

The Ten Promised Paradise

The Ten Promised Paradise - Islamic Queries 07



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Question

In the [Prophetic] traditions (*riwayat*), is it mentioned that there are ten companions of the Prophet of Islam who have been promised Paradise? If such a statement does exist, then our follow-up question is: Is this tradition considered authentic (*sahih*) or not?

Answer

In the sources of the Ahl as-Sunnah, there is a tradition present which is commonly referred to as the ‘Ten Promised Paradise’ [العشرة المبشرون بالجنة – *al-ashara al-mubashirun bil jannah*] in which it is stated that the Messenger of Allah gave the glad tidings of Paradise to ten of his companions.

Therefore, the Ahl as-Sunnah commonly refer to those companions with the title of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise,’ and these include: Abu Bakr [b. Abu Qahafah], ӦUmar [b. al-Khattab], ӦAli [b. Abi Talib], ӦUthman [b. al-Affan], Talha [b. ӦUbaydullah], Zubayr [b. al-ӦAwwam], SaӦid b. Abi Waqqas, ӦAbd al-Rahman b. ӦAwf, SaӦid b. Zayd bin ӦUmrū b. Nufayl and ӦAbdullah b. MasӦud.¹

However, the Shi'a rejects such traditions based on their own strong arguments and consider these [types of traditions] as fabrications.² As for the proofs which the Shi'a scholars bring forth to reject such types of traditions, we relate some of them below:

1. A careful study [of the Islamic texts] clearly show that this purported tradition was narrated by SaӦid b. Zayd³ and Zubayr b. al-Awwam (whom we will speak about shortly) – however they themselves are within this classification of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise’. In addition, history has shown that no other companions ever asked these specific ten individuals why, up until that point in time [when this narration was first brought up within the Muslim society] had it been kept hidden!

How is it possible that in this “tradition”, someone like Imam ӦAli can be regarded as being one of the people of Paradise and at the same time, individuals who clearly broke their pledge of allegiance (*bayyah*) to him and rejected him [and his authority] – such as SaӦad b. Abi Waqqas, and those who launched armed rebellions against the caliphate of Imam ӦAli, such as Talha and Zubayr, can also be included in this list!

2. In some of the books of Shi'a traditions it is mentioned that when the tradition of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise’ was being related, Zubayr b. al-Awwam went to Imam ӦAli and reminded him of this tradition however the Commander of the Faithful ӦAli categorically rejected this tradition to his face.

The books of tradition mention that:

When the Commander of the Faithful ӦAli went face to face in the Battle of the Camel (*MaӦrikah al-Jamal*) against the people of Basrah (Iraq), the Imam called upon Zubayr and said: “O Aba ӦAbdillah!⁴ Come out [of your tent].”

The companions present said to Imam ӦAli: “Will you go to Zubayr – a man who has broken his pledge of allegiance to you while he is mounted on his horse and is fully protected with weapons, while you are on your donkey and without any weapons!?”

Imam ӦAli replied to them stating: “I have a promise granted to me by Allah of full protection. Also, keep

in mind that no one is able to run away from their own appointed period of death. I will definitely not die in this battle nor will I be killed; rather this – my death – will be at the hands of the worst person of this nation – just as the she-camel of Salih was killed by the worst of people from the tribe of Thamud.”

At this point Zubayr came forward and Imam Ali said to him: “Where is Talha? Bring him with you as well.”

Talha also came out and then the Imam said to these two: “I adjure the two of you by the name of Allah that do the two of you, those who are carriers of the knowledge from the family of Muhammad, and in addition to the two of you, Ayesha the daughter of Abu Bakr, don’t all of you know that the people who will take part in the Battle of the Camel and the people of the Battle of Nahrawan have been maledicted⁵ against by the Prophet, and anyone who seeks to plot against me are the losers [in this world and in the next]?”

To this, Zubayr retorted: “How is it possible that we would be imprecated against while we are the people of Paradise?”

Imam Ali replied: “If I considered you to be from the people of Paradise, then I would not have considered war against you to be permissible!”

Zubayr replied: “On the Day of the Battle of Uhud, did you not hear the Prophet saying that: ‘Talha is deserving of Paradise.’ In addition to this, the Prophet said: ‘Whoever wishes to see a martyr (*shahid*) who is alive and walks on the earth, should look towards Talha.’ Also did you not hear the Prophet say that: ‘There are ten individuals from amongst the Quraysh who are Paradise-bound?!’”

To this, the Commander of the Faithful Ali replied: ‘Enumerate who those people are.’

Zubayr replied: ‘They are Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, me (Zubayr), Talha...’ and he continued to recount the names and went on to mention: ‘...Abu Ubaydah Jarrah, Said bin Zayd bin Umru bin Nufayl.’

When he finished, Imam Ali said to him: ‘You have only mentioned nine names! Who is the tenth?’

