

The Blessings of Khilafat

(Tommy Bockarie Kallon)

All prophets, without exception, are but mortal human beings. However, although the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa) passed away like all prophets before him, his message was to endure till the end of days. Thus, Allah Almighty promised in the Holy Qur'an that Islam would be nurtured and fortified through the dedicated efforts of his rightly guided spiritual successors of Khulafa, so that his opponents would not rejoice in the reflection that after his demise, Islam would wither and pass into the limbo of history. We read in the Ayat-ul-Istikhlaf, that is, the verse of the Holy Qur'an which deals with the subject of Khilafat:

Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will, surely, make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from those who were before them; and that He will, surely, establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear. (24:56)

The promise of the establishment of Khilafat is clear and unmistakable. As the Holy Prophet is now humanity's sole guide for all time, his Khilafat must continue to exist in one form or another in the world till the end of time. This is, among many others, the Holy Prophet's (sa) distinct superiority over all other prophets and messengers of Allah.

In accordance with that promise, on the demise of the Holy Prophet (sa), when all the believers were struck with shattering bewilderment, Hadrat Abu Bakr (ra), was elected as the First Khalifa in Islam. The Islamic Empire was soon beset with many internal disorders and external threats. There arose many false prophets from within who seized the opportunity to instigate a rebellion and, from beyond, the external enemies threatening the security of the Islamic State. Hadrat Abu Bakr (ra) led both by precept and by example and was able to crush all forces of revolt and disorder thereby fully safeguarding Islam from discord and disintegration. By the end of his Khilafat, the Muslims were united again under one standard. When we take due cognizance of the enormous loss the Muslims suffered with the departure of the Holy Prophet (sa), the void that was created by his demise and the unenviable responsibility, as it were, of stepping into his shoes, we can safely conclude that this was no mean achievement and was due entirely to the blessings that emanated from Hadrat Abu Bakr's leadership.

After his demise, Hadrat Umar (ra) assumed the mantle of Khilafat and, by the grace of Allah Muslims enjoyed many blessings under his humble and tolerant leadership. Indeed, his Khilafat represents a golden period in the history of Islam. His tireless energy, his selflessness, sympathy, scrupulous discharge of duty, his

strong sense of even-handed justice and his zeal in the service of Islam are universally recognized and marveled at even today as they were fourteen hundred years ago. He initiated many schemes for the welfare of the Muslims. It was Hadrat Umar (ra) who first introduced the system of old age pensions, now prevailing in the West. Children without guardians were brought up at the expense of the State. Education was made compulsory for boys and girls. The weak and disabled were granted allowances from the public treasury and in general, people grew in prosperity under his leadership. We read with just pride that Hadrat Umar (ra) would traverse his State at night in disguise to ascertain and attend to the needs of his citizens. No wonder he was blessed, so much so that during his Khilafat the mighty Roman and Persian empires that once threatened Islam, were utterly defeated.

However, victory would not spoil him. He always encouraged his armies to adhere to the teachings of Islam and show tolerance, justice and kindness to all peoples who came under Muslim rule. For their part, his armies translated into action all his admonition which won over the hearts of the conquered and made many friends in the territories.

In addition to the many conquests, the Khilafat of Hadrat Umar (ra) yielded many other blessings. He established the Majlis-e-Shura, a consultative body of advisors to the Khalifa. He displayed a unique genius in organizing the civil administration of the Muslim Empire. Every country was divided into provinces, a police force was established, canals were dug, public treasuries were started and the Muslim calendar of Hijra which has been a great help in the preservation of history was introduced.

After the demise of this great personality, Hadrat Uthman (ra) was elected as the third Khalifa. He, like his two predecessors, proved to be an admirable leader and guided, successfully expanding the Muslim Empire still further. A general wave of revolt and invasion swept through the Muslim Empire but by the sheer grace of Allah and a result of the blessings of Khilafat, these rebellions and invasions were promptly quelled.

