

Khalifa Uthman bin Affan - The Caliphate of Uthman

Dream of Abdul Rahman b Auf

The instructions of Umar were that the Selection Committee should choose the successor within three days, and he should assume office on the fourth day. As two days passed away without arriving at a decision, the members felt anxious that the time was running fast, and still no solution to the problem appeared to be in sight.

On the night after the second day, Abdul Rahman b Auf had a dream; He saw that in a wilderness a strong and handsome camel appeared and the wilderness was converted into a rich green pasture on which it fell, and then moved away.

Thereafter another camel came. It tarried in the pasture for a short time, and then following in the footsteps of the first camel moved away. Then the third camel. It tarried in the pasture for some time, and then thereafter looking right and left, it also moved away following the footsteps of the first two camels. Then came the fourth camel. It limped and could walk with difficulty. Then a strong hot wind began to blow from the desert, and the pasture became parched. The camel was unable to feed itself, and then limping it moved away in the same direction which the previous three camels had left.

Abdul Rahman b Auf interpreted this dream to signify that the first camel represented the Holy Prophet who gave mankind the message of Islam, and thereby spearheaded a great revolution. The second camel represented Abu Bakr who followed in the footsteps of the Master, but whose rule was short. The third camel represented Umar whose rule was comparatively longer. The fourth camel represented the successor of Umar. The dream signified that the rule of such successor was to end in some disaster.

That made Abdul Rahman b Auf feel that he should not covet the office for himself. On the third day addressing the members of the Selection Committee, Abdul Rahman b Auf observed that if they went on debating and wrangling in that way, differences among them would grow in dimensions, and they would fail in the objective set for them. He suggested that in order to narrow down the choice, some of them should withdraw from the contest voluntarily. Thereupon he declared that in the interests of the Muslim community, he withdrew from the contest of his freewill. The choice now came to be restricted to the remaining four members, but still no headway was made. There were some further deliberations,

and thereafter it was decided that as Abdul Rahman b Auf had retired voluntarily from the contest and had given proof of his selflessness, he might choose the Caliph out of the remaining four members. Abdul Rahman accepted the onerous task, and undertook that in arriving at his decision he would be just and impartial, and would be guided solely by the interests of the Muslim community. He added that he would try to ascertain public opinion, and his choice would be in accord with such opinion.

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