Critique of Walīd ibn Ṣāliḥ Bāṣamad's Claim Regarding the Apparent Conflict in Shia Traditions about the Expectation of Faraj

Hasan Zarnooshe Farahani
Associate Professor, Department of Theology and Islamic Studies, Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University, Tehran, Iran, (Corresponding author). Email: zarnooshe@sru.ac.ir
Zeinab Hormozi
MA student of Quranic and Hadith Sciences, Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University, Tehran, Iran. Email: zynbhrmzy4@gmail.com

Introduction

The hope for the advent of a savior at the end of time is a belief shared by all divine religions. All individuals, by their very nature, wish for a day to come when, under the grace and divine favor and the emergence of a global leader, human society will be saved from oppression and injustice, and according to the promises given by the prophets, justice and fairness will prevail throughout the world, and humans will achieve the dignified life they deserve. This belief gives meaning to human lives and makes it easier for them to endure difficulties.

In the Twelver Shi'a faith, the embodiment of the savior at the end of time is clear, and that is the twelfth Imam of the Shi'as, namely Imam Mahdi. Therefore, the belief in the "Imamate" of the twelve Imams as successors to the noble Prophet of Islam, and subsequently, the belief in the occultation and then the advent of the twelfth Imam, which is referred to as "Mahdism," is one of the five fundamental principles of the Shi'a faith. For this reason, a significant portion of the efforts of opponents of the Shi'a faith, which is also reflected in some academic writings and research, is dedicated to undermining the concept of "Imamate" and especially its "Mahdism" branch.

Materials and Methods

In the Shia hadith sources, in addition to many traditions that praise those who are waiting for the appearance of Imam Mahdi (as), there are also other traditions that appear to be in conflict with the previous ones and consider the haste for the appearance of Imam Mahdi (as) as distasteful and cause destruction. In a university treatise in Arabic with the title " al-Rawāyāt al-Wāridah fī al-Mahdī fil Kutub al-Ḥadīthīyyah al-Muʿtamada 'inda al-Shī'ah al-'Ithnā 'Asharīyyah; Dirāsah Naqdīyyah.; "Critical study" written by "Walid Bin Saleh Basamad" by insisting on these traditions, it is claimed that the Shia traditions about Mahdism are weak, conflicting and cannot be summed up, and therefore the principle of Mahdism

considered by Shia is a place of doubt. The author, by reporting seemingly contradictory Shiite traditions in the following chapters and sections, seeks to cast doubt on the very issue of "Mahdism": Chapter One: Traditions Related to the Conditions of the Mahdi among the Shiites; in 8 sections with the titles: His birth and the conditions of his mother, his names, titles, and kunyas, the prohibition of explicitly stating his name, his lineage, his characteristics and signs, his status, his miracles, and traditions related to the interpretation of verses concerning the rise of the Qa'im. Chapter Two: Traditions Related to the Occultation (al-ghaybah); in 7 sections with the titles: Proof of the Occultation and its duration, the reason for the Occultation and how people benefit from him during his Occultation, the conditions of the envoys who were during the Minor Occultation, those who claimed to have seen him, those who claimed Mahdism, the prohibition of setting a time for his emergence, and awaiting relief in his emergence. Chapter Three: Traditions Related to His Emergence; in 9 sections with the titles: Signs of his appearance, his appearance, the day of his emergence, his conduct, morals, and the characteristics of his time, what he inherits, what he rules by, the cities he conquers or passes through, the companions of the Mahdi, and his enemies. Among the above, the present article specifically examines and critiques the claim of contradiction in the traditions of "intiẓār al-faradj fī khurūdjihī" and has focused its work on the following questions: 1. On what basis is the claim of conflict in traditions regarding the expectation of the resurrection formed? 2. What is the solution to resolve the contradiction among these traditions?

Results and Finings

The author of the treatise "al-Rawāyāt al-Wāridah fī al-Mahdī fil Kutub al-Ḥadīthīyyah al-Muʿtamada 'inda al-Shīʿah al-'Ithnā 'Asharīyyah; Dirāsah Naqdīyyah.; reports 53 traditions, which he believes are related to the expectation of the advent (intizar al-faradj), under twenty collections and titles. Regarding his classification and the traditions within them, two points should be noted: Firstly, some collections have no connection to the discussion of anticipating the advent and are considered off-topic; for example, the traditions in collections eighteen, nineteen, and twenty with the titles "That the one who awaits the advent of the Mahdi is granted ease in all obligations," "That if the Mahdi is absent from the land of the oppressors, relief is near," and "That the hearts of many followers of the Mahdi harden when his absence is prolonged." Therefore, the traditions in these three collections (which are four traditions) are excluded from the discussion. Secondly, it would have been better if the author, instead of categorizing the traditions into multiple and sometimes similar collections (such as the traditions in collection one and nine, collection two and sixteen, and collection three and eight), had categorized and reported all traditions under two general titles: traditions praising the expectation of the advent, and traditions condemning the hastening of the advent. Based on this, and for ease in reporting Basamad's claim, the remaining 49 traditions he cited are reported under these two general titles: 47 traditions under the first title, "traditions praising the +of the advent," and 2 traditions under the second title, "traditions condemning the hastening of the advent." After examining the chains of transmission of the 49 traditions in question, the ruling for each tradition must first be stated to

address the claim of contradiction among the traditions. In stating the ruling of traditions, there are two approaches to validation: the transmitter-centric approach and the context-centric approach. In the transmitter-centric approach, the status of the transmitters determines the ruling of the tradition, and even the slightest flaw in any part of the chain of transmission invalidates the tradition. However, in the context-centric approach, among the transmissions of ''"';lllujhy   jvkllll a weak transmitter, only his unique transmissions are rejected, meaning that if a weak transmitter's tradition has corroborating evidence, it is considered valid. Therefore, in the following, in two separate tables, the ruling of each tradition will be stated, first based on the transmitter-centric validation approach and then based on the context-centric validation approach, to determine how many valid and invalid hadiths remain on each side of the contradiction according to each of these two approaches, and how the contradiction is resolved.

Conclusion

Based on the transmitter-centric validation approach, out of 47 traditions indicating praise for awaiting the advent, 6 credible traditions remain, while according to this approach, the credibility of traditions indicating condemnation of hastening the advent is not confirmed.

Based on the context-centric validation approach, all 47 traditions indicating praise for awaiting the advent, as well as traditions indicating condemnation of hastening the advent, are considered credible.

The implication of traditions condemning hastening the advent does not conflict with traditions praising awaiting the advent; hastening and awaiting are two different ways of dealing with the issue of the Imam of the Age's occultation. Those who await are forbidden from hastening that is accompanied by doubt, denial, setting a time, and rushing for the advent, which leads to destruction. They are advised to await with sincerity and submission to divine will, which leads to salvation. Therefore, these two seemingly contradictory sets of traditions can be reconciled in their implications, and there is no need to prefer one over the other.

Keywords: Mahdism, Expectation of Faraj, Walīd ibn Ṣāliḥ Bāṣamad, Resolving the Conflict of Traditions.