

Authority and Legitimacy in Islamic Political Life the Ummah, Politics, the Caliphate

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Abstract:

The circumstances and contexts surrounding the early emergence of Islam are key to understanding subsequent developments relating to the concepts of the ummah, authority **and the state**. The intrinsic political dynamics within Islamic society **were** significant, leading to the formation of an Islamic political community and sphere closely linked to the essence that bound the community together: religion, which served simultaneously as both a belief system and a unifying force. Secondly, in the Islamic experience, politics did not present itself merely as a practice but as a subject of reflection that would lead Muslims to establish their own fields of knowledge: Islamic theology (kalam) and jurisprudence (fiqh), as well as the theory of the caliphate.

Keywords: authority; the ummah; the political question; legitimacy; political assembly.

01. Research Problem

- To investigate the sources of authority in Islam and the nature of the relationship between them.

02. Research Framework

In this article, we explore three main areas

1. The concept of the ummah, from the ‘tribe’ to the ummah as a cultural bond.
2. The reasons for the presence of politics in Islam.
3. The crisis of legitimacy in the system of governance

03. Research Methodology

We employ a descriptive and historical approach, with a slight borrowing from the content analysis method.

04. Significance of the research

In that it reveals the structure of authority in Islam and how it is distributed, as well as the conflict over the sphere of authority between religious and political figures.

01. Introduction:

The question of authority is central to understanding the formation of Islamic political society, given its links to questions concerning the nature of the political community, sources of legitimacy, and the boundaries of the relationship between religion and politics. The historical circumstances surrounding the emergence of Islam and the formation of the first Muslim community contributed to the development of specific conceptions regarding the ummah, authority and the management of public affairs, which

soon became the subject of reflection and debate as the Islamic world expanded and political experiences diversified.

In the Islamic experience, authority did not merely take the form of political practice; rather, it evolved into an epistemological, jurisprudential and theological issue, linked to the concepts of imamate, caliphate, bay'ah, shura and the ummah, and to the question of the basis upon which the legitimacy and legitimacy of authority rest. Consequently, research into authority and legitimacy within Islamic political society takes on particular importance, as it provides a gateway to understanding the interaction between religion and politics, between the community and authority, and between normative conceptions and historical practices.

On this basis, this article seeks to analyse the relationship between **the ummah, politics and the caliphate** in shaping the concept of authority within Islamic political thought, and to reveal how the political question evolved from a practice linked to the governance of the community into a subject of foundational analysis and theorisation in Islamic thought.

02. From the tribe to the ummah or from nature to culture

The circumstances and contexts surrounding the early emergence of Islam are key to understanding many subsequent developments relating to the concepts of the community, the ummah, authority and the state. The period of revelation constituted a constantly renewing source of interpretation and legislation, and was subject to constant reinterpretation, as it was the phase that witnessed the founding of the 'society of revelation' (), which is 'the model society embodying the cosmic system of meaning for the Muslim community' (Islam: Ethics and Politics, 1997, p. 127).

03. Mechanisms of Integration and Assimilation:

The Prophetic mission was founded on two covenants: the first between God and His Messenger, and the second between the Messenger and the people of Medina. The first covenant is the source of the mission and the creed **"And [remember] when Allah took a covenant from the Prophets: 'Whatever I have given you of the Scripture and wisdom, then a Messenger will come to you confirming what is with you; you must believe in him and support him' "** (Āl 'Imrān, 81). As for the second covenant, known as the 'Constitution of Medina', it formed the basis upon which the first united Muslim community was established (Al-Umma wa al-Dawla, 1993, p. 7). The formation of the first Muslim community was based on the call to Islam, and its establishment was a conscious political project . The Messenger and his companions realised that they were founding a new community, the essence of which was the call to Allah, yet one that was not devoid of a political dimension. When their project faced strong opposition in Mecca, they migrated to Medina.

One of the first actions undertaken by the Prophet was to draw up the Constitution of Medina, which regulated relations between the Muhajirun, the Ansar and the Jews. In drafting it, he took into account the prevailing balance of power, as well as social relations, which he subjected to a new pattern of bonds stemming from concepts of religious brotherhood, gradually moving the individual away from the old framework based on tribalism and clan ties towards a framework of solidarity within the emerging Muslim community. Islam utilised the concept of tribal brotherhood (), which was based on biological ties, expanded it, and re-founded it on an ideological and doctrinal dimension, thereby turning it on its

head. Thus, rather than people being members of a tribe pitted against the rest of society, they all became integrated members of a universal community. The dismantling of the structures of the old social order was a necessary condition for the social integration upon which the ummah is founded.

