

***Khilafat* and Caliphate**

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The commonly used English words ‘Caliph’ and ‘Caliphate’ are both taken and transformed from the Arabic terms ‘*khalifa*’ and ‘*khilafat*’. The term ‘caliph’ is in English use since 1393, and ‘caliphate’ since 1614. One of the reasons for the richness of English vocabulary is its ability to borrow and absorb foreign words and phrases in abundance. English speaking people use words taken from almost every other language in the world. For example, from Indo-Pakistani languages such as Urdu, Hindi and Sanskrit, English has obtained ‘camphor’, ‘ginger’, ‘musk’, ‘sugar’, ‘punch’, ‘guru’, ‘nirvana’, ‘bungalow’, ‘jungle’, ‘cheetah’, ‘thug’, ‘pundit’ and ‘Aryan’. From Farsi are ‘bazaar’, ‘caravan’, ‘dervish’, ‘jasmine’, ‘magazine’, ‘rook’ and ‘checkmate’. From Hebrew are the words ‘Amen’, ‘jubilee’, ‘kosher’, ‘Satan’ and ‘messiah’. Similarly, numerous names, phrases and terms are taken from Arabic language. To mention only a few: Admiral (*Amir-ul-bahr, or amir-ar-rahl*), Gibraltar (*Jebel-e-Tarik*), alchemy (*al-kimiya*), alcohol (*al-kohl*), algebra (*al-gebro-wal-muqabilah*), algorithm (*al-Khowarazmi*), arsenal (*dar-as-sina’ah*), assassin (*hashishin*), coffee (*qawah*), El Cid (*al-Sayyid*), elixir (*al-iksir*), emir (*Amir*), fakir (*faqir*), genie (*jinn*), minaret (*minarah*), Ottoman (*Uthman*), Saracen (*sharqiyien*), sherbet & syrup (*sharbah, sharaab*), sofa (*suffah*), talisman (*talism*), and zero (*sifr*).

The Concept of *khilafat* in the Holy Quran

For our discussion, we would like to make a distinction between “*khilafat*” and “caliphate” for reasons other than mere etymological development of the words. In Arabic “*khalifa*” means “successor/deputy/vicegerent”, and “*khilafat*” is the dominion of a *khalifa*, or the institution that runs under the leadership of a *khalifa*. In English, “caliph” is the chief civil and political Muslim ruler regarded as a successor of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). But in the Holy Quran, the words *khalifa* (in singular) and *khulafa* or *khalaa’if* (in plural) have wider connotations than “caliph” and “caliphs” in English. For example, the Holy Quran uses the title of “*khalifa* on the earth” for Prophet Adam as “God’s deputy or vicegerent on the earth” (2:31). In Arabic we can call him *Khalifa-tul-Allah*, but we cannot call him as ‘God’s Caliph.’ Similarly, David is called a “*khalifa*”, a vicegerent of God in the Holy Quran: ‘O David! We

have made you a *khalifa* (vicegerent) in the earth; so judge between men with justice and follow not vain desires, lest it should lead you astray from the way of Allah.’ (38:27). But we never say “Caliph David” in the English language; he is called “King David”. Moreover, in the Holy Quran the words *khalaa’if* and *khulafa* (plural of *khalifa*) have been used for some nations or specific generations in the sense that God did a great favor to them and made them dominant over the earth: “And remember the time when He made you as *khulafa* after the people of Noah, and increased you abundantly is constitution.” (7:75). “And remember the time when He appointed you as *khulafa* after ‘Ad, and assigned you an abode in the land.” (7:75). But in English we do not refer to any nation or generation as “Caliphs.”

