



A Critical Review of Narrations on the Signs of the Advent in Basra

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Abstract

The belief in Mahdism and the advent of Imam Mahdi (AJ) is one of the fundamental principles of Shia Islam, accompanied by various signs in narrative sources. The city of Basra in southern Iraq is one of the regions that holds a special place in the narrations concerning the signs of the advent. This article, titled "A Critical Review of Narrations on the Signs of the Advent in Basra," examines four categories of narrations, each of which refers to specific events in this region; the "*Khasf* of Basra," (land sinking) the reading of a letter of dissociation from Amir al-Mu'minīn (PBUH), the destruction of

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Basra, and the emergence of an individual from the lineage of the Prophet who causes the city's ruin. The present study, the authenticity of the chain of narrators (*Sanad*) and the semantic import (*Dalālah*) of these narrations were evaluated using a *Rijālī* and analytical approach. The findings indicate that most of these narrations are either transmitted as *Mursal* (lacking a full chain) or *Marfūʿ* (with an incomplete chain) or include narrators who are *Majhūl* (of unknown status) and unreliable. Consequently, from a *Rijālī* perspective, they lack sufficient credibility. Furthermore, a semantic analysis reveals conceptual ambiguities and, in some cases, conflict with clear interpretive principles. The conclusion of this study is that these narrations cannot be used with scientific certainty as credible signs of the advent. The central message of this article is to emphasize the necessity of a critical approach and to avoid unsubstantiated historical and geographical applications.

Keywords: Signs of the Advent, Basra, *Khasf*, Dissociation from Amir al-Muʿminīn, Mahdavi Narrations.

Introduction

The belief in Mahdism, as one of the most fundamental theological beliefs in Shia Islam, plays a central role in the identity of Shias and, in continuation of the principle of Imamate, holds a high position in the Shia system of knowledge. This belief that a living Imam is in the occultation and will one day reappear to rid the world of oppression and corruption has always been a key component in the religious and political dynamism of Shia communities.

However, the abundance of narrations related to the signs of the advent and the resulting complexities have led to incorrect interpretations, personal readings, and even the fabrication of some narrations. This is an issue that can fuel theological and political deviations. One of the most important challenges facing research on the signs of the advent is distinguishing authentic narrations from inauthentic ones, explaining their textual implications, and understanding the place of each narration within the overall body of Mahdavi hadiths.

In this regard, the city of Basra in southern Iraq, a city with an influential religious, cultural, and political history in Islam, is one of the geographical regions about which a considerable number of narrations have been transmitted. Narrations such as the "*Khasf* of Basra," the "Destruction of Basra," and the "Reading of a letter of dissociation from Amir al-Mu'minīn (AS)" in this city are among the signs that have been mentioned, directly or indirectly, in hadith texts.

The main issue of the present article is the critical review of the chain of narrators and the semantics of these narrations in ancient hadith and Mahdavi sources. In this process, questions are raised, such as: 'What is the credibility of these narrations from a biographical and chain perspective?' 'Do their implications refer to past historical events or a promised future?' 'What are the differences between these narrations and other signs of the advent?' 'And can these narrations be used as a credible sign of the advent?'

Based on first-hand Shia sources such as *al-Ghaybah* by al-

Nu'mānī and *Shaykh Ṭūsī*, *Kamāl al-Dīn* by *Shaykh Ṣadūq*, *al-Irshād* by *Muḥīd*, and later works like *Biḥār al-Anwār*, the present article seeks to conduct a precise review of the narrations related to the signs of the advent in Basra with an analytical and evaluative approach. Many previous works have only collected these narrations and have neglected a critical review of their chain and a semantic analysis. Therefore, the innovation of the present article lies in this focus: "A precise biographical review and critical analysis of the chain of narrations, a comparison of their content with historical evidence, and a distinction between definite and non-definite signs."

Ultimately, this article attempts to purify the hadith heritage from weak or suspicious data, take a step towards strengthening the scientific discourse on the signs of the advent, and make the reader aware of the methodology for dealing with such narrations. This is an issue that is more necessary than ever in the current tense climate of the Islamic world.

1. Research Background

Based on the search conducted regarding the background of the present study, it can be said that some authors have included content about narrations of the era of the advent in their works, which are related to the topic of this research. For example:

- Alī Kūrānī, (2003 AD/1382 SH), "The Book of the Era of the Advent." In this book, the author has collected and analyzed narrations related to the era of the advent and reviewed its signs in

a categorized manner. A part of this work is dedicated to events in specific geographical regions like Basra, with the explanation that the author focuses more on the collective and applied aspects of the narrations rather than on a critical review of their chain.

- *Ja'far Murtaḍā 'Āmilī*, (2000 AD/1424 AH), "A Study on the Signs of the Advent." This book is an analytical study on the signs of the advent that attempts to evaluate the narrations related to the signs of the advent with a rational and critical perspective. The author, while referring to narrations about Basra, has expressed doubt about the credibility of some of them. His method of critical review of the chain and content serves as a model for the present article.
- Ayati, Nusratullah, (2011 AD/1390 SH), "A Reflection on the Definite Signs of the Advent." In this work, Ayati has categorized the signs of the advent into definite and non-definite and, in his review of the narrations, has focused on biographical and semantic analysis. In cases such as the *Khasf of Baydā'*, the emergence of *Sufyānī*, and other signs, he provides a precise methodology that can also be applied to the analysis of narrations related to Basra.
- Barari, Muhammad, (2016 AD/1395 SH), article "A Source Study of Narrations of the Signs of the Advent in the Book *al-Ghaybah* by *Shaykh Ṭūsī*." In this article, Barari has examined the sources and chains related to the narrations of the signs of the advent in the book *al-Ghaybah* and have tried to determine the degree of credibility and the method of transmission of these narrations. This article is important for the present research because a part of the

discussed narrations is transmitted in this very book.

