

Does this hadith “My caliphs are twelve persons” indicate the existence of hadrat “Mahdi” [a.s]?

Description:

There are numerous narratives in Shia and Sunni resources in which messenger of Allah [PBUH] says: “My successors are twelve persons”. Amongst Shia and Sunni hadith narrators this narrative is known as “My caliphs are twelve persons”.

Question is that id this narrative indicates the existence of imam “Mahdi” [a.s] or not?

Respond:

Narrative of “My caliphs are twelve person” is amongst narratives that indicates the existence of one of Shia imams until day of resurrection to protect and continuity of Islam religion. So, in current age, one of “Ahl al-Bayt” [a.s] must exist so that Islam religion remains stable.

In this article, we’ll study this matter in perspective of Shia and Sunni relying on authentic resources of Sunni.

Text of narrative with different phrases:

Phrase of “Twelve caliphs”:

This narrative with above phrase has been quoted by different persons in “Sahih Muslim” book:

حدثنا قُتَيْبَةُ بن سَعِيدٍ حدثنا جَرِيرٌ عن حُصَيْنٍ عن جَابِرِ بن سَمُرَةَ قال: سمعت النبي صلي الله عليه وسلم يقول وحدثنا رِفَاعَةُ بن الُهِيَمِ الوَاسِطِيُّ واللفظ له حدثنا خَالِدٌ يَعْنِي بن عبد الله الطَّحَّانَ عن حُصَيْنٍ عن جَابِرِ بن سَمُرَةَ قال: دَخَلْتُ مع أَبِي علي النبي صلي الله عليه وسلم فَسَمِعْتُهُ يقول: **إِنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ لَا يَنْقُضِي حَتَّى يَمُضِيَ فِيهِمْ اثْنَا عَشَرَ خَلِيفَةً.** قال: ثُمَّ تَكَلَّمَ بِكَلَامٍ حَفِيٍّ عَلَيَّ قال: فقلت لِأَبِي: ما قال؟ قال: كلهم من قُرْبَشٍ.

“Jabir ibn Samarah” says: I went to messenger of Allah [PBUH] with my father. I heard that he said: the matter of Islamic caliphate won’t end unless twelve successors rule amongst them.

Then he said a sentence that was unclear to me, I said to my father: what did messenger of Allah [PBUH] say? My father said: all these caliphs will be from "Quraysh" tribe.

"Muslim ibn Hajjaj" – Sahih Muslim – vol. 3, p 1452

And "Muslim ibn Hajjaj" quotes in another narrative:

حدثنا قُتَيْبَةُ بن سَعِيدٍ وَأَبُو بَكْرِ بن أَبِي شَيْبَةَ قَالَا حَدَّثَنَا حَاتِمٌ وَهُوَ بن إِسْمَاعِيلَ عن الْمُهَاجِرِ بن مِسْمَارٍ عن عَامِرِ بن سَعْدِ بن أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ قَالَ كَتَبْتُ إِلَى جَابِرِ بن سَمُرَةَ مع عَلَامِي نَافِعٍ أَنْ أَخْبِرَنِي بِشَيْءٍ سَمِعْتَهُ من رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ فَكَتَبَ إِلَيَّ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ يَوْمَ جُمُعَةٍ عَشِيَّةَ رُجْمِ الْأَسْلَمِيِّ يَقُولُ: لَا يَزَالُ الدِّينُ قَائِمًا حَتَّى تَقُومَ السَّاعَةُ أَوْ يَكُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ اثْنَا عَشَرَ خَلِيفَةً كُلَّهُمْ من قُرَيْشٍ.

Amir ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas" says: my slave and I wrote to "Jabir ibn Samarah" to write for us what he's heard from messenger of Allah [PBUH]. "Jabir" wrote: "I heard from messenger of Allah [PBUH]: religion will always remain stable until resurrection is set up and you'll have twelve caliphs that all of them are from "Quraysh".

"Muslim ibn Hajjaj" – Sahih Muslim – vol. 3, p 1453

To comply with the observation, we quote next narratives written on page 1452 without their document:

... يقول لَا يَزَالُ الْإِسْلَامُ عَزِيزًا إِلَيَّ اثْنِي عَشَرَ خَلِيفَةً.

Messenger of Allah [PBUH] said: Islam is always dear until twelve caliph rule the people.

... لَا يَزَالُ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ عَزِيزًا إِلَيَّ اثْنِي عَشَرَ خَلِيفَةً.

This religion is always dear until twelve caliphs govern on people.

... لَا يَزَالُ هَذَا الدِّينُ عَزِيزًا مَنِيعًا إِلَيَّ اثْنِي عَشَرَ خَلِيفَةً.

This religion is always dear and strong until twelve successors govern on people.

"Muslim ibn Hajjaj" – Sahih Muslim – vol. 3, p 1452

“Abu Dawud Sajistani”, one of Sunni scholars quotes this narrative with another phrase:

حدثنا عمرو بن عثمان ثنا مروان بن معاوية عن إسماعيل يعني بن أبي خالد عن أبيه عن جابر بن سمرة قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول لا يزال هذا الدين قائمًا حتى يكون عليكم اثنا عشر خليفة كلهم تجتمع عليه الأمة فسمعت كلامًا من النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لم أفهمه قلت لأبي ما يقول قال كلهم من قريش.

