



## The Selection of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and Hallaq's Perspective: A Research Review

Javed Iqbal<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Faridah Yousuf<sup>2</sup> & Usmat Batool<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan,  
Email: [usmanjaved7679604@gmail.com](mailto:usmanjaved7679604@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan,  
Email: [faridahyousuf@bzu.edu.pk](mailto:faridahyousuf@bzu.edu.pk)

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Institute of Islamic Studies Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan,  
Email: [usmatbatool@bzu.edu.pk](mailto:usmatbatool@bzu.edu.pk)

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received: January 05, 2025  
Revised: March 08, 2025  
Accepted: March 18, 2025  
Available Online: March 28, 2025

#### Keywords:

Saqifah, Sunnah, Caliphate, Banu Isra'il, Ummah, Shura (consultation)

#### Corresponding Author:

Dr. Faridah Yousuf

#### Email:

[faridahyousuf@bzu.edu.pk](mailto:faridahyousuf@bzu.edu.pk)



### ABSTRACT

Many contemporary Orientalists and Occidentalists have failed to present an accurate image of various Islamic principles. Among these scholars is Wael Hallaq, who, after Joseph Schacht, is considered a prominent name in the Western academic world. Born in 1955 in Nazareth, Palestine, Hallaq earned his B.A. from Haifa University in Israel and later travelled to the United States for his Master's and PhD. He is the author of approximately 20 books and 80 articles. He has critically discussed the political, economic, social, and religious systems of Islam. Notably, he has raised objections regarding the selection process of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (Khulafā-e-Rāshidīn). According to his perspective, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did not appoint Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (RA) as his successor during his lifetime, which he considers the first political issue of the newly established Islamic state. He refers to the nomination of Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) as "World Order II", acknowledges the selection of Uthman ibn Affan (RA) as aligned with Sunnah, and although he recognises Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) as the fourth Caliph, he does not delve into his character. This article reviews Hallaq's objections.

## The Succession of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (RA)

Hallaq discusses the eras of the Rightly Guided Caliphs in his writings and particularly focuses his research on their selection processes. When referring to Abu Bakr (RA), the close companion of the Prophet ﷺ, he claims the Prophet ﷺ did not resolve the issue of succession during his life and

that this became the first challenge of the new state. In his book “*The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law*”, he writes:

“The Prophet ﷺ did not appoint Abu Bakr (RA) as his successor during his lifetime, and this was the first problem faced by the new state. The decision was made by majority in favour of Abu Bakr, and thus, he was appointed as the first Caliph.”<sup>1</sup>

However, the history of Prophethood demonstrates that no succession issue ever arose after the demise of any prophet because, prior to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, none were the Seal of the Prophets. The Prophet ﷺ said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَ: "كَانَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ تَسُوسُهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ كُلَّمَا هَلَكَ نَبِيٌّ خَلَفَهُ نَبِيٌّ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي وَسَيَكُونُ خُلَفَاءُ فَيَكْتُمُونَ، قَالُوا: فَمَا تَأْمُرُنَا، قَالَ: فُوا بِبَيْعَةِ الْأَوَّلِ فَأَلَّوْا أَعْطَوْهُمْ حَقَّهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَائِلُهُمْ عَمَّا اسْتَرَعَاهُمْ."<sup>2</sup>

Narrated by Abū Hurayrah (RA), The Prophet ﷺ said:

**“The children of Israel were governed by their Prophets. Whenever a Prophet died, another succeeded him. But there will be no Prophet after me. There will be Caliphs, and they will be many.”**

The Companions asked, “*What do you command us to do?*”

He ﷺ replied:

**“Fulfil the allegiance to the first one, and give them their due rights. Verily, Allah will question them about what He entrusted to them.”**

This hadith clearly indicates that the one who is first given the allegiance (bay'ah) by the Companions is the legitimate Caliph, and obedience to him is incumbent upon all. Thus, **Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA)** and **Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah (RA)** were the first to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr (RA), followed by the rest of the Companions.

The Prophet ﷺ did not explicitly appoint a successor during his life, and one wisdom behind this was that doing so could have affected justice and fairness and may have prevented the community from exercising their right to choose. He instead left the decision to the Ummah, giving them the freedom to choose a leader suited to their circumstances — a significant precedent for the future governance of the Muslim community.

