

In the Light of Quran & Hadith

3

THE TWELVE SUCCESSORS

By

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 Ó{Yæìáí èïæYäË úÜøG àìåÇ
 æÆøG Ô{ìäÈô»A øÅä§
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 BãÄæ¨òñä´ò» ìÁåQ
 øÅæîêÄäìò»Bøì åÉæÄê¿

Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed.

(Surah Najm : 2-3)

And if he had fabricated against Us some of the sayings, We would certainly have seized him by the right hand, then We would certainly have cut off his aorta.

(Surah Haaqqah : 44-46)

PREFACE

In the Name of Allah The Compassionate, the Merciful.

May Allah shower His blessings upon Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) and his Purified Progeny (a.s.)

Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

'Write (down the traditions) and propagate the knowledge among your brothers. When you die, bequeath these books as your legacy to your sons. Verily, there will come on the people a time of disturbance, when nothing will give them any satisfaction and to nothing will they pay any heed except to their books.' (Al-Kafi)

In the light of the above tradition, World Islamic Network (WIN) has taken up the task of diffusing Islamic teachings according to the School of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). This booklet is the third of the series titled : IN THE LIGHT OF QURAN AND HADITH.

Compiled by the great scholar Allama Sayyid Murtaza Askari these booklets deal with some of the important issues of faith. We pray that Allah

give us the *tawfeeq* to continue this noble endeavour.

WORLD ISLAMIC NETWORK

INTRODUCTION

In The Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Praise be to Allah the Lord of the worlds. Benedictions be upon Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) and his Purified Progeny (a.s.).

Peace be upon the righteous companions.

Some of the controversial issues have divided the Muslims. These issues have been misused by the enemies of Islam to divide the Muslims and to weaken them. Therefore in order to unite the Muslims and to defend the boundaries of Islam it is necessary to clear the misunderstandings regarding these differences. In sorting out these issues we have been ordered to confine ourselves within some limits. As the Almighty Allah says: **'And obey Allah and His Apostle and do not quarrel for then you will be weak in hearts and your power will depart...'** (Sura Anfal 8 : 46)

It is a must for us today, and for all times to refer to Quran and Hadith in case of any difference of opinion. As the Almighty Allah says: **'...then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle...'** (Sura Nisa 4 : 59).

In these series we shall refer to the Quran and Hadith to guide us on the correct path in various controversial topics. We seek the help of the Almighty in this.

Al Askari

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In The Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

NARRATION OF THE MESSENGER REGARDING THE NUMBER OF IMAMS

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) informed that the number of Imams after him are twelve, as the compilers of 'Sihah' and 'Masanid' have narrated it.

Muslim has narrated from Jabir ibn Samarah that he heard the Prophet (s.a.) say: "Always the religion will be upright till the hour is established or there are twelve viceregerents upon you, all of them from Quraysh."

And in a narration:

"The affair of the men will always"

And in two other traditions:

"Till the twelve vicegerents"

And in Sunan of Abi Dawood:

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

And in a tradition:

"Till the twelve"¹

And in Bukhari, He said: I heard the Prophet (s.a.) say:

"There will be twelve rulers." Then he said some words which I could not hear. Then his father said: He (s.a.w.s.) said: "All of them are from Quraysh."

And in a tradition:

Then the Prophet (s.a.) spoke a few words which I could not understand. Then I asked my father: 'What did the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) say?' He said: 'All of them are from Quraysh.'¹

And in a tradition:

¹ Sahih Muslim 3:1453, Tradition No.1821, Kitabul Ijarah. Sahih Bukhari 4:165, Kitabul Ahkam. Sunan Tirmizi, Chapter of Fitan. Sunan Abi Dawood 3:106, Kitabul Mahdi. Musnad of Tyalisi, Tradition No.767 and 1278. Musnad Ahmed 5:86. Kanzul Ummal 13: 26-27. Hilayah of Abu Nuaym 4:333.

Jabir bin Samara bin Junada was the nephew of Saad bin Abi Waqas. He died at Kufa. The compilers of traditions have narrated 146 traditions from him. For his biography, refer to Usud al-Ghaba or Taqrib at-Tahzib.

¹ Fath-ul Bari 16:338. Mustadrakul Sahiayn 3:617.

