

## **KHILAFAT: UNITY OF MAN AND PEACE**

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### **Concept of Khilafat**

*Allah had 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 He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear: They will worship Me, and they will not associate anything with Me. Then who so is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious. (Surah Al-Nur, Verse 56)*

This is known as the istikhlaf verse. A promise has been made to the believer of succession. Some commentators have translated istikhlaf as 'inheritance of power'. While this is also part of the meaning, it is more correctly translated as succession or vicegerency.

According to a famous lexicographer, Ibn-e-Manzoor Ifriqi, "*al-khalifu didd al-qudaam,*" *khalf* (behind/ at the back) is opposite to *qudaam* (fore part/front part); *khalifah* means, the one who becomes successor to his prior. (Ibn Manzoor, *Lisaan al-'Arab*, (Qum: Nashru Adab al-Hawzah), 1405 AH, 9: 82-82)

Imam Razi also says that, "*al-Khalifah, man yakhlufu ghayarahu wa yaqumu muqaamahu*" (*khalifah* is the one who comes after another person and takes his place) meaning he was called *khalifah* because he is a vicegerent of Allah in exercising His authority among the people obligated to follow His Commands. (Imam Razi, *Tafsir-e-Kabir*, 12:202). All words in the Qur'an using the root word "*kh-l-f* have the same meaning. 9:83, 7:75, 6:166,10:74, 38:27; 35:40; 7:70; 27:63; 48:12, 16, 17).

The four verses prior to verse 56 in Surah Al-Nur deal with obedience. Obedience to 'Allah and His messenger'. Obedience to 'what is right'. And if you obey the Messenger you will be successful and 'rightly guided'. These verses explain that you have to display obedience to receive guidance. This guidance is through the Messenger and then after him through his Successor or Vicegerent in the earth. This is a promise of spiritual and temporal leadership, which will keep the believers united and lead to peace. When a Messenger dies people naturally get fearful as to what will happen next. A leaderless people are without direction and this situation will eventually lead to chaos. Allah promises to exchange their fear with security and peace. But the *condition* is the believers need to worship Allah alone and do good works. The next verse (24:57) describes three essential conditions for the fulfillment of this promise namely

1. Observe prayer.
2. Give Zakat (alms to the poor)
3. Be obedient to the Messenger.

Islam professes to be a religion for all mankind. So establishing the religion of Islam all over the world would naturally take time. This verse is talking about a Successor or Khalifa. Rightly guided kalians are there to carry on the work of the prophet. In history we see three distinct kinds of successors to prophets as mentioned in the Quran:

1. Khulafa, who are Prophets such as Adam and David. About Adam, God says in the Qur'an: *"I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth"* (2:31); and about David He says: *"O David, We have made thee a vicegerent in the earth"* (38:27).
2. Prophets who are the Khulafa of another and a greater Prophet such as the Israelite Prophets who all were the Khulafa of Moses. About them the Qur'an says: *"We have sent down the Torah wherein was guidance and light. By it did the Prophets who were obedient to Us judge for the Jews:"* (5:45)
3. Non-Prophet Khulafa of a Prophet, with or without temporal powers, such as godly people learned in the Law. Their mission is to protect and preserve the law from being tampered with (5:45).

Briefly, the verse under comment covers all these categories of Khulafa, viz., the Holy Prophet's rightly-guided Khulafa, the Promised Messiah, his Successors and the spiritual Reformers or Mujaddids. Their mission, as the above verse says, is to protect the Law and to bring back "the erring flock into the Master's fold."

The special marks and characteristics of these Khulafas are:

1. They are appointed Khulafa through God's own decree in the sense that the hearts of believers become inclined towards them and they voluntarily accept them as their Khulafa;
2. The religion, which their mission is to serve, becomes firmly established through their prayers and missionary efforts;
3. They enjoy equanimity and peace of mind amidst hardships, privations or persecution which nothing can disturb;
4. They worship God alone, i.e. in the discharge of their great responsibilities they fear no one and they carry on their duties undaunted and without being discouraged or dismayed by the difficulties that stand in their way.