- Sulayman, Khodamurad, (2016 AD/1395 SH), article "An Analysis of the Increasing Trend of Narrating the Signs of the Advent in the Course of Compiling Narrative Sources." In this article, Sulayman has conducted a historical and analytical review of the increasing trend of narrations about the signs of the advent in various sources. He shows that some later narrations lack credible support and are mostly the result of the social conditions of the era of compilation. This is a topic that should also be considered when reviewing the Basra narrations.
- Khalili Rad, Murtada, (2020 AD/1399 SH), article "A Critical Review of the Chain and Semantics of Narrations on the Signs of the Advent in Basra." In this study, the author, focusing on first-hand Mahdism sources, has reviewed the narrations related to the signs of the advent in Basra, such as the *Khasf*, the reading of the letter of dissociation from Amir al-Mu'minīn (AS), and the destruction of the city, from a chain and semantic perspective. His method is based on the reliability of the chain of transmission and the collection of evidence of the strength and weakness of the chains. The conclusion of the article emphasizes the weakness of the chain of these narrations and the impossibility of relying on them with certainty. Unlike Khalili Rad's article, which primarily focuses on evaluating Basra narrations based on the reliability of the chain and a limited chain-semantic analysis within the

framework of primary Mahdism sources, the present article uses a combined biographical, semantic, and applied approach. In addition to evaluating the chain of narrators and analyzing the content, it also assesses the historical, geographical, and ideological context of the narrations. The important distinction of this research is in its critique of unfounded historical applications, the explanation of the educational-warning functions of the signs, and the presentation of an analytical model for separating definite and non-definite signs of the advent in relation to Basra. This model allows for a redefinition of the function of weak hadiths in Mahdavi discourse.

- Elahinejad, Hussein, (2016 AD/1395 SH), article "Symbolism in the Signs of the Advent." In this article, Elahinejad has tried to analyze many of the signs of the advent as symbols with deeper layers of meaning, using a symbolic approach. This approach also provides the possibility of a non-superficial interpretation of the narrations related to Basra and is useful in evaluating their implications.

A general critique of the works written on the signs of the advent is that there are no books, articles, or theses with a focus on the signs of the advent related to the land of Iraq that have addressed the chain and semantic analysis. Many of them have only sufficed with scattered narrations of some of the signs of the advent. Some of them contain incorrect and unscholarly applications, and the fundamental problem of many earlier sources in this field is their generality and the transmission of narrations, and the problem of repetition is seen in

them. We intend in this research to review the narrations of the signs of the advent related to the land of Iraq, which have not been discussed and studied regionally and specifically until now, by conducting a chain and semantic analysis of them.

2. Research Methodology

This research was conducted with a descriptive-analytical approach, using the method of critical review of the chain and semantics. In the first stage, narrations related to the signs of the advent in Basra were collected from credible narrative sources. Then, based on the principles of the science of *Rijāl* (biographical evaluation), their chain credibility was assessed. In the next step, using the method of textual content analysis and the rules of hadith comprehension, the conceptual implications of the narrations were examined, and their application to theological and interpretive principles was evaluated. This approach has made it possible to provide a comprehensive and coherent analysis of the credibility and usefulness of the Basra narrations in the topic of the signs of the advent.

3. Signs of the Advent

The word "*Alāma*" means a sign (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 12, 419), and its plural forms are "*Alām*" and "*Alāmāt*." "*Alam*" is considered its synonym. About the meaning of "*Allāmah*" and "*Alam*," it is said that it is something that is set up in deserts to guide those who are lost (ibid.).

10 In terminology, "Signs of the advent" refers to any event that

indicates a hidden event that is supposed to happen in the future, so that it becomes a sign of the occurrence of another event after it. In the science of *Malāḥim* (eschatological events), this term is mostly applied to the prediction of the signs of the advent of Imam Mahdi (AS) at the end of time, which indicate the proximity of his advent, such as: the emergence of *Sufyānī*, the emergence of *Yamānī*, the emergence of *Khurāsānī*, the occurrence of a heavenly cry, the killing of *Nafs al-Zakīyyah*, and so on. This word is mentioned in the words of Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) referring to the principle of the signs of the advent, who says: "Indeed, before the Qaim, there are signs from Allah, the Mighty and Exalted, for the believers." (Ibn Bābawayh Qummī, 1974 AD/1395 AH: 2, 649)

By reflecting on the narrations of the signs of the advent, the answer to the question of why the impeccable Imams (AS) were intent on stating them becomes clear. And what was the general purpose of their dissemination among the Islamic community? It was to make the nation aware of the misleading banners and also the deviant invitations in religious, political, social, and moral matters that will occur before the advent (Nili, 1981 AD/1360 SH: 32).¹ It was also a good tiding of the emergence of the banners of truth (Nu'mānī, 1976 BAD/1397 AH: 256)² and the preparation of Muslims for the advent,

1. Beware of al-Sufyānī, and beware of the two outcasts from the descendants of so-and-so. They will come to Mecca and divide the wealth there, imitating al-Qā'im.
2. And when al-Yamani emerges, hasten towards him, for his banner is a banner of guidance, and it is not permissible for a Muslim to turn away from him. Whoever does that is among the people of Hellfire.

similar to the story of the Egyptians during the time of Prophet Joseph, who were awaiting seven years of famine, but with prior knowledge and proper planning, they were able to overcome the problems well.

With a precise conceptual and narrative review of the signs of the advent, especially in relation to the Basra region, it becomes clear that many of these signs in narrative sources do not have acceptable chain credibility. The term "*Allāmah*" in Mahdavi narrations primarily has a warning and awakening aspect. The main purpose of mentioning these signs are to increase insight and intellectual and spiritual preparedness of the community to confront the tribulations and trials before the advent, and not merely to predict temporal and spatial events. From this perspective, signs such as the *Khasf* of Basra, its destruction, and other similar signs, although mentioned in some ancient sources, are often weak in terms of their chain, are transmitted incompletely, or contain unknown and unreliable narrators.

The scientific finding of this article emphasizes that in analyzing the narrations of the signs of the advent, one must proceed with a critical, biographical, and textual approach to avoid falling into the trap of incorrect applications, populist interpretations, and unscientific analyses. As a result, adopting a scientific and methodical approach to these topics not only preserves the credibility of religious research but also prevents the distortion of the fundamental concepts of Mahdism.

12 A critical analysis of the concept of "Signs of the advent" shows

that these signs are not merely tools for predicting future events or determining the exact time of the Mahdavi uprising. Rather, they possess various cognitive, educational, and social functions. For example, in their cognitive function, these narrations help to purify the intellectual boundaries of the religious community by warning against deviant movements. In the educational dimension, by focusing on the trial of patience, resilience, and steadfastness of an individual's and a community's faith, they prepare the spiritual ground for confronting crises. And in their social function, by identifying the signs of crisis before the advent, they lead to an increase in public insight and the cohesion of the front of truth. Therefore, a re-evaluation of the traditional approach to the signs of the advent becomes a double necessity.

