

*The Twelve Successors of
the Holy Prophet*

Seyed Motaza Askari

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Preface

*"The Religion with God means Islam
(a commitment to live in peace).*

*Anyone who desires something other than Islam,
as a religion, will never have it accepted by Him,
and in the Hereafter, he will be among the losers.*

(Qur'an 3: 19, 85) "

The last divine religion, Islam, had been provided through His last messenger, Mohammad (p.b.u.h.), in order to guide the human communities till the Last Day.

According to the religions, it goes without saying that the human being in order to carry his daily life, in addition to his reason and scientific achievements, needs a guide who could comprehend the truth of the universe, and the reality of the life of the human being at the same time. It is also obvious that some prophets have

been appointed by the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe and the human beings, in order to guide the human communities to a better level of living. All the religions have basically confirmed this idea.

Now, Islam as the last divine message, which contains the most complete divine knowledge, Jurisprudence, and social orders, has been collected and promoted in exactly the same words which have been revealed to the holy Prophet, and without a single change that collection of verses has been introduced to the people named as Qur'an.

However, the concise knowledge and orders of Qur'an were not easy to understand by the normal people. The commentator and explainer of this divine message has been the holy Prophet, who had received the same comments and explanations through the divine revelations.

We can say that in Islam we have two kinds of divine revelation. The first is the holy Qur'an, which includes the exact words and literature of the Almighty God. And the second is the explanatory words of the Prophet. The words and literature of this part belong to the Prophet; yet, the meanings are again inspired by the Almighty

God to the heart of the Prophet. The Almighty God has confirmed the value of the expressions of His Prophet, which are equal to the Divine revelation. *"He does not speak from some whim; it is merely inspiration that is revealed (to him)."* (Qur'an 53: 3- 4)

The comments and explanations of the Divine verses (Qur'an) did not finish during the time of the respected Prophet. In the next stages of time, people needed further explanations. The next Divine approach was provided. Some special persons were appointed as the scientific and religious references of people. The holy Prophet clearly and explicitly informed this fact. " I leave two valuable things for your guidance after me. The holy Book (Qur'an), and my progeny (Ahl Bayt). The first of them is Ali (p.b.u.h.), and the last one is Mahdi (May God accelerate his Reappearance)."

He gave the exact name of them. The popular tradition of "Thagalain" is generally accepted by all the Islamic groups (sects). The holy infallible Imams (leaders) have clearly proved their superiority and preferences in different Islamic sciences over other scholars in different generations. Even the non-Islamic scholars,

philosophers, and theologians had confirmed the preferences and high characteristics of the infallible Imams from the Prophet's progeny in different fields of knowledge.

If we are going to get a way to the pure Islamic knowledge and Jurisprudence, the only way is to refer to the infallible Imams from the Prophet's progeny. Even if we degrade them, we will observe that they have provided the most correct and understandable narrations from the words and practice of the holy Prophets. They have always provided complete references and documentations from the traditions.

After the demise of the holy Prophet, the hypocrites and some of the deviated groups tried to prevent any publication of the guiding clear traditions in the community. To worsen the situation, some of the clergies, who were supported and credited by the corrupted and cruel kings (caliphs) tried to change and misform the Prophet's traditions.

The respected scholars, Allamah Askari, in his valuable investigations, has tried to solve the problem of research in the problematic and doubtful traditions quoted from the Prophet, by double referring and making attribution to the

references and documents of both Shia and Sunni referential books and collections.

In fact, he has established a new method of research. Instead of making tiring arguments over the old religious issues such as the succession, Caliphate, and leadership of the Islamic community, Allmah Askari has established a discussion in order to discover Islam. He believes that if we explore the truth of Islam, then we will find out that who should lead the Islamic community. He has even tried to change the name of the two popular tendencies of Shia and Sunni groups. Since both of them respect and follow the practice and traditions of the holy Prophet.

The followers of the school of the progeny of the Prophet, are the Islamic scholars. And the followers of the school of caliphate, have been the governors, kings, and caliphs in different times and generations, who had necessarily made changes and deviations in the Islamic teachings and instructions.

