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## A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE NARRATION INDICATING THE CALIPHATE LASTED 30 YEARS\*

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### Abstract

*This study offers a different perspective on a narration attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), which states: “The caliphate in my community will last for thirty years. After that, there will be kings.” (Tirmidhi, Fitān, 48).*

*Researchers who have studied this topic generally argue that this statement is not authentically from the Prophet. Instead, they suggest it was later fabricated within the context of political events—either to defend a certain party or to denounce another. Two primary approaches emerge in this regard:*

- 1. To prove the legitimacy of Ali's caliphate.*
- 2. To demonstrate that Muawiyah was not a caliph but rather a monarch.*

*Although we partially agree with some of the reasons given by those who argue that the narration is fabricated, we do not concur with their approach toward the groups alleged to have fabricated it. While the narration is often characterized as having a Shiite inclination, we disagree with this view based on the reasons outlined below.*

*From a political perspective, when we examine the early period of the Umayyad dynasty in the context of such narrations, several critical observations arise. When Hasan handed over power to Muawiyah, he proposed that the future leader of the Islamic state should be chosen by the ummah. Moreover, when Muawiyah attempted to secure allegiance for Yazid from companions such as Husayn, Abdullah ibn Umar, Abdullah ibn Abbas, and Abdullah ibn Zubayr, he did not use this narration as justification.*

*Similarly, none of those companions responded with an argument like, “Even though we do not approve of your son Yazid, we cannot oppose the prophecy of the Prophet (pbuh).” This absence raises doubts about the narration’s authenticity and public awareness.*

*If we accept the narration as authentic, then the efforts of companions and successors such as Husayn and Ibn Zubayr to reestablish the caliphate could be interpreted as attempts to defy the Prophet’s statement, which would be a problematic conclusion.*

*In our opinion, this statement was likely fabricated in an attempt to legitimize the Umayyad monarchy initiated by Muawiyah and continued by his successors, using the authority of the Prophet (pbuh) as a shield. In this context, we believe that this saying—attributed to the Prophet—is not a genuine hadith and therefore holds no scholarly value.*

**Keywords:** Islamic History, Hadith, Thirty Years of Caliphate

## INTRODUCTION

Governance systems have long been a subject of debate across the world, driven by various motives, and such discussions are likely to continue. In the history of Muslims following the death of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), it is observed that these debates began with the selection of the first caliph. While the first four caliphs were chosen through consultation and with the approval of the people of Medina, the subsequent emergence of rulers with monarchical tendencies paved the way for deeper discussions on legitimate leadership.

Initially, there appeared to be no major disagreement regarding the selection of the first four caliphs. However, internal conflicts during the caliphate of Ali led to divisions among Muslims and reshaped the debates surrounding leadership. Over time, these discussions became central to various ideological and sectarian narratives. Debates then evolved around questions such as whether the caliphate must remain within the Quraysh tribe, whether it rightfully belonged to Ali from the Prophet’s household (Ahl al-Bayt), or whether neither condition held merit.

Particularly within Shiite thought, the belief that the caliphate rightfully belonged to Ali—based on the doctrine of divine appointment—led to a rejection of the legitimacy of the first three caliphs. However, since they could not ignore Ali’s allegiance to these caliphs, Shiite scholars interpreted this as a pragmatic acceptance aimed at preserving Muslim unity, thereby granting de facto legitimacy to their rule. In our view, had the internal unrest of Ali’s caliphate not occurred and the process proceeded normally, the legitimacy of the early caliphs would likely never have become a matter of dispute. Thus, these debates emerged as a consequence of the internal discord during the transition from what was seen as the period of caliphate to what was later described as monarchy.