The "Traditional approach" in this research refers to the dominant method of the early scholars in dealing with the narrations of the signs. In this method, the indications of the authenticity of the narration, including the harmony of its content with other credible texts, its fame among scholars, or the existence of historical confirmations and content parallels, played a more decisive role than the individual evaluation of each narrator in the chain. These indications, some of which were available to past hadith scholars and are now unknown or incomplete to us due to the passage of time, sometimes led to the acceptance of narrations that, from today's biographical perspective, have unreliable narrators.

Given the loss or weakening of some of the previous indications,

contemporary research must inevitably adopt a combination of the traditional method and a new critical-analytical approach. This means that while adhering to the principles of the science of *Rijāl*, one must carefully examine the remaining intra-textual and extra-textual indications to discover the educational and warning goals of the narrations. In this framework, the signs of the advent should not be interpreted merely as indicators of the temporal or geographical occurrence of events. Rather, they should be considered as a stimulus for self-awareness, a factor for strengthening faith boundaries, and a tool for protecting the authentic Mahdavi discourse against distortion. Such a reading both preserves the narrative heritage and enhances the scientific credibility of the analysis.

4. The *Khasf* of Basra

Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) in a narration states a number of the signs of the advent, some of which are specific to the land of Iraq. In this discussion, we intend to examine the *Khasf* of Basra.

1) The Text, Content, and Sources of the Narration

"The people will be warned before the advent of the *Qā'm* (AJ) from their sins by a fire that will appear in the sky, and a redness that will cover the sky, and a sinking in Baghdad, and a sinking in the city of Basra, and blood that will be shed there, and the destruction of its houses, and a plague that will befall its people, and a fear that will encompass the people of Iraq with which they will have no peace."

The above narration was first mentioned in the book *al-Irshād*. The rest of the sources, such as "*A'lām al-Warā bi A'lām al-Hudā*," (Ṭabrisī, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 2, 279) "*Kashf al-Ghummaḥ fī Ma'rīfat al-A'immaḥ*," (Irbilī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 2, 463) "*Mukhtaṣar Kifāyat al-Muhtadī li Ma'rīfat al-Mahdī*," (Mir Lauhi, 2008 AD/1427 AH: 218) "*Ithbāt al-Hudā bi al-Nuṣūṣ wa al-Mu'jizāt*," (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, n.d.: 5, 362) "*Biḥār al-Anwār*," (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 221) "*Rīyāḍ al-Abrār fī Manāqib al-A'immaḥ al-Aṭḥār*," (Jazāyirī, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 3, 171) have narrated this narration from *al-Irshād*. The text of the narration is the same in all sources. The only difference that is noticeable is in the chain of the narration, where in some sources, instead of "*al-Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd*," "*al-Ḥusayn ibn Zayd*" is used (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, n.d.: 5, 362 and Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 221) or "*al-Ḥasan ibn Yazīd*"¹ is used. Or, instead of "*al-Khawzī*," "*al-Jawzī*" is used (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 221). And in some sources, "*al-Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd*" is not mentioned in the chain of the narration, and only "*Mundhir al-Khawzī*" is mentioned (Irbilī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 2, 462). In *Biḥār al-Anwār*, "*al-Ḥusayn ibn Zayd* from *Mundhir al-Jawzī*" is mentioned (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 221).

The analysis of the above narration confirms that despite the repetition of this content in multiple sources and its narration from great hadith scholars, the weakness of the chain due to its incomplete transmission or the ambiguity of some narrators such as "*al-Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd*" and "*Mundhir al-Khawzī*" makes the position of this

1. *Al-Ḥasan ibn Yazīd* from *Mundhir* from *Abī 'Abdillāh* (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, n.d.: 459). This is a typographical error because *al-Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd* is mentioned on page 284.

narration shaky from the perspective of definitive proof. In addition, the lack of a specific timeframe and a clear interpretation of the details of the event make any historical or geographical application difficult. It must be emphasized that the mention of the *Khasf* of Basra has more of a warning, attention-grabbing, and preparatory aspect for the end-of-time trials. Its main function is to lead the community of waiters to be cautious in their judgments and patient in confronting the signs of the advent. A scientific approach requires that the predominance of a symbolic and cautionary atmosphere be preferred over dogmatic analyses to be immune from deviations in interpretation and application.

2) Chain of Transmission (*Sanad*) Review

- *Al-Husayn ibn Yazīd*. His full name is "*al-Husayn ibn Yazīd ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Nawfalī*." There is no information regarding his reliability or lack thereof. *Najāshī* says about this person that some of the *Qummīs* accused him of *Ghuluw* (exaggeration), "But I have not seen anything that indicates his *Ghuluw*." (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 38)
- *Mundhir al-Khawzī*. There is no information that indicates his reliability or lack thereof. Result of the chain review indicates that in the chain of the mentioned narration, the names of all the narrators are not mentioned, and *Shaykh al-Mufīd* has only mentioned the names of two of the narrators. For this reason, the mentioned narration is considered *Mursal* (lacking a full chain) and therefore

lacks sufficient credibility. The weakness of the chain of the *Khasf* of Basra narration due to the incomplete chain and the lack of reliability for key narrators such as "*al-Husayn ibn Yazīd*" and "*Mundhir al-Khawzī*" makes the evidential position of this report shaky. Such deficiencies remove the narration from the scope of a conclusive argument and reliance and make relying on it in theological and applied discussions lack sufficient scientific support. Therefore, in Mahdavi studies, paying attention to biographical principles and avoiding reliance on weak narrations is an unavoidable necessity for maintaining the accuracy and integrity of research in the field of Mahdism and religious studies.

3) Semantic Review

This narration contains eight items of the signs of the uprising of Imam Mahdi (AS), which are as follows:

1. A fire that appears in the sky;
2. A redness that illuminates the horizons;
3. The *Khasf* of Baghdad;
4. The *Khasf* of Basra;
5. Blood that is shed in Basra;
6. The destruction of the houses of Basra;
7. The annihilation of the people of Basra;
8. The spread of fear and horror throughout all parts of Iraq, which will deprive all the people of Iraq of peace and tranquility.