“The enmity of their enemies will not harm them.”²

And in another tradition:

“This nation will always be straight in its affairs, and triumphant against the enemies, till twelve Caliphs will be among them; all of them from Quraysh. Then there will be discord and confusion.”³

And in a tradition:

“There will be twelve upright Imams for this nation. Those who try to disgrace them will not succeed; all of them shall be from Quraysh.”

“The affair of the people will continue as long as twelve men rule over them.”

And from Anas:

“This religion will remain till twelve Imams from Quraysh (will pass), then when they expire the earth will swallow its inhabitants.”¹

And in a tradition:

² Fath-ul Bari 16:338.

³ Muntakhab Kanzul Ummal 5:321. Tarikh Ibne Katheer 6:249. Tarikhul Khulafa of Suyuti, Vol.10. Kanzul Ummal 13:26. As Sawaiqul Muhriqa :28.

¹ Kanzul Ummal 13:27.

“The affair of this nation will always be apparent till the twelve Imams will rise, all of them from Quraysh.”²

Ahmad and Al-Hakim and others have narrated similarly from Masrooq who said:

“We were sitting one evening with Abdullah (ibne Masood). We were reciting the Quran, then a man asked him: ‘O Abu Abdur-Rahman, did you ask the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) how many Caliphs will rule this nation?’ Abdullah said: ‘No one asked me about this before you from the time I arrived in Iraq.’ He said: ‘We asked him (the Prophet s.a.), he said: ‘Twelve, (like) the number of the Chiefs of Bani Israel.’”¹

And in a tradition:

Ibne Masood said: “The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said: ‘There will be Caliphs after me,

² Ibid.

¹ Musnad Ahmed 1:398 and 406. Mustadrak of Al-Hakim. Talkhis of Zahabi 4:501. Fath-ul Bari 16:339 Majmauz Zawaid 5:190. Sawaiqul Muhriqa of Ibne Hajar Vol.12. Tarikhul Khulafa of Suyuti, Vol.10. Jameus Sagheer 1:75. Kanzul Ummal of Al-Muttaqi 13:27.

whose number are like those of the companions of Musa.²

Ibn Katheer said: 'And there is a similar narration from Abdullah bin Umar, Huzaifah and Ibne Abbas.³

However, I have been unable to find this tradition of Ibne Abbas or others as reported by Al Hakim Al Haskani.

The traditions assert that the number of authorities are twelve and all of them are from Quraysh, and, Imam Ali, (peace be upon him) clarified it in his speech that they shall be from Quraysh when he said: Surely Imams will be from Quraysh, they have been planted in this line through Hashim. It would not suit others nor would others be suitable as heads of affairs."¹

And he said: "O Allah ! Yes, but the earth is never devoid of those who maintain Allah's plea either openly and reputedly or, being afraid, and

² Ibne Katheer 6:248. Kanzul Ummal 13:27. Shawahidut Tanzeel of Al-Haskani 1:455, Tradition No.626.

³ Ibne Katheer 6:248.

¹ Nahjul Balagha, Sermon no.142.

hidden in order that Allah's pleas and proofs should not be rebutted."²

² Yanabiul Mawaddah of Shaykh Sulayman Qandoozi al-Hanafi Pg.523.

THE TWELVE IMAMS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Ibne Katheer says:

We see the following prophecy in the Tauraat which is in the hands of Jews and the Christians: Indeed Allah, the Exalted, has given Ibrahim (a.s.) the glad tidings of Ismaeel, and he has bestowed a favour and multiplied it and placed in his progeny twelve mighty (personalities).

And he says:

Ibne Taymiyyah said: And these are the same, regarding whom the Prophet (s.a.) has given the glad tidings in the tradition of Jabir bin Samarah and stated their number; indeed this is with regard to the Imams and the Hour will not come till they last.

And many of those who accepted Islam from among the Jews think that they are the same Imams of the Rafizi sect.¹

The author says:

¹ Tarikh Ibne Katheer 6:249 and 250.

The afore-mentioned glad tidings is present in the section of Genesis 17-18:20) of our era. It is also present in the original Hebrew.

The words (of the Lord) to Ibrahim (a.s.) translated from the Hebrew are as follows:

“And as for Ismaeel, 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 for him a large nation.”²

This also indicates that the blessings, fruits and multiplication is in the generation of Ismaeel (a.s.). Shanim Asaar’ means ‘twelve’; and the word ‘Asaar’ is used for a compound number when the counted things are masculine. The singular ‘naasi’ means: Leader, chief, head, etc.¹

The Almighty Allah ordered Ibrahim (a.s.) to leave the city of Namrood and go towards Syria. So he left the city with his wife Sarah, and Lut (a.s.) and migrated according to the Divine Order. In the due course, they reached the land of Palestine.