The debates pertinent to our study began when Ali, having accepted the caliphate under extraordinary conditions, faced military opposition from some companions accused of stirring unrest and from Muawiyah b. Abi Sufyan, who sought the caliphate and assumed a patron-like role over the Umayyad clan (Aycan, 2005, vol. 30, pp. 330–332). Specifically, groups such as the supporters of the Battle of the Camel claimed they were seeking justice for the killers of Uthman and thus justified their rebellion. Likewise, Muawiyah pursued a vendetta against the killers and confronted Ali militarily. These events, along with the belief that opposition to Caliph Ali was a deviation from the rightful path, form the basis of the debates.

While no major political judgment was made in the sources regarding the defeat of the Camel faction in the civil war, political evaluations began to emerge after Muawiyah succeeded in having himself declared caliph following the Battle of Siffin and the subsequent arbitration. Despite the fact that Muawiyah consolidated power in Damascus, sources suggest that until Hasan gave him allegiance, Muawiyah was not regarded by the majority of Muslims as a legitimate caliph. He came to be known as the one who transformed the caliphate into a hereditary monarchy by appointing his son Yazid as his successor (Aycan, 2005, vol. 30, pp. 330–332).

Within this historical context, a narration attributed to the Prophet, transmitted by his freed slave Safina, came to prominence amid debates regarding Ali’s caliphate. The narration classifies different periods and describes the characteristics of their rulers. This study aims to examine whether the text—presented as a hadith during that historical process—is genuinely a prophetic tradition. If it is authentic, the goal is to interpret it properly; if not, to determine the intended purpose or function behind its attribution. Accordingly, we begin by presenting the narration in question and related reports that are claimed to be hadiths.

### An Academic Assessment of the Traditions Regarding the Thirty-Year Caliphate

#### 1. Introduction: Unseen Matters and the Prophet Muhammad’s (pbuh) Informative Role

Within the framework of revelation he received from God, the Messenger of Allah shared knowledge concerning many aspects of the unseen (ghayb)—including the creation of the universe and humanity, past prophets, and future events such as the Day of Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. It is only natural that, as the first verbal and practical interpreter of the Qur’an, the Prophet (pbuh) would also provide exegesis on these verses. Therefore, it is not something to be denied, but rather a perfectly natural occurrence, that he conveyed information pertaining to the unseen which, although not part of the recited Qur’an, was divinely communicated to him through various means.

In this context, it is also natural that the Prophet (pbuh) warned his community about certain trials and tribulations they would face—this being a common practice among all prophets. However, whether the Prophet’s (pbuh) reports about future occurrences should be regarded as descriptions of general phenomena or, as is the focus of our study, as detailed accounts involving specific names, individuals, or dates, remains a subject open to debate.

While our view tends toward the position that the Prophet (pbuh) described phenomena in terms of cause-and-effect relationships, in this study we will examine narrations that contain particular information forming the basis of our inquiry.

## 2. Evaluation in the Context of the Narration Attributed to Abu Hurayrah

Before directly addressing the main narration at the center of this study, we find it necessary to briefly examine related narrations, as considering them collectively presents the issue in a different light. In this regard, we would like to discuss a narration transmitted by Abu Hurayrah, which he presents as a hadith. According to Abu Hurayrah, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) stated: *"The caliphate will be in Medina, and kingship will be in Damascus"* (Bayhaqī, 5/229–230).

Taking this hadith into consideration, it becomes questionable whether 'Alī can be regarded as a legitimate caliph, especially since he left Medina after receiving allegiance and established Kūfa as his capital. In the entry "Abu Hurayrah" in the *Dīyanet Islamic Encyclopedia*, no mention is made of Abu Hurayrah pledging allegiance to 'Alī. As this is a focused research inquiry, it is worth noting that the article emphasizes Abu Hurayrah's support for 'Uthmān and mentions that he served as governor of Medina during the reign of Mu'āwiyah. Although the article asserts that Abu Hurayrah was not a supporter of the Umayyads (Kandemir, DİA, 10:160–167), the issue of his allegiance to 'Alī should be considered in connection with the narration he transmitted regarding the caliphate. This raises the question: did Abu Hurayrah refrain from pledging allegiance to 'Alī because of this narration? And if so, did he share this justification with others? Could it be that the other Companions who are reported to have withheld their allegiance did so for the same reason?