“Jabir ibn Samurah” says: I heard from messenger of Allah [PBUH] who said: this religion is always stable until twelve caliphs come. Then he said a sentence that was unclear to me, I said to my father: what did messenger of Allah [PBUH] say? My father said: all these caliphs will be from “Quraysh” tribe.

“Al-Sajistani” – Sunan Abi Dawud – vol. 4, p 106

حدثنا موسى بن إسماعيل ثنا وهيب ثنا داود عن عامر عن جابر بن سمرة قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: لا يزال هذا الدين عزيزًا إني اثني عشر خليفة قال فكبر الناس وصحوا ثم قال: كلمة خفية قلت لأبي يا أبت ما قال؟ قال: كلهم من قريش.

“Jabir ibn Samurah” said: I heard from messenger of Allah [PBUH] who said: religion is always dear until twelve caliphs come. “Jabir” says: people said “Takbir”. Then messenger of Allah [PBUH] said a sentence that I didn’t understand, I said to my father: why did he say? He said: messenger of Allah [PBUH] said: all of them are from “Quraysh”.

“Al-Sajistani” – Sunan Abi Dawud – vol. 4, p 106

This narrative has been quoted by other Sunni elders such as; chief of “Hanbali” denomination, “Ahmad ibn Hanbal” in “Musnad” book, p 86 to 107, “Hakim Nishapuri” in “Al-Mustadrak”, vol. 3, p 715 and 716.

2: “Twelve chieftains”

In some narratives the word “Chieftain” has been used instead of “caliph”:

“Ahmad ibn Hanbal” has quoted this narrative on two pages of his “Musnad” book:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا حسن بن موسى ثنا حماد بن زيد عن المجالد عن الشعبي عن مسروق قال: كنا جلوساً عند عبد الله بن مسعود وهو يُقرئنا القرآن فقال له رجل: يا أبا عبد الرحمن هل سألتُم رسولَ الله صلي الله عليه وسلم كم تملك هذه الأمة من خليفة؟ فقال عبد الله بن مسعود: ما سألتني عنها أحدٌ منذُ قدمتُ العراقَ قبلكَ ثم قال: نعم. ولقد سألتنا رسولَ الله صلي الله عليه وسلم فقال: **أثنا عشرَ كعدة نبيّ بني إسرائيل.**

“Masrouh” said: we were sitting along with “Abudullah ibn Masud” and he was reading Quran for us, a man told him: O “Aba Abd ar-Rahman”! Didn’t you hear from messenger of Allah [PBUH] that how many caliphs will come after him? “Abdullah” said: no one has asked me about it since I’ve arrived to “Iraq”, we asked messenger of Allah [PBUH] and he said: my caliphs are twelve persons like the number of chieftains of children of Israel.

“Ahmad ibn Hanbal” – Musnad “, vol. 1, p 398

Some of Sunni big scholars such as; “Asimi Macchi”, “Mubarfakuri”, “Ibn Hajar Asqalani”, “Suyuti”, “Ibn Hajar Haythami” say frankly that narrative quoted by “Masud” has authentic document:

أما حديث بن مسعود فأخرجه أحمد والبخاري بسند حسن أنه سئل كم يملك...

“Ibn Hajar Asqalani” – Fath al-Bari – vol. 13, p 212 /// “Al-Suyuti” – The History of caliphs – vol 1, p 10 /// “Ibn Hajar Haythami” – al-Sawa’iq al-Muhraqa, vol. 1, p 54 /// “Al-Mubarfakuri” – Tuhfah al-Ahuozi – vol. 6, p 394

“Ibn Hajar Asqalani” has quoted narrative as follow:

وقال إسحاق: أخبرنا أبو أسامة قال: ثنا المجالد عن الشعبي عن مسروق قال: جاء رجلٌ إليّ عبد الله بن مسعود فقال: هل حدّثكم نبيُّكم صلي الله عليه وآله كم يكون بعده من الخلفاء؟ فقال: نعم. وما سألتني أحدٌ قبلكَ وإنك لأحدُت القومَ شيئاً نعم. قال: يكونُ بعدي عدة نبيّ موسى **أثني عشر نبياً.**

A man came to “Abdullah ibn Masud” and said: Did your Prophet tell you that how many caliphs will be after him? He answered: Yes, He did. And no one asked me such thing before

you and you're the youngest person. He said: there will be twelve chieftains after me, as much as "Moses" chieftains.

He says at the end:

(هذا اسناده حسن)

Document of this narrative is authentic.

"Al- Asqaani Shafi'i" – Al-Matalib al-'Aliyah – vol. 9, p 577

3: "Twelve leaders"

In some of narratives this phrase is written "Twelve leaders":

This narrative is written in "Sahih Bukhari":

حدثني محمد بن الْمُتَنِّي حدثنا عُنْدَرٌ حدثنا شُعْبَةُ عن عبد المَلِكِ سمعت جَابِرَ بن سَمْرَةَ قال: سمعت النبي صلي الله عليه وسلم يقول: يَكُونُ اثْنَا عَشَرَ أَمِيرًا فقال: كَلِمَةً لم أَسْمَعُهَا فقال: أَبِي إنه قال: كلهم من فُرَيْشٍ.