The Holy Quran specifically uses the term *khulafa* indicating a special favor of Allah to the people not only by granting them worldly power, but more specifically as a spiritual reward for their righteousness. In this sense, to retain the blessing of *khilafat*, vigilance is required as it is a test and a trail for righteous people. “And He it is Who has made you *khalaa’if* (successors to win favors of God) on the earth, and then exalted some of you over the others in degrees of rank, so that He may try you by that which He has given you” (6:166). “Then We made you *khalaa’if* (successors) in the earth after them (i.e. the earlier generation), that We might see how you would act.” (10:15). “Who answers the distressed person when he calls upon Him, and removes the evil, and makes you *khulafa* (successors) in the earth? Is there a God besides Allah? Little it is that you reflect” (27:63). In this verse the blessing of *khilafat* is closely connected with God’s answering prayer of the distressed, and removing a sorrowful state. Again, “Verily, Allah knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth. Verily, He knows full well all that lies hidden in the breasts. He it is Who made you *khalaa’if* (successors/vicegerents) in the earth. So he, who disbelieves, will himself suffer the consequences of his disbelief” (35:40).

In the above quoted verses, the Holy Quran lays emphasis on the moral, ethical and spiritual aspects as a requirement for the believers to receive the favor of *khilafat* from God. “Allah has promised to those among you who posses faith, and do good works, that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He had 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 He will surely give them in exchange security (and peace) after their fear: They will worship Me alone, and they

will not associate anything with Me. Then whoso is ungrateful after that, they will be rebellious” (24:56).

God’s promise to establish *khilafat* as a blessing for mankind is firmly rooted in the moral and spiritual condition of sincere believers. In this specific sense, we make a distinction between *khilafat* and caliphate. Caliphate deals with civil and political domain of the rulers in Islamic history, but *khilafat* deals with moral, religious and spiritual leadership of mankind. *Khilafat* exerts to establish the worship of One God, to see that the people remain prayerful, do good works, live freely, and maintain peace. Therefore, a political ruler who might be called “Caliph” may not be a *Khalifa* in the true Quranic sense of the word.

A Prophetic Hadith

In the famous book of Ahadith, *Musnad Ahmad* by Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, there is one prophetic Hadith narrated by Hadhrat Huzaifa (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be on him.) said: “Prophethood will remain among you as long as Allah wills. Then *khilafat* on the lines of Prophethood shall commence, and remain as long as Allah wills. Then corrupt/erosive monarchy would take place, and it will remain as long as Allah wills. After that, despotic kingship would emerge, and it will remain as long as Allah wills. Then, the *khilafat* shall come once again based on the precept of Prophethood.” In this Hadith, the promise of *khilafat* is connected with Prophethood on two separate occasions. In between the two eras of *khilafat*, the reference to “the corrupt/erosive monarchy” and “despotic kingship” is what we would like term as “Caliphate.” Most of the Muslim monarchs used the title “*khalifa*”, but they had in fact digressed from following the precept of Prophethood. The Arabic words showing the relationship between *khilafat* and Prophethood are “*khilafat -ala- minhaj-e-nabuwwat*”, that is, *khilafat* on the lines of Prophethood. This means that a Prophet’s true Successors (*Khulafa*) would continue to follow the example of the Prophet and lead the believers in the same way as the Prophet guided them. This elucidates the principle that *khilafat* in its essence is a continuation of the mission of the Prophet. The objectives of *khilafat* and Prophethood remain the same. The Holy Quran makes it clear that the main objective of Prophethood is the moral and spiritual development of mankind. With regards to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him), the Holy Quran

declares: “We have sent to you a Messenger from among you, who recites Our verses/signs (*ayaat*) to you, and purifies you, and teaches you the Book and wisdom, and teaches you that which you knew not” (2:152). This verse enumerates four functions of the Prophet:

1. Recital of God’s verses/signs (*ayaat*) to establish firmness of faith in the existence of One God and to worship Him alone.
2. Purification of souls by bringing a moral change in human conduct by creating mutual love, sympathy and unity among the believers, and by eradicating sinful inclination from the hearts of the believers.
3. Teaching the Book, that is, the Holy Quran which contains Law and commandments of God to establish a just and benevolent society.
4. Teaching wisdom that underlies natural and social laws to increase human knowledge.