Hadrat Uthman (ra) made many contributions in the cause of public welfare. He supervised the erection of many new buildings, roads and bridges. Mosques and guest houses were also constructed in different towns under his direction. The Holy Qur'an, in its present standard form, was compiled during his Khilafat and under his direct supervision, this perhaps, is his most important contribution to the cause of Islam. Hadrat Uthman (ra) was a simple and kind man who never wavered in his integrity, honesty and piety. He showed great tolerance and utmost patience even towards the end of his Khilafat when various groups wanted to depose him. He refused to discard the robe of Khilafat invested in him by Allah Almighty but at the same time he refused to fight them in order to avoid shedding the blood of

innocent Muslims. His assassination ensued but there can be no doubt that Hadrat Uthman (ra) laid down his life for the integrity of Khilafat and in the best interests of Islam.

The death of Hadrat Uthman is certainly one of the saddest chapters in the history of Islam. Unity among all Muslims was shattered Internal feuds became the order of the day as Muslim turned against Muslim. Hadrat Ali (ra) was elected as the fourth Khalifa six days after the death of Hadrat Uthman (ra). He announced that his top priority was to restore law and order in the state and to this end showed enormous restraint and tried his best to avoid fighting and bloodshed in the face of popular demands by some influential Companions of the Holy Prophet (sa) for him to bring to justice the assassins of Hadrat Uthman. As Medina had degenerated into a lawless society, Hadrat Ali (ra) moved the capital from Medina to Kufa in Iraq. Unfortunately, however, his Khilafat was beset by disruption and disarray. Hadrat Ali (ra) tried to pacify the Muslims but it seems that the anti-Khilafat malaise which had set in was incurable. Civil wars broke out and the whole debacle culminated in the martyrdom of Hadrat Ali (ra).

‘The value of a shade is not known until the tree is cut down.’ With the assassination of Hadrat Ali (ra), that brilliant beacon of guidance and unity, that glorious fountain of blessings and mercies was lost. Muslims discarded the robe of Khilafat and with it all its countless blessings. The system of monarchy, devoid of all spiritual glory, was instituted in the place of Khilafat with various dynasties arising over many centuries. Civil wars and internecine feuds greatly weakened the Muslims. Nations that in the past trembled and bowed before them now confronted them with insolence and invariably succeeded in humiliating the Muslims. Islamic influence and world dominion began to diminish until the time came when other religions, though based on false doctrines, began to dominate the true religion of Islam.

The re-establishment of Khilafat amongst the Muslims has to date been one of the greatest challenges facing the Muslims. Present day Islam is torn with internal strife and external intrigues and is in dire need of a leader, a man of integrity who would take charge of the institution of Khilafat and under Divine guidance lead the Muslim nations. Various movements to establish Khilafat amongst orthodox Muslims have arisen in the past and recently in our time as well. It is a sad but historical truth that all have met with failure. This is because they are devoid of any Divine guidance and are based solely on human endeavour with self-indulgence and personal desire for power at the heart of their foundation.

Khilafat is a spiritual dominion of Allah Almighty and its establishment is never brought about by any political or pseudo-religious movement. Whenever Khilafat is established by Divine design, it has been through a prophet of Allah. History furnishes not a single instance where Khilafat was established without the

advent of a prophet preceeding it. The Khilafat promised in the Holy Qur'an is in the footsteps of a prophet. The Holy Prophet (sa) is reported to have said:

‘Prophethood shall remain among you as long as Allah shall will. He will bring about its end and follow it with Khilafat on the precepts of prophethood for as long as He shall will and then bring about its end. A tyrannical monarchy will then follow and will remain as long as Allah shall will and then come to an end. There will follow thereafter monarchical despotism to last as long as Allah shall will and come to an end upon His decree. There will then emerge Khilafat on the precept of Prophethood. (Munsad Ahmad)

From this prophecy of the Holy Prophet (sa) it is clear that the Khilafat which would come into being after him would consist of two eras and would follow immediately after his death and between that and the other, would intervene a period of suppressive, oppressive and cruel regimes. On the demise of the Holy Prophet (sa), that blessed institution of Khilafat was established as prophesied. It was to be re-established only with the advent of the Promised Messiah (as) and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya movement in Islam.

Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) of Qadian, was a faithful servant of Allah and a devoted follower of the Holy Prophet (sa). He claimed that he had been appointed by Allah Almighty as the voice articulate of this age; that he is the Messiah foretold in the Traditions of the Holy Prophet (sa) and the Mahdi promised in his Sayings. He claimed that the prophecies contained in all the different religious books about the advent of a Divine Messenger in the latter days have also been fulfilled in his person; that God has raised him for the advocacy and promulgation of Islam in our time; that God has granted him insight into the Holy Qur'an and revealed to him its innermost meaning and truth.

By his work, his message and his example, he glorified the Holy Prophet (sa) and demonstrated the superiority of Islam over other religions so that the Holy Prophet (sa) could be accepted as the Seal of the Prophets by all the peoples of the world. At a time when fanaticism, obscurantism and bigotry had become the hallmark of Muslim thinking, he displayed before the wondering eyes of seekers after truth, a vast and seemingly limitless treasury of knowledge, philosophy and wisdom from the Holy Qur'an. The moral and spiritual values inculcated by the Holy Qur'an and illustrated in their perfection by the Holy Prophet (sa) were revived by him, so that men could profit not only from his precept but also from his example.

On his demise, obituaries from open-minded Muslims and non-Muslims alike paid rich tribute to his messianic qualities, purity and righteousness. However, his unthinking opponents rejoiced in his death hoping that what they considered a grave heresy would now die a natural death and be relegated to history.

At that critical hour, his most devoted follower – an eminent divine, a reputed physician, a discerning mystic and a scholastic commentator of the Holy Qur'an – was unanimously elected to the office of Khalifatul Masih. By the grace of Allah, in that capacity he navigated the ship of Ahmadiyyat to safe waters fully safeguarding it from disintegration. His name, Nooruddeen, that is, the Brilliance of Faith, was synonymous to his brilliant services in the name of faith.

Hadrat Maulvi Nooruddeen (ra) had a living faith in Allah Almighty and relied on Him totally for all his needs. As Khalifatul Masih, his role was variegated and multi-faceted. In spite of his indifferent health, he would carry out his manifold functions with a benign countenance displaying an enviable devotion to duty. He would diagnose and prescribe for each of his patients, give directives, advice and counsel to office bearers, hold lectures on the Holy Qur'an, Ahadeeth and Islamic thought, dictate responses in refutation of the critics of Islam and deliberate projects for the propagation of Islam. But his most important distinction was his unerring maintenance and fortification of the Institution of Khilafat in the face of persistent opposition from his dissenters who sought to undermine his authority and create disorder in the Community. Nothing and no one could affect either his high resolve or the urbanity of his disposition. In a loud and unambiguous voice he proclaimed: 'I declare with all the emphasis at my command and call Allah to witness that I shall not discard the robe with which He has invested me.' On his demise, that robe of Khilafat was bestowed upon Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddeen Mahmood Ahmad (ra). Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) was the promised Son of the Promised Messiah. His birth was in fulfillment of a glorious prophecy of the Promised Messiah that he would be granted a son whose qualities and excellence would be truly outstanding. He was elected to the exalted office of Khalifatul Masih at the tender age of 25 and, by the grace of Allah, his tenure of office was blessed with enormous success beyond the pale of expression. With extremely limited funds, he guided the community to previously unfathomable heights. Notable among the numerous schemes he launched are the Tahrik-e-Jadid and Waqf-e-Jadid which have been instrumental in establishing the Community in almost all countries of the world. It was his unique genius that launched the auxiliary associations so that today all members of the Community, under the auspices of their particular association, are bound together in affectionate ties of brotherhood and sisterhood and carry out programs designed to inculcate moral and spiritual values.

Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) established the Majlis-e-Shura within the Community, a consultative body that meets annually to deliberate and advise the Khalifa on important policy matters. The Qada Board, a judicial system, providing the Community with a very fair, economical and dignified way for its members to settle their internal disputes, in accordance with Islamic law and jurisprudence, was

set up by him. He initiated Jalsa Seerat-un-Nabi and Religious Founders' Days to celebrate the life of the Holy Prophet (sa) and the lives of all founders of great religions.

Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) also showed a keen understanding of complex political and social issues successfully guiding the community through two fearsome world wars and a migration en masse to Pakistan after the 1947 partition of the Indian sub-continent from where he started the Holy city of Rabwah from absolute scratch into a most inhospitable land.

His books and pamphlets which number more than 200 expose him as an eminent divine and an expert diagnostician of eternal verities. The greatest blessing of his Khilafat, perhaps, is his magnum opus, the Tafseer-e-Kabeer, an exhaustive commentary on the Holy Qur'an. This ten thousand-page commentary contains a deep esoteric understating and exposition of thousands of spiritual truths and hidden secrets, many of which had never been presented before.

His Khilafat, spanning two and fifty years, truly represents a golden period in the history of Ahmadiyyat and of Islam. In spite of manifold duties and multifarious engagements, he strove hard to maintain the Community at the highest level of activity, both in respect of self-improvement and in respect of propagating the message of Islam. For this purpose, he called in aid all his great talents; he had recourse to continuous advice, exhortation and admonition; he set a high and shining personal example and spent a good part of his nights in earnest supplication to the Divine.

When Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) passed away, his eldest son, Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (ra) was elected as Khalifatul Masih III. During his seventeen years of Khilafat, with his unique administrative ability and his distinctive plans of far-reaching benefits, he was able to strengthen and expand the Community remarkably. Some of the salient features of his Khilafat include the Fazle Umar Foundation, to promote activities in the field of research work, education, missionary engagements and economic welfare of the Community and the Nusrat Jehan scheme under which scores of schools and hospitals have been established in West Africa, purely for the service of humanity and without any profit motives. Through the success of this scheme, millions of Africans have embraced Ahmadiyyat and still continue to do so. But perhaps he would be remembered most for that simple yet highly pragmatic *modus vivendi* he bequeathed the Community, namely, the motto: Love for All, Hatred for None.

Today we are passing through the golden era of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV. He, like his predecessors, has, under Divine direction, launched various schemes to mobilize the Community efforts for the global spread of Islam. During his tenure of office which, on 10th June 2002, completed a glorious 20 years, the Community has been extraordinarily blessed with its membership growing from 10 to an

amazing 150 million world-wide. Under his directives, thousands of mosques, mission houses, clinics, hospitals, schools and colleges dedicated to the service of Islam have been established. Homoeopathic dispensaries have been set up all over the world, under his auspices, providing millions with cures to various ailments free of charge. Among his numerous books is his thesis, Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth which has been acclaimed as perhaps the greatest literary achievement of the last century. His devotion to the Holy Qur'an is confirmed by his personal supervision of numerous translations and accurate revisions of translations of the Holy Qur'an in diverse languages, he himself producing a fluid translation and commentary in the Urdu language.

Muslim Television Ahmadiyya, the world's first global satellite Muslim broadcasting channel simultaneously providing live translations in up to eight languages, was the brainchild of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV. It is impossible to enumerate all the blessings that MTA International has brought in its wake. It provides, to a global audience, an invaluable source of knowledge, it teaches various languages, discusses various topical issues and their relation to the moral and spiritual well-being of man and, in general, is essential viewing for students of religion and philosophy everywhere. The key to its success is without doubt the personal appearance of Khalifatul Masih in many of the programmes so that Muslims and non-Muslims alike from the world over can benefit from his broad knowledge, wisdom and perception. It is through MTA that we have been able to witness historic scenes like the International Bai'at Ceremony at the Annual International Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community where, in one year alone, up to 81 million new Ahmadi Muslims from over a hundred nations of the world simultaneously took the oath of allegiance at the hands of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih through live satellite transmission.