The dialectical and investigative approach of Allamh Askari is based on the Qur'anic verses and mutually accepted correct traditions of the holy Prophet.

In this chain of discussions which are titled as "In the light of the Book and the Islamic tradition, Allamh Askari has examined some of the critical arguing issues of the Islamic community. We hope that it would be a clear way to the beginning point of the Quranic revelation and the Truth of Islam, as expressed by the holy Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.).

The Cultural and Scientific
Institution of Allamah Askari

أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَ
يُطَهِّرَكُم تَطْهِيراً

*"Allah desires to keep away the
uncleanness from you, O people of the
House! (Ahl-ul-Bait) and to make You
pure and spotless "* (Qur'an 33: 33)

Introduction

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.
Benedictions be upon Muhammad and his purified progeny.

Peace be upon the righteous companions.

Some of the controversial issues have divided the Muslims. Those issues have been misused by the enemies of Islam to divide the Muslims, and to weaken them. In order to unite the Muslims and to defend the boundaries of Islam it is necessary to clear misunderstandings. In sorting out the issues we have been ordered to observe some limits. The Almighty Allah says: *"Obey Allah and His Prophet, and do not quarrel, otherwise you will be weak in hearts and your power will depart ..."* (Qur'an 8:46)

We should refer to Qur'an and Hadith if there is any difference of opinions. As the Almighty Allah says; *"if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the prophet..."* (Qur'an 4:59).

In these series we shall refer to the Qur'an and Hadith to guide us on the correct path, with regard to various controversial topics. We seek the help of Almighty God in this matter.

Askari

The tradition of the messenger regarding the number of the Imams

According to the compilers of "Sihah" and "Massanid" books, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s) had informed that the number of Imams after him would be twelve.

Moslem has narrated from Jaber ibn Samarah that he heard from the prophet that, "This religion will be upright till the Hour is established, and twelve viceregerents govern you. All of them will be from Quraish."

In a similar narration it is said;

"The affair of the men will always...."

And in two other traditions we read,

"Till the twelve vicegerents....."

And in "Sonan" of Abi Dawood, it is related,

"Till there are twelve Vicegerents over you....."

And in another tradition; "Till the the

twelve....."1

And in the book Sahih of Bukhari, it is narrated from jaber that he heard the Prophet (s.a) said, "There will be twelve rulers." Then he said some words which I could not hear. My father said that he (s.a.w.s) added, "All of them are from Quraish." And in another tradition, it is quoted from jaber that then the Prophet (s.a) spoke a few words which I could not understand. I asked my father that what did the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s) say?"

He said, "All of them are from Quraish."²

And in a tradition, the holy prophet said, "The enmity of their enemies will not harm them."³

¹ . Sahih Moslem Vol. 3; P. 1453, No. 1821 (Kitabul Ijarah). Sahih Bukhari Vol. 4, P. 165 (Kitabul Ahkam). Sonan Tirmizi (chapter of Fitan). Sona Abi Dawood Vol, 3, P. 106, (Kitabul Mahdi). "Mosnad " of Tyalisi, Tradition No. 767 and 1278. Mosnad Ahmad Vol. 5. P. 86. Kanzul Ummal Vol. 13; P. 26 -27. Hilyah of Abu Nuaym. Vol 4; P. 333.

Jaber bin Samara was the nephew of Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas. He died at Kufa. The Compilers of traditions have narrated 164 traditions from him. For his biography refer to Usd al-Ghaba or Taqrib al-Tahzib.

² . Fath-ul Bari Vol 16. P. 338. Mustadrakul Sahihayn Vol 3 P. 617.

³ . Ibid;

In another tradition he said, The affairs of this nation will always be all right, and it will be triumphant against the enemies, till twelve Caliphs govern them; all of them from Quraish. Then there would be discord and disorder."⁴

And in a tradition it is quoted from the Prophet that, "There would be twelve Imams for this nation. Those who try to disgrace them would not succeed; all of them will be from Quraish."

"The affairs of the people would continue as long as twelve men rule over them."

And it is narrated from Anas that the Prophet said,

"This religion would remain till twelve Imams from Quraish are in power.