Indeed, these four objectives -- related to spiritual, moral, societal and intellectual enhancement of mankind -- continued to be the main objectives of the righteous and “rightly guided” *khilafat* in the footsteps of the Prophet of Islam.

The Rightly Guided *Khilafat*

After leading his followers for 23 years on ‘the straight path’ of Islam, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) passed away in 632 AD. His companions elected Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) as his first *khalifa* by a majority of votes. Hadhrat Abu Bakr continued to uphold the unity among the Muslims, leading them in following the principles of Islamic teachings in full obedience to Allah and His Messenger. After him, the next three successive *khulafa* – namely, Hadhrat Umar ibn al-Khattab, Hadhrat Uthman bin Affan and Hadhrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with them all) – were among the most devoted and the closest companions of the Prophet. They carried on his mission under very difficult and complex circumstances. Thus “*khilafat ala minhaj-e-nabuwaat*” was firmly established when the Prophet was no more among the believers. *Khalifa* would lead the prayers as *Imam-us-Salat*. He would impart religious and spiritual knowledge to the fellow Muslims; maintain justice and piety in society, and remain above any party-politics. In addition, he administered all matters with mutual consultation (*Shura*) as was

ordained in the Holy Quran. He was also the commander-in- chief as *Ameer-ul-Momineen*.

The Text of the Holy Quran Preserved

One of the major tasks in the hands of the *Khulafa* of the Messenger of Allah was to preserve the text of the Holy Quran. When many *hufaaz* (those who commit the entire Quran to memory) were killed in a battle, on the advice of Hadhrat Umar, codification and compilation of the Holy Quran started under the directive of Hadhrat Abu Bakr. He entrusted the work to Hadhrat Zaid bin Sabit, a close companion of the Prophet who presented the Holy Quran in a complete Book form to Hadhrat Abu Bakr. At the death of Hadhrat Abu Bakr, the compiled Book passed into the hands of Hadhrat Umar who in turn bequeathed it to his daughter Hadhrat Hafsa the widow of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him.). It was the same text that later formed the basis of the copies distributed on a large scale by the third *Khalifa* Hadhrat Usman bin Affaan to every part of the Islamic world.

In less than 30 years, from the deserts of Arabia, the Muslims reached Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Jerusalem, Egypt, Cyprus, and Tripoli in North Africa; Iran, Afghanistan, and Sindh in India. The powerful Byzantine Empire in the North West and the ancient Persian Empire in the East were defeated by Muslims. One of the standing orders of *khilafat* was that the conquered people were not to be forcibly converted to Islam. The Holy Quran clearly condemns compulsion in religion, and it specifically respects the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians, calling them *ahl al-kitab*, the People of the Book. They, along with Zoroastrians, Hindus and Buddhists were considered as *dhimmis* (protected subjects). Muslims paid *Zakat* (an annual tax to assist the poor), but the non-Muslim *dhimmis* were exempted to pay *zakat*. Instead, they paid a poll tax called *jizya*. In return, their lives, properties, honor and freedom of religious practice were safeguarded by the Islamic government under the system of *khilafat*.

Dynastic Monarchies

The rapid expansion of Islamic domain created many challenges. There were mischief mongers who were busy creating discontent and disunity among the Muslims. Unfortunately, they succeeded in creating a military rebellion

against the third *khalifa*, Hadhrat Uthman. A group of soldiers came to Medina (in 656 AD) from Fustat, Egypt, and murdered him in his house while he was reciting the Holy Quran. Demands to punish Uthman's murderers were put to Hadhrat Ali who was elected as the fourth *khalifa*, and this situation subsequently led to civil wars. A close relative of Hadhrat Uthman, Muawiyya, who was at that time the governor of Syria, confronted Hadhrat Ali. After failed attempts at negotiations and arbitration, Muawiyya forcefully tried to depose Hadhrat Ali, declaring him-self to be the caliph.

