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Initiatives of the Four Caliphs' Social Reforms

A Research and Analytical Study in the Light of Arabic Islamic Literature

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Abstract:

The Noble Messenger Muhammad's (peace and blessings of Allah Almighty on him) companions are the world's ambassadors and preachers of Islam, spread the religion to all corners of the globe. For this, they presented themselves from every aspect. As a result, it has been said: Allah Almighty is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him¹. There are several grades between them because of their superiority and politeness. The four Caliphs Rashidin (Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq, Hazrat Umar, Hazrat Usman, Hazrat Ali) were the closest companions of the Noble Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah Almighty on him) who not only made significant contributions to the life of the Noble Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah Almighty on him) but also consolidated and strengthened the Muslim Ummah socially, economically, and in every aspect of life. They took many initiatives for the social reforms.

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the initiatives for the social reform of the four caliphs. In this article, it is discussed, after the Noble Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah Almighty on him), how his companions established and strengthened society socially and in other fields of life.

¹ *al-Maidah: 119*

Keywords: Four Caliphs, Social reform,

Introduction:

During his prophethood, the Supreme leader Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah almighty on him) brought the Age of Ignorance's culture up to the highest moral standards. This happened through his social reforms.

Throughout his lifetime, the Noble Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah almighty on him) never appointed an heir. Also, he (peace and blessings of Allah Almighty on him) did not inherit any strategy outlining how Muslims would govern themselves. The Muslim Glorious book also didn't contain verses that categorically relate to a state or system of administration. Although it highlighted that the shura should be used as a guide in administrative concerns. Due to this, at the last moment of the Supreme Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah almighty on him), chaos rose. Various temptations started to arise. Seeing the delicacy of the situation, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) stepped forward and managed the affairs as the head and protected the society from fitnah and mischief. People also accepted you wholeheartedly. He (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) was affirmed the first ruler of the Muslim Ummah after the Noble Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah almighty on him). To protect society from all sorts of disputes, implement some social reforms after taking over and delivered a sermon.

After praising Allah Almighty, he (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) addressed:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، فَإِنِّي قَدْ وُلِّيتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَسْتُ بِخَيْرِكُمْ، فَإِن أَحْسَنْتُ فَأَعِينُونِي، وَإِن أَسَأْتُ فَفَقِّمُونِي،
الصِّدْقُ أَمَانَةٌ، وَالْكَذِبُ خِيَانَةٌ، وَالضَّعِيفُ فِيكُمْ قَوِيٌّ عِنْدِي حَتَّى أُرِيحَ عَلَيْهِ حَقَّهُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ،
وَالْقَوِيُّ فِيكُمْ ضَعِيفٌ عِنْدِي حَتَّى آخِذَ الْحَقَّ مِنْهُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ، لَا يَدْعُ قَوْمُ الْجِهَادِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا

ضَرَبَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِالذُّلِّ، وَلَا تَشِيْعُ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي قَوْمٍ قَطُّ إِلَّا عَمَّهُمُ اللَّهُ بِالْبَلَاءِ، أَطِيعُونِي مَا أَعْطَتْ اللَّهُ
وَرَسُولَهُ، فَإِذَا عَصَيْتُ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَلَا طَاعَةَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ. قُومُوا إِلَى صَلَاتِكُمْ يَرْحَمُكُمُ اللَّهُ.²

“O, people! I am made a ruler over you even though I am not superior to you. If I perform beautifully please assist me; if I do poorly, then make me straight and established. Whoever is weak among you is powerful to me because honesty is the foundation of trust and lying is the height of treachery. Whoever is mighty and strong among you is weak and feeble to me, and I will give him his right. If God wills, I will grant him the people's rights. The people who abandoned Jihad in the way of God, Allah humiliates that people and the people in which obscene acts are commonly practiced, Allah sends down various calls on them. O, people! You must obey me as long as I follow the instructions of God and His Messenger, and if I disobey them, you must obey me as well. Now stand up for your prayer. May Allah have mercy on you.”

In his first sermon, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) introduced social reform. He (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) trampled the distinction of status under his feet by saying that he was not superior because he was a ruler. Rather he is like ordinary people. He (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) mentioned in his sermon that everyone has the right to inquire if he gives special honor to anyone, acts fairly, or shows injustice. Another social issue that he reformed strictly was stealing from the vulnerable and usurping their rights. Expressed most important point which is causing the destruction of social values is the generalization of obscene acts. Obedience to the leader is obligatory as long as he is following the orders of Allah and His Messenger.

It's crucial that everything is said purely for Allah's pleasure in order to maintain social harmony. If a person says something that does not involve the wish of Allah. Of

² Abd al-Malik bin Hisham bin Ayoub, *Biography of the Prophet by Ibn Hisham, (Mustafa Al-Babi Al-Halabi & Sons Library and Printing Company, Egypt, 1955), Vol. 2, P. 661.*

course there will be some personal gain or loss for someone other. There can be fine in society when the purpose of what you say is only for God's pleasure.