The verse may also be regarded as embodying a prophecy which was made at a time when Islam was very weak and idols were being worshipped throughout Arabia and the Muslims being small in number feared for their very lives, and yet in the course of only a generation the prophecy was literally fulfilled. Idolatry disappeared from Arabia and Islam became firmly established not only in Arabia but also reigned supreme in the whole world and the followers of the Holy Prophet, erstwhile regarded as the dregs and scum of humanity, became the leaders and teachers of nations.

The words, *"Whosoever is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious,"* signify that

Khilafat is a great Divine blessing. Without it there can be no solidarity, cohesion and unity among Muslims and therefore they can make no real progress without it. If Muslims do not show proper appreciation of Khilafat by giving unstinted support and obedience to their Khulafa, they will forfeit this great Divine boon and in addition will draw the displeasure of God upon themselves (5 volume translation of the Qur'an edited by Malik Ghulam Farid, p. 1870).

The task of the Khulafa is to carry on the work of the Prophets so that the seed sown by the Prophets becomes a strong and sturdy tree. It is a continuation of the work of Prophethood carried on beyond the life of the Prophet.

### **Unity and Peace**

Unity in Islam means the negation of all else except God. When one believes there is no all-encompassing power except God's it negates all other powers as being subservient to His power. As such all beliefs spring from this most central of all concepts in Islam. All goodness springs from God.

When one believes in an omnipotent God, one is naturally awed by His Majesty and Grandeur and this leads to submission to His will. Peace is due to submission to the will of God. That is why the word Islam is translated both as peace and submission to the will of God. The Islamic concept of Unity also inculcates in man the realization of the oneness of the human species, and does away with all such barriers as divide man into racial, ethnic and color denominations. This gives birth to the universal concept of equality in Islam, which is its distinctive feature. Hence from the vantage point of God, all human beings, wherever and in whichever age they were born, stand equal in His sight... Coming to individuals, the belief in Unity plays a very important role in the education and upbringing of humans. It requires a consistency between man's views and actions, a consistency between his relationship with God and his fellow beings, thus binding creation in a single chain of unbreakable unity. This can be better understood by bringing to focus the practices of some so-called religious people, who preach hatred for one section of human society against another in the name of the one and only God. The principle of Unity of God is at variance with this practice, and as such does not permit people to create divisions between God and His creation and within the creation of God. (An Elementary Study of Islam by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad)

God is loving and His Grace and Mercy is such that he sends his messengers to mankind to draw humanity towards Himself. This is the unity of man's purpose with God's. This is only achieved by being in perfect harmony with God. It is a measure of the love that God has for His Creation that he sent messengers to all peoples throughout history to bring them towards Him:

***And We, indeed, sent Messengers before thee; of them are some whom We have mentioned to thee; and of them are some whom We have not mentioned to thee, (40:79)***

***And there is no people to whom a Warner has not been sent (35:25).***

The task of the messengers and the successors is to draw man to God. This can only happen if the successors are true and 'rightly guided'. If a people *inclined* to God choose a successor, God helps those people by infusing His spirit into the successor, helping and guiding him so the people can continue to be rightly guided. Thus it is apparent that for a rightly guided people God establishes the successor or Khalifa.

As people developed over time and were able to appreciate and understand more, the message from God became more sophisticated culminating in Islam which being a complete code of life covered all aspects of life that affect man, not only of faith but of behavior, lifestyle, relations of individuals, society, nations etc.

We see in the life of the Holy Prophet saws that he drew people of various backgrounds together with love. This led to harmony and unity in the Islamic community. The great mission of the Holy Prophet (saws) was to lead all of mankind to God. He was the culmination of the message of God to mankind. After his demise his rightly guided Khulafa or successors carried on the work. The paramount task was to keep the Muslims united.