Some extremists, known as *Kharijies* (seceders), rebelled against Muawiyya and Hadhrat Ali both. Hadhrat Ali dealt with them harshly and crushed their armed rebellion. Later, one of the *Kharijies* killed Hadhrat Ali in 661, thus ending the era of the rightly guided *Khulafa*. By then, Medina the capital of the Prophet was no more the power center. Muawiyya, who had taken power by force, was the first military and political leader to initiate Caliphate in the sense of hereditary monarchy. Damascus was the capital of his kingdom. According to Professor Hitti, Muawiyya was not only the first, but also one of the best of the Arab kings. He was shrewd, diplomatic, cool and calculating. In his life-time, not only he nominated his own son, Yazid, to be the next ruler, but also made the subject take "Ba'it" (an oath of allegiance) to Yazid in various parts of the empire. He himself went to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina for this purpose. The only persons who refused to make Ba'it were Hadhrat Hussain son of Hadhrat Ali, Abdullah son of Hadhrat Umar, Abdur Rahman son of Hadhrat Abu Bakr, and Abdullah son of Hadhrat Zubair. Their stand was that *Khilafat* could not be degenerated into a hereditary monarchy. Nevertheless, Yazid, who did not have the moral integrity for being a *Khalifa*, inherited the kingship from his father in 680 AD. Thus a new phase in the Islamic history started, leading to kingship to be run by members of Umayya family. This phase is distinct from "*Khilafat*". The caliphs were successful political leaders, but not necessarily men of moral integrity with full religious knowledge anymore; thus, hereditary monarchy eroded the true nature of *Khilafat* and it transgressed into royal Caliphate.

In the words of historian Karen Armstrong, "The Umayyad caliphs would gradually transform the disparate regions conquered by the Muslim armies into a unified empire, with common ideology. This was a great achievement; but the court naturally began to develop a rich culture and luxurious lifestyle, and became indistinguishable in many respects from any other class." (*Islam: A Short History*, p.41.).

The Caliphate

After the four “rightly guided” Successors to the Prophet, the “Caliphate” (or dynastic monarchies) started, and it remained among the Muslims for more than 1250 years. Muawiyya founded the Umayyad dynasty in 661, and his son, Yazid I, became caliph in 688. The House of Umayyad ruled the Muslim world for almost a century. In 749, the Abbasid (descendants of Prophet’s uncle Hadhrat Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib) overthrew the Umayyad and retained power for next five centuries. However, they suffered a great tragic setback when the Mongols attacked Baghdad in 1258, and the then Caliph al-Musta'sim was executed. Three years later, a surviving member of the Abbasid family was installed as Caliph at Cairo under the patronage of the Mamluk Sultanate; but this remained a “shadow”/titular Caliphate, and mostly limited to only ceremonial and religious matters.

Turkish Sultans assume the Caliphate

The Turkish Ottoman Muslim rulers used the title “Sultan” for themselves, but the seventh Sultan of Ottoman dynasty, Mehmed II (1432-1481) and his son Selim I, claimed to be Caliphs to justify their conquest of Islamic heartland. In the beginning, they used the title "Caliph" symbolically, but it took a kind of permanency when the Ottoman Empire defeated the Mamluk Sultanate in 1517. The last Abbasid Caliph at Cairo, al-Mutawakkil III, was imprisoned and taken to Istanbul, where he reportedly surrendered the Caliphate to Selim I.

The Umayyad, Abbasid and Ottoman dynasties ruled in multifaceted forms of administrations. At times, multiple Caliphates were running parallel to each other. Internal conflicts, rebellions and rivalries leading to oppression and bloodshed were not uncommon. Thus slowly and gradually, the institution of Caliphate lost much of its legitimacy in the eyes of the Muslim *Umma*. Clearly, the caliphs were far-removed from the norms set by the Prophet and the early *Khulafa* to be serious contenders to the leadership of Muslims. None of them could claim to be the spiritual and religious leader of the entire Muslim *Umma*. The objectives of Prophethood were mostly discarded. But in secular matters, cultural advancements were made in various sciences and arts creating a new and robust civilization. The moral and spiritual essence of *khilafat* survived to some extent through the religiosity of conservative Islamic Scholars (*Ulama*), but was mostly

preserved and sustained by *Aulia* (Saints), *Imams* (spiritual and religious guides), *Mujjaddids* (religious reformers) and the *Sufis* (mystics).