In several places in the Qur'an, the appointment of leadership is described as a divine favour from Allah. Consider the following verses:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ... يَعْزُبُونَ عَنَّا لَيْسَ مِنَّا وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ<sup>3</sup>

**“Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [as caliphs] in the land just as He granted it to those before them, and**

<sup>1</sup>-Wael, B. Hallaq, *The Orgins and the Evolution of Islamic Laws*, pp 29.

<sup>2</sup> **Bukhārī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī***, Book of the Stories of the Prophets (*Kitāb Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā*), Chapter: What Has Been Mentioned about Banū Isrā‘īl, Ḥadīth No. 3455.

<sup>3</sup>-The Qur’ān, Sūrah al-Nūr(24:55)

that He will establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will substitute for them, after their fear, security. They will worship Me and not associate anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that – then they are the defiantly disobedient.”

Another verse states:

أَلَّذِينَ إِنَّا مَكَنْتُهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاللَّهُ عَاقِبَةُ  
الْأُمُورِ<sup>4</sup>

“[They are] those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer, give zakat, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And with Allah rests the outcome of all matters.”

Allah also declares:

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمَلِكِ تُؤْتِي الْمَلِكَ مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمَلِكَ مِمَّن تَشَاءُ □ وَتُعِزُّ مَن تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَن تَشَاءُ  
بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلِيمٌ بِقَدِيرٌ<sup>5</sup>

“Say: O Allah, Master of the Kingdom! You give dominion to whom You will and You take it away from whom You will. You honour whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is all good. Indeed, You are capable of all things.”

And in another place:

وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عِلْمُهُ<sup>6</sup>

“Allah grants His kingdom to whom He wills, and Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.”

These verses make it abundantly clear that **leadership and governance on earth are divinely mandated for Muslims**, provided they uphold **justice**, implement the **religion of Allah**, and safeguard the community. This model of governance, based on divine principles, is what is termed “**Khilāfah ‘alā Minhāj al-Nubuwwah**” — the Caliphate upon the Prophetic model.

### The Principle of “Aṣḥāḥ”

The principle of **Aṣḥāḥ** refers to the idea that when multiple capable individuals are present in an Islamic state, the one who is **most virtuous, competent, and pious** should be appointed to the position of Caliph. This principle was applied in the selection of all four Rightly Guided Caliphs.

Its basis is found in the Qur’anic verse:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>-The Qur’ān, Sūrah al-Ḥajj(22:41)

<sup>5</sup>-The Qur’ān, Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān(3:26)

<sup>6</sup>-The Qur’ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah(2:247)

<sup>7</sup>-The Qur’ān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt(49:13)

**“Indeed, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”**

Renowned Islamic thinker **Maulana Abul A‘la Maududi** also cited this verse to support the idea that:

“If there are many qualified individuals in an Islamic state, then the one who is most honoured and righteous should be chosen.”<sup>8</sup>

The selection of **Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (RA)** as Caliph aligns with this principle of **Aṣḥāb**, supported also by the indirect textual indication (*ishārat al-nass*) from the Prophet ﷺ. According to a narration in Sahih al-Bukhari:

عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيدٍ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ الْقَاسِمَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ، قَالَ: "قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ وَرَأْسَاهُ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ذَلِكَ لَوْ كَانَ وَأَنَا حَيٌّ فَأَسْتَعْفِرَ لَكَ وَأَدْعُو لَكَ، فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: وَإِنِّي لَأَطْنُكَ نُجْبُ مَوْتِي وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَلِكَ لَطَلَلْتُ آخِرَ يَوْمِكَ مُعْرَسًا بِبَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِكَ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: بَلْ أَنَا وَرَأْسَاهُ، لَقَدْ هَمَمْتُ أَوْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَابْنِهِ وَأَعْهَدَ أَنْ يَقُولَ الْقَائِلُونَ أَوْ يَتِمَّنَى الْمُتَمَنُّونَ ثُمَّ قُلْتُ يَا أَبَى اللَّهِ وَيَدْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ أَوْ يَدْفَعُ اللَّهُ وَيَأْبَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ"<sup>9</sup>

**Narrated by Yahya ibn Sa‘īd:** He said: I heard **al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad** say:

**‘Ā’ishah (RA)** said, “Oh my head!”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied,

**“If that happens while I am alive, I will seek forgiveness for you and pray for you.”**

‘Ā’ishah said, “Oh my loss! By Allah, I think you wish for my death. And if that were to happen, you would spend your last day with one of your other wives.”