By the Grace of Almighty Ibrahim (a.s.) was bestowed an excess of wealth. He said, “O my Lord what can I make by this wealth, and I do not

² Genesis 17.

¹ Al Mojamul Hadith.

even have a son ?” The Almighty revealed to him, “I will increase your progeny till it reaches the number of stars.” Hajra was the slave girl of Sarah. Sarah bethroted her to Ibrahim (a.s.). She bore for him a son, Ismail (a.s.). The age of Ibrahim (a.s.) was 86 years when Ismail (a.s.) was born to Hajra.²

The Holy Quran mentions in the following words the prayer of Ibrahim (a.s.).

“O Our Lord ! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive of fruit near Thy Sacred House, Our Lord ! That they keep up prayer; therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits; haply they may be grateful.” (Surah Ibrahim 14:37)

The holy verse points to the fact that Ibrahim (a.s.) had settled some of his progeny, that is Ismail (a.s.) in the area of Mecca and he also prayed that the Almighty may bestow them with His Mercy and that they remain the medium 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 the leaders of humanity for the time to come.

² Tarikh Yaqoobi 1:24-25 (Printed at Qum)

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) says, “We are that remnant of progeny. And that was the prayer of Ibrahim (a.s.) regarding us.”

EXPLANATION OF AFORE-MENTIONED TRADITIONS

After having discussed the traditions regarding twelve successors, we can derive the following points: The number of Imams for this Ummat shall be twelve, in a continuous line. Secondly, after the twelfth of these Imams, the world shall reach its end.

According to the first tradition:

“The Islamic religion will continue until the Hour has been established, or you have been ruled over the twelve Caliphs have passed among you.”

This Tradition has fixed the period of Islam’s supremacy till the day of Qiy’amat and also fixed the number of Imams for this Ummat as twelve.

According to the fifth tradition:

“The Islamic religion will continue until there are twelve (Imams) from the Quraysh. And when they all die the Earth will swallow its inhabitants”.

This tradition proves that Islam will continue till the end of this world or till the reign of twelve

Imams and after them this Earth shall be destroyed.

The eighth tradition limits the number of Imams to twelve:

“After me there shall be Caliphs equal in number to the companions of Musa (a.s.).”

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 will be limited to twelve and after these Twelve, the Qiyamat will surely occur and the Earth shall 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 humanity, one of the Imams must have a long life which is an unusual phenomena. Thus the twelfth Caliph and the successor of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.), that is, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) was bestowed with a long life.

BEWILDERING INTERPRETATIONS

The scholars of the school of Caliphate are at pains to explain the traditions that mention the Twelve Successors. We present herewith, in brief, their contradictory explanations.

Ibne Arabi says in his 'Explanation of Sunan Tirmizi':

We have counted the Amirs after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as twelve.

We found them as follows: Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman, Ali, Hasan, Muawiya, Yazid, Muawiya Ibne Yazid, Marwan, Abdul Malik Ibne Marwan, Al-Walid, Sulaiman, Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz, Yazid Bin Abdul Malik, Marwan Bin Muhammad Bin Marwan, As-Saffah... After this there were twenty-seven caliphs from the Bani Abbas.

Now if we consider twelve of them we can reach only till Sulaiman. If we take the literal meaning we have only five of them and to these we add the four Righteous Caliphs, and Umar bin Abdul Aziz...

I cannot understand the meaning of this hadith!¹

Qazi Ayaz, says in reply to the claim that there shall be only twelve caliphs:

"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 more. Hence it is possible that there can be more."²

Suyuti says: There are only twelve Calpihs till Qiyamat. And they will continue to act on truth, even if they are not continuous.³

It is mentioned in Fathul Bari that:

Four of them (the Righteous Caliphs) have passed. The rest also must pass before Qiyamat.⁴

Ibne Jauzi says, 'It can be concluded that the phrase, 'then there will be discord' imply the

¹ Ibne Arabi - Commentary on Sunan Tirmizi 9: 68-69.

² Commentary on Nawawi in Sahih Muslim 12:201-202 Fath-ul Bari 16:339.

³ Tarikhul Khulafa of Suyuti, Vol.12.