Therefore, it is necessary to do every act, say or write any quotation, this will be only for the will of Allah Almighty. As Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (peace be upon him) said in his sermon:

وَلَا حَيْرَ فِي قَوْلٍ لَا يُرَادُ بِهِ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى³

"There is nothing good in this saying that does not seek the happiness of Allah".

At one point, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) dispatched an army in the direction of Syria. He selected Hazrat Yazid bin Abi Sufyan (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) to take charge of this army and serve as its commander. When the army was getting ready to leave, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) gave them a sermon in which he advised them on ten things which are followings:

لا تقتلوا امرأة، ولا صبياً، ولا كبيراً هرمًا، ولا تقطع شجرةً مثمرًا، ولا تحزن عامرًا، ولا تعقر شاة

ولا بغيراً إلا لماكلة، ولا تغرقن نخلاً، ولا تحرقنه، ولا تغلل، ولا تجبن.⁴

“Not to kill women, boys, or elderly people; not to cut down any fruit trees; not to destroy any populations; not to slaughter a camel for any reason other than sustenance; not to uproot a palm tree or burn it; and neither to be wasteful nor miserly. These are the commandments.”

When it came time to choose an Ameer to administer the affairs of the community after the death of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah Almighty on him), the people were split into different factions. There were some who were demanding that

³ Abu Naeem al-Asbhani, *Haliyat al-Awaliya*, vol. 1, p. 36.

⁴ Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Muhammad, *Ibn Khaldun, Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut*, Volume: 2, p: 489.

there should be two leaders. So Hazrat Abu Bakr Sadiq (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) said:

لَا يَجِلُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ أَمِيرَانِ , فَإِنَّهُ مَهْمَا يَكُنْ ذَلِكَ يَخْتَلِفُ أَمْرُهُمْ وَأَحْكَامُهُمْ , وَتَتَفَرَّقُ
جَمَاعَتُهُمْ , وَيَتَنَازَعُوا فِيمَا بَيْنَهُمْ , هُنَالِكَ تُتْرَكُ السُّنَّةُ , وَتَظْهَرُ الْبِدْعَةُ , وَتَعْظُمُ الْفِتْنَةُ , وَلاَ يَسَ
لِأَحَدٍ عَلَى ذَلِكَ صَلاَحٌ⁵

"It is forbidden for Muslims to have more than one Amir. It is possible that their judgements and decisions will be different, that sectarianism will develop among Muslims, that there will be conflicts, that the Sunnah will be abandoned, that innovation will appear, that sedition will take hold, and that none of this will be beneficial for anybody."

Zakat is an important part of Islam and is also important for the health of society as a whole. Which every rich person has to do at a certain rate. During the time of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him), some people refused to give Zakat. Zakat is important for keeping peace and order in society. If a poor person's wants aren't met, he will choose to steal, rob, or do other bad things. Because of this Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (peace be upon him) declared war against them. As has been mentioned:

وَاللَّهِ لَأُقَاتِلَنَّ مَنْ فَرَّقَ بَيْنَ الصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ فَإِنَّ الزَّكَاةَ حَقُّ الْمَالِ وَاللَّهُ لَوْ مَنَعُونِي عَنَّا كَانُوا يُؤَدُّوهَُا
إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَقَاتَلْتُهُمْ عَلَى مَنَعِهَا⁶

"I swear of Allah! I will battle anyone who makes a distinction between zakat and prayer because zakat is the right to wealth, while prayer is an obligation. I swear to Allah that if

⁵ Hamad bin Al-Hussein bin Ali bin Musa, Abu Bakr Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Sunan Al-Kubra, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Alami, Beirut - Labanat, Ed: 3, Number: 16650

⁶ Sahih Bukhari, Book of Zakat, Chapter Wajub al-Zakwat, Hadith: 1400

they withhold even one kid of the goat that they were supposed to pay to the Messenger of Allah, I will surely fight with them even if they withhold it.”

It is a common practise to take the life of another person in order to accomplish one's goals. The thief, in particular, is the one who takes the property. When there is opposition, it kills. Killing is a terrible act and is considered one of the big sins. Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (peace be upon him) said:

عن أبي برزة الأسلمي، قال: غضب أبو بكر من رجل، فاشتد غضبه جداً، فقلت: يا خليفة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم- اضرب عنقه، قال: ويلك! ما هي لأحد بعد رسول الله صلى

الله عليه وسلم⁷

“Abu Barza narrated that Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique was very angry with a person, so I asked him, Caliph of the Noble Messenger, kill him. You said you are bad. No one have authority to do that after the Messenger of Allah.”