The Prophet ﷺ replied,

**“Rather, [I say], ‘Oh my head!’ I had thought — or intended — to call for Abu Bakr and his son, and to make a will (regarding succession), lest some people should say something (i.e., claim leadership), or some people desire [leadership]. But then I said, ‘Allah will refuse, and the believers will prevent it,’ or ‘Allah will avert it, and the believers will reject it.’”**

This hadith points to the Prophet’s ﷺ inner intention of appointing **Abu Bakr (RA)**, indirectly affirming his suitability and pre-eminence among the Companions.

This is further supported by a narration from **Ibn Sa‘d (d. 230 AH)**:

عن أبي أمامة عن كعب بن مالك قال : إن أخذت عهدي بنبيكم ، قبل وفاته بخمس فسمعتة يقول ويحرك كفه : إنه لم يكن نبي قبلي إلا وقد كان له من أمته خليل، ألا وإن خليلي أبو بكر، إن الله اتخذني خليلاً كما اتخذ إبراهيم خليلاً<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup>-Maududi, Syed Abul A‘la. *Islami Riyasat (The Islamic State)*. Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 1967, p. 399.

<sup>9</sup>-Bukhārī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Marḍā (Book of the Sick)*, Chapter: What Is Permissible for the Sick to Say Like “I Am in Pain” or “O My Head!” or “My Pain Has Intensified”, Ḥadīth No. 5666.

<sup>10</sup>-Ibn Sa‘d, Muḥammad. *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 1st ed., 1410 AH, vol. 2, p. 173.

**Abu Umamah** narrates from **Ka'b ibn Malik** who said: "The last thing I heard from your Prophet ﷺ, five days before his passing, was while he was moving his hand and saying: 'There was no Prophet before me but that he had a best friend (khalil) from among his people. And my best friend is Abu Bakr. Allah has taken me as His Khalil just as He took Ibrahim as His Khalil.'"

This establishes that among all the Prophet's Companions, **Abu Bakr (RA)** was the most beloved and closest to the Prophet ﷺ, in both internal qualities and outward actions.

In this context, **Ibn Sa'd** also records the conduct of **'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (RA)**, which shows that **Abu Bakr's (RA)** appointment was carried out in accordance with the **consensus of the Ummah**, Qur'anic principles, mutual consultation (*shurā*), and the **Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ**. This demonstrates that the **Rāshidūn Caliphate was fundamentally elective**, not based on any theocratic or authoritarian rule.

**Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH)** writes that after the Prophet's ﷺ passing, it reached **'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (RA)** that the **Anṣār** had gathered at **Saqīfah Banī Sā'idah**, demanding leadership. **'Umar (RA)** went to inform **Abu Bakr (RA)** and brought him along with **Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ (RA)** to the Saqīfah.

When they arrived, **'Umar (RA)** was about to speak, but **Abu Bakr (RA)** motioned for him to stay quiet.<sup>11</sup>

The **Anṣār** had proposed that the leadership should be divided: one leader from the **Anṣār**, and one from the **Muhājirīn**. They were leaning towards pledging allegiance to **Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah (RA)**.<sup>12</sup>

According to **al-Ṭabarī**, when the delegation from the **Muhājirīn** arrived at Saqīfah, **Abu Bakr (RA)** addressed the gathering and said:

"Leadership belongs to the Quraysh." He then offered two candidates to the **Anṣār**: **'Umar (RA)** or **Abu 'Ubaydah (RA)**. However, **'Umar (RA)** immediately stood up and pledged allegiance to **Abu Bakr (RA)**, saying:

"You were the most honoured by the Prophet ﷺ, so you should lead."<sup>13</sup>

Following him, the rest of the Companions pledged allegiance.

The next day, **Abu Bakr (RA)** addressed the people from the pulpit and received a **general oath of allegiance (bay'ah-āmmah)** from the rest of the community. Approximately **23,000 Companions** gave their bay'ah to him. Both the **Anṣār** and **Muhājirīn** were present during this pledge, and there was **no disagreement**.

