

## The Traditions about the Twelve Caliphs

From the traditions which the knowledge of every researcher and student seeks, rather which is obligatory on every Muslim to be acquainted with it and not to transgress it till he comprehends its contents and knows its matter thoroughly, is the successive traditions concerning the number of caliphs and Imams and those who will rule this nation.

Surely, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has not stated these traditions merely as prophecies. Nay, these are religious injunctions; knowing them and believing in them is obligatory. Although these traditions sound as prophecies in nature, yet essentially they are religious dictates. These are documentary evidences for the distinguished and eminent personalities whose like and equal cannot be found amongst the Muslims. They are twelve in number; none can either increase their number or decrease it.

Undoubtedly, this is a subject worth deliberation, research and investigation to understand its meaning because its traditions fall in the category of successive traditions (الاحاديث المتواتره). They talk about the system of leadership and rule after the Messenger of Islam (s.a.w.a.), and as to who will take over the reins of mastership.

Moreover, it talks about those who will be responsible for governance, support and defence of Islam, establishment of justice, enjoinder of good, prohibition of evil, protection of the borders, security of the cities and implementation of divine laws. From these traditions, one can understand that Allah, the High and His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) have not left this important issue unattended to. Nobody will have any argument against Allah and His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) regarding this subject, if he has not done enough research or made sufficient preparations. If somebody attempts to justify that he could not deliberate enough on these traditions along with their explanations as their conclusions were unfavourable for the present government and its scholars, then such excuses and justifications will not be accepted.

Scholars were not permitted to voice their opinions freely on such issues because the minimum punishment for this crime would be a long period of incarceration and intensive flogging. Hence, they were in a state of utter confusion and perplexity vis-à-vis these traditions. Those who did write their explanations and interpretations actually came up with nothing. Some of them even confessed their

helplessness in understanding these traditions. Consequently, the majority of the Muslim nation remained ignorant of the true meaning of these traditions and were deprived of guidance through them. This was not the first glass bottle to be broken in Islam.

Here, with the strength and power of Allah, we shall attempt to explain these traditions in an order that some will elucidate the others; some will support the others till there is no need for further explanations on the subject. Plus, we will also bring forth appropriate commentaries for these traditions or explanations on the comments given on these traditions, Inshallah.

These traditions have been classified in groups as per their topics and it is only proper that we inform about them over here:

- Those traditions that talk only about numbers and the restriction put on the number of caliphs, like the traditions of Ibne Masood and Anas and some traditions of Jaaber Ibn Samarah.
- Those traditions that are an addendum to it (All of them will be from Quraish). Such traditions abound from Jaaber. One can also find in them (All of them will be from Bani Haashim) as Qunduzi has brought in Yanaabiul Mawaddah and Sayyid Ali Ibn Shahab in Al-Mawaddatul Qurbaa.
- Those traditions that suggest that these caliphs will be equal in number to the chiefs (Nuqabaa) of Bani Israel and Musa (a.s.), and the companions (Hawaari) of Eesa (a.s.).
- Here we have explained the traditions by dividing them in a few groups:
- Traditions that establish that these caliphs will be from the Ahle Bait (a.s.).
- Traditions which prove that the last of them is Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).
- Traditions which inform that the first amongst them is Ali (a.s.) and last amongst them is Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).
- Traditions which establish that nine amongst these caliphs will be the descendants of Imam Husain (a.s.) like the one which says, “The first amongst them is Ali (a.s.), the second and the third are al-Hasan (a.s.) and al-Husain (a.s.), the two grandsons of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the remaining nine are from the progeny of al-Husain (a.s.).”
- Traditions which suggest that the ninth of these nine will be Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).
- Traditions, and there are many of them, that explain their names, their personas and their attributes.

It should be borne in mind that quite often amongst these numerous traditions, some chain of narrators can be found that are defective, thereby preventing us to completely rely on them independently. Except for the fact that the authenticity of such traditions are supported and endorsed by other reliable traditions, thereby doing away with the shortcomings.

Finally, let us state the purpose of writing this book, with the help of Allah, the Kind, the Loving.

The reader should know that:

We have not brought out these traditions to investigate them and therefore often we have not felt the need of mentioning some of them.

This is the first volume of this voluminous book concerning our Master Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and is captioned as “Muntakhabul Asar” (A Selection of Traditions). We have selected them so that the masses may derive independent benefit from it, underlining the significance of Caliphate, the status of Wilayah and Imamah. Allah, the High, informs us:

يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ

***On that day We will call every people with their Imam. (Surah Bani Israel 17: 71)***

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

***You are only a warner and (there is) a guide for every people. (Surah Ra'd 13:7)***

His Holiness Ayatullah Lutfullah Saafi Golpaygani

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