5. *Khasf* in the Quran and Narrations

The word "*Khasf*" in Arabic means the sinking of the earth (Farāhīdī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 4, 201). In the Quranic and narrative literature, this concept, in addition to its literal meaning, is sometimes used with a warning and punitive connotation. The Holy Quran explicitly states the actual occurrence of *Khasf* in the past in the story of *Qārūn* and, by threatening infidels and oppressors with sinking into the earth, makes its future occurrence entirely possible and believable.

Basra is also a city in southern Iraq that is mentioned as the location of *Khasf* in a number of Mahdavi narrations. According to these sources, the *Khasf* of Basra is presented as one of the signs of the advent of Imam Mahdi (AJ). This linguistic and historical background, while removing any improbability, shows that the mention of the *Khasf* of Basra in narrations, whether in its literal meaning or in its symbolic function, carries a message of warning and preparation of the community for the great changes of the era of the advent.

The word *Khasf* is mentioned eight times in the Quran,¹ and we will mention some of the verses of the Quran:

- "So We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And he had no party to help him against Allah, nor was he of those who could defend themselves." (al-Qaṣaṣ: 81)

In several instances, infidels and polytheists are threatened with sinking into the earth and similar punishments, some of which we

1. Al-Qīyāmah: 8, al-ʿAnkabūt: 40, al-Qaṣaṣ: 81 and 82, Saba': 9, al-Naḥl: 45, al-Isrā': 68, al-Mulk: 16.

will mention:

- "Do they who plot evil deeds feel secure that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them, or that the punishment will not come upon them from where they do not perceive?" (al-Nahl: 41)

"Or do you feel secure that He will not cause a side of the land to swallow you, or send upon you a storm of stones? Then you will find no one to be your protector." (al-Isrā': 68)

Khasf in narrations; in the narrations of the signs of the advent, *Khasf* is mentioned in several places. The *Khasf* of *Baydā'* is considered one of the definite signs of the advent, and many narrations refer to this matter. The *Khasf* in the other cases, such as the *Khasf* of Baghdad, the *Khasf* of Basra, the *Khasf* of the East, and the *Khasf* of the West, the *Khasf* of *Jābīyah*, and the *Khasf* of *Ḥarastā* are considered non-definite signs of the advent.

Based on narrations, *khasf* will occur in different places:

- The *Khasf* of *Jābīyah*. *Jābīyah* in Arabic means a basin where water is collected for camels to drink. In terminology, it is a city in Sham (Syria) where, according to a narration, *Khasf* will occur before the advent of Imam Mahdi (AJ). There is a narration about the *Khasf* of *Jābīyah* where Imam *Bāqir* says: "...And a village from the villages of Sham called *Jābīyah* will sink..." (Nu'mānī, 1976 AD/1397 AH: 279)
- The *Khasf* of *Ḥarastā*. *Ḥarastā* was a large city, more than a league away from Sham (Yāqūt Ḥimawī, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 2, 241). It is one of the places where, according to a narration, *Khasf* is supposed

to occur before the advent of Imam Mahdi (AS). In this regard, there is a narration from Imam *Bāqir* (AS), quoting Amir al-Mu'minīn, who says: "...So look for the sinking of a village from Damascus called *Harastā*. When that happens, the son of the liver-eater will come out of the dry valley until he stands on the pulpit of Damascus. When that happens, wait for the emergence of the Mahdi." (Nu'mānī, 1976 AD/1397 AH: 305 and Ṭūsī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 461)

- The *Khasf* of the East, the West, and the Arabian Peninsula. Of course, it is possible that the *Khasf* of the East refers to the *Khasf* of Baghdad and Basra, and the *Khasf* of the West refers to the *Khasf* that will occur in the land of Sham, and the *Khasf* of the Arabian Peninsula is the same as the *Khasf* of *Baydā'*, which is considered one of the definite signs of the advent. The narration that mentions the *Khasf* in the East, the West, and the Arabian Peninsula is narrated from the Messenger of God (PBUH): "...And at that time there will be three sinking; a sinking in the East, a sinking in the West, and a sinking in the Arabian Peninsula..." (Ibn Bābawayh Qummī, 1974 AD/1395 AH: 1, 251) In this regard, there is a narration that considers it one of the signs of the Day of Judgment (Ibn Bābawayh, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 431).

- The *Khasf* of *Baydā'*. It is considered one of the definite signs of the advent, and there are relatively many narrations on this matter (Nu'mānī, 1977 AD/1397 AH: 252 and 257, 264 and Kulaynī, 1986

AD/1407 AH: 8, 310). In this regard, there is a narration from Imam *Bāqir* (AS) who says: "For that, there are signs, among them a call from the sky, and a sinking in the East, and a sinking in the West, and a sinking in *Baydā'*." (Azdī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 15, 206)

A little earlier, it was mentioned that: "It is possible that the *Khasf* of the East refers to the *Khasf* of Baghdad and Basra, and the *Khasf* of the West refers to the *Khasf* that will happen in the land of Sham, and the *Khasf* of the Arabian Peninsula is the same as the *Khasf* of *Baydā'*, as in the last narration, the *Khasf* of *Baydā'* is mentioned alongside the *Khasf* of the East and West instead of the Arabian Peninsula. Therefore, the content of the last narrations will be the same as the previous narrations." The mentioned *Khasfs*, whether they have occurred or not, can be a sign of the advent of Imam Mahdi (AJ), or they can be a divine punishment and a consequence of the spread of sin and impurities, as Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) said in one of the previously mentioned narrations.

- The *Khasf* of Baghdad and Basra. Another region that, according to the narration, will be subject to *Khasf* is Baghdad. In this regard, Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) says: "The people will be warned before the advent of the *Qā'im* (AS) from their sins by a fire that will appear in the sky, and a redness that will cover the sky, and a sinking in Baghdad, and a sinking in the city of Basra..." (Mufīd, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 2, 378)

In analyzing the narrations related to *Khasf* in different places,

including Baghdad and Basra, two basic points must be considered: first, the use of the word "*Khasf*" in the Quran and the Sunnah has various connotations and instances and is not always limited to the physical sinking of the earth. Rather, it can be a symbolic reference to decay, the fall of authority, or broad social changes. Second, a comparison of the narrative structure of the *Khasf* of Basra with other *Khasfs* mentioned in hadith texts shows that many of these signs lack the certainty of occurrence or a specific timeline. More than anything, they have a warning and cautionary function. In the opinion of the author, focusing on a literal interpretation and a quick application of these narrations to historical or contemporary events is contrary to the method of *ijtihad* and scientific precision. It is necessary to conceptualize the mentioned signs within the broad system of Mahdavi signs as a "Warning Siren" for religious communities and a caution against deviations or a distance from values. Such an analysis strengthens the awakening and educational role of these signs, instead of being rigid about their literal meaning. It also prevents hasty applications that cause theological deviation from finding a place in Mahdavi studies. Ultimately, a message-centered analysis and attention to educational warnings have more originality than a purely historical and informational view and make the pathology of incorrect application possible.