Eventually, **the entire Arabian Peninsula acknowledged Abu Bakr (RA)** as the Caliph.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>-Nāṣirī, 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad. Ā'inah-yi Ayyām Tārīkh. Maktabah Ahl al-Bayt al-'Ālamī, India, 1993, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup>-Najīb Ābādī, Akbar Shāh Khān. Tārīkh-e-Islām (The History of Islam). Lahore: Dār al-Andalus, n.d., p. 285.

<sup>13</sup>- Ibn Jarīr. Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī. Karachi: Nafīs Academy, Urdu Bazar, 2004, vol. 2, p. 405.

**In view of Idrīs Kāndhlawī, Abu Bakr (RA), ‘Umar (RA), ‘Uthmān (RA), and ‘Alī (RA)** were all righteous servants of Allah. They were deeply versed in the Qur’an and Sunnah and were true lovers of the Prophet ﷺ. They were well aware of who among them was the most suitable to lead. Thus, the Companions unanimously selected **Abu Bakr (RA)**.<sup>15</sup>

One of the key signs of Islamic leadership is the **trust of the Prophet ﷺ**, as evidenced by the appointment of Abu Bakr (RA) as **Amīr al-Ḥajj** in 9 AH.

According to **Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa‘d**,

“In the year 9 AH, under the command of the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr led the people for Hajj. Twenty camels were sent ahead, and around **300 Companions** accompanied him.”<sup>16</sup>

Another sign of leadership is that when the Prophet ﷺ was too ill to lead the ‘**Ishā**’ prayer, he instructed that **Abu Bakr (RA)** should lead the people in his place. Abu Bakr (RA) ended up leading **seventeen prayers** during the Prophet’s illness.<sup>17</sup>

**Maulana Maududi** explains: “It was ‘Umar (RA) who proposed Abu Bakr (RA) for succession. The people of Madinah, who in effect represented the whole country, accepted him without pressure or bribe, solely out of free will and admiration.”<sup>18</sup>

Even many Orientalists, despite their criticisms of Islamic teachings, acknowledge the legitimacy and stature of Abu Bakr (RA) as the first Caliph.

Brockelmann (d. 1956) mentioned the caliphate of Abu Bakr (RA) in the following words:

Consequently the circle of Muhammad's old companions soon succeeded in securing the recognition of his father-in-law Abu Bakr, who with 'Umar and Abu 'Ubavdah ibn-al-Jarrah had previously exercised a decisive influence on the Prophet's politics, as his successor, or khalifah, and the Ansar then had no choice but to recognize the new ruler.<sup>19</sup>

**H.G. Wells** also notes: These are the things that made Islam a power in human affairs. It has been said that the true founder of the Empire of Islam was not so much Muhammad as his friend and helper, Abu Bekr<sup>20</sup>

Wael Hallaq attempts to prove in his research that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did not resolve the issue of succession during his lifetime. However, as demonstrated by the preceding arguments and evidence, the Prophet ﷺ **implicitly** indicated Abu Bakr (RA) as his successor — not by **explicit**

---

<sup>14</sup> -Najīb Ābādī, Akbar Shāh Khān. Tārīkh-e-Islām (The History of Islam). Lahore: Dār al-Andalus, n.d., p. 320.

<sup>15</sup> -Kāndhlawī, Muḥammad Idrīs. Khilāfat-e-Rāshidah (The Rightly Guided Caliphate). Lahore: Maktabah Ashrafiyyah, 2001, p. 35.

<sup>16</sup> -Ibn Sa‘d, Muḥammad. al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā. vol. 2, p. 127.

<sup>17</sup> -Mubārakpūrī, Ṣafī al-Raḥmān. al-Raḥīq al-Makhtūm (The Sealed Nectar), p. 647.

<sup>18</sup> -Maududī, Syed Abul A‘la. Khilāfat o Mulūkīyat (Caliphate and Monarchy). Lahore: Idārah Tarjumān al-Qur’ān, 1989, p. 84.

<sup>19</sup> -Carl Brockelmann, History of The Islamic Peoples, New York, 1939, P.45

<sup>20</sup> -H. G. Wells, A Short History Of The World, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922, P.252

text (*ibārat al-naṣṣ*) but by **implied indication** (*ishārat al-naṣṣ*), **evidential reasoning** (*dalālah*), and **necessary inference** (*iqtiḍā' al-naṣṣ*).