"Jabir ibn Samurah" says: I heard from messenger of Allah [PBUH] who said: there are twelve leaders after me; the he said something that I didn't hear, my father said: messenger of Allah said: all those leaders are from "Quraysh".

"Al-Bukhari" – Sahih Bukhari – vol. 6, p 2640

"Ahmad ibn Hanbal" says in his "Musnad" that this saying of messenger of Allah [PBUH] about twelve successors was said in farewell "Hajj":

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا بن ثَمِيرٍ ثنا مُجَالِدٌ عن عَامِرٍ عن جَابِرِ بن سَمْرَةَ السَّوَامِيِّ قال: سمعت رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلي الله عليه وسلم يقول: فِي حَجَّةِ الْوَدَاعِ لَا يَزَالُ هَذَا الدِّينُ ظَاهِرًا عَلَيَّ مِنْ نَاوَاهُ لَا بَصْرُهُ مُخَالَفٌ وَلَا مَقَارِقٌ حَتَّى يَمْضِيَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي اثْنَا عَشَرَ أَمِيرًا كلهم من فُرَيْشٍ قال: ثُمَّ خَفِيَ عَلَيَّ قَوْلُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلي الله عليه وسلم قال: وكان أبي أَقْرَبَ إِلَيَّ رَاحِلَةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلي الله عليه وسلم مِيَّي فقلت: يَا أَبَتَاهُ مَا الَّذِي خَفِيَ عَلَيَّ مِنْ قَوْلِ

رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال يقول: كلهم من قريشٍ قال: فاشهد علي إفهام أبي إياي قال: كلهم من قريشٍ.

“Jabir” says: messenger of Allah [PBUH] said in farewell “Hajj”: this religion always wins over enemy and its supporters and opponents can never hurt it. Twelve persons of my nation who are all from “Quraysh” will become leader. Then he said a sentence that I didn’t hear it, my father was closer to him than me, I told him: what did he say? He said: messenger of Allah said: all of them are from “Quraysh”. “Jabir” says: I testify that my father heard that sentence from messenger of Allah who said: all these twelve persons are from “Quraysh”.

“Ahmad ibn Hanbal” – Musnad – vol. 5, p 90 and 99

In another narrative, “Ahmad ibn hanbal” quotes this phrase:

لَا يَزَالُ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ مَاضِيًا حَتَّى يَقُومَ اثْنَا عَشَرَ أَمِيرًا.

“Ahmad ibn Hanbal” – Musnad – vol. 5, p 101

“Tabarani” quotes this narrative with this phrase:

حدثنا أبو حبيب زيد بن المهددي المروزي حدثنا علي بن حشرم ثنا عيسى بن يونس عن عمران بن سليمان عن الشعبي عن جابر قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في حجة الوداع يقول لا يزال أمر هذه الأمة هاديًا علي من نأواها حتى يكون عليكم اثنا عشر أميرًا ثم تكلم بكلمة لم أسمعها فسألت أبي وكان أقرب إليه مني ما قال قال كلهم من قريش

Messenger of Allah said: religion of this nation always wins over its enemies until twelve leaders rule. Then he said a sentence that I didn’t hear. I asked my father who was closer to him. He said: messenger of Allah said: all of them are from “Quraysh”.

“Al-Tabarani” – Al-Mu’jam al-Kabir – vol. 2, p 197

“Albani” says about this narrative:

وهذا إسناد صحيح علي شرطهما. وقد أخرجه مسلم عنه بلفظ: لا يزال أمر الناس ماضيًا.

Document of this narrative is authentic if conditions that both "Muslim ibn Hajjaj" and "Ismail Bukhari" considered for a narrative to be valid, are fulfilled in this narrative as well and "Muslim ibn Hajjaj" has quoted this narrative with this sentence:

لا يزال أمر الناس ماضيا

"Al-Silsilah al-Sahiha" – vol. 1, p 651

"Tirmidhi" writes about this narrative:

قال أبو عيسى: هذا حديث حسن صحيح.

This narrative is authentic.

"Al-Tirmishi" – Sunan al-Tirmidhi – vol. 4, p 501

4: "Twelve guardians"

The fourth phrase of in this narrative is "Twelve guardians" that "Al-Tabarani" has quoted in "Mu'jam":

حدثنا إبراهيم بن هاشم البغوي ثنا محمد بن عبد الرحمن العلاف ثنا محمد بن سواد ثنا سعيد عن قتادة عن الشعبي عن جابر بن سمرة قال: كنت مع أبي عند النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال: يكون لهذه الأمة اثنا عشر قِيَمًا يَضُرُّهُمْ من خذلهم ثم همس رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بكلمة لم أسمعها فقلت: لأبي ما الكلمة التي همس بها النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم؟ قال: كلهم من قريش.

"Jabir ibn Samurah" says: my father and I were with messenger of Allah who said: there are twelve guardians for this nation that even if people don't support, it won't hurt them. Then messenger of Allah said a sentence slowly that I didn't hear, I asked my father about it, he said: messenger of Allah said: all of them are "Quraysh".