Khilafat among the Sufi Orders

The lavish lifestyle of the elite ruling class under the monarchical Caliphs had caused a reaction, and many pious Muslims were led towards mysticism. Many eminent Sufi leaders had emerged since the eighth century, and with the passage of time this trend was further heightened. The famous Sufi orders of Naqshbandiya, Qadriya, Yassaviyya, Suhrawardi, Shadilliyya, Badawiyya, Chishtiyya and Mawalawiyya were formed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The use of the title of *khalifa* became customary among the successors and deputies of the founders of the Sufi orders. For example, Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiar Kaki (d.1235 AD) was a contemporary saint and the principal *khalifa* (deputy) of Muin-ud-Din Chishti (d.1236) -- the founder of the famous Chishtiyya order. Farid-ud-Din Masud Gand Shakar (d. 1265) was a *Khalifa* (successor) of Bakhtiar Kaki. And his *Khalifa* was Nizam-ud-Din Aulia (d.1325) of Delhi, India. The Sufi leaders and their *Khulafa* exercised spiritual power over the hearts and minds of the people by laying emphasis on attaining nearness to God through esoteric doctrines, piety, and resistance to worldly temptations. They were saintly persons with faith in the power of prayer. They performed miracles and experienced true dreams, visions and Divine revelations.

End of the Caliphate

During the World War I (1914-1918), the Turkish Ottoman Empire fought against Britain and her Allies, and was defeated. By the end of World War I, the Turkish Ottoman Empire was occupied by European allies, and its territories were divided among them. Mehmed VI, the 36th Sultan was exiled, and after his death the Sultanate was abolished in 1922. However, his cousin, the Crown Prince Abdul Majid II, was elected by the Turkish National Assembly in Ankara as 'Caliph'. Later, on March 3, 1924, he was deposed and expelled from Turkey along with the rest of his family. This was followed by Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) formally abolishing Caliphate and the *shariah* court system. Abdul Majid II, therefore, is considered to be "*Aakhir Khalifatul Muslimeen*" – the last Caliph among the Muslims.

The *Khilafat* Movement

When European allies decided to partition the Ottoman Empire territories, there was a strong reaction among the Muslims of the world. In late 1919, some Indian Muslim leaders started 'Khilafat Movement', to preserve the integrity of the Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire. A Khilafat Committee was formed with two goals to achieve: "First, to urge the retention of the temporal powers of the Sultan of Turkey as Caliph, and second to ensure his continued suzerainty over the Islamic holy places." The Khilafat Movement was based on a non-factual premise that the Ottoman Caliph was the 'Universal Caliph' to whom all Muslims, everywhere in the world, owed allegiance.

In 1920, a famous Indian Muslim scholar and leader, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, published a book called *Masla-e-Khilafat* (The Issue of Caliphate), in which he stated: "Without the Caliphate, the existence of Islam is not possible, the Muslims of India with all their effort and power need to work for this." Surprisingly, the Muslim leaders of the Khilafat Movement then asked a Hindu leader, Mohandas Gandhi, to help them with what was purely an Islamic cause. To gain strength for his own political agenda, Gandhi willingly agreed to give his support to the Muslims in creating mass agitations and applying diplomatic pressure on British Government. However, the Muslim political leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah (who later became the founder of Pakistan) was opposed to Gandhi's political tactics, and the Khilafatists used to jeer at him. However, when the Turkish Muslims under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk abolished Caliphate in 1924, the Indian Muslims were deeply hurt and humiliated and the Khilafat Movement collapsed.

