

## Foreword

Praise be to Allah Who favored the faithful when He raised up among them an Apostle of their own. Peace be upon His Apostle (S.A.W.A.)<sup>1</sup> who possessed a great character and invited to the way of his Lord with wisdom and good advice, and disputed with people in a manner that is best. Allah May bless the Prophet's household whom He purified with a thorough purification, and made the reward of His Apostle's message the love for his relatives. Allah May be pleased with the Prophet's Companions who believed in him, honored him, helped him, and followed the light that was sent with him, and they are felicitous.

A few years ago, I came across a book entitled *Khilafat va intikhab* (Caliphate and Election).<sup>2</sup> In the dedication of the book he says,

“It was written: for the devotees, who endeavor in search of the truth. And for clergies, scientists, researchers, students; and for the youths who have not relied on the sayings and writings of historians, heretics, and orientalists for cognition and understanding the high position and status of the Prophet's Companions, and who are not caught in the net of hypocrisy nor have they fallen into their deceptive and foul traps.”<sup>3</sup>

Apart from these rhetorics, every researcher, who wants to know the truth about the past, must consult the sayings and writings of historians, heretics, orientalists, traditionists, interpreters, conformers and opponents, and follow what is the best of them. Supporting their own ideas, or refuting their opponent's creeds, the Sunnite and Shi'ite writers have written many books. Here we are not going to analyze all of them, but we wish to clarify the subject, to the extent that suffices the above-mentioned book, for 'the devotees who endeavor in search of the truth and original ideals of Islam'. We all worship one God, believe in one faith, follow one Prophet, recite one Qur'an and pray towards one Qibla. Small differences in views should not spoil or destroy our unity and Islamic relationship.

Of course, the unity and solidarity does not prevent us to know the truth about our faith or understand the Islamic fundamentals and customs, so we must try to settle the doubts of our brothers. We also hope that the believers, who are searching for the true and original Islam, listen to the words of both sects and

follow the best of them.

Before dealing with the issue of caliphate, we will give a summary of the Prophet's life, because it is difficult to discuss about someone's successor without knowing him. This summary is mainly based on Ibn Hisham's *al-Sirat al-nabawiyya*,<sup>4</sup> unless stated otherwise.

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1. (S.A.W.A.) = Sall Allahu 'alayhi wa alihi.

2. 'Abd al-Rahman Salimi, *Khilafat va intikhab, 'aqida ahl sunnat piramun khilafat*, Mashhad, 1384, published by the author.

3. *Ibid*, 1.

4. Ibn Hisham (d. 218/833), *al-Sirat al-nabawiyya*, ed. Mustafa al-Saqqa, et al. Egypt, 1335/1936; Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, a translation of [Ibn] Ishaq's *Sirat Rasul Allah*, London, 1955.

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