In this day and age as prophesied by the Holy Prophet (saws) and by other Prophets about the latter days a reformer (mujaddid) or Messiah would come to correct misunderstandings and bring people back to God. It is quite obvious that presently, there is no peace in this world and the situation keeps getting worse. The times cry out for a messenger to guide people back to the peace of God. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jam'aat believe that God's promise is true and the awaited one has come in the person of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad about a hundred years ago. His task is to carry on the work of the Holy Prophet saws and of all the prophets in bringing mankind to God.

***'And He will raise him among others of them who have not yet joined them. He is the Mighty the Wise.'* (62:4)**

Says Abu Hurairah: "One Day we were sitting with the Holy Prophet when Surah Jumuah was revealed. I asked the Holy Prophet, "Who are the people to whom the words And among others from among them who have not yet joined them, refer. Salman the Persian was sitting among us. Upon my repeatedly asking him the same question, the Prophet put his hand on Salman and said, 'If Faith were to go up to the Pleiades, a man from these would surely find it (Bukhari). This is a reference to the coming of the Promised Messiah in the latter days.

After his demise, his work is being carried on by his successors. Their work is the work of the Promised Messiah. He came in complete subordination to Holy Prophet Muhammad saws, the last Law bearing Prophet. The Head of the Ahmadiyya Jam'aat is a spiritual and religious head only. He is known as Khalifatul Masih, Successor to the Promised Messiah. He is a spiritual and religious head only; the Khalifa plays the same role in this capacity as the early Khulafa of the Holy Prophet saws. He is elected by an

electoral college and after his election, the entire Ahmadiyyah Muslim Jam'at the world over pledges their oath of allegiance to him. There is a very strong bond of spiritual love between him and members of the Jam'at from all over the world. This bond of love is remarkable. Once a Journalist investigated the Ahmadiyya Khilafat by visiting Rabwah, Pakistan, the headquarters. He visited Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, the third Successor to the Promised Messiah. He at first interviewed the Ahmadis there. Before his audience with the Khalifa, he remarked that he had never seen a people more in love with their leader. After he had met the Khalifa, he remarked that this is truly amazing; this Khalifa loves his people more than they love him. The subject of love and obedience is intimately linked and one leads to the other.

This blessing of Khilafat was lost to the Muslims and is now reappeared with the advent of the Promised Messiah and only the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jam'at has the institution of Khilafat. How prophetic were the words of Uthman, the third successor to the Holy Prophet saws when he warned the mutineers:

*"If you succeed in killing me, you shall never be able to remain united, nor able to offer your prayers or face the enemy in unity". (Tabri p. 482 Vol. III).*

The Islamic world talks of a single ummah but it is plain to see the divisions within it. Sometimes they appear united against a common foe but it is a superficial unity:

***Thou thinkest them to be united, but their hearts are divided (59:15).***

The process of creating one ummah out of a scattered and divided people is not brought about at once. It is a slow process, which is accomplished through a long and painful journey of human sacrifices. The Holy Quran refers to this creation and declares that it is only God Who can transform hatred into love. This power of God when it works through the institution of prophets, works wonders. Addressing the Muslim brotherhood of the time of the Holy Prophet saws the Holy Quran says:

***And it is by the great mercy of Allah that thou art kind towards them, and if thou hadst been rough and hardhearted, they would surely have dispersed from around thee. (3:160)***

(With Love to the Muslims of the World by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad p.6-7)

Without returning to God one cannot attain peace and without that peace, peace in society cannot be built. All human efforts to create peace from selfish ulterior motives are bound to fail and come to nothing. If there is no God, there is no peace. That is the ultimate wisdom. (Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad p. 269). The Messengers and their successors and Khulafa have but this one aim. As such, the Khalifa is the unity of man and peace through the love and obedience he engenders in his community.