā Yuḏhirū al-Islāma wa Ya'tarifū bil Īmāni. 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 faḥīm'aidhin Tuḏhiru al-Arḍu Kunūzihā wa Tubdī Barakātihā falā Yajidu al-Rajulu minkum Yawma'idhin Mawḍi'an liṣadaqatihī wa lā libirrihi Shumūli al-Ghinā Jamī'a al-Mu'minīn. Thumma Qāla: "Inna Dawlatana ākhiru al-Duwalī 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; Hurr '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-Husaynu 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'fūrin 'an Mawlā li Banī Shaybāna 'an Abī Ja'farin Qāla: "Idhā Qāma Qā'imunā, waḍa'a llāhu yadahu 'alā ru'ūsī 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; Fayd Kāshānī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 2, 456; Ḥurr ‘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

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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