Rosenthal (The Role of the State in Islam, 1991, p. 45) argues that the ‘Constitution of Medina’ arose from the Prophet’s awareness of the need for a political organisation that would bind his followers together and ensure their protection; he regards the document as a religious, social and political text, and in this sense, it serves as a model for subsequent constitutional developments. Meanwhile, Radwan al-Sayyid (The Community, Society and the State, 2015, p. 30) interprets the ‘Constitution of Medina’ as evidence that the Prophet undertook a significant political act that was not of a religious nature, nor was it required by religion or prophethood: “ ‘This is a charter from Muhammad the Prophet, between the believers and Muslims of Quraysh and Yathrib, and those who followed them, joined them, and fought alongside them: that they are **one nation amongst the people...** and that any Jew who follows us shall have victory and a good example... and **that the Jews of Banu ‘Awf are a nation alongside the believers; the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs.**” This significant text—according to Radwan al-Sayyid—proclaims the establishment of a political community rather than a religious one; otherwise, what is the significance of the Jews’ presence amongst them? There is no doubt that the Prophet was the leader of this political community, not because he was a prophet, for the Jews do not recognise his prophethood—but because he was the head of those groups that had covenanted to abide by what is in the Book; for the latter contains, in addition to the bond of blood, two new bonds that led to coexistence: namely, brotherhood amongst the believers and the covenant—or citizenship (if that term is appropriate)—between the people of Medina and, in particular, the Jews.

The aforementioned text contains a legal aspect relating to internal legislation, as well as a discussion of the external relations of this ‘independent nation’ existing ‘apart from other peoples’, characterised by the fact that their peace is one and their war is one. Thus, as Radwan al-Sayyid states, the Book constitutes a constitutional covenant resembling modern political societies. This does not mean that the state is a requirement of religion, but this text traces the establishment of the state and the political community back to the civil covenant of the Prophet’s call.

The existence of a Muslim society—the ‘society of Medina’—called for the introduction of legislation. This was a situation that did not exist prior to the Hijrah. The Medina period constituted an advanced model of how religion and society interact, as prescriptive rulings were issued sporadically, as a subsequent reaction to facts and events (Religion and Religiosity, 2012, p. 36). This reality continued to drive the transition from a community to a society. Hussein Marwa argues that the religious mission of Muhammad’s call found its first manifestations in the migration to Medina; he regards the migration as a decisive event that enabled Islam to move from creed to Sharia, as it carried the task of organising society (Material Tendencies in Islam, 2008, p. 401). And when the Qur’anic text was finalised upon the Prophet’s death, there existed a political entity resembling a state, or a state in the process of emerging and taking shape .

By tracing the Prophet’s work in Medina, and in light of Malah’s observation of this trend, we see that he sought to establish the community or ummah, as defined in the Qur’an, on a moral foundation

comprising four pillars, in which the religious and the political—at least as required by the founding phase—are intertwined to the utmost extent: **migration, Brotherhood; the Constitution of Medina;** and the codification of **the principle of combat**, or ‘jihad’. These principles formed the solid core of the political system established by the Prophet to form the new Islamic community, upon which he relied to take it far. When we examine these effects methodically, and by striking a balance between spiritual incentives and material factors in the Madinah experience, we find that authority here—as Arkoun states — was founded on the Qur’anic logic, entirely oriented towards the religious vision with its two dimensions: the ascetic, salvific dimension based on solidarity and the unity of the community; and the political authority of the Prophet, who knew how to utilise, with consummate skill, all the sources of his precise and intimate knowledge of his Hijazi society.

From the very moment of the Prophet’s death, Muslims disagreed amongst themselves over who should assume authority, not over its necessity. These disputes did not concern the concept of the community or the ummah; rather, they regarded the community as an end in itself and a supreme ideal, and held that the state must always exist for fear that the continuity of the community might be interrupted. The latter was established by the Prophet; it is the ‘Jama’ah of God’, the ‘Ummah’ which Muslims from the very outset placed above all other considerations and which became an absolute entity beyond question. The crux of the matter is that politics and the state emerged as a subsequent measure following the existence of the ‘Jama’ah’ and the ‘Ummah’.

