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Islamic Studies

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

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Q: Discuss the salient features of Islamic political system in the light of governance under pious Khilafat - i - Raashida. (20 marks)

Introduction:

The Islamic political system, especially during the period of Khilafat - i - Rashida (632-661 CE), holds a significant place in Islamic history due to its exemplary governance principles. The four rightly guided caliphs, Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A), Hazrat Umar (R.A), Hazrat Usman (R.A) and Hazrat Ali (R.A), established a model of leadership that emphasized justice, equality and accountability.

"The era of Khilafat - i - Rashida is the golden age of Islamic governance. The Caliphs ruled with wisdom, justice, and consultation, ensuring the welfare of the people while staying true to the teaching of Islam."

(Imam Al-Ghazali)

II. Salient Features of the Islamic Political System in the Light of Khilafat-i-Rashida:

2. Sovereignty of Allah:

In the Islamic political system, Sovereignty rests solely with Allah and the rulers are considered stewards, responsible for implementing divine laws. The Caliphs of the Rashidun era governed in line with the Quran and Sunnah, ensuring that all policies and decisions adhered to Islamic principles.

"Verily, the earth belongs to Allah. He causes to inherit it whom He will of His servants."

(Al-Quran)

2. Consultative Governance (Shura):

Decision-making during the Khilafat-i-Rashida was based on consultation known as Shura. The Caliphs would regularly seek advice from companions and scholars before making important

before making important decisions, promoting a Participatory Political System. This practice ensured that the government was run with collective wisdom.

"And those who has responded to their Lord and established prayer and whose affairs is [determined by] Consultation among themselves"

(Al-duran)

3. Rule of Law and Justice :

Justice was a cornerstone of the governance under the Pious Caliphs. The Caliphs ensured that everyone, including themselves was subject to the law. Hazrat Umar (R.A) in particular, was renowned for his emphasis on justice, going to great lengths to ensure that no individual faced discrimination based on wealth or status.

"O people, fear Allah and be just with your subjects. Do not commit oppression, as oppression will turn into darkness on the Day of judgement"

(Hazrat Umar R.A)

4. Accountability and Transparency:

The Rashidun Caliphs practiced a high level of accountability. The Caliphs were answerable to the people and would often face public scrutiny for their decisions. For example, Hazrat Umar (R.A) would roam the streets at night to understand the challenges faced by the citizens and ensure their welfare.

5. Equality and Social Welfare:

The Islamic political system promotes social equality and welfare of all citizens, regardless of race, status or faith. Under the Khalifat-i-Rashida numerous welfare measures were introduced including pensions for the elderly and financial support for the needy. The Bait-ul-Mal (public treasury) was utilized to ensure that no citizens remained in poverty.

"If a dog dies hungry at the banks of Euphrates, Umar will be responsible for dereliction of duty" (Hazrat Umar (R.A))

6. Protection of Minority Rights:

During the Khilafat - i- Rashida, non-muslims were granted full protection and freedom to practice their religion.

They were treated as dhimmis (protected citizens) and their rights were safeguarded. For example, Hazrat Umar (R.A) issued a charter to ensure the protection of Christian communities in Jerusalem.

7. Moral and Ethical Leadership:

The Caliphs were known for their personal piety, humility and simplicity. Their leadership style was based on ethical behavior and moral values.

They lived modestly and avoided any luxurious or extravagant lifestyles, setting an example for the entire Muslim community.

"By Allah, if a single sheep were to be lost on the banks of the Euphrates, I am afraid that Allah would hold me accountable for it"

(Hazrat Umar (R.A))

8. Separation of Executive and Judicial Powers:

The separation of Powers between the executive and judicial branches was maintained during the Rashidun Period. Judges were appointed to ~~the~~ ~~independently~~ independently administer justice without interference from the government, ensuring the fair application of Islamic law.

"A ruler cannot judge his own cause, for justice cannot be dispensed when one is both the plaintiff and the judge" (Imam Al-Shafi')

9. Public Participation and Freedom of Expression:

Public Participation and Freedom of expression were key features of Khilafat-i-Rashidia. Citizens had the rights to vote their opinion openly and critique the caliphs without fear of retaliation, ensuring accountability and transparency in governance.

10. Expansion and Diplomacy:

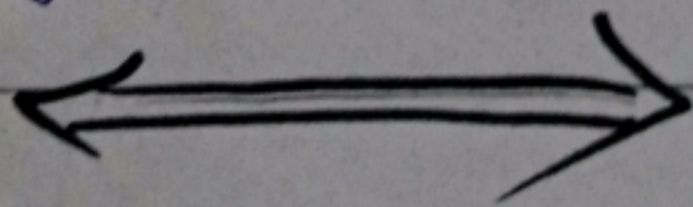
The Caliphs extended the Islamic state through diplomatic and military means, but always ensured that the newly conquered regions were treated fairly. Conversion to Islam was not forced, and the administration in new regions were established with the consent of the local population.

"The Rashidun Caliphs combined diplomacy and military strength, ensuring that peaceful means were always prioritized and war was only waged to end tyranny or oppression."

(Maulana Maududi)

Conclusion:

The governance during Khilafat -
i- Rashida exemplified the ideal
Islamic Political system grounded
in justice, accountability, equality
and moral leadership. The Caliphs
served as a model for leadership
by practicing transparency, encouraging
public participation and maintaining
fairness for both Muslim and non-
Muslims. These features continue to
be significant in discussions of
Islamic Governance.



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