If Abu Hurayrah did, in fact, pledge allegiance to 'Alī, did he later revoke it after 'Alī departed from Medina, in line with the implications of the hadith he transmitted? Or did he perhaps caution 'Alī, saying, *"O 'Alī! I heard from the Messenger of Allah that the caliphate is in Medina and kingship is in Damascus. By leaving here, you are abandoning the caliphate—do not do this!"*?

In the end, however, it has been asserted that Abu Hurayrah, like some other Companions, chose to remain neutral. The reasons for this neutrality, and how he personally evaluated 'Alī's caliphate, remain questions of interest. Yet the sources do not provide any definitive attitude or evidence-based answers to these questions. What we are suggesting is this: if the narration Abu Hurayrah transmitted is authentic, then it would imply that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) did not approve of 'Alī's caliphate. Consequently, this would stand in contradiction to the following narration, which associates the thirty-year duration of the caliphate with the period including 'Alī's tenure.

Thus, the matter takes a different turn in regard to Abu Hurayrah. Either, as some critiques and alternative reports suggest, Abu Hurayrah—being a supporter of the Umayyads—fabricated such a narration to emphasize Mu'āwiyah's legitimacy (not as a caliph, but in acknowledgment of his sultanate in line with the hadith), though we find this unlikely, since Abu Hurayrah passed away before Mu'āwiyah could have benefited from such a report. Or, alternatively—and more plausibly, in our view—this narration was fabricated in Abu Hurayrah's name, given his reputation as a prolific transmitter of hadiths. It seems improbable that a single

individual would transmit conflicting narrations on the same subject.

## 3. The Narrations Regarding the Pillar of the Book Being Transferred to Damascus

In relation to Damascus, we believe it is appropriate to mention a narration that approaches the issue from a different perspective. Although al-Bayhaqī deemed the chain of transmission authentic (*isnād ṣaḥīḥ*), from our point of view, the narration appears rather peculiar. According to this narration, reported by Abū al-Dardā', the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

*"While I was asleep, I saw the pillar of the Book (symbolizing the authority that upholds the rulings of the Qur'an) being taken from beneath my head. Thinking it was being taken away from me, I followed it with my eyes, only to see that it was being transported to Damascus. Know this: during times of tribulation, faith will be in Damascus."*

In another narration transmitted through 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr, the Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said:

*"While I was asleep, I saw the pillar of the Book (the system that upholds the Qur'anic rulings) being taken from beneath my pillow. I saw that it was a radiant light, and it was being transported to Damascus. Know this: during times of tribulation, faith will be in Damascus."*

A different version of the same narration from 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr includes the phrase: *"I followed it with my eyes."* Safwān adds, *"I feared that it would be taken away from me entirely,"* and concludes, *"I interpreted this as meaning that during tribulations, faith will reside in Damascus."* A similar narration is transmitted by Abū Umāmah through a different chain, also attributing it to the Prophet (pbuh). Likewise, according to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) stated: *(While sleeping), I saw a pillar, glowing like light, being taken from beneath my head and planted in Damascus."* Additionally, during the Battle of Siffin, 'Abd Allāh ibn Ṣafwān narrates that when a man cursed the people of Damascus saying, *"O Allah, curse the people of Damascus,"* 'Alī rebuked him, saying: *"Do not curse all the people of Damascus altogether! For there are Abdāl (righteous individuals) in Damascus, there are Abdāl! There are Abdāl!"* (al-Bayhaqī, 5:231–233)

## 4. Criticism of the Narrations and Alternative Readings

In the hope that it may contribute to a better understanding of the topic, we would also like to share another narration that strikes us as rather peculiar. According to the account recorded by Ibn Kathīr, Nu'aym b. Ḥammād transmitted from Yahyā b. 'Amr al-Shaybānī the following statement: *"Anyone who does not possess two mosques like al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and al-Masjid al-Aqṣā is not among the caliphs."* (Ibn Kathīr, n.d., vol. 6: 339–343)

There is no indication that this report qualifies as a ḥadīth, yet when examined in terms of content, it implies that the caliphate of Abū Bakr, the period of 'Umar's leadership before the conquest of Jerusalem, and the time following 'Alī's loss of control over Jerusalem are not to be considered part of the legitimate caliphate.