Exegetes have not delved deeply into the study of the concept of the ummah in isolation from the concepts of the ‘tariqah’ or the ‘millah’. As Nasif Nassar states, their minds were dominated by the existing link between the community and Sharia. However, in this context, they distinguished between what they termed the ‘ummah of the call’ and what they termed the ‘ummah of the response’. The latter comprises all those who believe in that Prophet, or all Muslims, whilst the ‘nation of the call’ is humanity. The call does not cease until the two nations coincide, for the Qur’an presupposes that the ‘nation of the call’ remains open, so that the ‘nation of response’—‘the Muslims’—becomes the ‘nation of the call’—‘humanity’.

04. On the Presence of the Political Question in Islam

The question of authority imposed itself upon the Muslims at the time of the Prophet’s death. That day did not pass until Abu Bakr had been sworn in as ‘Caliph’ by the overwhelming majority of the Companions and the people. Al-Tabari (Tarikh al-Umam, 1997, p. 236) narrated with his chain of transmission: “Amr ibn Harith said to Sa’id ibn Zayd: ‘Did you witness the death of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him?’ He replied: ‘Yes.’ He asked: ‘When was Abu Bakr sworn in?’ He replied: ‘On the day the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, died; for they disliked the idea of remaining even part of a day without being united as a community.’” It is not difficult to appreciate the speed with which Abu Bakr’s succession took place (The Fitna and the Schism, 2012, p. 33). A political response was essential to fill the vacuum created by the Prophet’s death; the fear for the unity of the community was of the utmost importance. For had the Muhajirun or the Ansar insisted on making a unilateral decision regarding authority, the ummah would have split, and there would have been two Islams in conflict, one of which would inevitably have destroyed the other; the victor would then have lost its meaning, ceasing

to be a religion of invitation and becoming instead a sect of extermination (The Community, Society and the State, 2012, p. 325).

It was virtually a foregone conclusion that the matter of the Prophet's succession would not proceed without major problems, for none of the Companions had any textual basis upon which to claim their right to the position over others. The text is silent on this matter. Here, the central question arises: 'Who is worthy of the Prophet's succession?' According to Hisham Ja'it, this is a foundational question, for it lies at the heart of all the conflicts that erupted among Muslims—initially in a muted form—from the very moment of the Prophet's death, and later intensified, leading to fragmentation following the assassination of 'Uthman and the events of the Great Fitna.

With the advent of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the Prophethood came to an end and the state began to take shape, effectively forming as a natural social entity. The Muslim community at the Saqīfa had a better understanding of its nature; they spoke of the Prophet's political authority, whilst religion remained in its place as a moral umbrella sheltering the objectives, and its presence remained overwhelming. We might well ask, when 'Abd al-Jawad Yasin states that religion continued to guide the objectives of the state or authority after the end of the Prophethood, what justifies the assertion that authority and politics are necessary in Islam?

We shall cite two examples from the early Rashidun period during the reign of 'Umar: Al-Darimi, in his **Sunan**, relates a statement attributed to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, in which he addressed the Arabs: 'O people of the Arabs, the land is the land; there is **no Islam except through the community, no community except through leadership, and no leadership except through obedience...**' Whether or not the statement is authentically attributed to 'Umar—in either case—there is no doubt that it captures the interdependence of three dimensions in the formation of the historical Islamic experience: **religion, the ummah and the state**. 'Umar's statement' implies that there is no Islam without Muslims—a principle that is a given in the sociology of religion: there is no religion without a community – and that the very future of Islam depends on a community or ummah that undertakes to realise it. However, Islam, which exists 'only through a community', presupposes that this community acts as a force and a pillar, or as the political vehicle for Islam; and this can be none other than the emirate, or the state, governance, politics and the administration of public affairs.

The second example dates from the reign of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. Sources state that the 'Kharijites', a group of the Muhakkima, argued with Imam 'Ali in the year 39 AH or 40 AH that there was no obligation for an Imam or a political ruler, using the slogan: 'There is no rule but that of God!' In other words, they believed that Islam did not require a political leader. This was an idealistic but impractical view, as they were eventually forced to choose a leader of their own in their conflict with Ali. However, Ali responded by explaining that authority is necessary, not for the sake of religion or to enforce God's rule on earth, but to look after the affairs of the people; he said: 'Judgement belongs to God, but on earth there are rulers. The people must have a ruler, whether righteous or wicked, who brings the scattered together, unifies the affairs, distributes the spoils of war, wages jihad against the enemy, and takes from the strong for the weak, so that the righteous may find peace and relief from the wicked'. These words, spoken in the midst of the civil war (35–41 AH), declare that the state attained its full meaning in the early Islamic

world with the completion of the political community (The Community, Society and the State, 2012, p. 25).

