

**THE POST PROPHETIC ERA OF ORTHODOX CALIPHS:  
A PARADIGM OF SECURITY AND PEACE BUILDING  
INITIATIVE FOR NIGERIA  
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**Abstract**

*It is an undeniable fact that substance of peace and security is very paramount for social cohesiveness and nation building. It has been the unique feature of Islam that it sets historical precedents of emulative quality for generations of mankind. That is why the venerable companions of the prophet who were known as orthodox caliphs in Islamic history remain point of reference in the matter of social security and peace building. The present paper delves into the characteristic traits of the orthodox caliphs in the administration of the people in the Islamic empire on the standard of justice and equity. It also reveals the qualities of leadership demonstrated by the orthodox caliphs which enhanced good governance of the Islamic state. The exemplary conducts of the caliphs serve a legacy for Muslim generations in order to achieve peace and security in the society. However the Muslim and political leaders in Nigeria need to contemplate about the political lifestyles of the orthodox caliphs. This is with a view to having an insight on the way of ensuring peace and security which has become current challenges in the Nigerian environment. It is believed that the recommendations and suggestions given in this paper would be of immense benefit if they could be taken into consideration.*

**Keywords:** *Post Prophetic Era of Orthodox Caliphs, Security, Peace Building initiative, Nigeria*

**Introduction**

Islam as a comprehensive way of live attaches much importance to peace and security of individual members of society and human community as a whole. That serves the purpose of emergence of Islām as a new social order in Arabian Peninsula to restructure the chaotic state of Arab environment characterized with insecurity, barbarism, violence, and other sorts of social disorder. Though, the last prophet of Allah, Muhammad was raised among the Arabs with the mission of grand reform of Arabs society, the message of Islam is however universal. (Qur'an 21:107). Cutting across every aspect of human lives without the bound of space and time. Despite several odds, the Prophet through divine aid and support was able to restrain the unbridled influence of Makkan aristocracy and lay down for the first time in history a perfect social order of Islāmic government in the city of Madinah (Abdul Karim 1998).

Historically, the prophetic guidance was guarded jealously by the era of the venerable companions. The era of the four orthodox caliphs continue to serve as historical precedent in the administration of justice and fairness. It features recognition of much vaunted fundamental

human rights in the modern democratic dispensation of western civilization and ensuring of peace and security of individual and society at large. This tends to pose an intriguing question about the significance of the era of the caliphs in the history of Islām. It is of relevant note to examine initially the concern of Islām for the cause of peace and security.

### **The Islamic Concern for Peace and Security**

Islam shows great importance on the matter of Peace and security of individual. This is understood in the sense that Islam recognizes society of different back ground and emphasizes peaceful co-existence with the people of the Book and Christian. The Madinah society Founded by the Prophet had the Jews including the non-Muslims as the subjects of strongly warned by Allah not to violate the Tight of the non-Muslims subjects demonstrate hostility to them. Islam enjoins that Muslims should extend kindness and generosity to non-Muslims that respect their religious identity and existence,

Similarly, the Qur'ān lays down severe punishment tor anyone that violate the societal peace and security. Likewise. Qur'an states eternal damnation in hellfire in respect of anyone who deliberately kills a believer. (Quran 4:92) the Qur'an warns Muslims to avoid commission of suicide, let alone having a deliberate attempt of suicide bombings. (Qur'an 4:27)

Furthermore, the Islamic ruling on the amputation of hand in the case of the thief, flogging the fornicator, stoning of married adulterers to death, castigation of the givers of false witness are meant to secure the lives, property as well as honor and reputation of people.(Qur'an 2:176). Beside the stipulated punishment enshrined in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The judge is also empowered under Shariah to effect Ta'zirat (discretionary judgment) on several cases of criminal acts that have no definitive punishment from the primary sources of laws as explained by El-Awa.(ElAwah. 1998).

