

KHILAFAT IN ISLAM: DIMENSIONS

Khilafat is a very important concept in Islam. It has important implications in the political system of Islam. Many important groups have made it a part of their programme to establish Khilafat. It is therefore necessary to be clear about the concept of Khilafat.

Khilafat has three important dimensions. In the moral and spiritual sense, Khilafat means that all human beings are 'Khalifa of Allah' or representatives of Allah on earth. This is the purport of the verse "Surely, we are going to place our representatives (Khalifa) on earth" [verse 30 : Sura Baqara]. All human beings are khalifa of Allah though many of them commit sins and do not act like khalifa. (Ref.: Quran, 6:165; 27:62 and 35:39). This is the spiritual khilafat in Islam. Khilafat also means the political system of Islam. This is the most mentioned dimension of Khilafat. Khilafat, as a system of politics and management of state was established by the companions of Prophet (sm). The main points of khilafat or political system of Islam are as follows:

- a. Sovereignty of Allah which means supremacy of Shariah (Quran and Sunnah). The basic law of the state shall be based on the Quran and the Sunnah. The detailed subsidiary law is obtained by Ijtihad carried out by individual or groups of scholars or made by the Parliament in the present day world with the aid of the Ulama or scholars of Islam.
- b. Government established by the free choice of the people. This is the majority view. In the present world, this means government elected by the people. There is agreement on this among the Ulama of Islam. There is hardly any major difference. This is the system accepted in the Islamic constitutions in force in the Muslim world.

- c. Fundamental rights : All citizens should have human rights irrespective of gender or creed. The Islamic Constitutions of the world have a chapter on the Fundamental rights or Rights of the people which are available to all the citizens in the state. These rights have been agreed to or confirmed by Ulama after long debates in the light of the Quran and Sunnah.
- d. Rule of Law and Independence of Judiciary are important points of Islamic political system.
- e. Shura or consultation with the people and among the persons in the Government through various forum including Parliament is an important element in Islamic political theory. This is the basis of democracy in Islam. Large number of scholars feel that the term democracy can be used in Islamic framework. (Ref.: Preamble of Islamic Constitution of Pakistan which says that the state shall strive to observe "democracy as enunciated by Islam". Ulama accepted this phrase.)

These are the various elements of Islamic political system which go to make Khilafat (Ref.: Khilafat and Mulukiat by Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi, other books on Islamic Political thought and Islamic Constitutions of Iran and Pakistan).

The third dimension of Khilafat is that it means the form of Government in Islam. The Ulama have now agreed by and large that in the framework of overall Islamic political theory, both Presidential and Parliamentary Governments of to-day are consistent with Islam (Ref.: Islamic Constitution of Iran and Pakistan, Islamic Law and Constitution by Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi,). In the present circumstances, it is our duty to try to run our respective states on the basis of Islamic principles or the principles of Khilafat as outlined above. In fact almost all major Islamic parties are working in this direction which is the right political course in the present circumstances. In conclusion, we can say that Khilafat does not only mean that the President should be called Khalifa, it is much more than that. It is in essence the political system of Islam.