

History of Islam - Vol. 1

Chapter 3: The Rightly-Guided Caliphate

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Objections to the Procedure of Electing the Caliph

Allah ﷻ is the Lord of the worlds, and He ﷻ is the Facilitator of all rules. In the Qur'an, Allah ﷻ outlines and gives a detailed description of a caliph's tasks. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ left no instructions as to who would be his successor, but many indications, such as Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) leading the Muslims in prayers, directed to the succession of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him). The Prophet ﷺ knew very well that the act of choosing a caliph laid in Allah's ﷻ hands; thus, all the indications were a kind of prophecy, but not direct orders from him ﷺ.

After the death of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, some disputed and raised doubts on the choice of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) as the Caliph.

Difference between Caliphate and Temporal Rule

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) came to be known as the *Khalifat Rasulallah*, and he established the rules of Allah ﷻ. By doing so, he and the rightly-guided caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them) served humanity in the best way. Thus, no king can be called a caliph, because to be called so, he would need to rule according to the divine code and enforce it.

Relation of Caliphate with a Nation, Tribe or Family

Islam also abolished all types of discrimination and made this *ummah* one nation. Allah ﷻ says, “*The believers are nothing else than brothers...*” [49:10]

The pious and righteous deserve honour, no matter which tribe, nation or family they belong to. Allah ﷻ rewards the most deserving with the responsibility of the caliphate. He ﷻ made knowledge, health, physical strength, piety, justice and reform as prerequisite conditions for wielding power.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said that if an ordinary Abyssinian slave was appointed to rule, people were obliged to obey him. Also, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said on his deathbed that if Salim (may Allah be pleased with him), the slave of Abu Hudhaifah (may Allah be pleased with him), had been alive, he would have appointed him as his successor.

The Caliphate and Spiritual Guidance as a Profession

In the Qur'an, Allah ﷻ has explicitly defined caliphate and has referred clearly to the caliphates of Adam and Dawud (peace be upon them). Muslims are ordained to follow the Qur'an in every aspect of their lives.

Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him)

Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was the first rightly-guided caliph. His name was Abdullah bin Abu Quhafah. His mother was Salma Umm al-Khair. He and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ meet in the lineage at a distance of 6 generations, at their ancestor Murrah.

During the days of ignorance, he (may Allah be pleased with him) was called Abd Ka'bah. Later, the Prophet ﷺ named him Abdullah. He was also called 'Atiq, but As-Suyuti says in his book that the majority of *ulama* are of the opinion that Atiq was his surname.

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was brought up in Makkah and was younger than Prophet Muhammad ﷺ by two years and two months. He (may Allah be pleased with him) accompanied the Prophet ﷺ on his migration to Madinah, and he was given the title *As-Siddiq* due to his firm belief in the Prophet ﷺ and total support in all circumstances.