"Al-Tabarani" – Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir – vol. 2, p 196

"Tabarani" quotes another narrative in this regard:

حدثنا عَبْدَانُ بن أَحْمَدَ ثنا زَيْدُ بن الْحَرِيشِ ثنا رَوْحُ بن عَطَاءِ بن أَبِي مَيْمُونَةَ عن جَابِرِ بن سَمْرَةَ قَالَ: سمعت رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وهو يَخْطُبُ علي الْمُنْبَرِ وَيَقُولُ: اثْنَا عَشَرَ قِيَمًا من قُرَيْشٍ لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ عَدَاوَةٌ من عَادَاهُمْ قَالَ: فَالْتَفَتَ خَلْفِي فإذَا أَنَا بِعُمَرَ بن الْخَطَّابِ رضي اللَّهُ عنه وَأَبِي فِي نَاسٍ فَانْتَبَهتُ لِي الْحَدِيثِ كما سمعت.

Messenger of Allah said on pulpit: there will be twelve guardians from "Quraysh" after me whom enemies' enmity can't hurt them, then I took a look at behind me and saw "Umar ibn Khattab" and my father amongst people and they quoted saying of messenger of Allah as I heard.

"Al-Tabarani" – Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir – vol. 2, p 256

5: "Twelve men"

In some phrases, this sentence is written which has been quoted in "Sahih Muslim" and other books:

حدثنا بن أَبِي عُمَرَ حدثنا سُفْيَانُ عن عبد الْمَلِكِ بن عُمَيْرٍ عن جَابِرِ بن سَمْرَةَ قَالَ سمعت النبي صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يقول: لَا يَزَالُ أَمْرُ النَّاسِ مَاضِيًا مَا وَلِيَهُمْ اثْنَا عَشَرَ رَجُلًا ثُمَّ تَكَلَّمَ النبي صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِكَلِمَةٍ خَفِيَّتْ عَلَيَّ فَسَأَلْتُ أَبِي مَاذَا؟ قَالَ: رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: كلهم من قُرَيْشٍ.

"Muslim ibn Hajjaj" – Sahih Muslim – vol. 3, p 1452

And at the end, in some resources this narrative is written without these suffixes "caliph, leader, men and guardian", this narrative has been quoted by "Abu Awanah":

حدثنا أحمد بن يوسف السلمي قال نا عمر بن عبد الله بن رزين عن سفيان يعني ابن حسين عن سعيد بن عمرو بن أشوع عن عامر الشعبي عن جابر بن سمرة السوائي قال جئت مع أبي إلي المسجد ورسول الله صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يخطب فسمعتة يقول: من بعدي اثنا عشر ثم خفض صوته فلم أدر ما يقول، قلت: لأبي ما يقول؟ قال: كلهم من قريش.

"Abu Awanah" says at the end:

وهذا مما انتخبه أبو زكريا الأعرج وهو حديث حسن حسن.

"Abu Zakariya A'araj" has selected this narrative which is an authentic narrative.

"Abu Awanah al-Isfara'ini" – Musnad Abi Awanah – vol. 4, p 372

According to these narratives written in Sunni best narrative books, we realize that this narrative with its different phrases is an acceptable narrative with them and all of them restate that after messenger of Allah, these twelve persons are successor, guardian and leader of people.

The meaning of "Twelve caliphs" in this narrative:

One of important issues in this narrative is the meaning of "Twelve caliphs" that Shia and Sunni have said different views about it.

Since Shias believe that the meaning of this narrative is "Ahl al-Bayt" twelve imams, they don't have problem in its interpretation, but Sunni elders and scholars have presented different opinions and in fact, they faced perplexity and some of them have said frankly that they can't determine what messenger of Allah [PBUH] means by saying this narrative.

A: "Sunnis' point of view:

Sunnis have faced serious perplexity and confusion in interpreting and determining the instance of twelve caliphs; because from one side these narratives have been quoted in their resources with authentic document; and from another side, qualities that exist in the text of these narratives; such as number twelve, are not match with Sunni's principle and caliphs that they have in mind.

"Ibn Jawzi" quotes the perplexity of Sunni in saying the meaning of this narrative:

هذا الحديث قد أطلت البحث عنه، وتطلّبت مطاّنه، وسألت عنه، فما رأيت أحدا وقع علي المقصود به.

I made discussion about this narrative long and searched about opinions. I didn't find anyone who could get the meaning of this narrative.

"Ibn Al-Jawzi" – Kashf al-Mushkil men Hadith al-Sahihayn – vol. 1, p 449

“Ibn Battal Bakri Qurtubi”, “Ibn Hajar Asqalani”, “Badr al-Din Ayni”, quote from “Muhallab”:

لم ألق أحدا يقطع في هذا الحديث بمعني- يعني بشئ معين.

No one could have determined definitive meaning of this narrative and interpreted it clearly.

“Ibn Battal al-Bakri” – description of Sahih Bukhari – vol. 8, p 287 /// “Al-Asqalani Shafi’i”- Fath al-Bari – Vol. 13, p 211 /// “Al-Ayni” – Umdah al-Qari fi Sharh Sahih Bukhari – vol. 24, p 281

Sunni elders have said many possibilities for this narrative. Their major possibility is that the meaning of “Twelve caliphs” is “Bani Umayya” caliphs. Studying these possibilities will be done in another article.

B: Shias’ point of view:

In Shias’ opinion the only instance of these narratives is imams of “Ahl al-Bayt” [a.s] not others and there is authentic narrative in this regard in which numbers, names and parentage of imams of “Ahl al-Bayt” [a.s] were introduced.