It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that the aforementioned narrations were constructed in order to legitimize the political authority in Damascus. In one of these narrations, it is said that the "pillar of the Book"—symbolizing the authority that upholds the Qur'anic rulings—was taken from beneath the Prophet's (pbuh) head. If this expression is interpreted to mean the transfer of the

state capital from Medina to Damascus, then referring to the first four caliphs as *al-khulafā' al-rāshidūn* would be problematic, since their period is not even referenced in the narration. If, on the other hand, the term “pillar of the Book” is understood as referring to the caliphal governance, then the implication would be that when ‘Alī left Medina, the essence of faith was transferred to Damascus. In that case, Kūfā should also be mentioned, for ‘Alī’s caliphate was based there, not in Medina.

Moreover, the statement “*During times of tribulation, faith will be in Damascus*” requires closer scrutiny. After the death of the Prophet (pbuh), Abū Bakr’s caliphate was marked by a major crisis—marked by apostasy, rebellion against the new caliph, and refusal to pay zakāt. Yet, at that time, no one sought faith in Damascus, as the city had not even been introduced to Islam yet. All of these narrations seem to reflect a tendency to delegitimize ‘Alī’s caliphate while presenting the Umayyad rulers in Damascus as the protectors of Islam and faith.

### 5. Multiple Caliphate Narratives and Sunni Sources

According to a narration recorded by al-Bayhaqī and transmitted by Abū Hāzim on the authority of Abū Hurayra, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “The Children of Israel were led by prophets; whenever a prophet died, another would succeed him. However, there will be no prophet after me, but there will be many caliphs.” When the Companions asked, “What do you command us to do in such a situation?” the Prophet (pbuh) replied: “Fulfill your pledges of allegiance to them one after another, and grant them the rights that Allah has bestowed upon them, for Allah will call them to account for what they govern.” (Bukhārī, *Anbiyā’* 50; Muslim, *Imārah* 10 [44]). This narration appears to contradict the report stating, “The caliphate is in Medina, and the kingship is in Damascus,” as it refers to the plurality of caliphs. This suggests that even those who came to power through monarchy, such as the Umayyad rulers, may still be regarded as “caliphs.”

Furthermore, in the *Sahihs* of Bukhārī and Muslim, there is a narration by Jābir b. Samura in which the Prophet (pbuh) said: “There will be twelve caliphs.” Jābir b. Samura added that the Prophet (pbuh) then said something he could not hear, so he asked his father what that was. His father responded, “The Prophet said: All of them will be from the Quraysh.” (Bukhārī, *Ahkām* 51; Muslim, *Imārah* 5–9 [1821]; Tirmidhī, *Fitān* 46 [2223]; Ibn Kathīr, n.d., 6: 332–335). Additionally, in a narration attributed to Hudhayfah al-Yamān and recorded by Ibn Kathīr, it is stated that after ‘Uthmān, there would be no caliph, but instead, twelve rulers from the Umayyads would emerge. (Ibn Kathīr, n.d., 6: 339–343).