⁴ Fath-ul Bari 6:341.

disturbing events like the coming of Dajjal and whatever will come after it.¹

Suyuti has explained as follows:

We see that from the twelve, four are the Righteous Caliphs, then Hasan, then Muawiya, then Ibne Zubair, and finally Umar Bin Abdul Aziz. They are eight. Four of them remain. May be Mahdi, the Abbasid could be included as he is an Abbasid like Umar Bin Abdul Aziz was a Umayyid. And Tahir Abbasi will also be included because he was a just ruler. Thus two more are yet to come. One of them is Mahdi, because he is from the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).²

It is also said :

It could also mean that the twelve Imams will remain during the period of Islam's supremacy. The time when Islam will be a dominant religion. These caliphs will, during their tenure, glorify the religion. All the Muslims will collect around them in unison.¹

¹ Fath-ul Bari 6:341.

² As Sawaiqu Muhriqa 19th volume. Tarikhul Khulafa of Suyuti, Vol.12. There is a unanimity in the School of Caliphate that the awaited Imam is Mahdi, as is the belief of the followers of the School of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)

¹ Nawawi in his Sharh of Sahih Muslim 12:202-203.

Baihaqi says:

"This number (twelve) is found till the period of Walid Ibne Abdul Malik. After this, there was chaos and disturbance. Then came the Abbasid dynasty. This report has increased the number of Imams. If we neglect some of their characteristics which came after the disturbance, then their number will be much higher.²

And they said:

The Caliphs around whom the people had collected were the first three Caliphs, then Ali, until the Battle of Siffin against Muawiya when pages of Quran were raised on the spears. Then the people collected around Muawiya, and then again at the time of the treaty with Imam Hasan. Then with Muawiya's son Yazid. But the people did not collect around Imam Husain (a.s.). He was murdered before he could gain this type of support. When Yazid died, they collected around Marwan after the killing of Abdullah Ibne Zubair. Then they supported the four sons of Abdul Malik Ibne Marwan; Walid, Sulaiman, Yazid and Hisham. There was a break between Sulaiman and Yazid when Umar Bin Abdul Aziz occupied the throne. The twelfth of them was Walid Ibne

² Tarikh Ibne Katheer 6:249. Tarikhul Khulafa :11 As Sawaiqu Muhriqa, Vol.19. Fath-ul Bari 16:341.

Yazid. After Hisham people collected around him. He ruled for four years.¹ On the basis of this the Caliphate of the twelve Caliphs was valid due to the people's support. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) had given the good tidings of their Caliphate; that they will propagate Islam among the people. In this connection Ibne Hajar says, 'The above reason is correct and it is more preferable.'

Ibne Katheer says:

Whosoever follows Baihaqi and agrees with his assertion that Jamat means those Caliphs who came intermittently till the time of Walid Ibne Yazid Ibne Abdul Malik the transgressor comes under the purview of the tradition quoted by us criticising and denouncing such people. It is a controversial sect. The Caliphs are till Walid Bin Yazid. Their total is more than twelve. And their argument is that the Caliphate consisted of Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali. (The Righteous Caliphate). After this the Caliphate of Hasan was true because he had been nominated by Ali and the people of Iraq had also pledged their allegiance to him. It continued till the time of his treaty with Muawiya. Then came Yazid the son of Muawiya. Then his son Muawiya Ibne Yazid, then Marwan Bin Hakam, then Abdul Malik Ibne

¹ Tarikh-ul-Khulafa, vol. 11.

Marwan, then his son, Walid Ibne Abdul Malik, then Sulaiman Ibne Abdul Malik, Then Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz, then Yazid Ibne Abdul Malik, then Hisham Ibne Abdul Malik. This takes the total to fifteen. Then after this, Walid Ibne Yazid Ibne Abdul Malik became the Caliph. And if we accept the Caliphate of Ibne Zubair before Abdul Malik the total shall be sixteen. Whereas their total should be twelve before Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz. In this method Yazid Ibne Muawiya will be included and not Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz. However, it is established that the majority of the Ulama accept Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz as a truthful and a just Caliph. There was complete peace and justice during his reign. Even the Rafizee accept this fact.

Suppose we say that we will accept the Caliph as the one who has the acceptance of all the Ummat, then we cannot accept Ali and his son. Because the whole Ummat had not supported them.