To this, Zubayr said: ‘It is you!’

Ali then said to him: ‘So you bear witness that I am one of the people of Paradise, however that which you and your companions claim is something which I categorically reject! I swear by Allah that some of the names of the individuals which you have just taken will be residing in a coffin, housed in a well, lying in the deepest recesses of Hell.

On the top of that well is an access gate which covers, made of stone, and anytime Allah wishes to ignite the fire of Hell, He will move that rock from its place and will ignite the fire of Hell from that well [and those who are within it].

This is something which I myself heard the Messenger [of Allah] mention and had this not been the case, then surely Allah would have allowed you to become victorious over me and you would have been successful in shedding my blood; [however if I am speaking the truth] then know that we will be victorious over you and your companions [in this battle].'

Zubayr left this encounter and returned to his tent, crying.⁶

In addition to this, the Noble Prophet had given the glad tidings [of Paradise] to various believers. For example, it is narrated that he said, time and time again that "Imam Ali and his followers (*sh'i'a*) shall be in paradise."⁷

Or according to other traditions, the Prophet has been quoted as saying, "Paradise is desirous of four individuals: Ali bin Abi Talib, Ammar, Salman and Miqdad."⁸

All of these traditions are present in the books, but the tradition of the 'Ten Promised Paradise' does not contain any name of the righteous followers that supported Ali and really [in our opinion], the only reason that the name of Imam Ali, with all of its luster and gleam which it has, has been mentioned in the apparent tradition of the 'Ten Promised Paradise' is because of the fact that his status is something which is beyond doubt.

In addition, [it is our belief that] the only reason why his name was even inserted into this false tradition was that the fabricators felt that by mentioning the name of Ali, they would be able to mislead others into believing that this tradition was authentic [through putting his name alongside these nine other individuals]!

Indeed, what an interesting combination in which exact opposites are seen in this fabricated tradition!

Is it possible to even presume that someone who would unjustly fight against Imam Ali could actually have a place reserved for himself in Paradise, while we know that the Messenger of Allah has clearly stated that: "Whosoever fights with Ali, it is as if they have fought against me."⁹

Going back to the discussion about Zubayr, we should realize that he is that same person about whom Umar bin al-Khattab has been quoted as saying the following:

فقال عمر: أفلأ أخبركم عن أنفسكم؟ قال: قل: فإنما لو استعفيناكم لم تعفنا. فقال: أما أنت يا زبير، فوقع لقس مؤمن الرضا كافر الغضب يوماً إنساناً و يوماً شيطاناً، و لعلها لو أفضت إليك ظلت يومك تلاطم بالبطحاء على مد من شعير. أرأيت إن أفضت إليك فليت شعري من يكون للناس يوم تكون شيطاناً و من يكون يوم تغضب و ما كان الله ليجمع لك أمر هذه الأمة و أنت على هذه الصفة .

Then Umar [b. al-Khattab] said: "Should I not inform you all about your true natures?" He (Zubayr b. al-Awwam) replied: "Speak. For you will not spare us even if we beg you to spare us!" Then Umar [b.

al-Khattab] said: “As for you O Zubayr (b. al-Awwam)! You are an ill-mannered, impatient and greedy person, faithful [displaying your belief in Islam] in [times of] happiness and [acting] blasphemous when filled with anger; one day, you [act as a] human, while [you act as a] devil the next day.

If I was to transfer this (*khilafa*) over to you, you would probably waste your days in Batha¹⁰ fighting people over a kilogram or a half a kilogram of barley. Do you not see [the consequences], if I was to hand this (*khilafa*) over to you? If only I had a way to know who would look after the people on the days when you come out as a devil, and who would protect them on the days when you are filled with anger! Allah will never give you control over this nation as long as you are tainted by such characteristics.”¹¹

In addition, Talha who was also mentioned in the purported tradition of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise’, is that same individual who during the lead up to the Battle of the Camel was approached by the Commander of the Faithful 𣇱Ali and was asked if he recalled hearing the tradition of *wilayah* or not – to which he ended up stating that it was due to the fact that he just happened to forget the hadith of Ghadir¹² – thus he tried to excuse himself and his actions in the Battle of the Camel. In the end, he ended up being killed by an arrow shot by Marwan (who killed him to avenge the blood of Uthman).¹³

Therefore, Talha ended up being killed and leaving this world while he had disobeyed the Imam of his time.

With all of this, is it really possible to assume that the legitimate leader of the Islamic state and the one who had worked against him in a frenzied state can both be considered as being eligible to make it into Paradise?