The Prophet throughout his lifetime was not found wanting in executing Allah's judgment on criminal cases. He made it clear to his companions that effecting the laws of Allah on culprit is a way of guaranteeing security in the society. This is explicable in relation to a

Woman from tribe of Maklhsim, found guilty of theft but pleading was made to me Prophet through Usamah bn Zayd to waive the punishment. (Abdul Karim U. 1960), The Prophet made them realized that there should be no distinction between the highly and lowly placed individual in the society. The footstep of the Prophet was followed by the orthodox Caliphs by not hesitating to carry out the commandment of Allah. Most especially when it is incumbent to safeguard the welfare of the community, as could be observed in the stand of caliph Abubakr against the defaulters of Zakat and false claimant of prophet hood during his reign. (Abdul, 1998).

### **Political Uniqueness of the Orthodox Caliphs Era**

The companions of the Prophet were cognizant of the sensitiveness of the political authority and leadership of people. This is because the Prophet had cautioned them to avoid selfish interest in

lobbying for political power. The Prophet was reported as pointed by An-Nawawi to have stated as follow:

انكم ستحرصون على الامارة وستكون ندامة يوم ت القيامة

You will covet for getting a position of authority, but remember that it will be a cause of humiliation and remorse on the Day of Judgment. (Imam An Nawawi, 2006)

It is on account of the Hadith above and similar prophetic traditions that the four caliphs were appointed on criteria of merit and their contributions to the development of Islām. Abdul gives account on the appointment of the caliphs from Abubakr to Ali Ibn Talīb. Which was not characterized by tribal inclination, selfish motive, but received wide acceptance and approval of generality of Muslims (Abdul, 1982). Then, it cannot be ignored as a fact that such electoral process has a far reaching. Influence, when considering peace and security of the society.

More importantly, the caliphs were highly motivated by the principle of self-accountability to Allah in the Islamic political system. Therefore they put the matter of security and peaceful existence of their subjects at forefront. Not only that, they defended the Islamic territory from potential external threat and aggressors as the era witnessed numerous conquests and expansion of Islamic empire (Abdul, 1982). Nonetheless, they were not carried away or dillusioned by massive wealth accrued to the purse of the Islāmic state to project and defend the interest of the people. This disposition of the caliphs lends a credence to the fact that Islām places high premium on matter of peace and security as it will be analyzed in the subsequent section.

### **Roles of the Caliphs in Ensuring Peace and Security**

The era of orthodox caliphs reflected the glowing account and shining examples of good governance in terms of ensuring protection of lives and property. That is why the era was not only an historical precedent for subsequent Muslims generation but also a pride and jealously guarded socio-cultural and historical heritage of Islām. On this account, Raji cites Veccia's observation on the caliphate era that when one is to trace the cause of rapid expansion of Islam, a new era of prosperity and wealth (i.e era of orthodox of caliphate) was ushered in a richness which Asia had not witnessed for centuries. The life of the conquered people, their civil right and their wealth received a degree of protection that is relatively equivalent to thatof the Muslims. (Raji, 2007)

As-sibai explains that caliph Abubakr represented himself as a ruler whose heart was full sympathy for mankind. He did stand on his honour as the head of the Muslims to milk the goat for the girls of locality whose father has become martyrs in battles against unbelievers. (Muheeb, 2005). Hashimi expresses the virtue of Abubakr in giving equal right to citizenry of Islamic state in appointment to public office, as he honored the command of the Prophet that Zayd bn °Usman

a freed slave should be the head of the army dispatched by the Prophet to fight the Romans before the Prophet's demise. (Hashimi, 2007)

Similarly, Muheeb states that during the reign of Umar he ordered demolition of the mosque built by certain Muslims on a usurped piece of land belonging to a Jew and instructed restitution of the land to the owner. (Muheeb, 2005). The magnanimity of Uthman bn Affan, the third caliph was accounted by Murad that he distributed his merchandise of food freely to the poor and the needy during the incidence of drought and famine in the reign of Abubakr, despite that some rich merchants had interest to purchase it, at exorbitant price. (Murad, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. 2006). Abdul Karim exposes that caliph "Umar throughout his tenure used to inquire at foremost about the welfare of non-Muslims minority (Ahl Dhimma) in the state. Zaydan states 'Umar admonition to his judge, Abu Musa al Ash'arri that the latter should maintain sense of equality in respect to the litigants that bring cases to law court irrespective of their social status. (Zydan, 1987)