It should be patently obvious by now that Khilafat is not only a very blessed institution but also a very important institution of Islam and unquestionably calls for the highest degree of obedience. A Khalifa is elected through the Will of Allah but by the act of the believers. In other words, at that critical hour when the election of Khalifa is due, the minds and deliberations of the faithful are guided by Allah Almighty to the appointment of His choice. Inasmuch as the Khalifa is elected in accordance with the Divine Will, disobedience to him is in fact tantamount to the disobedience of Allah and, by the same token, obedience to Allah Almighty and obedience to the office of Khilafat are simply the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

This, in itself, is a necessary and sufficient condition for the continuation of this great Divine institution. In a community otherwise showered with so many Divine blessings, Khilafat is undeniable the most important bounty to the members of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. The Khalifa plays a pivotal role in uniting

all members of the Community under one banner. To all members he is, at all times, a deeply loving father to whom they can look up to for guidance, advice and encouragement, to all intelligent and reasonable people of goodwill he proves himself a wise friend and counselor to the afflicted he is, without discrimination, a ready source of comfort, consolation and relief.

It is only through the blessings of Khilafat and through Divine Grace that Islam has made progress in the past as it continues to do so today and, Allah willing, will continue to do for years and centuries to come. Prophethood is a seed after which the instrumentality of Khilafat spreads its munificence throughout the world. After the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa), through the devoted works of the rightly guided Khulafa, Islam spread throughout the then known world. Today, under the guidance of the Khalifatul Masih, the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam is spreading and spreading exponentially all around the world, despite all the efforts of hostile fanatics, both individual and governmental, whose purported objective is of exterminating Ahmadiyyat from the surface of the earth.

Through the blessed institution of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya, the promise of Allah in the Holy Qur'an: 'He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them' is being fulfilled. The days are fast approaching when we shall observe the unification of mankind under the banner of Islam and we shall witness the final and universal manifestation of the Unity of Allah.

THE INSTITUTION OF KHILAFAT

Quranic Decree

Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will, surely, make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them; and that He will, surely, establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that after their state of fear He will grant them peace and security. They will worship Me, and they will not associate anything with Me. Then who disbelieve thereafter, they will be the rebellious ones. (24:56)

Prophecy of the Holy Prophet

Prophethood shall remain among you as long as God wills. He will bring about its end and follow it with Khilafat on the precepts of prophethood for as long as He wills and then bring about its end. Kingship shall then follow to remain as long as God wills and then come to an end. There shall then be tyranny which shall remain as long as God wills and come to an end upon His decree. There will then emerge Khilafat on the precepts of Prophethood (*Musnad-i-Ahmad*).

Teachings of the Promised Messiah

“Brethren, since it is the practice of God from ancient times that he shows two manifestations in order to frustrate two false exultations of His enemies, it is inconceivable that He should abandon this established practice. Therefore you must not be grieved at that which I have mentioned, nor should your hearts be afflicted, for it is necessary for you to witness the second manifestation whose appearance is better for you, for it is everlasting and unending till the Day of Judgment.” (*Alwasiyyat*, pp. 6-7).

“It is God’s design to gather around His Unity all those souls who possess innate faith and abide in different lands, be they in Europe or Asia, and to muster His people under one religion. This is the purpose of God for the accomplishment of which I have been commissioned. Therefore you should pursue this purpose with meekness through constant prayers, and you should work in unity after me until someone is raised amongst you with the Holy Spirit from God.” (*Alwasiyyat*, p.7)

“It is necessary for you to witness the Second Manifestation whose coming is better for you, for it is everlasting and unending till the Day of Judgment. The Second Manifestation cannot occur until I depart, and it is only when I depart that God shall send the Second Manifestation for you which shall abide with you forever. It is, therefore, necessary for you to see the day of my departure so that the day may follow which is the day of everlasting promise.... I have appeared from