The Syrians had accepted their superiority but not their Caliphate. In this way they cannot be accepted as Caliphs.

He (Baihaqi) has also written that some people included Muawiya, his son and his grandson among the Caliphs. The time of Marwan and Ibne Zubair is also not included. For none of them had

the unanimous support. Therefore we say about this sect that they believe in the first three Caliphs, then Muawiya, then Yazid, then Abdul Malik, then Walid Ibne Abdul Malik, then Sulaiman Ibne Abdul Malik, then Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz, then then Yazid Ibne Abdul Malik, then Hisham Ibne Abdul Malik. This comes to ten. Then they consider Walid Ibne Yazid Ibne Abdul Malik the transgressor as the Caliph. In this way they exclude Ali and his son Hasan. Now this is absolutely against the belief of the majority of the Muslims, whether Shias or Sunnis.¹

Ibne Jauzi has offered two explanations in his book, 'Kashful Mushkil':

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) has informed about whatever is going to occur after him with his Companions. And that the actions of the Companions will be similar to those of the Prophet's. At that time he had also indicated the number of Caliphs of Bani Umayya. As the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) has said, 'La Yazaaluddin' (the religion will not decline), it indicates the chain of Wilayat till the Twelfth Caliph. The Second and the more serious meaning is that after the passing of the twelve

¹ Tarikh Ibne Katheer 6:249-250.

Caliphs the conditions will deteriorate. The first Caliph of Bani Umayya was Yazid Ibne Muawiya and the last, Marwan Al-Himar. Their total is thirteen. Usman, Muawiya and Ibne Zubair are not included as they were among the Companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

If we exclude Marwan Bin Hakam because of the controversy about his being a Companion or that he was in power even though Abdullah Ibne Zubair had the support of the people. Then we can get the figure of Twelve.

When the Caliphate came out of the Bani Umayya, a great disturbance arose. Until the Bani Abbas established themselves. Hence, the original conditions had changed completely.¹

Ibne Hajar in Fathul Bari has refuted this.

The second explanation of Ibne Jauzi is as Follow:

Abil Husain Bin Mauaadi in his book, 'Al-Mahdi' says, 'The more probable meaning refers to the Mahdi who will come towards the end of the world. I have seen in the book of Daniel, 'When Mahdi will die five men from his elder grandson, then five men from his younger grandson will succeed him. Then the last of them will make a

¹ Fath-ul Bari 16:340 quoted from Sibte Ibne Jauzi.

will in favour of one of the descendants of the elder grandson. After this his son will become the King. This proves the twelve Imams mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet (s.a.).

All of them will be known as Imam Mahdi.' He says, '...This affair will continue with the twelve persons. Six of them will be from the progeny of Hasan and five from the progeny of Husain. The last will be someone else. After his death confusion will prevail upon the earth.'

Ibne Hajar says, 'This tradition is without any chain of narrators and hence we cannot rely upon it.'¹

And some people say:

Maybe the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) had meant to say in this perplexing tradition regarding the future, that at one and the same time the people will 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 is possible that they will be present contemporaneously.¹

It is also said : In 500 A.H. in Andulus, there were six people in power at one and the same time.

¹ Fath-ul Bari 16:341. As Sawaiqul Muhriqa.

¹ Fath-ul Bari 16:338.

Each of them claimed to be the Caliph. Included among them were the Abbasid of Baghdad and the ruler of Egypt. The Alawis and the Kharijis also claimed to be the rulers of the earth.²

Ibne Hajar says, 'No one has much knowledge about this particular hadith of Sahih Bukhari.'³ Then he says, 'It is not correct to say that these twelve will be present at one and the same time.'⁴

The writer says:

There is no agreement in the explanation of the above tradition. These scholars have not paid attention to those reports which mention the names of the twelve successors. For it was against the political expediency of the time. However the hadith scholars of the School of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) have recorded numerous such traditions with proper chains of narrators going back to the trustworthy Companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.). We mention herewith a few of these traditions.

² Sharh of Nawawi 12:202. Fath-ul Bari 16:339.

³ Fath-ul Bari 16:338.

⁴ Fath-ul Bari 16:339.

THE TWELVE IMAMS ACCORDING TO THE SCHOOL OF CALIPHATE

(a) Al Juwaini¹ reports that Abdullah Ibne Abbas remarked that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said, 'I am the chief of the Prophets and Ali Ibne Abi Talib is the chief of the successors, and after me my successors shall be twelve, the first of them being Ali Ibne Abi Talib and the last of them being Al Mahdi.'