In conclusion, the mentioned narration, being a "*Mursal*" (interrupted) narration, does not possess sufficient credibility in

terms of its chain of narrators and cannot be relied upon, despite its inclusion in the book "*al-Irshād*." Based on the aforementioned points, it can be stated that the "*Khasf* of Basra" is one of the specific signs of the reappearance, mentioned in some Shi'a hadith sources, particularly in *Shaykh Mufīd's "al-Irshād,"* and subsequently quoted in secondary sources like "*Biḥār al-Anwār*" and "*Kashf al-Ghumma*." However, a thorough examination of the narration's chain of narrators reveals that, due to the incomplete mention of the chain and the presence of unreliable or unknown individuals, the narration is considered "*Mursal*" from a *Rijālī* (biographical evaluation of narrators) perspective, and consequently lacks the necessary credibility for definitive reliance. Furthermore, discrepancies in the names of narrators (such as "*al-Ḥusayn ibn Zayd*" and "*al-Ḥasan ibn Yazīd*") also indicate the existence of variations in the chain of narrators and the weakness of this narration. From a denotative perspective, the narration refers to the occurrence of a series of events in Iraq, including the sinking in Baghdad and Basra, fire and a red sky, the falling of blood, and the destruction of houses, all of which are presented in a general manner without specifying a timeframe or detailing the location. This ambiguity in meaning makes a definitive and reliable analysis of the narration's content difficult. Additionally, the word "*Khasf*," which means sinking into the earth, although it has precedent in the Quran and narrations, its application in this narration without a clear interpretive sign cannot be definitively applied to a specific event. In reality, although the sinking of Basra is mentioned as one of the

signs of the reappearance, it does not have the necessary probative force for definitive reliance, neither in terms of its chain of narrators nor its denotation. Therefore, caution in relying on such narrations in Mahdavi studies and avoiding historical or geographical interpretations without reliable support is considered a scientific and religious necessity.

6. Reading the Letter Declaring Disavowal of Amir al-Mu'minīn (AS)

One narration mentions two signs for the advent of Imam Mahdi (AJ), stating that before his rise, two declarations will be read in Basra and Kufa, both disavowing Imam Ali (AS).

1) Text and Content

"...And the *Qā'im* will not rise until two letters are read: one in Basra and one in Kufa, with the disavowal of Ali." The only source that has narrated this tradition is the book *al-Ghaybah* by Nu'mānī. Other sources such as *Ithbāt al-Hudāt bi al-Nuṣūṣ wa al-Mu'jizāt* (Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, n.d.: 3, 168), *Hilyat al-Abrār fī Aḥwāl Muḥammad wa Ālih al-Aṭhār* (Baḥrānī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 5, 331-333), *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 361), and *Bishārat al-Islam fī ʿĀlāmāt al-Mahdi* (Kazemi, 2007 AD/1428 AH: 190-191) have all cited from Nu'mānī's *al-Ghaybah*.

In analyzing this narration, it should be noted that the reading of a
24 letter of disavowal of Amir al-Mu'minīn (AS) in Basra and Kufa

symbolizes the peak of doctrinal and social deviation on the eve of the era of advent. From a content perspective, it is a serious warning to the Shi'a community about the danger of adversarial movements infiltrating and distorting authentic beliefs. However, the weak chain of transmission and the limited number of narrations of this tradition in reliable sources prevent it from being cited definitively. Therefore, the correct approach is to emphasize the educational and insightful aspect of the narration and to avoid hasty and superficial interpretations, in order to preserve the integrity of the Mahdavi discourse.

2) Examination of the Chain of Transmission (*Sanad*)

- *Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'īd*. *Najāshī* has authenticated him (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 94). *Shaykh Ṭūsī* also authenticated him (Ṭūsī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 86).
- *Yahyā ibn Zakarīyā*. His full name is "*Yahyā ibn Zakarīyā ibn Shaybān Abū 'Abdullāh al-Kindī al-'Allāf*," and *Najāshī* has authenticated him (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 442).
- *Yūnus ibn Kulayb*. He is unknown.
- *Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ḥamza al-Baṭā'inī*. He is considered one of the leaders of the Waqifiyya, who is described as extremist (*Ghālī*) and a liar (Kashshī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 36).
- *Abū Baṣīr*. His name is "*Abū Baṣīr Yahyā ibn Abī al-Qāsim*," and *Najāshī* has authenticated him (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 441). He was a companion of Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) and is considered reliable.

Result of the *Sanad* examination indicates that a detailed review of the chain of transmission for this narration shows that the presence of individuals such as *Yūnus ibn Kulayb* (of unknown state) and *al-Ḥasan ibn Alī ibn Abī Ḥamza al-Baṭā'inī* (accused of extremism and lying) severely compromises its reliability. Although some narrators are authenticated by biographical scholars, the weakness in key links of the chain renders the narration unsuitable for scholarly citation. Therefore, by the standards of the science of *Rijāl* and the principles of hadith criticism, this narration lacks the necessary credibility for reliance in Mahdavi discussions, and scholarly or jurisprudential reliance on such a narration would be contrary to academic and religious caution.

3) Examination of the Semantic Import (*Dalālah*)

A prominent point in analyzing narrations about the signs of advent, especially the one about the reading of two letters of disavowal of Amir al-Mu'minīn (AS) in Basra and Kufa, is to consider the semantic context, the narrative purpose, and the cognitive and even sociological challenges embedded within the narration itself.

This short narration raises several questions for the researcher: 'Who will undertake such declarations and what will be their motives?' 'Why is the focus on disavowal of Imam Ali (AS) highlighted?' 'And what is the ultimate message and function of this content within the system of the signs of advent?'