### 6. Evaluation of the Hadith “The Caliphate Will Last Thirty Years”

Returning to the primary narration on this subject: according to a report found in al-Bayhaqī, Sa’īd b. Jumhān narrated that Safīnah (d. 689 or 699) said: “The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated: ‘The caliphate will last thirty years. Thereafter, Allah will grant kingship—or His dominion—to whomever He wills.’” In another narration, the expression is: “After me, the caliphate will last thirty years among my ummah, after which kingship will commence.” Safīnah further explained: “If you calculate, the caliphate of Abū Bakr lasted two years, ‘Umar’s ten years, ‘Uthmān’s twelve years, and ‘Alī’s six years—adding up to thirty years.” When someone responded to him, saying: “O Safīnah! But these people (the Marwānids) claim that ‘Alī was not a caliph,” Safīnah replied: “The sons of the blue-eyed woman (i.e., the

Marwānids) fabricate lies from their behinds.” (al-Bayhaqī, 5/116–117; Tirmidhī, *Fitān* 48 [2227]). A similar version is recorded in Ibn Kathīr: “The caliphate will endure for thirty years after me. Then there will be a biting (hereditary) monarchy.” (Ibn Kathīr, n.d., 6: 339–343). This same narration is also transmitted by Abū Dāwūd and Ahmad b. Hanbal (Abū Dāwūd, *Sunnah* 9 [4646, 4648]).

The main motivation behind this narration appears to be the objections raised by the Marwānid dynasty. In this context, it becomes crucial to question what understanding motivated Marwān, who is reported to have pledged allegiance to ‘Alī after the Battle of the Camel. However, the primary point of concern here is the period during which this narration was circulated. It is plausible that the narration gained prominence during the reign of the Marwānid dynasty (684–750), or that it was voiced within the framework of debates on kingship following Mu‘āwiyah’s appointment of his son Yazīd as heir apparent. Our view is that this narration was fabricated during the Marwānid era. If this narration were truly prophetic (ḥadīth), ‘Alī could have said to Mu‘āwiyah: “Acknowledge my authority, for the Messenger of Allah foretold that kingship would commence after me, and thus you would be the one to continue ruling.” Moreover, the narration raises suspicion due to its implicit reference to the lifespan of ‘Alī, which seems an unlikely aspect for a genuine ḥadīth.

### 7. The Non-Use of the Hadith During the Periods of Mu‘āwiyah and Yazīd

A narration found in al-Bayhaqī states that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakrah reported from his father that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “*The caliphate based on prophethood will last for thirty years, then Allah will grant kingship to whomever He wills.*” In this context, Mu‘āwiyah is reported to have said, “*We are content with this kingship*” (al-Bayhaqī, 5/118). If Mu‘āwiyah was aware of this narration and actively sought kingship, an important question emerges: Why did he pursue the caliphate and oppose ‘Alī during his rule, instead of waiting for the thirty-year period predicted by the Prophet to end?

This implies that Mu‘āwiyah, by challenging ‘Alī’s authority, contradicted the Prophet’s words and revolted against the prophetic model of caliphate. Considering events such as Mu‘āwiyah’s rise to power after the arbitration incident or following ‘Alī’s departure from Medina, his reign might be interpreted as beginning with caliphate and evolving into monarchy. Alternatively, one could argue that the prophetic caliphate ended and monarchy began in Damascus, which would, in turn, depict ‘Alī’s resistance as defiance of the Prophet’s prediction—an interpretation that raises serious concerns.

Historical sources reveal that the aforementioned narration was not cited in the diplomatic exchanges between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyah (Apak, 2016a: 286, 290). Likewise, after ‘Alī’s martyrdom and Ḥasan’s appointment as caliph in Kūfā, neither Mu‘āwiyah used the narration to demand the transfer of authority nor did Ḥasan reference it when yielding control (Apak, 2016a: 343–350). Instead, Ḥasan suggested Mu‘āwiyah should not appoint a successor, and that future leadership be decided through consultation (*shūrā*) among Muslims (Ibn al-A‘tham, 1411: 290–293; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, 2002: 181–182; Söylemez, p. 466). According to Shī‘ī sources, the peace treaty stipulated that Ḥasan would assume the caliphate after Mu‘āwiyah’s death; if something happened to Ḥasan, his brother Ḥusayn would inherit the role.