When they expired, the earth would swallow its inhabitants."⁵

And in a tradition:

"This affair of this nation would always be apparent till the twelve Imams rise. All of them

⁴ . Muntakhab Kanzul Ummal Vol 5, P. 321. Tarikh Ibne Katheer Vol 6, P. 249. Tarikhul Khulafā, J. Suyuti, P. 10. Kanzul Ummal Vol 13, P. 26. As Sawaiqul Muhriqa: 28.

⁵ . Kanzul Ummal Vol 13, P. 27.

being from Quraish." ⁶

Ahmad, Hakim, and others have narrated similarly from Masrooq who said;

"Once we had sat with Abdullah (ibne Masoud). We were reciting the Quran, when a man asked: "O Abu Abdur-Rahman, did you ask the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s) how many Caliphs shall rule this nation?"

Abdullah said: "No one asked me about this before you, from the time I arrived in Iraq." He added: "We asked him (the Prophet)", and he replied, "Twelve, (like) the number of the Chief of Bani Israel."⁷

And in a tradition Ibn Masoud said that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s) declared, "There would be Caliphs after me, whose number is same as the companions of Moses" ⁸

Ibn Katheer said: "There is a similar narration from Abdullah bin umar, Huzaifah, and Ibne

⁶ . Ibid.

⁷ . Mosnad Ahmed Vol 1, P. 398 and 406. Mustadrak, Al-Hakim 4: 501. Fath-ul Bari 16: 339 Majmauz Zawaid 5: 190. "Sawaiqul Muhriqa", Ibne Hajar Vol. 12; " Tarikhul Khulafa", Suyuti, Vol. 10; Jameus Sagheer 1: 75. " Kanzul Ummal", Muqqati 13: 27.

⁸ . Tarikh, Ibne Katheer 6: 248; Kanzul Ummal 13: 27. Shwahidut Tanzeel, Haskani, 1: 455, No. 626.

Abbas.⁹

However, I do not know if this tradition of Ibne Abbas is the same as reported by Hakim and Haskani?

Traditions assert that the number of authorities are twelve, and all of them are from Quraish. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) clarified in his speech that they shall be from Quraish, when he said: "Surely Imams will be from Quraish. They have been put in the back of Hashim.

It would not suit others, nor would others be suitable, as heads of affairs."¹⁰

And he said: "O Allah! The earth will never be empty from those who maintain Allah's plea, either openly and reputedly, or being unsecure and hidden; in order that Allah's signs and proofs should not be rebutted."¹¹

⁹ . Tarikh, Ibne Katheer Vol 6, P. 248.

¹⁰ . Nahjul Balagha, Sermon no. 142.

¹¹ . Yanabiul Mawaddah, Shaykh Sulayman Qandoози al-Hanafi, P. 523.

The twelve Imams in the Old Testament

Ibne katheer has said about the following prophecy in the Tauraat, which is now in the hands of Jews and the Christians. "Indeed Allah, the exalted gave Abraham the glad tiding of Ismael, and has bestowed favour and excess to him, and placed twelve mighty (personalities) in his progeny."

He has also added that Ibne Taymiyah said, "they are the same, regarding whom the prophet has given the glad tidings (in the tradition of Jaber bin Samarah), and stated their number; indeed this is about the Imams and the Hour will not appear till they live. Ibn Taymiyah has commented, "many of those who accepted Islam from among the Jews think that Imams are the

same Imams of the Rafizi sect (Shia)."¹²

We say the said glad tiding is present in the book Genesis, chapter 17 (18-20) of the present Taurat.

The words (of the God) to Abraham, translated from Hebrew are as follow:

"As for Ismael, I have blessed him, and I have made him fruitful. And I have truly multiplied him. He will beget twelve leaders and I will provide him a large nation."

It also indicates that the blessings, fruits and multiplication is in the generation of Ismael (a.s.) "Shanim Assar" means "twelve"; and the word "Assar" is used for a compound number when the counted things are masculine. The word "naasim" means Leader, Chief, head, etc.¹³

The Almighty Allah ordered Abraham to leave the city and move towards Syria. So he left the city along with his wife Sarah and Lut, and migrated according to the Divine Order. In due course, they reached Palestine.