At the outset, it must be admitted that the narration lacks clear details about the identity of those who will carry out this act and their historical or social motivations. The reading of letters disavowing a figure like Ali (AS), who holds a distinguished position of faith, knowledge, and political authority in Shi'a teachings, cannot be a simple political action. Rather, it is a sign of the peak of intellectual and cultural decay and the deep-rooted presence of hypocrisy and hostility toward authentic Alawi values. From this perspective, such an event is a serious warning to the religious community that even on the verge of the advent and in a predominantly Islamic environment, there is a possibility for the re-emergence of distorting and hostile movements.

A second point is the connection of this sign with the historical ups and downs of the followers of Imam Ali throughout the Islamic centuries. The disavowal of Ali (AS) in the midst of Islamic societies is a recurring tragedy, evidence of which can be found in the early days of Islam and subsequent eras, especially in the official policies of the Umayyads, which aimed to isolate the movement of imamate. A re-examination of this narration recalls the continuation of the same policy in a new and more extreme form, even before the rise of the global state of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), and draws attention to the resistance of the front of falsehood, even until the final moments of the era of occultation.

Given this, it must be emphasized that the purpose of the narrations of the signs of advent, especially such signs, is not merely to provide a

tool for literal application to specific events. Rather, they carry an educational, social, and cautionary message for the Islamic community. To oversimplify and reduce these signs to "news of the future" or to try to blindly apply them to contemporary events is not only contrary to contemplating the intentions of the impeccable Imams (AS) but also carries the risk of straying from the truth of the Mahdavi teachings.

If such a development—the embodiment of hostility toward Amir al-Mu'minīn (AS) in a social context—is considered a warning about the sensitivity of the Islamic community in the era of advent, its educational function becomes clearer: "The community of believers should not be deceived by the superficial religiosity of some movements and should always uphold the teachings of the imamate."

In conclusion, the mentioned narration is not only seriously questionable from a documentary standpoint and cannot be considered a definite sign, but from a semantic perspective, it also carries a more insightful message for the Islamic community during the era of occultation. Paying attention to the sociological, pathological, and historical aspects of this content deepens our understanding and provides new dimensions, showing that the intention of the impeccable Imams (AS) were to raise awareness and warn about the danger of hidden and overt waves of deviation, an issue that must be taken seriously in every era, even on the verge of the advent.

7. The Destruction of Basra

28 In a narration derived from the event of the night of the Ascension

(*Mi'rāj*), the Prophet (PBUH) mentions some events related to the end of time, which some have placed among the signs of the advent.

1) Text, Content, and Sources of the Narration

First narration is: "...At that time, there will be three collapses; a collapse in the east, a collapse in the west, and a collapse on the Arabian Peninsula, and the destruction of Basra at the hands of a man from your progeny, who will be followed by the *Zanūj*, and the rise of a man from the lineage of *Husayn ibn Ali*, and the appearance of the *Dajjāl*." (Ibn Bābawayh Qummī, 1974 AD/1395 AH: 1, 252) This narration was first mentioned by *Shaykh Ṣadūq* in *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni'mah*. The rest of the sources, such as *Muntakhab al-Anwār al-Muḍī'ah fī Dhikr al-Qā'im al-Hujjah* (Nili, 1981 AD/1360 SH: 48), *Ithbāt al-Hudāt bi al-Nuṣūṣ wa al-Mu'jizāt* (Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, n.d.: 5, 346), *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 51, 70), *Rīyāḍ al-Abrār fī Manāqib al-A'imma al-Aṭhār* (Jazāyirī, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 3, 33), and *Ilzām al-Nāṣib fī Ithbāt al-Hujjat al-Ghā'ib* (Ha'iri Yazdī, 2001 AD/1421 AH: 1, 191) have all cited from *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni'mah*.

A critical analysis of the narration about the destruction of Basra at the hands of a person from the Prophet's progeny (PBUH) and accompanied by a group known as the "*Zanūj*" reveals several key points:

First, the narration is *Marfū'ah* (incomplete chain of narrators), and the lack of a complete and reliable chain reduces its credibility from the perspective of *Rijāl*, making definitive hadith-based reliance

difficult. However, a weak or incomplete chain does not mean the absolute rejection of the narration's content. Its meaning might be strengthened by internal textual evidence, historical context, or corroboration from parallel narrations. Therefore, the correct approach in evaluating such texts is to pay simultaneous attention to the chain, the content, and the broader context of the Mahdavi signs, to properly assess its place in the system of the signs of advent and to study its potential relation to the events leading up to the advent through comparative analysis.

Second, the ambiguity in the meaning of concepts likes "A man from your progeny" and the "*Zanūj*" has opened the door to different interpretations and even historical applications. For example, some scholars have applied this event to the *Zanūj* Rebellion in the third century AH, but a more accurate reading shows that the narration, while being one of the signs of the advent, lacks clear temporal or specific details. The central message of this narration should be sought in its warning about the recurrence of strife and social crises before the advent and the necessity for the religious community to be vigilant. Thus, scholarly reliance on its content requires analytical caution and the use of principles for hadith authentication.

2) Examination of the Chain of Transmission (*Sanad*)

The chain of transmission for the above narration is mentioned as follows: "Narrated to us by *al-Husayn ibn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs*, may God be pleased with him, who said: "Narrated to us by my father," who said: "Narrated to us by *Abū Saʿīd Sahl ibn Zīyād al-Ādamī al-Rāzī*,"

who said: "Narrated to us by *Muḥammad ibn Ādam al-Shaybānī* from his father *Ādam ibn Abī Īyās*," who said: "Narrated to us by *al-Mubārak ibn Faḍḍālah* from *Wahb ibn Munabbih*," who raised it from *Ibn 'Abbās*, who said: "The Messenger of God (PBUH) said when I was ascended to my Lord, may His glory be exalted..."

As mentioned in the narration's chain of transmission, this narration is *Marfū'ah* (raised), and for this reason, it lacks sufficient credibility and cannot be cited. A narration transmitted with the phrase "raised it" (*Rafa'ah*) from *Wahb ibn Munabbih* from *Ibn 'Abbās*, which ends with the Messenger of God (PBUH), suffers from a fundamental weakness from the perspective of hadith science due to being *Marfū'ah*. This is because one or more links in the chain of narrators are either unknown or have been omitted, which makes it impossible to evaluate the trustworthiness of the narrators and the connection of the chain. In addition, the presence of individuals such as *Wahb ibn Munabbih*, who are generally not fully trusted by Shi'a scholars, further compromises the narration's credibility. Therefore, such a narration lacks definitive value for proving the signs of the advent and must be viewed with great caution in scholarly research.