It is vital for a person to obey the chief of the area in order to ensure the wellbeing of the society as a whole. Follow the instructions that have been given to you and put an end to the behaviours that have been prohibited. Because every member of the society will behave in accordance with his or her own will and interests, many people's rights will be violated as a result. the prerequisite is that the chief possesses a good moral character.

السمع والطاعة لمن ولاة الله أمركم فإنه من يطع الله وأولي الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر فقد

أفلح وأدى الذي عليه من الحق 8

⁷ Tarikh al-Khilafah, page: 81, Abu Dawud, volume: 4, page: 4363.

⁸ Abd al-Rahman bin Abi Bakr, Jalal al-Din Al-Suyuti, History of the Caliphs, Nizar Mustafa Al-Baz Library, 1425 AH, p. 83.

“Because the human is to obey Allah and His rulers who enjoin good and forbid evil, the comprehensive word of Allah is to obey the person ruled by Allah. Whoever obeys Allah and His authorities, who encourage good and forbid evil, has accomplished his duty and his right.”

During one war in Iraq, Hazrat Umar (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) appointed Hazrat Saad bin Abi Waqqas (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) as the main commander and gave him the following instructions:

يا سعد بن أم سعد لا يغرنك من الله أن يقال خال رسول الله وصاحب رسول الله فإن الله لا يحو السيء بالسيئ ولكنه يحو السيء بالحسن وليس بين الله وبين أحد نسب إلا بطاعته فالناس في دين الله سواء الله رهم وهم عباده يتفاضلون بالعافية ويدركون ما عنده بالطاعة. فانظر الأمر الذي رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يلزمه فألزمه وعليك بالصبر⁹.

“O Saad bin Abi Waqqas, do not let the thought that you are the maternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah and his Companions make you careless of Allah. As a result of the fact that Allah doesn't forgive evil for evil; instead forgives evil for good. Regarding Allah, obedience and self-denial are the only things that set people apart from one another. According to him, all creatures are equal and differ according to religion. Allah is the Sustainer of all. And each one of them is His servant; but, the accumulation of good works might elevate the status of some above others. And through obedience comes His pleasure. So keeping in mind the things that you have seen the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah Almighty on him) do and considering them as necessary the things that he (peace and blessings of Allah Almighty on him) had authorized, you should be patient.”

Once, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) delivered a speech for the purpose of educating the people in which he provided a great

⁹ Ibn Khaldun, Vol. 2 p. 529.

point of guidance. The everyday routine of a man involves dealing with a variety of issues concerning his existence. If he takes into account Allah's pleasure in the situation, then Allah's assistance will also be taken into account. If there is a decent motive behind one's work or affairs, then such things will acquire a position of approval with Allah Almighty. He (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) emphasised the significance of moderation in maintaining a healthy and successful social life, one in which there is neither an abundance nor a scarcity of affairs. Another important thing that you have pointed out is that following it is noble and honorable and abandoning it is disgraceful as you said:

ألا لكل أمر جوامع، فمن بلغها فهي حسبه، ومن عمل لله كفاه الله، عليكم بالجد والقصد
فإن القصد أبلغ، ألا إنه لا دين لأحد لا إيمان له، ولا إيمان لمن لا خشية له، ولا عمل لمن لا
نية له، ألا وإن في كتاب الله من الثواب على الجهاد في سبيل الله لما ينبغي للمسلم أن يجب
أن يخص به، هي النجاة التي دل الله عليها، إذ نجى بها من الخزي، وألحق بها الكرامة.¹⁰

“Every work has some purposes; if somebody achieves these goals, they are sufficient for him; and whoever does for Allah's sake, Allah is sufficient for him. Moderation is something that is required, as it is something that will get you closer to your goal. Beware, whoever lacks faith has no religion; whoever lacks fear has no faith; whoever lacks good intentions has no religion; thus, beware, his deeds are unacceptable. In the Qur'an, Jihad in the way of Allah is a great reward. Every Muslim should give special importance to it, this is the salvation towards which Allah Almighty has guided, because because of it, a person gets rid of humiliation and disgrace and he gets nobility and greatness.”

Once, Hazrat Umar Farooq (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) offered some advice regarding knowledge, which is of utmost significance in reforming social life. It is

¹⁰ Abu al-Fida Ismail bin Umar bin Kathir, *Albidaya Vannahaya*, Dar al-Fikr, vol. 7, page 3.

important to gain the knowledge that will be beneficial. No one should get the knowledge that will cause trouble for society. As has been said:

من علم شيئا فلينتفع به

“Anyone who acquires knowledge should benefit through it.”