### **The Succession of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (RA)**

Hallaq also examines the second Caliph, **'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (RA)**, in his research. He argues that **'Umar's nomination** by Abu Bakr (RA) represents a new form of political order, which he calls **"World Order II."** He contends that the legitimacy of a Caliph depended on the perspective of his predecessor, and that legal authority was based on the **customs and practices accepted by the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions.**

Hallaq writes:

"Abu Bakr appointed Umar, and in doing so, he established a new political global order — the first of its kind — in which the reforms of the Prophet's time were converted into a new political structure."<sup>21</sup>

In reality, **Abu Bakr (RA)**, during the final days of his life, consulted with senior Companions and then **nominated Umar (RA)** as his successor. Umar (RA) was a close and trusted Companion of the Prophet ﷺ, known for his **firmness, strength, integrity, and deep piety.**<sup>22</sup>

The nomination of Umar (RA) followed a **consultative method.** Abu Bakr (RA) presented his opinion as a **proposal** to the community, and according to **Mu'īn al-Dīn**, all major Companions accepted Umar's succession.<sup>23</sup>

This decision was **deeply rooted in the political context of the time** and reflected the importance of **shūrā (consultation)** in Islamic governance. All four Rāshidūn Caliphs were chosen through **mutual consultation and majority opinion.**

**Imām Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH)** writes:

وكذلك عمر لما عهد اليه أبو بكر إنما صار إماماً لما بايعوه وأطاعوه، ولو قدر أنهم لم ينفذوا عهد أبي بكر ولم يبايعوه لم يصير إماماً.<sup>24</sup>

"When Abu Bakr appointed 'Umar, he only became Caliph because the people pledged allegiance to him and obeyed him. If they had not accepted Abu Bakr's decision or refused to pledge allegiance to 'Umar, he would not have become Caliph."

This method of succession was not a form of dictatorship or coercion, but rather an **extension of shūrā** in line with the political norms of that era.

Just before his martyrdom, **'Umar (RA)** expressed a strong sense of accountability. As narrated by **'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (RA)**:

<sup>21</sup>-Wael, B. Hallaq, *Sharia Theory Practice Transformations*, pp 35-40

<sup>22</sup>-Nāṣirī, 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad. *Ā'īnah-yi Ayyām Tārīkh*, p. 66.

<sup>23</sup>-Nadwī, Mu'īn al-Dīn Aḥmad. *Tārīkh-e-Islām (The History of Islam)*. Lahore: Mushtāq Book Corner, Urdu Bazar, p. 161.

<sup>24</sup>-Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm. *al-Muntaqā min Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*. Cairo: Dār al-Qalam, 1992, vol. 1, p. 530.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا، قَالَ: قِيلَ لِعُمَرَ: أَلَا تَسْتَخْلِفُ، قَالَ:---- وَدِدْتُ أَنِّي نَجُوتُ مِنْهَا كَفَافًا لَا لِي وَلَا عَلَيَّ لَا أَتَحْمَلُهَا حَيًّا وَلَا مَيِّتًا.<sup>25</sup>

“When ‘Umar was fatally wounded, someone said to him, “Will you not appoint a successor?” He replied, “If I appoint someone, there is a precedent, for Abu Bakr did so. And if I leave the matter to the Muslims, there is also a precedent, for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did so. I only wish to escape this responsibility with neither a burden nor a reward. I do not want to carry it in life or in death.”

It is clear that **Abu Bakr (RA) appointed Umar (RA) only after consultation with senior Companions**, not unilaterally. According to **Musnad Ahmad**, the Prophet ﷺ once addressed Abu Bakr and Umar and said:

لواجتمعتما في مشورة ما خالفتكما<sup>26</sup>

**“If you both agree on a matter, I will never oppose you.”**

**Umar’s Principle of Governance** (as recorded in *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa‘d*):

تشاؤروا في أمركم، فإن كان اثنان واثنان، فارجعوا في الشورى، فإن كان أربعة واثنان، فخذوا صنف الأكثر<sup>27</sup>

“Consult with each other in your matters. If opinions are equally divided (e.g., two and two), refer the matter to the broader council. And if the split is four to two, follow the majority opinion.”