3) Examination of the Semantic Import (*Dalālah*)

Who is meant by "A man from your progeny"? Who is meant by the "*Zanūj*"? It means a person from the progeny of Amir al-Mu'minīn who will be accompanied by a group of slaves. It is worth noting that throughout history, a person named Ali ibn Muhammad revolted against the Abbasid Caliph in 255 AH and was accompanied by a

number of slaves, causing a massacre that eventually ended in his defeat. It is possible that the destruction of Basra in the aforementioned narration is the same destruction that occurred during the *Zanj* Rebellion in 255 AH.

Of course, given that the destruction of Basra is mentioned among the signs of the advent in this narration, it is not far-fetched that this destruction of Basra is not related to the *Zanj* Rebellion in 255 AH and that we will witness the destruction of Basra before the advent.

Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Ṣadr's opinion is that "This sign has already happened due to the *Zanj* Rebellion."

Critique of Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Ṣadr's theory; the same objection raised against Ayatollah Ṣadr's theory regarding the *Zanj* Rebellion also applies here. How can they apply the destruction of Basra at the hands of a person from the progeny of Amir al-Mu'minīn, which is mentioned in the narration as one of the signs of the advent, to the *Zanj* Rebellion? Perhaps we will witness such an event close to the advent, where the destruction of Basra occurs at the hands of a person from the progeny of Amir al-Mu'minīn who is supported by his slaves.

Ayatollah Kūrānī's opinion: "The narrations of the destruction of Basra are of three types; destruction by drowning, destruction by the *Zanj* Rebellion, both of which occurred during the Abbasid era, and the third type, which is the destruction of Basra by a collapse, is one of the signs of the advent that has not yet occurred."

Critique of Ayatollah Kūrānī's theory; the same objection that was

raised against Ayatollah Sadr's theory regarding the Zanj Rebellion also applies to Ayatollah Kūrānī's theory. How can they apply the destruction of Basra at the hands of one of the progeny of Amir al-Mu'minīn, which is mentioned in the narration as one of the signs of the advent, to the Zanj Rebellion? It is possible that we will witness such an event in the near future before the advent, where the destruction of Basra occurs at the hands of one of the progeny of Amir al-Mu'minīn who is supported by his slaves.

Second Narration; A narration from Amir al-Mu'minīn (AS) states that before the rise of Imam Mahdi (AJ), events will occur, one of which is the destruction of the city of Basra.

4) Text, Content, and Sources of the Narration

"From *Abū 'Abdullāh Ja'far ibn Muḥammad* (AS) that Amir al-Mu'minīn (AS) narrated things that would happen after him until the rise of the *Qā'im* ... when Basra is destroyed..." (Nu'mānī, 1976 AD/1397 AH: 274-275)

This narration was first mentioned in the book *al-Ghaybah* by Nu'mānī. The rest of the sources, such as *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 236), *Rīyāḍ al-Abrār fī Manāqib al-A'imma al-Athār* (Jazāyirī, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 3, 173), and *Ilzām al-Nāṣib fī Ithbāt al-Hujjat al-Ghā'ib* (Ha'iri Yazdī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 2, 107) have all cited from Nu'mānī's *al-Ghaybah*.

5) Examination of the Chain of Transmission (*Sanad*)

- *Ali ibn Aḥmad*; this person is unknown.

- *‘Ubayd Allah ibn Mūsā al-‘Alawīyy*. This person is unknown and not known among biographers.
- *‘Abdullāh ibn Hammād al-Anṣārī*. *Najāshī* refers to him with the phrase "From the Shaykhs of our companions." (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 218)
- *Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Ubayd Allah ibn al-‘Alā’*. *Ibn Ghadā’irī* refers to him as a corrupt person (Wāsiṭī Baghdādī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 1, 38).
- My father (*‘Ubayd Allah ibn al-‘Alā’*): He is unknown.

The aforementioned narration is unknown from a documentary standpoint, lacks sufficient credibility, and cannot be cited.

6) Examination of the Semantic Import (*Dalālah*)

Is the destruction of Basra mentioned in the second narration different from the destruction of Basra by the *Zanj* leader mentioned in the first narration? Generally, many things are mentioned in the second narration, one of which is the destruction of Basra, which is mentioned vaguely and does not lead us to a correct conclusion.

Considering the evidence and observations mentioned, it can be concluded that the issue of the destruction of Basra, although it has been raised in some narrative sources as a sign of the era of advent, faces deep challenges and deficiencies from the perspective of hadith authentication and semantic analysis.

First, the first narration in *Shaykh Ṣadūq*'s book *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni‘mah* is transmitted as *Marfū‘ah*, which clearly reveals its fundamental weakness in terms of the connection of the chain and

the evaluation of the trustworthiness of the narrators. This is because in a *Marfū‘ah* narration, a part of the chain of transmitters is either intentionally or unintentionally omitted, which eliminates any possibility of biographical reliance or validation. The second narration, although it appears in the reliable book *al-Ghaybah* by *Nu‘mānī*, a biographical review shows that a significant part of its narrators are either of an unknown state or have fundamental issues with their trustworthiness. Therefore, its chain also lacks the systematic backing of hadith scholars.

Beyond the weakness of the chain, the content and meaning of these two narrations also add to the ambiguities and interpretive difficulties. The most important content challenge is the lack of clarity in the names and identities of the main characters of the narration—including "A man from your progeny" and the group "*Zanj*"—which in historical and hadith studies have taken on different and even contradictory meanings. For example, some researchers have applied "A man from your progeny" to an Imam from the lineage of Amir al-Mu‘minīn (AS), while others have applied it to rebellious figures of the Abbasid period, such as the leader of the *Zanj*, or as a symbol of the leadership of a cultural religious movement. Regarding the "*Zanūj*," one group has applied it to the East African slaves who settled in Basra, while another group has considered it symbolic for the lower classes or marginalized forces in the apocalyptic conflicts. This diversity and sometimes contradiction in meaning, without precise biographical criteria and analysis of the historical context of the narration, eliminates the possibility of a uniform interpretation and

creates a fertile ground for conflicting interpretations or even ideological and incorrect uses of the text.