By the Grace of Almighty, Abraham was bestowed excessive wealth. He said, "O my Lord, what shall I do with this wealth? I do not have

¹² . Tarikh Ibne Katheer 6: 249

¹³ . Al Mojamul Hadith.

any child." The Almighty revealed to him, "I will increase your progeny as many as the stars."

Hajar was the slave girl of Sarah betrothed her to Ibrahim (a.s). She bore him a son, Ismael. The age of Abraham was 86 years when Ismael was born.¹⁴

The holy Qur'an mentions the pray of Abraham in the following words:

"O my God! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a barren valley near your Sacred House so that they keep up prayer. Therefore, make the hearts of some people inclined towards them and provide them with fruits; so that they appreciate you." (14:37)

The holy verse points to the fact that Abraham had settled some of his progeny, that is Ismael, in the vicinity of Mecca. He also prayed that the Almighty may bestow them with His Mercy, and that they remain the channel of guidance for humanity till the end of time. The Almighty accepted his invocation by appointing Muhammad (s.a.w.s) from his progeny, and after him his twelve successors, as leaders of humanity for the time to come.

¹⁴ . Tarikh Yaqoubi 1: 24-25 (Printed in Qum)

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (p.b.u.h.) has stated "We are the remnant of that progeny. And the pray of Abraham was about us."

Explanation of the traditions

After having discussed the traditions regarding twelve successors, we can derive the following points: The number of Imams of this nation will be twelve, in a continuous line. Secondly, after the twelve Imams, the world will come to its end.

According to the first tradition:

"The Islamic religion will continue until the Hour will be established, and you have been ruled over by the twelve Caliphs."

This Tradition has fixed the period of Islam's supremacy till the Last Day, and stipulated the number of Imams to be twelve.

According to the fifth tradition:

"The Islamic religion will continue until there are twelve (Imams) from the Quraish. And when they all die, the Earth will demolish its inhabitants".

This tradition proves that Islam will continue till the end of the world or till the reign of twelve Imams, and after that the earth will be destroyed.

The eighth tradition limits the number of Imams to twelve persons.

"After me there will be Caliphs, equal to the companions of Moses."

This tradition shows that there will be no more than twelve Caliphs after the holy prophet (s.a.w.s). And the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s) has clarified that the number of Caliphs would be limited to twelve. And after those twelve "Qiyamat" will surely occur, and the earth will be destroyed.

Other traditions clarify the above statements.

On the basis of this, we have to admit that in order to supervise the affairs of human community, one of the Imams should have a long life, as an exception. Thus the twelfth successor of the holy prophet, that is Imam Mahdi is granted a long life span.

Strange interpretations

The scholars of the school of Caliphate (Sunnite) are in difficulties to explain the traditions that mention the Twelve Successors. We present, in brief, their contradictory explanations.

Ibn Arabi says in his "Comments on sonan Tirmizi" that, "We have counted the Caliphs after the holy prophet (p.b.u.h.) as twelve.

We found them as follow:

Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmān, Ali , Hasan, Muawiya, Yazid, Muaviya Ibn Yazid, Marwan, Abdul Malik Ibn Marwan, Walid, Sulaiman, Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, Yazid Bin Abdul Malik, Marwan Bin Muhammad Bin Marwan, As-Saffah... After them there were twenty seven Abbaside Caliphs. Now if we count twelve, we can reach only till Sulaiman. If we take the just meaning, we will have only five of them, who were the four Righteous Caliphs, and Umar bin Abdul Aziz...

So, I can not understand the meaning of this hadith!¹⁵

Qazi Ayaz in reply to the above claim, that there will be only twelve Caliphs, has said:

"The number of Caliphs are more than that. To limit their number to twelve is incorrect. The holy prophet (s.a.w.s.) did not say that there will be only twelve and that there is no scope for

¹⁵ . Ibn Arabi, Commentary on Sonan Tirmizi, 9: 68- 69.

more. Hence, it is possible that there could be more."¹⁶

Suyuti has stated that there are twelve Caliphs till Qiyamat. And they would continue to act "truth", even if they are not continuous.¹⁷

It is mentioned in Fathul Bari:

Four of them (the Righteous Caliphs) have passed. The rest will necessarily appear before Qiyamat.¹⁸

Suyuti has provided other names as follow:

We see that from the twelve leaders four are the righteous Caliphs, and then Hasan, Muawiya, Ibn Zubair, and finally Umar Bin AbdulAziz.

