

A Thirty-Year Caliphate

A tradition of Safina is seen in Tirmidhi¹ that according to the Holy Prophet (S), Caliphate is only for thirty years, and after that, there is kingship. A tradition like this is also seen in Sunan Abi Dawood.² It is reported from Saeed bin Jumhan. Sharhe Fiqhe Akbar also indicates that the period of Caliphate is thirty years.

Author of Sharhe Maqasid, Allamah Taftazani says: “Caliphate is as follows: Abu Bakr for two years, Umar for ten years, Uthman 12 years and Ali (a.s.) for six years. From this aspect the figure of 30 is reached easily.” But books of history and biography throw up many difficulties and the calculation of Taftazani is proved incorrect. Now the readers may see that Taftazani says the Caliphate of Abu Bakr was only two years. But in Hayatul Haiwan³ the period of Abu Bakr’s Caliphate is given as two years, three months and eight days. Similarly, in Tarikh Abul Fida⁴ it is given as two years, three months and ten days. Then in Seeratul Muhammadiya⁵ it is given as two years, three months and 4 or 5 nights. In brief, these different accounts show that the period of Abu Bakr’s Caliphate was two years, three months and some days.

According to Taftazani, the Caliphate of Umar was 10 years. While in Seeratul Muhammadiya it was 10 years, 7 months and 5 nights, in Abul Fida⁶ and Hayatul Haiwan this period is 10 years, 6 months and 8 days or 5 nights. Some have written, 13 nights instead of 5 nights. All this shows that the period of Umar’s Caliphate is more than 10 years, whether it is seven months or less. There are not many differences of opinion regarding the period of Uthman’s Caliphate.

Abul Fida also says it is 12 years and Damiri’s research also says the same. But some have written 11 years, 11 months and 14 days. But there is a great divergence from the view of Taftazani regarding the period of Caliphate of Ali (a.s.). Taftazani says it was 6 years but on page 574 of Seeratul Muhammadiya, it is 4 years, 4 months and in Hayatul Haiwan it is 4 years and 9 months. None of the books mention it to be 6 years.

The conclusion of all this calculation is the Caliphate of all these four Caliphs together does not add up to 30 years. Then in order to complete the figure, scholars include the short Caliphate of Imam Hasan (a.s.) in this thirty years Caliphate. In spite of this, the figure of 30 years is not reached.

Also the view of Taftazani, that the Caliphate of Ali (a.s.) was six years, necessitates that we include the period when there was no Caliphate, since the condition of Caliphate is control over Islamic territory. This control had passed into the hands of Muawiyah. Thus, the view of Taftazani is incorrect.

Some have calculated the period of Caliphate of Imam Ali (a.s.) till his martyrdom. But this also seems incorrect, because his control on Islamic lands had ceased to exist. Thus, the period of 30 years can never be made to fit Caliphate. According to the writer, this tradition itself seems baseless. If it had really been authentic, the period would have definitely reached 30 years. On the basis of the unseen knowledge of the Holy Prophet (S) he knew all that was to occur till Judgment Day. So how could he not know the duration of Caliphate? Thus, this tradition is a fabricated one. The one who has fabricated it, did not do his calculations properly. It seems it was concocted to prove the legitimacy of the first three Caliphs.

[1.](#) Vol. 2, Pg. 50.

[2.](#) Vol. 2, Pg. 282.

[3.](#) Vol. 1, Pg. 60.

[4.](#) Vol. 1, Pg. 167.

[5.](#) Pg. 566

[6.](#) Vol. 1, Pg. 173.

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