This was the principle by which **Umar (RA)** governed throughout his tenure — until he was martyred.

Hallaq has tried to portray **Umar’s nomination** as authoritarian or imposed through decree, world order, or even dictatorship. However, this analysis is not based on reality. The nomination was done with **collective agreement** and through **mutual consultation**, and was consistent with **the Prophet’s respect** for the opinions of Abu Bakr and Umar.

## **The Succession of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (RA)**

Wael Hallaq, when discussing the selection of **‘Uthmān (RA)**, states that his appointment was in **accordance with the Sunnah**. He affirms that the Caliphs prior to him also acted according to the Sunnah and that the **legal and political concept of Sunnah** developed gradually over their eras.

He writes:

Uthman and Ali, the two candidates for the caliphate, were asked whether they were prepared to “work according to the Sunna of the Prophet and the siras of the two preceding caliphs”<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> -Bukhārī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Aḥkām (Book of Rulings), Chapter: al-Istikhḷāf (Appointing a Successor), Ḥadīth No. 7218.

<sup>26</sup> -Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Musnad Aḥmad, Book: Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn,

Chapter: Ḥadīth of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ghanm al-Ash‘arī (RA), Ḥadīth No. 17994.

<sup>27</sup> -Ibn Sa‘d, Muḥammad. al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā. vol. 3, p. 61.

Thus, the condition placed upon the candidates was to follow the Prophet's Sunnah and the policies of **Abu Bakr and Umar (RA)**.

When **Umar (RA)** was near death due to his injuries, he established a **council (shūrā)** of six prominent Companions to select the next Caliph. These were:

- **Uthmān ibn Affān (RA)**
- **Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (RA)**
- **Talḥah ibn Ubaydullāh (RA)**
- **Zubayr ibn al-Awwām (RA)**
- **Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Awf (RA)**
- **Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (RA)**

Umar (RA) appointed **Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Awf (RA)** as the **head of the committee**, instructing them to select a Caliph based on consensus.

Although **Abd al-Raḥmān (RA)** was the head, he did not impose a decision. Instead, he took **three days** to consult the people of Madinah — both men and women — regarding whom they considered most deserving. The public consensus overwhelmingly favoured **Uthmān (RA)**. Upon this, **Abd al-Raḥmān (RA)** addressed **Uthmān (RA)**:

“Will you follow the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger, and the path of Abu Bakr and Umar?” **Uthmān** replied, “Yes.”

Then **Abd al-Raḥmān** was the first to pledge allegiance, followed by **Alī (RA)** and the rest of the Companions.<sup>29</sup>

When the members of the shūrā were called, three Companions — **Talḥah (RA)**, **Zubayr (RA)**, and **Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (RA)** — withdrew their names from consideration. **Talḥah (RA)** gave his vote to **Uthmān (RA)**, **Zubayr (RA)** to **Alī (RA)**, and **Sa'd (RA)** to **Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Awf (RA)**. After this, **Abd al-Raḥmān (RA)** also withdrew his name and declared that the Caliph would be the one who is most pious and God-fearing. Then, by majority opinion, the announcement of **Uthmān's** caliphate was made.<sup>30</sup>

When **Umar (RA)** was advising the Companions before his death, they asked him who should be appointed as Caliph. In response, he formed a six-member council, appointing **Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Awf (RA)** as its head. After **Talḥah**, **Zubayr**, and **Sa'd** withdrew, **Abd al-Raḥmān (RA)** also stepped back from his right and said:

---

<sup>28</sup> .Wael, B. Halaq, *The Origins and evolution of Islamic law*, P48

<sup>29</sup> -Kāndhlawī, Muḥammad Idrīs. *Khilāfat-e-Rāshidah (The Rightly Guided Caliphate)*, pp. 87, 90–91.

<sup>30</sup> -Irshād, Dr. “A Research Review of the Method of Head of State Selection in the Rāshidūn Caliphate.” *Taṇāzur: A Research Journal of Islamic Research and Religious Policy (IRRP)*, vol. 5, no. 1, Jan–Mar 2024, p. 1201.

“I will appoint as Caliph the one who is most virtuous and God-fearing among you.”