They are eight. Four of them remain. May be Mahdi, the Abbaside could be included, as he is an Abbaside like Umar Bin AbdulAziz was an Umayyide. And Tahir Abbasi will also be included because he was a just ruler. Thus, two more are to come. One of them is Mahdi, because he is from the Ahlul Bayt of the holy prophet."¹⁹

¹⁶ . Nawawi's commentary on Sahih Moslem 12: 201 – 202 Fath-ul Bari 16: 339.

¹⁷ . "Tarikhul Khulafa", Suyuti, Vol. 12.

¹⁸ . Fath-ul Bari 6: 341.

¹⁹ . As Sawaiqul Muhriqa 19th volume. Tarikhul Khulafa of Suyuti, Vol. 12. There is a unanimity in the School of

Baihaqi has stated in his history that, they (12 rulers) came to power by the time of Walid Ibn Abdul Malik. After that there was chaos and disturbance. Then the Abbaside dynasty appeared. This report has increased the number of the Imams. If we neglect some of their characteristics, then their number will be much more than twelve.²⁰

It is also said about the 12 caliphs that they were the 3 Caliphs who were accepted or chosen by the people, then Ali, until the battle of Siffin against Muawiya. After arbitration Muawiya was acknowledged as caliph. By the peace treaty with Imam Hasan Muāwiya became stronger. Then Muawiya's son, Yazid. But the people did not gather around Imam Husain (a.s.). He was murdered before he could gain that type of support. When Yazid died, they gathered around Marwan, after the murder of Abdullah Ibn Zubair. Then they supported the four sons of Abdul Malik Ibn Marwan; Walid, Sulaiman, Yazid and Hisham. There was a break between

Caliphate that the awaited Imam is Mahdi, as is the belief of the followers of the School of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)

²⁰ . Tarikh Ibn Katheer 6: 249. Tarikhul Khulafa : 11 As Sawa'iqul Muhriqa, Vol. 19. Fath-ul Bari 16: 341.

Sulaiman and Yazid when Umar Bin Abdul Aziz occupied the throne. The twelfth of them was Walid Ibn Yazid. After Hisham people accepted him. He ruled for four years.²¹ On such basis, the caliphate of the twelve caliphs was valid due to popular support. The holy prophet (s.a.w.s.) had given the good tiding of their caliphate; that they will propagate Islam among the people. In this connection Ibne Hajar says, "The above reason is correct and more preferable."

Ibn Katheer has said "Whoever follows Baihaqi and agrees with his assertion that the true caliphs are those who came in the chain till the time of Walid Ibn Yazid Ibn Abdul Malik, the transgressor, is wrong and mistake."

The caliphs till Walid Bin Yazid are more than twelve. And their argument is that they consist of Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali. (The Righteous Caliphs) the Caliphate of Hasan was valid because he was nominated by Ali, and people of Iraq also pledged allegiance to him. It continued till the time of his treaty with Muawiya. Then came Yazid the son of Muawiya. Then his son Muawiya Ibn Yazid, then Marwan

²¹ . Tarikh-ul-Khulafa, Vol. 11.

Bin Hakam, then Abdul Malik Ibn Marwan, then his son, Walid Ibn Abdul Malik, then Sulaiman Ibn Abdul Malik, then Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz, then Yazid Ibn Abdul Malik, then Hisham Ibn Abdul Malik. I take the total to fifteen. Then Walid Ibn Yazid Ibn Abdul Malik became the caliph. And if we accept the caliphate of Ibn Zubair before Abdul Malik the total will be sixteen. Whereas, their total should be twelve before Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz. In this way, Yazid Ibn Muawiya will be included and not Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz, who was a just ruler. While it is established that the majority of the scholars accepted Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz as a truthful and a just caliph. There was complete peace and justice during his reign. Even the Shias accept this fact.