The best and the most comprehensive narrative in this regard is the tablet of “Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari” that was given to messenger of Allah by god on which the names of all “Ahl al-Bayt” [a.s] are written and skillful hadith narrator “Kulayni” has quoted this narrative with authentic document.

In our opinion, caliphs of messenger of Allah [PBUH] are from “Bani Hashim” and his dynasty, not that they’re just from “Quraysh” tribe and this issue is written in their valid resources.

According to the affirmation of some of Sunni scholars and researchers, last part of this narrative has been distorted and this fact has been said by two Sunni scholars.

1: Allameh Seyed “Ali Hamadani”:

According to the report of “Yanabi’ al-Mawadda” book, Seyed “Ali Hmadani” has quoted this narrative with the same document and text written in “Sahih Bukhari” and other resources but instead of quoting this sentence “All of them are from “Quraysh”, he quotes “All of the are from “Bani Hashim”, but it’s written in “Sahih Bukhari” differently:

عن عبد الملك بن عمير عن جابر بن سمرة قال: كنت مع أبي عند النبي صلى الله عليه وآله فسمعتة يقول: بعدي اثنا عشر خليفة، ثم أخفي صوته، فقلت لأبي: ما الذي أخفي صوته؟ قال: قال: **كلهم من بني هاشم**. وعن سماك بن حرب مثل ذلك.

“Jabir ibn Samurah” said: my father and I were with messenger of Allah [PBUH] and heard that he said: “They’ll be twelve caliphs after me” then he said a sentence that I didn’t hear: I said to my father: what did he say: he said: messenger of Allah said: **all of them are from “Bani Hashim”**.

{Author says:} such narrative has been quoted via “Sammak ibn Harb”.

“Al-Qunduzi al-Hanafi” – Yanabi’ al-Mawadda – vol. 3, p 290

2: Allameh “Qunduzi”:

Sheik “Sulayman ibn Abraham Qunduzi Hanafi” has quoted this narrative from “Abd al-Malik ibn Umayr” with the same document and text containing this sentence “All caliphs are from “Bani Hashim”:

عن عبد الملك بن عمير عن جابر بن سمرة رضي الله عنه قال: كنت مع أبي عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم فسمعتة يقول: بعدي اثنا عشر خليفة ثم أخفي صوته فقلت لأبي: ما الذي [قال في] أخفي صوته؟ قال: قال: **كلهم من بني هاشم**. وعن سماك بن حرب مثله.

“Al-Qunduzi Hanafi” – Yanabi’ al-Mawadda – vol. 2, p 315

Notable point is that “Abd al-Malik ibn Umayr” is amongst narrators of “Sihah Sitta” and “Sammak ibn Harb” – Except for “Sahih Bukhari” and “Sahih Muslim – is the narrator of other “Sihah” books. { Al-Kutub as-Sittah, are six (originally five) books containing collections of hadith (sayings or acts of the Islamic prophet Muhammad) compiled by six Sunni Muslim scholars in the ninth century CE}.

It might that the uproar arose while messenger of Allah [PBUH] was talking has been due to determining the instance of these twelve persons so that others can’t hear what Islamic Prophet says. If it’s true, we should search to realize who made the uproar.

Similar to this event occurred when messenger of Allah [PBUH] wanted to write something in the last moments of his life so that nation doesn't go astray after him, some made uproar in front his presence. Who caused this uproar and why? What did they say?!

Imams of "Ahl al-Bayt" [a.s], instance of "Twelve caliphs", affirmed by Sunni

"Qunduzi Hanafi" has said the opinion of some of Sunni researchers about the instance of "Twelve caliphs" and he believes that Shia imams [a.s] are the instance of this narrative not anyone else:

إن الأحاديث الدالة علي كون الخلفاء بعده صلي الله عليه وآله اثنا عشر، قد اشتهرت من طرق كثيرة، فبشرح الزمان وتعريف الكون والمكان، علم أن مراد رسول الله صلي الله عليه وآله من حديثه هذا الأئمة الاثنا عشر من أهل بيته وعترته، إذ لا يمكن أن يحمل هذا الحديث علي الخلفاء بعده من أصحابه، لقلتهم عن اثني عشر، ولا يمكن أن يحمله علي الملوك الأموية لزيادتهم علي اثني عشر، ولظلمهم الفاحش إلا عمر بن عبد العزيز، ولكونهم غير بني هاشم، لان النبي صلي الله عليه وآله قال: «كلهم من بني هاشم» في رواية عبد الملك عن جابر، وإخفاء صوته صلي الله عليه وآله في هذا القول يرحح هذه الرواية، لأنهم لا يحسنون خلافة بني هاشم و لا يمكن أن يحمله علي الملوك العباسية لزيادتهم علي العدد المذكور ولقلة رعايتهم الآية «قل لا أسألكم عليه أجراً إلا المودة في القربي» وحديث الكساء فلا بد من أن يحمل هذا الحديث علي الأئمة الاثني عشر من أهل بيته وعترته صلي الله عليه وآله لأنهم كانوا أعلم أهل زمانهم وأجلهم وأورعهم وأتقاهم، وأعلاهم نسبا، وأفضلهم حسبا، وأكرمهم عند الله، وكان علومهم عن آبائهم متصلا بجدهم صلي الله عليه وآله وبالوراثة واللدنية، كذا عرفهم أهل العلم والتحقيق وأهل الكشف والتوفيق.