(b) Al Juwaini has also mentioned another tradition from Ibne Abbas (r.a.) that he narrates from the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.):

Certainly my Caliphs and my legatees and the Proofs of Allah upon his creatures after me are twelve. The first of them is my brother and the last of them is my (grand) son." He was asked: "O Messenger of Allah, who is your brother?"

He said, 'Ali Ibne Abi Talib.'

¹ Zahabi says in Tadkiratul Huffaz that Sadruddin Ibrahim bin Muhammad bin Homuya Al-Juwaini Al-Shafi was a great scholar of hadith.

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

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) replied, 'Al Mahdi, the one who fill the earth with justice and equity like it would be brimming with injustice and tyranny. And by the One who has raised me as a warner and a giver of good tidings, even if a day remains for the life of this world, the Almighty Allah will prolong this day to an extent till He send my son Mahdi, then He will make Ruhullah Isa ibne Maryam (a.s.) to descend and pray behind him (Mahdi). And the earth will be illuminated by his radiance. And his power will reach to the east and the west.'

(c) Al Juwaini also narrates from his chain of narrators that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) informed:

"I and Ali and Hasan and Husain and nine of the descendants of Husain are the purified ones and the infallible."¹

Among the scholars of the School of the Caliphate it was the general tendency, due to the political expediency, to conceal such traditions from the people. A majority of their scholars have tried their best to explain away these traditions in a confusing manner. They

¹ Faraidus Simtain Pg.160.

have endeavoured to make vague guesses regarding the names of the Caliphs mentioned in these reports. On the other hand the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) has mentioned clearly, by name, his Twelve Successors.

It is not possible to relate all such traditions in this brief treatise. However, we shall present the biographical sketches of the Imams (a.s.) who have been named by the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.).

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE TWELVE SUCCESSORS OF THE PROPHET (S.A.W.S.)

The First Imam

Amirul Momineen Ali (a.s.)

Father: Abu Talib bin Abdul Muttalib bin Hashim.

Mother: Fatima binte Asad bin Hashim bin Abd Munaf.

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

Laqab (Title): Al-Wasi, Amirul Momineen.

Birth: He was born in the Kaaba¹, in thirty Aamul Feel (the year of the elephant).

Martyrdom: He was martyred by the Khwariji named Abdur Rahman Ibne Muljim at Kufa during the month of Ramadhan in the fortieth

¹ Fatema Binte Asad was circumbulating the Kaaba when she was carrying Ali (a.s.). The wall of Kaaba cracked to create an opening and she entered it to give birth to Ali (a.s.). Al-Mustadrak 3:483.

year of Hijrah and was buried at Najaf on the outskirts of Kufa.

The Second Imam

Al-Hasan ibne Ali Ibne Abi Talib (a.s.)

Mother: Fatima az-Zahra (s.a.), the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abu Muhammad.

Laqab (Title): Al Sibte Kabir (the elder grandson), Al-Mujtaba.

Birth: He was born in Madina in the middle of the month of Ramadhan in 3 A.H.

Martyrdom: He died on the 28th of Safar in the year 50 .A.H. He was buried in the graveyard of Baqi in Madina.

The Third Imam

Al Husain ibne Ali ibne Abi Talib (a.s.)

Mother: Fatima az-Zahra (s.a.) the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abu Abdillah

Laqab (Title): Al Sibte, Shaheed-e-Karbala.

Birth: He was born at Madina in the month of Shaban in the year 4 A.H.

Martyrdom: He was martyred with his companions by the army of Yazid in the month of Mohurrum 61 A.H. His tomb is in Karbala, a town of Iraq.¹

The Fourth Imam

Ali ibn Al-Husain Ash Shaheed (a.s.)

Mother: Ghazala, Shahzanaan.

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abul Hasan.

Laqab (Title) : Zainul Aabedeen, Al Sajjad.

Birth: He was born in 38 A.H. at Madina.

¹ For biographical sketches of Ali, Hasan and Husain (a.s.) refer to Tarikh Tabari in the events of 40, 50 and 60 A.H. Usud al-Ghaba.

Martyrdom: He died of poison in the year 94 or 95 A.H. at Madina and is buried at Baqi near his uncle Hasan (a.s.).¹

The Fifth Imam

Muhammad ibne Ali al-Sajjad (a.s.)