Additionally, Ismail narrates the incident of a Roman who came to Madinah to visit caliph Umar He was told to look for him in the mosque. He found 'Umar sleeping, placing his head on a stone with his garment full of patchwork without a guard. and said "O Umar you judge and maintain justice, then you gain security and sleep comfortably"(Ismail M.B. 2 edition 2004). Ambali also cites a case that happened between Caliph Ali bn Abi Talib and a Jew over a war-gown. The judge, Shurayh passed the judgment in favour of the Jew simply because the caliph was unable to satisfy the stipulated procedure of providing two upright witnesses to justify his claims. (Ambali. 2003)

Based on the above explanation, it can be said without mincing words that not only that the caliphs attached importance to security and peace issues of their subject, but also respected the fundamental human rights which the modern democracy agitates for. The human rights were protected during the caliphacy without a bias to religious or ethnic differences. Among such fundamental rights is the freedom of movement to individuals. Raji states that the rights are restricted only on necessity ground for certain individuals in the interest of general community, as it happened during the reign of caliph °Umar who strongly prohibited the movement of some elderly companions of the Prophet from leaving Madinah in order to seek help and support in offering their opinion and advice (Raji,2001)

### **The Relevance of Orthodox Caliphs Era to Good Governance in Nigeria**

It is quite conspicuous to all and sundry that peace and security of lives and property is the ultimate challenge facing Nigeria as a nation. There is no gain saying in the fact that peace and security of citizenry is a prerequisite for nation's growth, progress and development. One outstanding lesson that could be learnt from the era of Caliphacy is the simplicity in the lifestyle of the call prophet. (Abdul,2007). Most of our leaders in Nigeria have been affected grossly with insatiable quest of materialism. There had been a shift of emphasis from moral and intellectual

values to material pursuit. This invariably affects many Nigerian citizens seeking for wealth by hook or by crook in terms of money rituals, kidnapping, contract lobbying, suicide bombing hire killing and many others.

Secondly, the Caliphs gave much respect to the rule of the law and maintained the independence and autonomy of judiciary without any political interferences as could be observed in the case of Alj and Jews. This show that adequate justice must be sustained if peace and security is to be ensured in society. This is because the leaders are expected to show good examples to the followers since they are not but public servant.

Additionally, the principle of egalitarianism, most especially in relation to social life is not much obtainable in Nigeria. The individuals that claim prophethood during the reign of Abubakr were known with social importance among their tribes and clans. Nonetheless, Abubakr unleashed his army to rebellious .group and pronounce death penalty on Musaylamah as the deserved punishment of apostasy Ali bn Abi - Talib removed the corrupt officials who embezzled the public fund among the 'Unmayad family members without a recourse to immunity clause or grant of amnesty to them on account of their corrupt practice. He was noted for his courageous feat in tackling the civil unrest and dissensions that arose during his reign, rather than paying numerous official visits to neighbouring countries, living his own state in confusion.

### **Conclusion**

It is our hope that the excellent virtues of the era of orthodox caliphacy has been expatiated in this paper. The relevance of the caliph's way of governance as a mechanism for peace and security in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. The Nigeria politicians who are at the helm of the government affairs need to feel much more concern about the security, peace and integrity of Nigeria since we have no other place to claim as our country. All those that are concerned with matter of peace and security in Nigeria should bear in mind that unborn posterity would remember them for their laxity, indifferences as well as concern for common good. Let peace and security reign in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The Nigerian government needs to borrow a leaf from the governance system of the orthodox caliphs. The Muslims politicians in Nigerian Government should study the ways of life of the Companion of the holy Prophet. This will give them much insight on how to ensure the existence of peace and tranquility among the Nigeria populace. In this attempt, there should be a de-

emphasis on materialism that sabotage the country and respect to the rule of law should be sustained.

Also, the religious bodies and mass media have a lot to do in promoting peace among the religious adherents in Nigeria and masses at large. It could be remembered that the Madinah society comprises of Muslims and other religious adherents and this does not mar social relations. Dauda mentions that among the causes of religious riot in Nigeria are aggressive and militant preaching and evangelism, publication of sensational articles and lack of prompt action by the various arms of security agencies in diffusing religious tension before escalating into riot (Daud, 1993)

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