Futile Attempts to Revive Caliphate

Presently there are more than 50 countries with predominantly Muslim population, but all are without a Caliph. In 1979, following what was an "Islamic Revolution" in Iran, indeed the secular kingdom of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was replaced by a religious based power structure. The Islamic Republic of Iran claims to run the affairs of the state on Shia Islamic principles; but the Iranian religious leaders are unable to call for a global Imamate or Caliphate. They are waiting for the appearance of the "hidden Imam" who is the constitutional Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran!

Muslims are coming to the realization that the root cause for their failure in reviving Caliphate is the decline in their observance of religious practices and lack of spirituality. Several Islamic political parties and groups (including the militant *al-Qaeda*) are calling the Muslims to get united for the restoration of a global Caliphate; but apparently there is no agreement on its methodology. US President George Bush seems to be perturbed about such calls coming from the terrorist groups. He wants to “open a new chapter in the fight against enemies of freedom, against those who in the beginning of 21st century call Muslims to restore Caliphate and to spread shariah.” President Bush thinks that the so-called Jihadists/militants "hope to establish a violent political utopia across the Middle East, which they call Caliphate, where all would be ruled according to their hateful ideology...This Caliphate would be a totalitarian Islamic empire encompassing all current and former Muslim lands, stretching from Europe to North Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia." But the Ahmadi Muslims have full conviction that nothing like that shall ever emerge, and President Bush need not have any concerns about a rising Caliphate of this nature. According to the Prophecy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) the promised *Khilafat* on the precept of Prophethood (*ala minhaj-e-nabuwwat*), which is purely spiritual in nature, has already been established, since 1908, within the world of Islam under Divine Will. It is known as *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya*.

The Ahmadiyya *Khilafat*

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) -peace be on him - claimed to be the Imam of the Age, the Mahdi, and the awaited Messiah -- a Prophet of God, but in full subordination to the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). He initiated the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in 1889. Though he lived in a small village, Qadian, in the Punjab, India, he claimed that his mission was universal – to revive faith in One God, to remove the love for materialism, and to unify all mankind. He declared:

“I have been sent to strengthen faith in God by proving He exists and by making His Being manifest to the people. The condition of faith has become so weak that the Hereafter is now taken as a mere fantasy, and the actions of men clearly show that the degree of certainty with which they believe in this world, and the sort of trust which they put in worldly means, they do not possess such conviction about God and

the Hereafter. They pay a lot of lip-service to God, but their hearts are dominated by the love of the world alone. Therefore, I have been sent so that Truth and Faith may again dominate, and fear of God may again be kindled in the hearts of men! These are the ends for which I have come!" (*Kitab al-Barriyya*, pp. 293-294.)

He admonished his followers:

"Be united, and give up all miserliness, rancor, jealousy and lack of compassion. There are two great Commandments of the Holy Quran. One is Unity, love and obedience of the Lord, hallowed be His name; and secondly, sympathy with your brethren and with the whole of mankind." (*Azala Auham*, pp.446-452.).

"This age has become empty of true righteousness and purity. The way of the Holy Prophet, which is the means of purification, has been discarded. Now God Almighty desires that the time of Prophethood should be revived in this age, and the same righteousness and purity may be re-established. Thus the purpose of God Almighty in setting up this (*Ahmadiyya*) Community is that the lost understanding might be re-established in the world through this Community." (*Speeches*, pp.21-22.)

To achieve these objectives, his methodology was clearly defined:

"This humble one is appointed by the Omnipotent and Most Glorious God to work for the betterment of mankind in the manner of the Israeli prophet of Nazareth, the Messiah, with extreme humility, meekness, modesty, love and courtesy. To those who are unaware of the right way, I am to show them the straight path through which they can achieve true Salvation, and feel in this very world the signs of achieving heavenly life, and experience the enlightenment of being accepted and loved by God." (*Tabligh Risalat*, Vol. 1, p.11.).