Then he announced ‘Uthmān’s (RA) election as Caliph, which was based on consultation.<sup>31</sup>

According to Nāṣirī, when the nominated members of the committee gathered, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf (RA) proposed that three members withdraw in favour of the remaining three. When they complied, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (RA) withdrew in favour of ‘Alī and ‘Uthmān (RA). He then asked them both to withdraw in each other’s favour, but they remained silent. So, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (RA) stepped forward and pledged allegiance to ‘Uthmān (RA). After that, ‘Alī (RA) also pledged allegiance to him. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (RA) only pledged allegiance after he had ascertained that the majority of people favoured ‘Uthmān (RA) as Caliph.<sup>32</sup>

Miqdād (RA) brought the shūrā members to ‘Umar’s (RA) house, but they initially could not reach a conclusion. On the third day, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (RA) said:

“Let each person name the one whom they consider most deserving.”

In this way, three candidates remained. Then ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (RA) again withdrew in favour of ‘Alī and ‘Uthmān (RA) and declared:

“Whoever agrees to follow the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, and the ways of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar — he will be the Caliph. Leave this decision to me.”

After securing consent from both men, the final pledge of allegiance to ‘Uthmān (RA) was conducted in the Prophet’s Mosque (Masjid al-Nabawī).<sup>33</sup>

Ibn al-Athīr, summarising the event, writes that ‘Umar (RA) did not include his own son in the council. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (RA) was appointed the head of the committee and privately consulted individuals. The majority opinion favoured ‘Uthmān (RA), so ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (RA) appointed him as Caliph.<sup>34</sup>

There is consensus among the Ummah that ‘Uthmān (RA) was elected through shūrā, and that his appointment was in accordance with the Sunnah and consistent with the principle of aṣḥaḥ (choosing the most suitable and righteous).

### **The Succession of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (RA)**

Wael Hallaq discusses the eras and selection of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs. However, he **speaks very little** about the **political role** of **‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (RA)**, despite offering detailed commentary on the political conduct of **Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān (RA)**. While he

---

<sup>31</sup> -Janjū‘ah, ‘Aṭā Muḥammad. “The Appointment of the Rightly Guided Caliphs Was Through Consultation.” Monthly Muḥaddith, Majlis al-Taḥqīq al-Islāmī, vol. 21, no. 20, January 2009, p. 32.

<sup>32</sup> -Nāṣirī, Ibn ‘Uthmān. Ā‘īnah-yi Ayyām Tārīkh. Maktabah Ahl al-Bayt, n.d., pp. 71–72.

<sup>33</sup> -Nadwī, Mu‘īn al-Dīn. Tārīkh-e-Islām (The History of Islam). Lahore: Mushtāq Book Corner, al-Karīm Market, n.d., vol. 1, p. 231.

<sup>34</sup> -Ibn al-Athīr, ‘Izz al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad. al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh. Cairo: Dār al-Qalam, 1978, vol. 2, p. 188.

recognises ‘Alī as the fourth Caliph, Hallaq only addresses his role as a judge (qāḍī) and not as a political leader.

He writes:

*The sources report that the Prophet himself deployed qadis to the lands that came under Medinese dominion, particularly the Yemen. Ali, who was to become the fourth caliph after Abu Bakr, Umar I and Uthman.*<sup>35</sup>

The rebels and insurgents who had come from various regions did not have a good reputation in the past. They falsely accused and ultimately martyred ‘Uthmān (RA). After his martyrdom, the appointment of a Caliph became an urgent necessity. At that time, the Companions present in Madinah all wished for ‘Alī (RA) to be appointed as Caliph. Accordingly, Ṭalḥah (RA) and Zubayr (RA) came to ‘Alī (RA) and said:

“The appointment of a Caliph is now essential.” Their gesture clearly pointed towards ‘Alī (RA). He understood their intent and replied:

“Whomever you choose, I will be content with him.”<sup>36</sup>

According to **Dr Muhammad al-Sallābī**, ‘Alī (RA) initially **refused** the leadership position. However, as the demands from people increased, and given the growing **threat of further discord**, ‘Alī (RA) realised that **accepting the Caliphate was necessary** to prevent further strife.

He then said: “If you are determined to make me Caliph, then let it be done openly in the **Masjid al-Nabawī**, and I wish that **all people** express their agreement.”

