

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - The Caliphate Issue

Right to succeed

The basic point for consideration is, whether any right in fact accrued to Ali to succeed the Holy Prophet. It may be recalled that when Abu Bakr was deputed by the Holy Prophet as "Amir-ul-Hajj" (the Leader of the Pilgrimage), and the verses of the Holy Quran entitled "Declaration of Immunity" were revealed subsequently, Ali was commissioned to proceed to Makkah to announce these verses to the people assembled on the occasion of the pilgrimage. Abu Bakr remained the "Amir-ul-Hajj", and he presided over all the ceremonies connected with the Hajj, but the verses about the "Declaration of Immunity" were announced by Ali. It was later clarified by the Holy Prophet that a divine message had to be communicated to the people either by himself personally or by a member of his family. That brings out the point that while a divine message could be communicated by a member of the household of the Holy Prophet alone, any other office could be held by any other person. As the Holy Prophet was the last of the prophets, and there was to be no prophet after him that was the end of the divine mission. As the divine mission came to an end with the death of the Holy Prophet the grounds with reference to which Ali could claim preference in the matter of succession ceased to exist.

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