If we say that the Caliph is one who has the support of the whole community, then we can not accept Ali and his son. Because the whole community (Ummat) did not support them. The Syrians did not accept their caliphate. In this way, they could not be accepted as caliphs.

He (Baihaqi) has also written some persons such as Muawiya, his son and his grandson, among the caliphs. The reign of Marwan and

Ibne Zubair is also not included. For none of them had the unanimous support. Therefore, we say that they believed in the first three Caliphs, then Muawiya, Yaziz, Abdul Malik, Walid Ibne Abdul Malik, Sulaiman Ibn Abdul Malik, Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, Yazid Ibn Abdul Malik, and Hisham Ibne Abdul Malik. This comes to ten! Then they consider Walid Ibn Yazid Ibn Abdul Malik, the transgressor, as the caliph. They exclude Ali and his son, Hasan. But it is absolutely against the belief of the majority of the Muslim scholars, both Shia and Sunni.²²

And some other have expressed that, "Maybe the holy prophet (s.a.w.s.) had meant to say extraordinary happenings in the future, that would cause the people to be divided under "twelve kings." If he had intended something else he would have described the activities of the Amirs who were to succeed him. Therefore, it has been possible that they would be present at the same time.²³

It is also said in the fifth century A.H. in Andulus, there were six people in power at the same time. Each of them claimed to be the

²² . Tarikh Ibne Katheer 6: 249- 250.

²³ . Fath-ul Bari 16: 338.

caliph. In addition to them were the Abbasidse of Baghdad and the ruler of Egypt. The Alawis and the kharijis had also claimed to be the caliphs.²⁴ Ibne Hajar has said "No one has much knowledge about this particular hadith of Sahih Bukhari."²⁵ Then he says, "It is not correct to say that those twelve will be present at one and the same time."²⁶

We observe that there is no agreement in the explanation of the above tradition. Those scholars have not paid attention to the traditions which mention the names of the twelve successors. For it was against the political policy of the Sunni scholars. However, the scholars of the School of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) have recorded numerous traditions, with proper chains of narrators going back to the trustworthy companions of the holy prophet (s.a.w.s.). We mention here a few of those traditions.

²⁴ . Sharh of Nawawi 12: 202. Fath-ul Bari 16: 339.

²⁵ . Fath-ul Bari 16: 338.

²⁶ . Fath-ul Bari 16: 339.

The twelve Imams according to the school of Caliphate

a) Al Juwaini²⁷ has related on the authority of Abdullah Ibne Abbas that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said, "I am chief of the Prophets, and Ali Ibn Abi Talib is the chief of the successors. And after me, my successors will be twelve. The first of them is Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and last is Mahdi."

(b) Al Juwaini has mentioned another tradition from Ibn Abbas that the Messenger of Allah(s.a.w.s.)said:

"Certainly my caliphs, my successors, and the proofs of Allah upon His Creatures after me are

²⁷ . Zahabi says in "Tadkiratul Huffas" that Sadruddin Ibrahim bin Muhammad Al-Juwaini Al- Shafei was a great scholar of hadith (tradition).

twelve. The first of them is my brother, and the last of them will be my (grand) son."

He was asked: "O Messenger of Allah, who is your brother?"

He said, "Ali Ibne Abi Talib."

Then they asked, "And who is your son?"

The holy prophet (s.a.w.s.) replied, "Al Mahdi, the one who will fill the earth with justice and equity, as it would have been filled with injustice and tyranny before him. The One who has raised me as a warner, and a given of good tidings, even if there would remain only a day from the life of this world, the Almighty Allah will prolong that day to an extent, till He sends my son Mahdi. Then He would send Jesus, son of Mary, to pray behind him (Mahdi). The earth will be illuminated by divine radiance. And his power would extend from East to the West."

(c) Al Juwaini has also narrated, through his chain of narrators, that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) informed:

"I, Ali, Hasan, Husain, and nine descendants of Husain, are the purified ones and the infallibles."²⁸

Among the scholars of the School of Caliphate it was the tendency, due to the political expediency, to conceal such traditions from people. A majority of those scholars have tried their best to explain those traditions in a confusing manner. They have endeavored to make vague guesses regarding the names of the caliphs, as mentioned in these reports. On the other hand, the holy prophet has clearly mentioned, his Twelve Successors, one by one and by their full names.