Mu'āwiyah accepted this condition (Muṭahharī, 2006: 98–101). Still, the narration was never cited during these negotiations.

When Mu'āwiyah appointed his son Yazīd as successor, he consulted prominent Medinan figures such as Ḥusayn, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr. Yet, he did not justify his decision by claiming prophetic support, nor did he urge them to accept without protest (Aycan, 2005: 330–332). Had the narration been authentic and publicly acknowledged, Mu'āwiyah and subsequent Umayyad rulers would likely have referred to it frequently to legitimize their rule. Instead, opposition figures accused Mu'āwiyah of converting the caliphate into monarchy (Apak, 2016b: 74–76). If the narration had truly been accepted as a hadith, critics would presumably have said: *"Your action is in line with prophetic tradition; we are obligated to obey."* Yet, such statements are absent from historical records.

Moreover, key events—such as Ḥusayn's refusal to pledge allegiance to Yazīd, the tragedy of Karbalā', Ibn al-Zubayr's resistance in Mecca, Ibn Ḥanzalah's role in the Ḥarrah incident, and the refusal of various Companions to pledge to Yazīd—did not reference the hadith claiming a thirty-year caliphate followed by monarchy (Apak, 2016b: 83–85, 100–105). Additionally, interpreting events using the narration *"faith will be in Shām during the time of tribulation..."* would unjustly associate faith with Yazīd while depicting Ḥusayn, Ibn al-Zubayr, and the people of Medina as opposing it—an unacceptable conclusion.

Therefore, exploring the roots of these narrations helps clarify the matter. In our view, hadith texts lacking specific timeframes, individuals, or settings—but instead pointing to natural historical evolution—might have formed the basis of these controversial claims. Such general statements could have later been shaped by socio-political forces, resulting in narrations that served particular agendas. Hence, discerning authentic prophetic guidance from politically charged interpretations is vital for scholarly evaluation.

## 8. Other Narrations and Critiques of Narrations

According to a report found in Bayhaqī, Abū Hāzim states: "I spent five years in the company of Abū Hurayrah. He informed me that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: 'The Children of Israel were led by prophets. Whenever a prophet died, another would succeed him. But after me, there will be no prophet, though there will be many caliphs.' When the Companions asked, 'What do you command us to do in such a case?' the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) replied: 'Fulfill the pledges of allegiance you make to them, one after another, and give them the rights that Allah has granted them. For Allah will hold them accountable for those they govern.'" (Bayhaqī, 5/231–233). Bayhaqī also notes that both Bukhārī and Muslim transmitted this narration from Muhammad b. Bashshār (Bukhārī, Anbiyā' 50; Muslim, Imārah 10 [44]).

In another narration, it is reported that Ḥabīb b. Sālim said: "I heard Nu'mān b. Bashīr b. Sa'd say while narrating a hadith: Abū Sa'labah came and asked, 'O Bashīr b. Sa'd! Do you remember the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) concerning rulers?' Hudhayfah was also sitting beside Bashīr. Hudhayfah said, 'I remember the sermon of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) on this topic.' When Abū Sa'labah sat down, Hudhayfah said: 'Prophethood will remain among you as long as Allah wills, then He will remove it. After that, there will be caliphate following the way of prophethood. This will remain as long as Allah wills, and

then He will remove it. Then there will be a period of dictatorship, which will also last as long as Allah wills, and then He will remove it. After that, there will again be a caliphate upon the way of prophethood.'" Ḥabīb continues: "When 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz came with Yazīd b. al-Nu'mān, I wrote this hadith as a reminder and said: 'I hope the Commander of the Faithful ('Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz) is the one to come after the dictatorship.' Yazīd took this letter and gave it to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, who was very pleased and delighted by it." (Bayhaqī, 5: 282–283).