Khilafat on the Precept of Prophethood Revived

He successfully initiated his mission, and a vibrant Community of believers was firmly established in his lifetime. Upon his death, on May 27, 1908, his first successor, Hadhrat Maulana Nur-ud-Deen (May Allah be please with him) was unanimously elected. He was entitled *Khalifa-tul-Masih* to continue the mission of the Mahdi and the Promised Messiah. On

his demise, Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad (1889-1965) was elected on March 13, 1914, to be the second *Khalifa* of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. He constituted an Electoral College for *Khilafat* elections, which has conducted smooth elections in 1965, 1982 and 2003 of the successors at the demise of each preceding *Khalifa*. Presently, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his strength) is the 5th *Khalifa* of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. Thus, *Khilafat* is once again firmly established on the precept of Prophethood.

Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya and Caliphate

Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya is the bona-fide institution that has set goals to lead mankind on the path of righteousness, to bring Unity among the nations of the world, and to establish peace and security by safeguarding freedom, life and honor of all human-beings! The Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* is distinct in many ways from the so-called “Caliphate” of the past monarchies. The *Khalifa* is elected by means of and with the help of prayers on the basis of piety and righteousness. As the Holy Quran guides: “Verily Allah commands you to entrust authority into the hands of those who are best fitted to discharge it” (4:59), *Khilafat* is a responsibility to be entrusted to the most deserving person who is capable of serving God and His servants, devoting his time and faculties under the authority of the Word of God and examples set by the Holy Prophet of Islam. The Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* believes in promoting peace and harmony by reforming human character from within on moral basis. It rejects the use of force and violence in matters of faith. According to the Ahmadiyya *Khilafat*, the methods to propagate one’s religious convictions should always remain peaceful; that is, encouraging mutual dialogue and gentle persuasion among various faith traditions. It exhorts to establish fundamental human rights at all levels, and promotes human services.

The Institution of *Shura* in *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya*

The Holy Quran makes mutual consultation (*Shura*) incumbent upon the leadership to utilize in policy making and administrative matters (3:160). The Ahmadiyya *Khilafat*, therefore, gives utmost importance to consultation between elected leaders and competent representatives of the Community. *Shura* is a vitally important process under *Khilafat*. At the same time, the members of the Community are fully trained to listen and obey the final decisions made by the leadership in conjunction with obedience to the

Commandments of God and those of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him).

Essence of the Ahmadiyya *Khilafat*

The Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* differs significantly from the misplaced aspirations of some Muslim groups for political and militaristic dominance over the entire world. The Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* is apolitical; spiritual and religious in nature. Thus, the Ahmadis do believe in the concept of “separation of the State and Church”. While respecting the will of the people to adopt varying political systems that may suit them for beneficial administration of their public affairs, it does not aspire for political authority. Though the ideal Islamic state calls for the head of the government to exercise both the secular and religious authority, the institution of *Khilafat* can and should remain focused on moral and spiritual matters only, providing necessary guidance to the political leaders to the maintenance of justice and social harmony.

While other Muslims wait for a Mahdi who would wage a “bloody” Jihad against the infidels, the Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* holds the motto of “Love for all, hatred for none.” Following the teachings of its founder, it believes and practices the Jihad which entails overcoming sinful and immoral temptations of one’s own self, remaining firm in faith, and improving the quality of social life. It abhors terrorism, and strongly rejects violence. It teaches loyalty to one’s country, and to respect and obey the law of the land where one lives. Desired change in laws should be brought about through the legitimate legal process, and not through creating chaos and disorder in a country. The Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* is fighting the “good fight” against ignorance, disease, hunger and immorality. By doing so, it upholds the conviction that it will remain the recipient of the Divine support as long as it is working under God’s Commandments.

To conclude, the Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* has successfully emerged as the leading force among Muslims to follow the precepts set by the holy Prophet of Islam. It is engaged in establishing faith in the Unity of God all over the world. It teaches the Holy Quran, and promotes knowledge and wisdom. It is exerting to bring uniformity among the people belonging to various races and ethnic groups. It is promoting moral reformation of individuals, teaching mutual love and respect. Above all, the Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* is helping man to establish a living and loving relationship with God.