There are some misled and corrupt people who refute the Caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Umar and Hazrat Uthman (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anhum) and believe that Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) should have been the first Caliph. Hereunder we will Insha Allah learn that the Companions were chosen as Caliphs exactly how Allah and His Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) intended them to be chosen. It is therefore imperative that we never doubt or refute the Caliphate of any of the Khulafa-e-Raashideen.

The most excellent of the Blessed Companions is Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq, followed by Hazrat Umar, then Hazrat Uthman and then Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anhum), who are collectively known as the Khulafa-e-Raashideen (The Rightly Guided Caliphs). The Caliphate belonged to these four, following the physical departure of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), for a period of thirty years. Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was in command for just over two years, Hazrat Umar for ten, Hazrat Uthman for twelve and Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anhum) for six.

The Caliphate of these four leaders was a matter of free election by the Companions, with their unanimous agreement and willing consent. Its acquisition was also due to the superior merit of each of them, in his own age and time, over and above the rest of the Companions. It was not taken by the sword, by compulsion, coercion and forcible seizure from someone more worthy of the position, as we will learn below Insha Allah.

As for the Caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), it came about through the unanimous agreement of the Muhaajirun (Emigrants) and the Ansaar (Helpers). When the earthly life of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had come to an end, the spokesmen of the Ansaar said, “Let there now be a leader from amongst ourselves, and a leader from among you (Muhaajirun).”

Then stood up Hazrat Umar Farooq (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) saying, “O band of Helpers, surely you are well aware that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) commanded Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) to lead the people in prayer?” They all said, “Yes, of course.” So he said, “In that case, which of you considers himself fit to remove him from the position to which he was appointed by Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)?” They all responded to this by saying, “None of us considers himself fit to do such a thing! May Allah protect us from such a notion!”

They found themselves in complete accord with the Emigrants and so the full complement of the Blessed Companions paid homage to Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) including Hazrat Uthman Gani and Hazrat Ali Murtaza (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anhum).

This also explains why it is stated in the authentic traditional report that when homage was paid to Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) he stood up three times, turning to face the people as he said, “O People, should I release you from your pledge of allegiance (Bay'ah) to me? Is anyone making it reluctantly?”

Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was amongst the first of the people present to stand up and say in reply, “We shall never depose you, we shall never ask you for your resignation! It was Allah's

Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who brought you to the fore, so who would dare to push you to the rear?" It is stated that Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was in fact the most outspoken of all the Companions in favour of the leadership of Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh).

We know from traditional reports that Hazrat Abdullah ibn Kawwa (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) entered the presence of Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) and asked, "Did Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) entrust you with any special information concerning this matter (of the Caliphate)?" To this he replied by saying, "We examined our situation carefully and we had to acknowledge that the ritual prayer is the mainstay of Islam. We were therefore content to accept, as appropriate to the conduct of our affairs in this world, that which Allah and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had seen fit to approve for the sake of our religion. So we entrust the matter of the Caliphate to Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh)."

The point that Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) made here is that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), during the days of his final sickness, had delegated the task of leading the prescribed ritual prayer to Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh). Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) would come to him at the time appointed for each of the five daily prayers, and he would utter the Call to Prayer in his presence. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would then say, "Go and tell Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) that he must lead the people in prayer."

During his earthly life, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would often speak on the subject of Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), in such terms that it became quite obvious to all the Companions that he must be the person best qualified to assume the Caliphate when the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would physically be no longer with them. It was made equally obvious, in respect of Hazrat Umar, Hazrat Uthman and Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anhum), that each of them would be the one best qualified to assume that office in his own age and time.

Hazrat Abdullah ibn Umar (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) narrates that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "The one (who will be Caliph) after me is Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), but he will not remain here very long after I am gone."

Hazrat Mujaahid (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) reports that Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) once said to him, "The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not leave the abode of this lower world until he had informed me, "Abu Bakr will be in charge after I am gone. Then Umar, then Uthman after him, then Ali after him (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anhum).""

As for the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), he was designated to succeed to it by Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) himself, so all the Companions willingly agreed to pledge their allegiance to him, and to call him by the title *Ameerul Mu'mineen* (Commander of the Believers).

As for the Caliphate of Hazrat Uthman ibn Affaan (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), it also came about as a result of the unanimous agreement of the Companions (Ridwanullahi Ta'ala Alaihim Ajma'een). Hazrat Umar (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) had excluded his own sons from the succession to the Caliphate, which he left to be decided by a consultative council consisting of six members, namely Hazrat Talha, Hazrat Zubair, Hazrat Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, Hazrat Uthman, Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Abdur Rahman ibn Awf (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anhum).

Hazrat Abdur Rahman said to Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Uthman (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anhum), “I shall vote for one of you two, for the sake of Allah and His Messenger, and for the sake of all the believers.” He then took Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) by the hand and said to him, “O Ali, let it be your responsibility to fulfil the contract and compact of Allah, His covenant and the covenant of His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). I hereby pledge you my allegiance, trusting that you will conduct yourself in all sincerity, for the sake of Allah and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), and for the benefit of all the believers, and that you will follow in the footsteps of His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), Abu Bakr and Umar (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anhum).”

But Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) declined to accept the offer. This could be attributed to the fact that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had already told him that he would follow Hazrat Uthman (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) and he did not want to go against what Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said.

Hazrat Abdur Rahman (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) then took Hazrat Uthman (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) by the hand and repeated what he had just said to Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh). Hazrat Uthman (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) accepted and Hazrat Abdur Rahman (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) pledged his allegiance to him, after which Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) pledged his allegiance and then the rest of the people.

As for the Caliphate of Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), it came about again through the general consensus of the community and by the consensus of the Companions. After the Shahaadat of Hazrat Uthman Ghani (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) the people came to the house of Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) and started knocking on his door. As soon as they were admitted inside they said, “Uthman (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) has been martyed, and the people cannot manage without a Caliph. There is no one as far as we know, who is better qualified for the job than you are. But Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) responded by saying, “You do not really want me, for I can serve you better as a minister than as a commander.” But still the people insisted, “We know of no one who is better qualified for the job than you are.” So he eventually agreed and said, “Let me go out to the mosque, so that all those who wish to pledge their allegiance to me may do so there.” He then left his house and went to the mosque, where the people came and pledged their allegiance to him.”

We can therefore see that the order in which the Khulafa-e-Raashideen were chosen was by no means a coincidence and by no means the result of anyone usurping the position of another as some corrupt people accuse them of.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us true love and respect for the Blessed Companions of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), especially for the Khulafa-e-Raashideen, Ameen.

[*Compiled from Ghunyalit Taalibi Tareeqal Haqq, Vol. 1 by Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam Hazrat Shaikh Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh*]