

The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

THE RIGHTEOUS CALIPHS

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There is no mention of any of the early caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali) in the Quran by name. Even with regards the Quranic narrative which captures the event when Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) found himself in a cave with a close companion while they were fleeing, no name of the companion is mentioned.

009:040 (Part)

"If you help him not, certainly God helped him when those who disbelieved drove him out, the second of two; when they two were in the cave, when he said to his **companion (Arabic: Sahibi)...**"

However, there is support from a Quranic verse that succession (Khilafa) of some sort which possibly included power and authority in the land would be granted to those companions amongst the Prophet's contemporaries that remained steadfast and worked righteous deeds.

024.055

God has promised, to those among you (**Arabic: minkum**) who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will, surely grant them succession (**Arabic: layasta-KHLIFA-nnahum**) in the land, as He granted it to those before them; that He will surely establish for them their religion which he has approved from them; and that He will change, after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace: 'They will worship Me (alone) and not associate anything with Me. 'If any do reject Faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked.

No names are of course mentioned, nor any indication whether such personalities would remain righteous or not if such power and responsibility was granted to them. That matter of judgment solely remains with God. Hence, one also notes the proviso "If any do reject faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked..."

The word '**Khilafa**' comes from the root 'Kh-Lam-Fa' which means in this context to come after, to succeed or to follow.

خلف

1. **خَلَفَ**, aor. ², inf. n. **خَلْفٌ**, *He came after, followed, succeeded, or remained after, another, or another that had perished or died. (TA.)* Hence, in the **Qur** [vii. 168 and xix. 60], **فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ** (TA) *And there hath succeeded them, or come after them, [a posterity, or] an evil posterity. (Bd in xix. 60.)* And **خَلَفَهُ** *He came after him, (S, A in art. دبر, Mgh, Mṣb, TA,) or behind him, (A ubi suprà, Mgh,) or following him nearly; (A ubi suprà;) inf. n. as above, (Mgh, TA,) and خَلْفَةٌ also: (Mgh:) or he remained after him: (K:) and جَاءَ خَلْفَهُ like-*

Source: Edward Lanes Lexicon [1]

The following can be clearly ascertained from the above verse (24:55):

- A promise of succession (Khilafa) to those among (minkum) the contemporaries of the Prophet who believe and remain righteous
- Establishment of the correct religion through them
- Change of state from fear to one of security and peace
- They have been instructed to remain strong monotheists. They should worship God alone and not associate any partners with God.
- If they reject faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked (Arabic: Fasiqs)

However, nothing has been left by the hands of the companions with respect to any vestige of knowledge. There are no Hadith compilations or any other sources which they instructed to canonise apart from upholding the integrity of the Quran.

The only legacy we have from them is the Quran.

What we learn about the early companions is only through primarily oral sources ([Islamic secondary sources](#)) often centuries removed from the time they attempt to depict. Sunni Muslims have their own sources and Shia Muslims have theirs. An ardent study of all these sources reveals that each source depicts the caliphate ministries and individual personalities with their own particular bias.

FINAL THOUGHTS

If caliphate was granted to the immediate companions of the Prophet, there is support from the Quranic verses to suggest that this was due to their **steadfastness and righteousness** before they received their caliphate. What happened thereafter is a matter only for God to decide with respect to the judgment of their souls.

It is also significant to note the following verse in this context which was the advice given to Prophet Muhammad ^(pbuh) when being informed of great patriarchs such as Prophets Abraham, Ishmael, Ishaq and Jacob. ^(pbuh)

002.134

"Those are a people who have passed away. Theirs is that which they earned, and yours is that which you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do"

So it is clear how one should think of future generations of personalities after the Prophet's demise.

We should think well of all believers, especially those that succeeded the Prophet. Much is written about them centuries removed from source. The level of truth in these sources is dependant on the faith one places on the veracity of these sources. We only know of them and their works through the mouths and words of future men. In the end, only God knows best the states of their hearts.

"These are a people that have passed away ..."

May they rest in peace, God willing.

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REFERENCES

[1] LANE. E.W, Edward Lanes Lexicon, Williams and Norgate 1863; Librairie du Liban Beirut-Lebanon 1968, Volume 2, Page 792

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