

ADMINISTRATION UNDER PIOUS CALIPHS

SEMESTER : III

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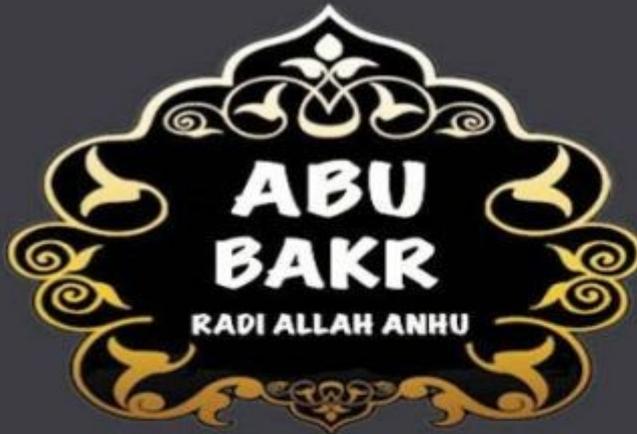


THE FOUR CALIPHS

The Four Rightly Guided Caliphs were the first four Caliphs that ruled after the death of Muhammed. It was a period during which Islam flourished and spread widely beyond Arabian peninsula to unify nations and large territories. Their importance to the unity of Islam was critical, because they provided transition after Muhammed's death. They largely preserved his cause and grew the Muslim territory and following, although the last two caliphs were also the cause for the split between Muslims

The Pious Caliphs were the first four Caliphs. They were:

- ❖ **Abu Bakr**
- ❖ **Umar**
- ❖ **Uthman**
- ❖ **Ali**



The first Caliph who helped spread Islam was Muhammed's father-in-law, Abu-Bakr. He served for only 2 years, from 632 to his death in 634, but is considered by many as an ideal Muslim caliph. His most major accomplishment during his rule was unifying the various Arab tribes at a critical time to the fate of Islam and leading them in conquering new lands. Most of them did not believe or support Islam, and weren't willing to follow Abu-Bakr as their ruler. In 633, he defeated the Bedouin revolt, after which he was able to convince the whole Arabian Peninsula to accept him as their Caliph ("The rightly guided caliphs").

He not only secured Islam, but spread it to Syria, Palestine and Iraq. He also ensured the sameness of Islamic religion and the moral teachings of the holy Qur'an compared to the prophet's time. Abu Bakr had wanted to expand his territory from Arabia and planned to take over two other nearby threats, which were the Byzantine Empire and the Sassanid Empire. He planned on commencing a campaign against them, however he died before being able to do so ("The four caliphs").

The second Caliph was named Umar, another father-in-law of Muhammed. His reign lasted from 634 to 644, significantly longer than Abu-Bakr's reign. His main achievements were several military victories, which helped spread the belief and knowledge of Islam and bring large territories and populations under one administration. He conquered Damascus in 635, Jerusalem in 637, Babylon in 641 and Alexandria in 642, adding lands in Syria, Egypt, Persia and North Africa ("The rightly guided caliphs"). He introduced the Islamic calendar to be used by all Muslims, ran public census, and started the construction of public facilities.

Umar also established the departments of military, education, jails, taxation, police, public treasury and regulations on how regional rulers should interact with their citizens, organized the armies, appointed judges. Education in the Quran became more widespread. Umar used a policy of religious tolerance so that his newfound subjects would remain loyal to him, e.g. did not force conversion to Islam. This attracted especially the People of the Book, Christians and Jews, who had until recently been under the suppressive reign of the Byzantines. They were allowed to worship their own religion in exchange for acceptance of Muslim governance and a special tax. During his reign, justice was enforced everywhere and he proved to be a model of the administration of justice for those who followed him. His empire turned out to become the second biggest in the world, only beat by China's empire ("The four rightly guided caliphs").

The third Caliph was a member of the Umayyad family. His name was Osman (or Uthman), and he served for 12 years, from 644 to 656. Osman continued the policies of the previous caliphs, such as impartial justice for all, mild and humane policies, and the expansion of Islam to Lybia, Cyprus, Afghanistan, Armenia and Azerbaijan. He organized a navy, changed administrative divisions, and completed many public projects. The first six years of his rule were peaceful. Tribal and nationalistic differences were discouraged.

Most significantly, he created a single definitive piece of text for the Quran in one dialect. This was very important in unifying Muslims everywhere as it ensured they all had one version of the book to worship and prevented conflicts and disagreements over this matter. Some of Osman's actions, however, were not always very popular with all of his followers, and this led to grievances and questions about who had the right to political power ("Islamic history: four rightly guided caliphs"). He was killed in a rebellion, starting the end of unity among Muslims.

The fourth and final Caliph was Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin, who ruled from 656 till 661. Ali was recognized as a devoted, fair, courageous and wise Muslim scholar. He was selected to be a Caliph by the opponents of Osman. As a result, his election was not recognized by Osman's supporters in Syria, and a civil war broke out, with them demanding the punishment of Osman's killers. When Ali tried to make a compromise with them to keep peace and unity, a group of his supporters called the Kharijites turned against him and assassinated him ("Islamic history: four rightly guided caliphs"). These events and disagreements over rules of succession led to a split among Muslims into two groups, Sunni and Shia, which has continued since.

With the death of Ali, the first and most successful phase in the history of Islam came to an end. Abu Bakr's main achievement was that he secured order and unity among tribes in the territory conquered under Muhammed. Umar was responsible for large territorial expansions and tolerant administration of the lands where he spread Islam. Under Osman, even though he continued expansion and developed a definitive Quran for use by all Muslims, the first signs of disunity started to show caused by the question of right to political leadership. Ali's reign was complicated by this issue from the start and he was not able to restore order, eventually leading to the definite split within Islam.

THANK YOU