In addition, it has been narrated in traditions that: “One day, when verse 53 of Surah al-Ahzab:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرَ نَاطِرِينَ إِنَّا هُوَ لَكُمْ إِذَا دُعِيْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَأْسِرُونَ لِحَدِيثٍ ۝ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذِي النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَحْيِي مِنْكُمْ ۝ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۝ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ۝ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقْلُوْكُمْ وَقُلُوْبِهِنَّ ۝ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذِنُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ۝ وَلَا أَنْ تَنْكِحُوا أَرْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبْدًا ۝ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا

O you who have faith! Do not enter the Prophet's houses for a meal until you are granted permission, without hanging around for it to be readied. But enter when you are invited, and disperse when you have taken your meal, without cozying up for chats. Such conduct on your part offends the Prophet, and he is ashamed of [asking] you [to leave]; but Allah is not ashamed of [expressing] the truth. When you ask [his] womenfolk for something, do so from behind a curtain. That is more chaste for your hearts and theirs. You should not offend the Apostle of Allah, nor may you ever marry his wives after him. Indeed, that would be a grave [sin] with Allah.
(33:53)

Was sent down [to the Prophet], Talha said to a group of people whom he was with:

‘What benefit does this ruling of the *hijab* have today for the Messenger of Allah, as tomorrow when he dies, I am going to go ahead and marry [his wife] ՚Ayesha anyway!’

When the Prophet heard these words, he became extremely upset and annoyed at this statement of Talha.¹⁴

With all this which is present in the life of Talha, how is it possible to believe that he is regarded to be one of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise,’ and that all of these ten are at one rank and status, and that they are individuals with an illustrious track record who are making it to Paradise!

O Allah! Send Your prayers upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad!¹⁵

1. Bayhaqi, Ahmad bin Husayn, *Al-Intiqad wa al-Hidayah ila Sabil al-Rishad ՚ala Madhab al-Salaf wa Ashab al-Hadith*; researched by Ahmad ՚Essam Katib, p. 332, Dar al-Afaq al-Jadid Publishers, Beirut, First Print, 1401 AH; Muhammad bin ՚Abdullah Hakim al-Nishaburi, *Al-Mustadrak ՚ala al-Sahihayn*, researched by Mustafa ՚Abd al-Qadir ՚Ata, vol. 3, p. 439, Dar al-Kutub al-՚Ilmiyyah, Beirut, First Print, 1411 AH; Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad Dhahabi, *Sayr A՚lam al-Nubala*, vol. 1, p. 104, Muqasissah al-Risalah, 1405 AH.

2. See Syed Murtada bin Da՚i Hasani Razi, *Tabhsira al-՚Awwam fi Ma՚rifah Muqalat al-An՚am*, pp. 242–244, Published by Asatir, Tehran, Second Edition, 1364 s; ՚Abd al-Husayn Amini, *al-Ghadir fi al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah wa al-Adab*, vol. 10, pp. 162–183, *Markaz al-Gahdir lil Darasat al-Islamiyyah*, Qum, first edition, 1416 AH.

3. The chain of narrators of this tradition is as follows: It was narrated from Salih b. Mismar al-Marwazi that he said, it was been narrated from Ibnu Abi Fadayk from Musa b. Ya՚qub from ՚Umar b. Sa՚id from ՚Abd al-Rahman b. Humayd from his father that Sa՚id b. Zayd related from a person that the Messenger of Allah, peace and prayers of God be upon him, said, ‘There are ten which will be in Paradise: Abu Bakr will be in Paradise, ՚Umar will be in Paradise, and ՚Uthman and ՚Ali and Zubayr and Talha and ՚Abd al-Rahman and Abu ՚Ubayda and Sa՚ad bin Abi Waqqas.’ Muhammad bin ՚Isa Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 5, p. 648, Shirka Maktaba wa Matba՚a Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi Press, Egypt, Second Edition, 1395 AH.

4. Aba ՚Abdillah is a patronym for Zubayr.

5. The process of invoking the *la՚in* – also known as evoking a prayer to anathematize an individual. This is a curse solemnly pronounced via a supplication (*du՚a*) upon a person or group of people in which one is asking Allah to withdraw His mercy from that person/people and punish them for their evil actions. (Tr.)

6. Ibn ՚Uqda Kufi, Ahmed bin Muhammad, *Fadha՚il Amir al-Mu՚minin ՚alayhi al-salam*, research and proofread by ՚Abd al-Razzaq Muhammad Husayn Hirz al-Din, pp. 166–167, Published by Dalil Ma, Qum, First Print 1424 AH; Shaykh Mufid, *al-Kafi ՚ala fi Ibtal Tawbah al-Khatia*, research and proofread by Zamani Nizhad, pp. 24–25, Printed by Kongara Shaykh Mufid, Qum, First Print, 1413 AH; ՚Ali bin Muhammad Khazzaz Razi, *Kifaya al-Athar fi al-Nass ՚ala al-՚Ismah al-Ithna Ashar*, Research and proofread by ՚Abd al-Latif Husayni Khukamari, pp. 114–115, Published by Bidar Publishers, Qum, 1401 AH; Sulaym bin Qays Hilali, *Kitab Sulaym bin Qays al- Hilali*, research and proofread by Muhammad Ansari Zanjan Khayyani, vol. 2, pp. 798–799, Published by Al-Hadi Publishers, Qum, First Print, 1405 AH; Ahmad b. ՚Ali Tabarsi, *Al-Ihtijaj ՚ala Ahl al-Lujaj*, research and proofread by Muhammad Baqir Khurasani, v. 1, p. 162, Published Murtadha Publishers, Mashhad, First Print, 1403 AH.