Some of researchers have said: narratives that say successors of messenger of Allah [PBUH] are twelve persons were quoted by many people. And it's clear that the intention of messenger of Allah [PBUH] from "Twelve imams" is his "Ahl al-Bayt"; because it's impossible to say that this narrative is about caliphs whose number is less than twelve and we can't say it means "Bani Umayya" caliphs; because they're more than twelve and they'd oppress a lot; except for "Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz", on the other hand, they're not from "Bani Hashim" while messenger of Allah [PBUH] said in narrative that "Abd al-Malik" quoted from "Jabir": "Those twelve imams are from "Bani Hashim" and hiding prophet Muhammad's [PBUH] voice by

Sahaba's uproar {when messenger of Allah wanted to say the parentage of imams} causes the preference of this narrative because they didn't like "Bani Hashim" to be caliph.

And it's also impossible to say it means "Banu Abbasid" caliphs; because their number was more than twelve and they would ignore hadith "Kasa" and verse of "Mawaddat" in which almighty god says to messenger of Allah [PBUH]:" This is the glad tidings that Allah gives to His worshipers, who believe and do good works. Say: 'For this I ask of you no wage except the love of the (Prophet's) relatives. We will add good to whosoever gains a good deed. Allah is the Forgiving and the Thanker". {Surah Al-Shura verse 23}. So, this sentence "My caliphs are twelve persons" in this narrative means **twelve imams who are from the descendent of messenger of Allah [PBUH]**; because they were the most knowledgeable and the best and the most pious people and perfect in terms parentage and the most respectable people with almighty god and they got their knowledge from their father connected to their grandfather messenger of Allah [PBUH] and it's been divine. And what confirms this meaning is hadith "al-Thaqalayn" {in which messenger of Allah [PBUH] says: I leave two valuable things amongst you; my "Ahl al-Bayt" and Quran} and numerous narratives written in this and other books.

"Al-Qunduzi Hanafi" – Yanabi' al-Mawadda – vol. 3, p 291

Sunni scholars have confessed that hadrat "Mahdi" [a.s] is amongst twelve caliphs and is from the descendent of messenger of Allah [PBUH]:

While Sunni scholars are trying to say that instance of "Twelve caliphs" is "Bani Umayya", they've confessed that hadrat "Mahdi" [a.s] is one of these caliphs.

1: "Ibn Kathir Damascene":

He's admitted in his "Tafsir" book this narrative imply the existence of twelve righteous caliphs who set up right including "Mahdi" whose appearance has been mentioned in narratives:

ومعني هذا الحديث (البشارة) بوجود اثني عشر خليفة صالحا يقيم الحق ويعدل فيهم...

والظاهر أن منهم المهدي المبشر به في الأحاديث الواردة بذكره أنه يواطئ اسمه إسم النبي صلي الله عليه وسلم وإسم أبيه إسم أبيه فيملاً الأرض عدلاً وقسطاً كما ملئت جوراً وظلماً.

This narrative gives glad tiding to the existence of twelve righteous caliphs who set up right and behave amongst people with justice.

And apparently hadrat "Mahdi" [a.s] is one of those twelve successors, the same "Mahdi" whose name is the same as messenger of Allah [PBUH] and his father's name is the name of Prophet Muhammad's [PBUH] name, he'll fill the earth with justice as it's filled with oppression.

"Ibn Kathir Damascene" – Tafsir al-Quran al- Azim – vol. 2, p 33

2: "Jalal al-Din Suyuti":

He's amongst Sunni well-known Quran interpreters and says: "Abi Dawud" has opened a chapter in his book about hadrat "Mahdi" [a.s] and the first narrative that he's quoted is the narrative of "Jabir ibn Samurah" and has said: "Mahdi" is one of twelve imams:

أن المهدي أحد الاثني عشر

"Al-Suyuti" – al-Havi li al-Fatawa fi al-Fiqh – vol. 2, p 80

"Suyuti" says in another narrative:

وعلي هذا فقد وجد من الاثني عشر خليفة: الخلفاء الأربعة، والحسن ومعاوية وابن الزبير وعمر بن عبد العزيز، ويحتمل أن يضم إليهم المهدي من العباسيين، لأنه فيهم كعمر بن عبد العزيز، وكذلك الطاهر لما أوتيه من العدل، وبقي الاثنان المنتظران، أحدهما المهدي، لأنه من أهل بيت محمد صلي الله عليه وآله وسلم.

So, twelve caliphs are as follow:

Four caliphs: imam "Hassan" [a.s], "Muawiya", "Ibn Zubayr", "Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz", and it might that "Mahandi Abbasid" is amongst them; because amongst "Abbasid", he was like "Umar ibn abd al-Aziz" and also "Tahir" who would behave with justice. And two of these twelve caliphs: one of them is "Mahdi" from descendent of messenger of Allah [PBUH].