Another narration reports that Abū Hurayrah said the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "After every prophet, there come caliphs who act according to the Book of Allah and rule the people with justice. After these caliphs come kings who pursue vengeance, unjustly kill people, and usurp property. Some of the believers will oppose this with their hands, some with their tongues, and some will detest it in their hearts. Whoever does none of these has no faith." (Ibn Kathīr, n.d., 6: 339–343).

When we examine the texts of these narrations on the topic, it is evident that they mostly contain general information and admonitions. Although the word "caliphate"—which is subject to criticism—appears in these narrations, they include problematic expressions in terms of meaning and emphasis. From a conceptual perspective, Keleş's article, which examines the hadith about the "30 years" that forms the basis of our study from multiple angles—through both concept analysis and the process of formation of the narration—is noteworthy. However, Keleş presents the narration largely through the lens of Sufinah's interpretation and argues that it has a Shī'ī tendency (Keleş, 2006: 37–54). We do not share this view. This is because neither Shī'īs nor Sunnīs dispute the caliphate of 'Alī. Therefore, there was no need for the production of a narration with Shī'ī origins on this matter. However, it is possible that this particular narration was produced with the intent of defending the Umayyad monarchy. Looking at the context of its emergence, it is highly likely that it surfaced during the political dominance of the Marwānīd branch of the Umayyads as a response to harsh criticisms against the Umayyads and was put forward as a ḥadīth to deflect accusations of political partisanship. Later, this statement—i.e., the ḥadīth—came to be presented as a prophecy from the Prophet (peace be upon him) heralding monarchy, and it was suggested, perhaps subconsciously, that criticisms of monarchy were in fact criticisms directed at the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own foresight. Although there is no record of Umayyad sultans or caliphs explicitly using this narration, it seems that their supporters promoted it either to defend or to attack, and in this way it has reached us today.

## CONCLUSION

Ultimately, it must be stated that if the statement at the core of this study was indeed expressed by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the absolute sense, then as Muslims, we affirm our belief in it and attribute any shortcomings in our understanding to our own failure to grasp its wisdom. We accept all reports conveyed by the Prophet (pbuh), whether they are general or pertain to future events—whether described as miracles or understood as knowledge imparted to him from the metaphysical realm. However, we approached the hadith in question with the conviction that it does not originate from the Prophet (pbuh) himself but was rather attributed to him retrospectively, shaped by political developments of the time.

It can be stated that the hadith at the center of this study is generally not attributable to the Prophet (pbuh), but rather emerged later as a saying constructed to support certain factions or discredit their opponents in the context of political disputes. While the hadith appears to have Shiite leanings in terms of its foundational logic, it was not produced to affirm the legitimacy of Ali's caliphate. This is because that issue is not a point of contention between Shiites and Sunnis. Therefore, the "thirty-year" hadith was not fabricated to legitimize Ali's caliphate nor to criticize Muawiya's monarchy. On the contrary, it seems to have been fabricated later and attributed to the Prophet (pbuh) as part of an effort to justify the legitimacy of Muawiya's dynastic rule.

Although this narration has been associated with the "Safina (Ship)" hadith, it is important not to overlook the possibility that this association originated from an interpretive commentary which later evolved into a hadith. Through this narration, there is an implicit acceptance of the monarchical system initiated by Muawiya. It suggests that rejecting this system would amount to opposing a prophetic miracle about the future. In this sense, it implies that people are being tested on whether they accept or reject a prophecy of the Prophet (pbuh).

When we analyze the narrations in question, we observe that despite the "thirty-year" narration being potentially useful for political actors, it was not actually employed as a decisive argument during political conflicts. This leads to the conclusion that many of the aforementioned narrations should be seen as material produced by the populace or scholars who took sides in political rivalries. In other words, in order to suppress criticisms directed at the monarchical system established by the Umayyads, the Prophet (pbuh) was used as a shield, and under the guise of prophetic miracle, an attempt was made to legitimize this form of governance.

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