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

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abu Jafar.

Laqab (Title) : Al Baqir.

Birth: He was born at Madina in the year 57 A.H.

Martyrdom: He died of poisoning in Madina in 11 A.H. and is also buried at Baqi near his father.²

The Sixth Imam

Jafar ibne Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.)

Mother: Umme Farwa, the daughter of Qasim bin Muhammad bin Abu Bakr.

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abu Abdillah.

Laqab (Title) : As-Sadiq.

¹ Tarikh Ibne Athir. Tarikh Ibne Katheer.

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

Birth: He was born at Madina in 83 A.H.

Martyrdom: He died of poison in 148 A.H. and is buried at Baqi near his father.¹

The Seventh Imam

Musa bin Jafar as-Sadiq (a.s.)

Mother: Hamidah.

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abul Hasan.

Laqab (Title) : Al Kazim.

Birth: He was born at Madina 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 at Kazimiyyah in Iraq.¹

The Eighth Imam

Ali bin Musa al-Kazim (a.s.)

Mother: Al Khaizraan.

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abul Hasan.

Laqab (Title) : Ar-Reza.

¹ Refer Hilayatul Awliya, Wafayaatul Ayaan. Tarikh Yaqoobi 2:381. Al-Masudi 3:46

¹ Maqatilit Talibiyyin. Tarikhe Baghdad. Wafayaatul Ayaan. Tarikh Ibne Katheer. Tarikh Yaqoobi 2:414

Birth: He was born at Madina in 148 A.H.

Martyrdom: He was poisoned in the year 203 A.H. and is buried in the Khorasaan district of Iran.²

The Ninth Imam

Muhammad bin Ali Ar-Reza (a.s.)

Mother: Sakina.

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abu Abdillah.

Laqab (Title) : Al Jawad.

Birth: He was born at Madina in 195 A.H.

Martyrdom: He died of poison at Baghdad in the year 220 A.H. and is buried near his grandfather at Kazimmiyah in Iraq.¹

The Tenth Imam

Ali bin Muhammad al-Jawad (a.s.)

Mother: Samana al-Maghribiya.

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abul Hasan al Askari.

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

¹ Tarikhe Baghdad 3:54. Wafayaatul Ayaan. Al-Masudi 3:464

Laqab (Title) : Al Hadi.

Birth: He was born at Madina in the year 212 A.H.

Martyrdom: He died of poison in 254 A.H. at Samarra (Sarmanra) in Iraq is and buried there.¹

The Eleventh Imam

Al Hasan bin Ali al-Hadi (a.s.)

Mother: Ummul Walad - Susan.

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abu Muhammad.

Laqab (Title) : Al Askari.

Birth: He was born at Samarra in the year 232 A.H.

Martyrdom: He was poisoned in 260 A.H. at Samarra and is buried there.²

All the tombs of the eleven Imams (a.s.) are a place of Ziarat (visitation) by Muslims. Four of the Imams are buried at Baqi in Madina al-

¹ Tarikhe Baghdad 12:56. Wafayaatul Ayaan. Tarikhe Yaqoobi 2:484. Al-Masudi 4:84.

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

Munawwara. However, their tombs were demolished by the authorities along with the tombs of the wives of the Prophet (s.a.) and his companions.

The Twelfth Imam

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

Mother: Ummul Walad Narjis alias Saiqal.

Kunniyat (Patronymic) : Abu Abdullah, Abul Qasim.

Laqab (Title) : Al-Qaim, Al-Muntazar, Al-Khalaf, Al-Mahdi, Sahibuzzamaan.

Birth: He was born at Samarrah in the year 255 A.H. He is the last Imam (a.s.) and he is alive and is hidden.¹

¹ Tadrikatul Khawaas of Sibte Ibne Jauzi. Matalibus Sooul. Wafayaatul Ayaan

An Important Advice

One of the points in the traditions mentioned above is that each of the twelve will be from Quraish. After them there will be chaos. Another point is that the religion will remain established till the twelve Caliphs of Quraish are present. When they die, the earth will swallow its inhabitants.

The above two points thus prove that after the twelve Caliphs of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) the earth will be destroyed.

Therefore it is necessary that one of these twelve successors should have such a long life that it should surpass the age of this earth.

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

The traditions discussed in this treatise prove the Imamatus of these Twelve Noble Personalities. Not anyone else.