"Al-Suyuti" – The history caliphs – vol. 1, p 12

3: "Muhammad ibn Yusuf Sakehi Shami":

He's accepted that hadrat "Mahdi" [a.s.] is from descendent of messenger of Allah [PBUH]:

وروي الإمام أحمد والباوردي عنه [ابي سعيد الخدري] قال: قال رسول الله صلي الله عليه وسلم: (أبشروا بالمهدي، رجل من قريش من عترتي يخرج في اختلاف من الناس، فيملأ الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت ظلماً وجوراً، ويرضي عنه ساكن السماء وساكن الأرض ويقسم المال صحاحاً).

Imam "Ahmad ibn Hanbal" and "Al- Bawerdi" have quoted from messenger of Allah [PBUH]: I give you glad tiding to "Mahdi" who is from "Qauraysh" and my "Ahl al-Bayt", he'll appear while there is discrepancy amongst people; he'll fill the earth with justice as it's filled with oppression and residents of earth and sky are satisfied with him and he divides properties fairly.

"Al-Salehi Shami" – Subul al-Huda wa al-Irshad fi Sirat Khayr al-Ebad – vol. 10, p 171

4: "Ibn Hajar Haythami":

He's also accepted that the last caliph is hadrat "Mahdi" [a.s.]:

والظاهر أن آخرهم المهدي فإنه بملك جميع الأرض.

Apparently last person of these twelve caliphs is "Mahdi" who will own entire earth.

"Al-Haythami" – Muballigh al-Arab fi Fakhr al-Arab – vol. 1, p 38

5: "Azim Abadi":

He's describer of "Sunan ibn Dawud" has quoted this saying of "Ibn Kathir" and accepted it:

ومعني هذا الحديث البشارة بوجود اثني عشر خليفة صالحاً يقيم الحق، ويعدل فيهم.

"Al-Azim Abadi" – al-Ma'boud fi Sharh Sunan ibn Dawud – vol. 11, p 247 /// "Al-Mubarfakuri" –

Tuhfah al-Ahuozi – vol. 6, p 293

6. Fiqh council of Islamic world communication:

Members of Fiqh council of Islamic world communication in "Mecca" have said: the last caliph of twelve caliphs is the one whom messenger of Allah [PBUH] has notified of his arrival:

«ويظهر عند فساد الزمان وانتشار الكفر وظلم الناس ويملاً الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً، كما ملئت ظلماً وجوراً، يحكم العالم كله، وتخضع له الرقاب... وهو آخر الخلفاء الاثني عشر، أخبر النبي صلي الله عليه وسلّم عنهم في الصحاح».

When corruption takes everywhere and oppression spreads amongst people, he'll appear and fill the world with justice as it's filled with oppression. He'll govern on entire world... he's the last caliph of twelve caliphs whom messenger of Allah [PBUH] has notified of his appearance in "Sihah sitta" narratives.

Important point of this narrative:

According to text of narrative and its different phrases, several important points are gotten and considering these points, we can rely on the existence of imam "Mahdi" [a.s]:

- 1: the number of caliphs that messenger of Allah [PBUH] has given good tidings to their existence is twelve.
- 2: they're from "Quraysh" tribe; but considering narrative of "Qunduzi Hanafi", they're "Hashemi".
- 3: their quality is that glory and greatness of Islam depend on them and people's support or opposition have no effect on their guidance.
- 4: resembling them to the chieftains of children of Israel shows that selecting them to this position is in hand of god; not people, as almighty god has selected chieftains of children of Israel and like prophets of children of Israel, they're infallible that only god knows about people's infallibility.
- 5: they follow divine guidelines supervising religion; and their job is spreading justice and fighting oppression.

6: these caliphs of messenger of Allah [PBUH] come to guide people constantly at any time which means caliph of messenger of Allah will be on the earth until day of resurrection come up. The word «لا يزال» in this sentence:

لا يزال الاسلام عزيزا إلي اثنا عشر خليفة

And other sentences that all valid resources have quoted it, shows that imams always exist on the earth and if one of them and their last one don't exist, I'll be time of resurrection. This point is in this narrative:

لَنْ يَزَالَ الدِّينُ قَائِمًا إِلَيَّ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ، فَإِذَا هَلَكُوا مَاجَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِأَهْلِهَا.

“Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi” – Kanz al-Ummal – vol. 12, p 17

Hadith “Thaqalayn” restates that Quran and “Ahl al-Bayt” who are caliphs of messenger of Allah won't separate from each other and their existence on the earth is constant until day of resurrection.

So, according to this narrative, caliphs of messenger of Allah [PBUH] come one after another one constantly and no time is empty of the existence of one them.

In addition to this narrative, some Sunni resources have quoted from some of companions of messenger of Allah [PBUH] that caliphs come constantly:

حدثنا ابن وهب عن عبد الرحمن بن زياد بن أنعم عن أبي عبد الرحمن الحبلي عن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص رضي الله عنهما قال: سيلي أمر هذه الأمة خلفاء يتوالون، كلهم صالح وعليهم تفتح الأرضين كلها...

“Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-‘As” said: in soon future caliphs will come one after another one, they'll be the guardian of this nation and all of them are righteous...

“Na'im ibn Himad” – Kitab al-Fitan – vol. 1, p 117

The method of reasoning

Considering these points, the method of reasoning to prove this matter is as follow:

1: Shias believe that successors of messenger of Allah [PBUH] are twelve persons, selected by god, have intrinsic knowledge and infallibility and wonderful qualities and qualities said in these narrative such as; number twelve, being fair and righteous, giving glory and stability of religion and Islam, guiding people based on divine {Quran} guidelines and fair attitude, are match with the existence of these right imams.