It is not possible to relate all those traditions in this brief treatise. However, we will present the biographical sketches of the Imams who have been named by the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.).

²⁸ . The reference of the 3 traditions a, b, and c is Faraidus Simtain P. 160; the hand-written copy in the central library of Tehran University.

A brief account of the twelve successors of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)

The First Imam

Amirul Momineen Ali (p.b.u.h.)

Father Abu Talib bin Abdul Muttalib bin Hashem.

Mother Fatima binte Asad bin Hisham bin Abu Manaf.

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abul Hasan, Abul Husain, Abu Turab.

Title Al-Wasi, Amirul Momineen.

Birth date He was born in the kaabā²⁹, in The 30th year after Aamul Feel (the year of the elephant).

²⁹ . Fatema Binte Asad was circumbulating the Kaaba, when she was carrying Ali (a.s.). The wall of Kaaba

Martyrdom He was martyred by the khwariji named Abdur Rahman Ibn Muljim, at kufa, during the month of Ramadhan, in the fortieth year of Hijrah. He was buried in Najaf.

The Second Imam

Hasan Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)

Mother Fatima Al Zahra (s.a.) daughter of the holy prophet (s.a.w.s.)

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abu Muhammad.

Title Al Sibte kabir (the elder grandson), Al Mujtaba.

Birth date He was born in Medina, in the middle (15th) of the month of Ramadhan in 3 A.H.

Martyrdom He was martyred on the 28th of Safar in the year 50 A.H and was buried in the Baqie cemetery in Medina.

The Third Imam

Hussain Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)

Mother Fatima Al-Zahra (s.a.) daughter of the holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abu Abdillah

Title Al Sibte, Shaheed-e-Karbala.

cracked to create an opening and she entered it to give birth to Ali (a.s.). Al-Mustadrak 3: 483.

Birth date He was born in Medina, in the month of Shaban, in the year 4 A.H.

Martyrdom He was martyred along with his companions, by the army of Yazid, in the month of Muharram of 61 AH. His tomb is in Karbala, a town of Iraq.³⁰

The Fourth Imam

Ali Ibn Al-Hussain (a.s.)

Mother Ghazala, Shahzanaan.

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abul Hasan

Title Zainul Aabedeen, Al Sajjad

Birth date He was born in 38 A.H. at Medina

Martyrdom He was died by poison in the year 94 or 95 A.H. in Medina, and is buried at Baqie near his uncle Hasan (a.s.).³¹

The Fifth Imam

Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.)

Mother Umma Abdullah, the daughter of Imam Hasan (a.s.)

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abu Jafar

³⁰ . For biographical sketches of Ali, Hasan, ad Husain (a.s.) refer to Tarikh Tabari in the events of 40, 50 and 60 A.H. and other historical books.

³¹ . "Tarikh" Ibn Athir. "Tarikh" Ibn Katheer.

Title Baqir

Birth date He was born in Medina, in the year 57 A.H.

Martyrdom He was died by poison, in Medina, in 11 A.H. and is also buried at Baqie near his father.³²

The Sixth Imam

Jafar Ibn Muhammad (a.s.)

Mother Umm Farwa, the daughter of Qasim bin Muhammad bin Abu Bakr

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abu Abdillah

Title Sadiq

Birth date He was born in Medina in 83 A.H.

Martyrdom He was died by poison, in 148 A.H., and is buried in Baqie near his father.³³

The Seventh Imam

Musa Ibn Jafar (a.s.)

Mother Hamidah

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abul Hasan

³² .Tadrikul Huffaaz. Wafayaatul Ayaan. Hilayatul Awliya. Tarikh Yaqoobi 2: 320. Tarikh Islam of Zahabi. Tarikh Ibne Katheer

³³ . Refer Hilayatul Awliya, Wafayaatul Ayaan. Tarikh Yaqoobi 2: 381. Al-Maudi 3: 46

Title Kazim

Birth date He was born in Medina in the year 129 A.H.