Thus, the **Anṣār and Muhājirīn** pledged allegiance to him **first**, followed by the **rest of the people**.<sup>37</sup>

According to **Naṣrī**, alongside the Anṣār and Muhājirīn, **other Companions** present in Madinah also took part in this **public bay‘ah**. This ensured that the **transfer of power** took place in an organised and appropriate manner.<sup>38</sup>

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Nadwī, while discussing the selection of ‘Alī (RA), writes:

After the martyrdom of ‘Uthmān (RA), the Egyptian rebels sought to have ‘Alī (RA) appointed as Caliph. However, ‘Alī (RA) was well aware of their schemes and cunning behaviour. The people were confused and uncertain about how to resolve the leadership crisis. Yet, they continuously insisted that only ‘Alī (RA) should be pledged allegiance to. Due to their repeated insistence, ‘Alī (RA) eventually agreed to accept the caliphate. Before the pledge of allegiance (bay‘ah) was taken, the opinions of the people of Madinah were carefully considered. The qualities of leadership and

---

<sup>35</sup> -Wael, B. Hallaq, *The Orgins and the Evolution of Islamic Laws*, pp 34

<sup>36</sup> -Nadwī, Mu‘īn al-Dīn. *Tārīkh-e-Islām (The History of Islam)*, vol. 1, p. 275.

<sup>37</sup> -Ṣallābī, Dr. ‘Alī Muḥammad. *Sayyidunā ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib: Personality and Achievements*. Khan Garh, Muzaffargarh, Pakistan: al-Furqān Trust, n.d., pp. 301, 399.

<sup>38</sup> -Naṣīrī, ‘Uthmān ibn Muḥammad. *Ā‘īnah-yi Tārīkh*, p. 120.

responsibility that were found in Abū Bakr (RA), ‘Umar (RA), and ‘Uthmān (RA) were also found in ‘Alī (RA).<sup>39</sup>

‘Alī (RA) was elected **in a time of political chaos**. Though his election was through **consultation and consensus**, his Caliphate is **less frequently referenced** in discussions about succession due to the **unusual and tense circumstances** under which he assumed power. Wael Hallaq, too, **largely avoids discussion** of ‘Alī’s **political leadership**, continuing his pattern of focusing on structural and legalistic frameworks.

## **Research Conclusions**

According to **Wael Hallaq**, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did not resolve the issue of **Abu Bakr’s (RA)** succession during his lifetime. However, based on the analysis of **historical sources, hadiths, and indirect textual indicators**, it is evident that the Prophet ﷺ **implicitly indicated** Abu Bakr (RA) as his successor — not through **explicit wording** (*‘ibārat al-naṣṣ*), but through **allusion, implication, and necessary inference** (*ishārat al-naṣṣ, dalālah, and iqtida’ al-naṣṣ*).

Hallaq also treats ‘**Umar’s (RA)** appointment as a kind of **formal decree** or "World Order". However, the historical evidence clearly shows that **Abu Bakr (RA)** nominated ‘**Umar (RA)** only after **consulting the senior Companions**, and the people later confirmed this nomination through **pledging allegiance (bay‘ah)** — thereby validating it democratically.

This study also confirms that ‘**Uthmān (RA)** was elected through **consultation (shūrā)** and **public consensus**, not imposed from above.

In summary, the **succession of all four Rightly Guided Caliphs** was conducted according to the **principle of aṣḥaḥ** — choosing the **most capable and righteous** leader available, in line with Islamic values and community interest.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the analysis and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Muslim researchers** have a **responsibility** to **intellectually respond** to Western political narratives by highlighting the strength and authenticity of **Islamic political systems** — particularly the model of the **Rāshidūn Caliphate**.
2. **Muslim scholars** should develop detailed **academic responses to Hallaq’s objections**, especially on the topic of succession and political legitimacy, and present them in **English** at an **international scholarly level**.
3. **Islamic political studies** should be integrated into the **curricula of colleges, universities, and religious seminaries**, so that future generations are well-equipped to present **Islam’s true political framework** to the world.

---

<sup>39</sup> -Nadwī, Maulānā Abū al-Ḥasan. *Sīrat Amīr al-Mu’minīn Sayyidunā ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*. Lahore: Maktabah al-Ḥusayn, Ḥaqq Street, Urdu Bazar, 2013, pp. 206–207.