On the other hand, the application of these events by some narrative commentators to the *Zanj* Rebellion in the third century AH is mostly based on verbal and superficial similarities—such as the accompaniment of the "*Zanūj*" and the destruction of Basra—without the chain of the narration having a reliable connection or historical evidence being provided that accurately aligns the time, place, and actions mentioned in the text with the documented events of the rebellion. This lack of biographical backing (due to the narration being *Marfū‘ah* and the presence of unknown or questionable narrators) and the lack of content-based evidence that aligns with contemporary historical sources means that such an application does not have sufficient academic weight. In reality, the mere presence of a few superficial elements in common, without establishing temporal, spatial, and semantic consistency, cannot provide a reliable basis for accepting a definitive link between the narration and the *Zanj* Rebellion. Therefore, such interpretations remain at the level of a hypothesis, and their evidentiary value is limited within the framework of critical hadith and historical studies.

In a final summary, it can be said that the destruction of Basra, as mentioned in the two narrations discussed, faces serious challenges from both a documentary and a semantic standpoint. From a documentary perspective, the

Marfū‘ah nature of the first narration and the presence of unknown or unreliable narrators in the second narration's chain of transmission

significantly reduces the necessary biographical credibility for definitive citation. From a semantic perspective, the ambiguity in the identity of the characters, the diversity and sometimes contradiction in historical and interpretive understandings, and the lack of clear temporal and spatial evidence, eliminates the possibility of a certain application to specific events.

Thus, these texts cannot be used as a basis for doctrinal deduction or historical application as "Definite and reliable signs of the advent" of Imam Mahdi (AJ). The main danger in the unquestioning acceptance of such narrations is the formation of incorrect understandings, the distortion of the semantic context of the Mahdavi signs, and the creation of a basis for hasty and ideological applications. The correct path for research in this field is to adhere to a two-sided critique of the chain and content, use parallel narrations and reliable historical evidence, and stick to the methodological principles of hadith science. Only in this way can the discourse of expectation be prevented from deviation and the salvific teachings of Islam be preserved in their authentic context, providing a scientific and reliable framework for the future-oriented analysis of events before the advent.

7) The Role of Chain and Semantic Criticism in Validating Narrations about the Signs of the Advent of Basra

Assessing the credibility of narrations about the signs of the advent, especially those related to the Basra region, is neither possible nor defensible in the field of hadith and Mahdavi studies without employing the scientific methods of chain and semantic criticism.

Chain criticism (examining the chain of narrators) and semantic criticism (analyzing the content and meaning of the narration) are two fundamental pillars in producing reliable knowledge and purifying narrative sources from untrustworthy data.

In the area of chain evaluation, narrations related to the signs of the advent of Basra often face serious problems, including being *Mursal* (incomplete) or *Marfū'ah* (raised) or having narrators of an unknown state or who are unreliable in the chain of transmission. These weaknesses mean that such narrations cannot meet the necessary criteria for hadith credibility and severely cast doubt on their entry into the realm of scholarly citation. The science of *Rijāl*, by using the criteria of trustworthiness and chain connection, is a reliable tool for distinguishing the authenticity or weakness of narrations. The studies conducted in this article show that none of the sources that narrate the signs of the advent of Basra have been able to fully provide these essential indicators, a fact that doubles the importance of caution in accepting these texts.

On the semantic level, analyzing the structure and meaning of the narrations has a prominent importance in assessing their credibility. Many of the narrations focusing on Basra are expressed with ambiguous words and characters, specific symbolism, and even ambiguous concepts, which increases the possibility of error in interpretation and misunderstanding. For example, the phrase "A man from your progeny" in a narration about the destruction of Basra has been applied by some to an impeccable Imam (AS) and by others to

rebellious figures like the leader of the *Zanj*. Similarly, the term "*al-Zanūj*" has sometimes been attributed to African slaves living in Basra and sometimes symbolically to the lower classes and rebellious forces. Furthermore, some meanings conflict with firm theological principles—such as the impermissibility of attributing illegitimate actions to an impeccable Imam (AS)—or with a documented historical process, such as the order and sequence of events leading up to the advent. These instances show that without a systematic approach to semantic criticism, not only will the ambiguities not be resolved, but the likelihood of incorrect application of narrations, the emergence of doubts, and even the creation of superstitious views on Mahdavi topics will increase.

Therefore, a comprehensive critical analysis based on chain and semantic criticism is not only a remedy for academic deficiencies in dealing with the narrations of the signs of the advent of Basra, but also a precise criterion for purifying and validating the Shi'a narrative heritage. Any neglect of these principles opens the way for weak news, common misconceptions, and semantic distortions, and distances research from methodological soundness and academic integrity. Accordingly, the findings of this article indicate the absolute necessity of paying attention to a precise and comprehensive chain and semantic criticism in studies related to the signs of the advent, especially the Basra narrations. Without its realization, no claim about the credibility and meaning of these narrations will have academic legitimacy.

Conclusion

The topic of the signs of the advent, especially in relation to regions such as Basra, is one of the most central Mahdavi topics in the Shi'a narrative heritage and has always attracted the attention of commentators, hadith scholars, and contemporary researchers. This research, by focusing on four well-known narrations related to Basra—including the collapse of Basra, its destruction, the reading of a letter of disavowal of Amir al-Mu'minīn (AS), and the role of a person from the Prophet's progeny in its destruction—sought to evaluate the academic credibility of these texts with a combined approach of chain, biographical, and semantic criticism.

The findings showed that all four narrations face serious weaknesses in their chains of transmission: some are transmitted as *Marfū'ah* or *Mursalah*, which compromises the chain's connection; some have narrators of an unknown state or who are unreliable; and in some cases, there is confusion and contradiction in the narration. From a semantic perspective, the existence of ambiguous expressions and characters, multi-layered symbolism, and sometimes a potential conflict with firm theological principles or undisputed historical processes, prevents any certainty in interpretation. Examples such as the different interpretations of "A man from your progeny" and the "*Zanūj*," or the attempt to apply the destruction of Basra to the *Zanj* Rebellion, show the wide but unstable range of interpretations and the danger of confusing historical evidence with narrative texts.

40 Based on this, the final conclusion of the research is that the

narrations in question lack the necessary criteria to be considered reliable and definite signs of the advent of Imam Mahdi (AJ). Adherence to a precise evaluation of the chain and meaning, the use of authentic sources, and the avoidance of hasty applications are the only ways to ensure academic soundness and prevent the distortion of Mahdavi teachings. Disregarding these principles exposes research to the risk of mixing with common misconceptions and deviating from the framework of reliable hadith.

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