

## Four Rightly Guided Caliphs

DISCLAIMER: This reminder was originally delivered in Arabic on Friday, 22 May 2009. Any meanings lost in translation are not to be attributed to the speaker as reminders are translated by volunteers. The mosque has no official translator and volunteers often have no formal qualifications to translate on the day. Please forgive any errors as they are from our human weakness and any right guidance is from God.

Oh Muslims - we reached the time of the fourth Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib but before continuing our journey through the lives of the ten people who were promised paradise during the life time of the Prophet (pbuh) we shall pause while saying farewell to the four rightly guided Caliphs; Abu Bakr, Umar, Othman and Ali.

These four men who ruled the Islamic nation for a short period – the time of rightly guided Caliphate- were the fairest, most noble and honourable Muslim rulers after the Prophet (pbuh). That blessed period of the Islamic nation was one of the best eras of Islamic rule as those Caliphs gave the best of examples for justice, equality and freedom. They were rulers but in the same time they were reviewed, criticised and even opposed by their own people. They used to hear the word of truth and accept it even if it was against their opinion. They followed the footsteps of the Prophet (pbuh) in ruling the Islamic nation and kept their covenant with Allah. The Prophet (pbuh) knew about their discipline and commitment to his way so he ordered his nation to adhere to their way after him (pbuh).

The Prophet (pbuh) said:" There shall be Prophethood among you for as long as Allah wishes it to be among you. Then it shall be lifted up when Allah wishes to lift it up. Then there shall be successorship (khilafa) on the pattern of Prophethood for as long as Allah wishes it to be. Then it shall be lifted up when Allah wishes to lift it up. Then there shall be a trying kingship for as long as Allah wishes it to be. Then it shall be lifted up when Allah wishes to lift it up. .Then there shall be successorship on the pattern of Prophethood". These are the historical stages through which the Islamic nation will go through as described by the Prophet (pbuh).

It is reported in the Sunan of Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi that al Irbad ibn Sariyah said, "The Messenger of Allah gave us a sermon by which our hearts were filled with fear and tears came to our eyes. We said, "O Messenger of Allah, it is as though this is a farewell Sermon, so counsel us." He said: "I counsel you to fear Allah and to give absolute obedience, even if a slave becomes your leader. Verily he among you who lives (long) will see very great controversy, so you must keep to my Sunnah, and that of the rightly guided Caliphs after me; cling to them stubbornly. Beware of newly invented matters for every invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is a going astray".

So in a time like our time, when turmoil and calamities increase – by the Muslim's own hands and by the hands of non Muslims who look for muslims' turns of misfortune- we must cling stubbornly to the way of the Prophet (pbuh) and his rightly guided Caliphs and follow their way in belief, speech and actions. In the previous hadith, the Prophet (pbuh) combined between his tradition (sunnah) and the tradition of the four rightly guided Caliphs - who followed his tradition anyway - as he knew that their way of understanding

Islam and extracting rules would be safe and free from distortion and deviation and misguidance.

Abdullah bin Masoud said: 'Whoever wants to adopt a way from amongst you, let him adopt the way of those who died (because the living is not safe from Fitnah), they were the companions of the prophet (pbuh) having the best hearts of this Ummah, most profound in knowledge, least in formalities; God chose them to accompany his prophet (pbuh) and to establish his religion. So we should respectfully recognize their role and hold to their guidance because, truly, they were on the straight path'.

Oh Muslims,

The Islamic nation has been unanimous on giving the title 'the rightly guided Caliphs' to the first four Caliphs; Abu Bakr, Umar, Othman and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all). Ibn Umar said:' during the lifetime of the Prophet we considered Abu Bakr as peerless and then Umar and then Othman (coming next to him in superiority) and then we used not to differentiate between the companions of the Prophet' [Bukhari - in the book of the merits of the companions] and there is no doubt that Ali was one of the best companions of the Prophet (pbuh). Some muslim scholars have chosen to go in preference between the four Caliphs in order of their succession in the Caliphate.

Oh Muslims,

Through our very short and quick reflections on the personalities, abilities and merits of the four Caliphs we came to the conclusion that they are- without any doubt- the best people of this nation after the Prophet (pbuh). At the same time, there is a difference in their status depending on the bounty given to them by Allah and the potential that made them leaders in many aspects of their lives.

The period of the rightly guided Caliphate is the best proof that Islam can produce capacities and capabilities and blow open the field and the prospects for every Muslim to create, excel and find their way towards excellence. Allah has opened the way for you to enter and participate in this bounty "And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājireen and the Anṣār and those who followed them with good conduct – Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment." [Al-Tawbah 9:100]. So if you want to join those forerunners then you should excel in your religion "And who is better in religion than one who submits himself to Allāh while being a doer of good and follows the religion of Abraham, inclining toward truth?" [Al-Nisa 4:125] and excel in everything in your life "Allah has written ihsan in everything".

May Allah guide us to whatever pleases Him.

والحمد لله رب العالمين