Justice which has fundamental importance in maintaining the society. He (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) said about it:

فإن للعدل أمارات وتباشير، فأما الأمارات فالحياء والسخاء والهين واللين. وأما التباشير فالرحمة. وقد جعل الله لكل أمر بابا، ويسر لكل باب مفتاحا، فباب العدل الاعتبار،

ومفتاحه الزهد¹¹

“So there are some signs and tidings for justice. Its signs are shyness, generosity, ease and softness. As for the good news, mercy. Allah has produce a door for every matter and facilitates a key for every door. The door of justice is thought and prudence, and its key is asceticism.”

As long as individuals can get along with one another and work together, there will be prosperity in society. If the people in society are not unified with one another, there will be anarchy in this society. What Hazrat Umar Farooq has to say about it can be expressed as follows:

ولا تنازعوا فتفشلوا وتذهب ريحكم¹²

“Do not quarrel with each other, otherwise you will lose your temper”

¹¹ Albidaya Vannahaya, Vol: 7, P: 36

¹² Albidaya Vannahaya, Vol: 7, P:107

Abusing alcohol is a despicable behaviour. One of the primary reasons for this is because a drunk person loses touch with their senses. He loses all sense of what is large and what is small, as well as right and wrong, modesty, and shame. As long as a person is under the influence of alcohol, they pose a danger to the harmony that exists within our community. Because of this, drinking alcohol is strictly forbidden under Islamic law. It is strongly discouraged by the Qur'an, which refers to it as a devilish conduct.

The Companions followed it strictly. Once a governor complained to Hazrat Usman that he was a drunkard. When a chief drinks alcohol, what will happen to the common people of the area? He (may Allah be pleased with him) not only deposed him but also punished him severely. As has been mentioned:

فأمر عثمان بإحضاره وأمر بجلده، فيقال إن علياً نزع عنه حلته، وإن سعيد بن العاص جلده

بين يدي عثمان بن عفان، وعزله.¹³

“So Hazrat Usman (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) ordered them to appear and be flogged. It is said that Hazrat Ali (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) removed his robe and Saeed bin Abi Al-Aaz whipped him in front of Uthman (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him). Then Usman (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) deposed him”

For the prosperity of the society, it is necessary that the people who are leading it. Keep your mouth shut against them. As has been said by Hazrat Usman (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him):

فكفوا ألسنتكم وطعنكم وعييكم على ولاتكم¹⁴

¹³ Albidaya Vannahaya, Vol: 7, P: 155

¹⁴ Albidaya Vannahaya, Vol: 7, P: 169

“keep your mouth in check and stop from criticising and placing blame on the people in authority over you”

What should someone do if they do anything wrong? Regarding this, Hazrat Usman (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) said in his a sermon:

يا هؤلاء الغرباء! الله الله، فامحوا الخطأ بالصواب، فإن الله لا يمحو السيئ إلا بالحسن¹⁵

Saif bin Umar has narrated that Hazrat Uthman (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) climbed up on the pulpit after offering the Friday prayer and gave a speech in which he said:

“O poor people of the country! Fear Allah, fear Allah, so wipe out wrongdoing with righteousness, surely Allah wipes out wrongdoing and evil through good deeds”

As a social reform, Hazrat Usman (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) once warned in his last address, "Do not become so greedy for wealth that you start killing the rights of others." Instead, keep in mind that this world is only a place of transit. Finally, there is death. You emphasised unity as being the most crucial factor. As has been mentioned:

إن الله إنما أعطاكم الدنيا لتطلبوا بها الآخرة، ولم يعطكموها لتركنوا إليها، إن الدنيا تفتنى وإن الآخرة تبقى، لا تبترنكم الفانية، ولا تشغلنكم عن الباقية، وآثروا ما يبقى على ما يفنى، فإن الدنيا منقطعة وإن المصير إلى الله، اتقوا الله فإن تقواه جنة من بأسه، ووسيلة عنده، واحذروا من الله الغير، والزموا جماعتكم لا تصيروا أحزاباً¹⁶

“It is true that Allah Almighty sent you this world so that you could seek the Hereafter through it rather than so that you would be drawn to it. You people prefer what remains over what perishes, so don't be arrogant and don't ignore what is still alive. The world is about to end, so you need to turn to Allah and fear Him. Indeed, the fear of Allah protects against His wrath and provides the means to avoid it. Beware of anybody other than Allah,

¹⁵ Albidaya Vannahaya, Vol: 7, P: 176

¹⁶ Albidaya Vannahaya, Vol: 7, P: 215

hold the Jamaat to be obligatory, and avoid splintering into other sects and political groups”

Conclusion:

Due to their contributions and close relationship with the Prophet of Allah, the Caliphs occupy a significant place in Islam. Instead, the Prophet of Allah once remarked, "Take my path and the paths of these four of my companions if you find the time of going astray."¹⁷ You will be successful if you follow this advice. Therefore, the efforts made by the Caliphs for the purpose of social reform must be taken into consideration. Even today, for a community to be prosperity and developed, it should be accepted, and their advice should be followed.

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