7. Tabari, Ameli Kabir, Muhammad b. Jarir b. Rustam, *al-Mustarshid fi Imamah ՚Ali b. Abi Talib ՚alayhi al-salam*, researched and edited by Ahmad Mahmud, p. 401, Published by Kushanpur Publishers, Qum, First Edition, 1415 AH; Syed Hashim Bahrani, *Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur՚an*, v. 5, p. 347, Published by Bunyad Bi՚thah, Tehran, First Edition, 1416 AH; Ahmad b. ՚Abd Allah Abu Na՚im Isfahani, *Hilyah al-Awliya wa Tabaqat al-Asfiya*, vol. 4, p. 329, Published by al-Sa՚adah

bi Jiwar Muhibidha Misr, 1394 AH; **Ali b. Muhammad** Ibn Moghazeli, Manaqib Amir al-Mominin **Ali b. Abi Talib** radhi Allahu **anhu**, Researcher: Abu **Abd al-Rahman** Turki bin **Abd Allah** Wadi, pp. 305 and 357, Dar al-Athar Publishers, Sana'a, First Edition, 1424 AH.

8. Shaykh Saduq, Al-Khisal, Researched and Edited by **Ali Akbar** Ghaffari, vol. 1, p. 303, Published by Daftar Intisharat Islami, Qum, First edition, 1362 s; Isma'il bin **Umar** Ibn Kathir Basri, Jami al-Masanid wa Sunan al-Hadi li Aqwam Sunan, vol. 3, p. 495, Published by Dar Khidr li Tabaqah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzih, Beirut, Second Edition, 1419 AH; Majd al-Din Abu Al-Sa'adat al-Mubarak b. Muhammed Ibn Athir Jazari, Jami al-Usul fi Ahadith al-Rasul, vol. 8, p 565, Published by Maktaba al-Halawani and Printed by MaTabaqah al-Malah, found in Maktabah Dar al-Bayan, First Edition, 1392 AH.

9. Khazzaz Razi, **Ali bin Muhammad**, Kifayah al-Athar fi al-Nass **ala al-Atimma al-Ithna Ashar**, Research and Corrected by **Abd al-Latif** Husayni Kuhkamari, p. 181, Published by Bidar, Qum, 1401 AH; Shaykh Saduq, I'tiqadat al-Imamiyyah, p. 105, Published by the Kongareh Shaykh Mufid, Qum, Second Edition, 1414 AH.

10. A part of the city of Riyad in current day Saudi Arabia. (Tr.)

11. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, **Abd al-Hamid** b. **Hebba** Allah, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, Research and Proofread by Muhammad Abu Al-Fadl Ibrahim, vol. 1, p. 185, Published by Maktaba Ayatullah al-Marashi al-Najafi, Qum, First Edition, 1404 AH.

12. Hakim Nishaburi, Muhammad b. **Abd Allah**, Al-Mustadrak **ala al-Sahihayn**, Research by Mustafa **Abd al-Qadir** Ata, vol. 3, p. 419, Published by Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, First Print, 1411 AH; **Ali bin Abi Bakr** Haythami, Kashf al-Astar **an Zawa'id al-Bazar**, Research by Habib al-Rahman Awdhami, vol. 3, pp. 186–187, Published by Muassisah al-Risalah, Beirut, First Print, 1399 AH.

13. Ibn **Abd al-Barr**, Yusuf b. **Abd Allah**, Al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifah al-Ashab, Research by **Ali Muhammad** Al-Bejawi, vol. 2, p. 766, Published by Dar al-Jil, Beirut, First Print, 1412 AH; Ahmad bin Yahya Baladhuri, Ansab al-Ashraf, Researched by Suhayl, Zirkili, Riyad, vol. 2, pp. 246–247, Published by Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, First Print, 1417 AH.

14. Qurtubi, Muhammad b. Ahmad, Al-Jami li Ahkam al-Quran, vol. 14, p. 228, Published by Intisharat Nasir Khusruw, Tehran, First Printing, 1364 AH.

15. We wish to thank Sayyid Sibtain Kazmi of Brisbane, Australia for assistance rendered in the translation of a portion of this Islamic Query.

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