Martyrdom He was poisoned in the prison of Haroon al-Rashid at Baghdad, in the year 183 A.H. He is buried in Kazimiyyah in Iraq.³⁴

The eighth Imam

Ali Ibn Musa (a.s.)

Mother Al Khaizaraan

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abul Hasan

Title Ar-Reza

Birth date He was born in Median, in 148 A.H.

Martyrdom He was poisoned in the year 203 A.H. and is buried in the Khorasan district of Iran.³⁵

The Ninth Imam

Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.)

Mother Sakina

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abu Abdillah

³⁴ . Maqatilit Talibiyyin. Tarikhe Baghdad. Wafayaatul Ayaan. Tarikh Ibne Katheer. Tarikh Yaqoobi 2: 414

³⁵ . Tarikh Tabari. Ibne Katheer. "Tarikhul Islam" of Zahabi. Wafayaatul Ayaan, Tarikh Yaqoobi 2: 453; Al-Masudi 3: 441

Title Al Jawad

Birth date He was born in Medina, in 195 A.H.

Martyrdom He was died by poison at Baghdad, in the year 220 A.H. and is buried near his grandfather in Kazmmiyah in Iraq.³⁶

The Tenth Imam

Ali Ibn Muhammad (a.s.)

Mother Samana al-Maghribiya

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abul Hasan al Askari

Title Al hadi

Birth date He was born in Medina, in the year 212 A.H.

Martyrdom He was died by poison in 254 A.H. at Samerra (Iraq) and is buried there.³⁷

The Eleventh Imam

Al Hasan Ibn Ali (a.s.)

Mother Ummul Walad (Susan)

Kunniyat (Patronymic) Abu Muhammad

Title Al Askari

³⁶ . Tarikhe Baghdad 3: 54. Wafayaatul Ayaan. Al-Masudi 3: 464

³⁷ . Tarikhe Baghdad 12: 56. Wafayaatul Ayaan. Tarikhe Yaqoobi 2: 484. Al-Masudi 4: 84.

Birth date He was born in Samerrah in the year 232 A.H. Martyrdom: He was poisoned in 260 A.H. in Samerrah, and is buried there.³⁸

* * *

All the shrines of the eleven Imams are places of Ziarat (visitation) by the Muslims. Four of the Imams are buried in Baqie in Medina. However, their tombs were demolished by the authorities, along with the tombs of the wives of the Prophet and his companions.

The Twelfth Imam

Al Hujjat Muhammad Ibn Hasan Al Askari (a.s.)

Mother Ummul Walad (Narjis or Saigal)

Kunniyat (Petronymic) Abu Abdullah, Abul Qasim

Title Al-Qaem, Al-Muntazar, Al-Khalaf, Al-Mahdi, Sāhibuzzamaan

Birth date He was born in Samerrah, in the year 255 A.H. He is the last Imam (a.s.) and he is alive and is hidden.³⁹

³⁸ . Wafayaatul Ayaan. Tadkiratul Khawaas of Sibte Ibne Jauzi. Matalibus Sooul fi Manqib Aale ERasool. Ash Shaykh Muhammad bin Talha Shafi (died 654 A.H.). Tarikh Yaqoobi 2: 503

An important advice

An important point in the tradition mentioned in the first part of this book is that all of the twelve Imams will be from Quraish. Afterwards, there would be chaos. Another point is that the religion will remain developed until the twelve caliphs of Quraish are present. When they die, the earth will swallow its inhabitants.

Thus the above two points prove that after the twelve caliphs of the holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) the earth shall be destroyed.

Therefore, it is necessary that the last of the twelve successors should have a longer life than the ordinary life span on the earth.

This is exactly how it happened. The Twelfth successor of the holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) was granted a long life. He is Al-Mahdi Muhammad Ibn Hasan Al- Askari (a.s.)

Tradition discussed in this treatise prove the Imamate of those Twelve Noble Personalities. And the prophecies of the Messenger of Allah do not fit anyone else.

³⁹ . Tadrkul Khawaas of Sibte Ibne Jauzi. Matalibus Sooul. Wafayaatul Ayaan