2: it's been said in narrative that stability of religion and Islam depend on their existence and according to this narrative, religion remains until resurrection:

لَا يَزَالُ الدِّينُ قَائِمًا حَتَّى تَقُومَ السَّاعَةُ.

So, as long as religion is stable, existence of one of these twelve imams is necessary, because existence of religion depends on their existence.

Thirdly: Sunni elders have confessed that the last person of these caliphs is a person named "Mahdi" and he's from the descendent of messenger of Allah [PBUH] and their name is the same and will fill the earth with justice after coming.

"Qunduzi Hanafi" has quoted from messenger of Allah [PBUH] via two persons that messenger of Allah [PBUH] has introduced hadrat "Ali" [a.s] as his first successor and hadrat "Mahdi" [a.s] as his last successor:

First narrative:

وعن عباية بن ربعي، عن جابر قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: أنا سيد النبيين، وعلي سيد الوصيين، وإن أوصيائي بعدي إثنا عشر، أولهم علي، وآخرهم القائم المهدي.

"Jabir" says: messenger of Allah [PBUH] said: I'm the master of prophets and "Ali" is the master of successors and there are twelve successors after me; their first one is "Ali ibn abi Talib" and last one is hadrat "Mahdi".

"Al-Qunduzi Hanafi" – Yanabi' al-Mawaddah – vol. 3, p 291

Second narrative:

عن سعيد بن جبير، عن ابن عباس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: إن خلفائي وأوصيائي وحجج الله علي الخلق بعدي الاثنا عشر، أولهم علي، وآخرهم ولدي المهدي، فينزل روح الله عيسي بن مريم فيصلي خلف المهدي، وتشرق الأرض بنور ربها، ويبلغ سلطانه المشرق والمغرب.

"Ibn Abbas" says: messenger of Allah [PBUH] said: after me, successors and proofs of god for people are twelve persons; their first one is "Ali" and last one is my child "Mahdi". "Jesus" will come down from sky and say prayer behind him and his reign takes east and west of the universe.

"Al-Qunduzi Hanafi" – Yanabi' al-Mawadda – vol. 3, p 295

Late Allameh Seyed "Murtaza Askari", one of Shia prominent researchers, quotes narrative of "My caliphs are twelve persons" with different phrases from Sunni resources and reasons the existence of imam "Mahdi" [a.s] as follow:

نستخلص مما سبق ونستنتج:

أن عدد الأئمة في هذه الأمة اثنا عشر علي التوالي، وان بعد الثاني عشر منهم ينتهي عمر هذه الدنيا.

فقد ورد في الحديث الأول: «لا يزال هذا الذين قائما حتي تقوم الساعة أو يكون عليكم اثنا عشر خليفة...». فان هذا الحديث يعين مدة قيام الدين ويحددها بقيام الساعة ويعين عدد الأئمة في هذه الأمة باثني عشر شخصا.

وفي الحديث الخامس: «لن يزال هذا الدين قائما إلي اثني عشر من قريش فإذا هلكوا ماجت الأرض بأهلها». ويدل هذا الحديث علي تأييد وجود الدين بامتداد الاثني عشر وأن بعدهم تموج الأرض.

وفي الحديث الثامن: حصر عددهم باثني عشر بقوله. «يكون بعدي من الخلفاء عدة أصحاب موسى». ويدل هذا الحديث علي أنه لا خليفة بعد الرسول عدا الاثني عشر.

وأن ألفاظ هذه الروايات المصرحة بحصر عدد الخلفاء بالاثني عشر وأن بعدهم يكون الهرج وتموج الأرض وقيام الساعة تبين ألفاظ الأحاديث الأخرى التي قد لا يفهم من ألفاظها هذا

التصريح. وبناءا علي هذا لابد أن يكون عمر أحدهم طويلا خارقا للعادة في اعمار البشر كما وقع فعلاً في مدة عمر الثاني عشر من الأئمة أوصياء النبي صلي الله عليه و آله.

The summery and result of what was said is that the number of imams who come amongst this nation one after another one is twelve and after their twelve one, life of this world will end.

First narrative:

“لا يزال هذا الدين قائما حتي تقوم الساعة أو يكون عليكم اثنا عشر خليفة”

This narrative determines the stability of religion until resurrection and it also clarifies that the number of imams amongst nation is twelve.

Fifth narrative indicates that as long as these twelve imams are alive, religion will be eternal and after them earth will collapse.

Eighth narrative has limited their number to eight like chieftains of “Bani Israel” and shows that after messenger of Allah [PBUH], no one will be caliph unless these twelve persons.

Words of these narratives that restate the number of twelve caliphs and beginning of chaos and resurrection after them, shed light on words of other narratives that aren't clear in this regard. So, life of one of these caliphs is miraculously long that this matter has come true about twelfth imam.

“Al-Askari” – Ma’alim al-Madrasatayn – vol. 1, p 336

Conclusion:

In the perspective of Sunni, narrative of “My caliphs are twelve” is an impeccable narrative and is one of narratives that imply the existence of hadrat “Mahdi” [a.s].

Good luck.