These interrelated conclusions, which suggest a tenacious interdependence between the community, the call to Islam and the state, in fact refer us to the central issue in the historical consciousness of the Islamic experience—one that continues to exert pressure on the very fabric of our reality today. This is the bond of kinship between religion and politics within that experience. Wajih Kawtharani argues that the organic relationship between these two spheres is affirmed by the Qur’anic text and the Prophetic experience, as well as by the concept of the Rightly Guided Caliphs among Sunni jurists and the concept of the Imamate among Shia jurists; this has made a separation between the two spheres either impossible or extremely difficult (The Jurist and the Sultan, 2001, p. 22).

This statement suggests much, but it translates, in any case, to mean that all the intellectual endeavours of Sunni Islamic thought concerned with politics and the system of governance naturally revert to the stages of the Prophethood and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, given the abundant implications they convey regarding the primacy of justice, Sharia and ethics. These are the two periods in which the model society, embodying a system of transcendent meaning, took shape; and consequently, the ideal model that is always open not to application but to emulation and approximation (). We find this problem situated within two boundaries. The first is the fusion of the religious and the political during the periods of the Prophethood and the Rightly Guided Caliphs. The second is the ‘Great Fitna’, where the two spheres began to diverge. Not entirely, but the distinction between them became apparent.

With the occurrence of the ‘Great Fitna’, the dialectic between the state and the community imposed a violent conflict within the ruling authority and amongst the Arabs themselves; this problem became clearly evident, and the conflict manifested itself through purely political concepts: the Shi’a of ‘Ali, the Kharijites of the ‘Muhakkima’, the Uthmanids, and the early Mu’tazilites. Even if the slogans they raised took on the guise of religious misguidance or pretence, it is not difficult to strip away these religious veils and look beyond the superficiality of events to discern the deep-seated motivations and tendencies upon which the stakes of the actors are based.

The conflict between Ali and Mu’awiya appears to be a conflict between two ideas: the idea of a universal community based on the brotherhood of faith, as represented by Ali, and the idea of the state, as represented by Mu’awiya, based on punishment. Mu’awiya demanded retribution against Uthman’s murderers, but in the final stage he revealed his desire to ascend to the throne; Ali defended the legitimacy of his succession in the name of his precedence in Islam, that is, he championed political authority through religious arguments and values. Hisham Ja’it (Al-Fitna, 1989, p. 46) states that the religious and the political are intertwined; for it is natural that a nation founded on a religious call, prophetic authority and a holy book should turn first to religion, and that everything—particularly the political sphere—should appear to it in religious terms; yet each individual has their own interpretation of this religious dimension as applied to politics.

These preliminaries lead us to two major observations regarding the first Islamic political movement, according to Belkiz (Al-Fitna wa al-Anqam, 2011, p. 76): The first is that the intrinsic political dynamics within Islamic society were so significant that they led to the formation of an Islamic

political community and sphere, closely linked to the very essence that forged the community's cohesion: religion, which serves simultaneously as both a belief system and a unifying bond. Secondly, in the Islamic experience, politics did not present itself merely as a practice but also as a subject of reflection that would lead Muslims to establish their own field of knowledge: from kalam and fiqh to the theory of the caliphate later on.

05. Issues of Legitimacy between Jurisprudence and Politics

Historical, theological and jurisprudential approaches that have sought to document the phases of the political experience in Islam have witnessed a debate concerning the problem of classifying the types of governance practised in reality and the ensuing issues of legitimacy, since the establishment of the Umayyad state, with this classification oscillating between three concepts: the Caliphate, the monarchy and the sultanate. This implies that the defining feature of that experience was the transformation of the Caliphate into a monarchy (Fundamentalist Thought and the Problem of Scholarly Authority, 1994, p. 81), Ibn Khaldun considered that Mu'awiya's reign had become a monarchy, even though it was confused with the Caliphate: 'I have seen how the matter turned into monarchy, whilst the meanings of the Caliphate—such as upholding the religion and its doctrines, and following the path of truth—remained; the change appeared only in the motivating force, which was once religion but then turned into tribalism and the sword' (The Muqaddimah, 1984, p. 262). It is, therefore, a transformation in the nature of authority brought about by a shift in the driving force, manifested in the prioritisation of tribalism, domination and power.

Sunni jurists were well aware of the historical roots of the crisis of legitimacy that beset the formation of the state in Islamic history; for that crisis has its roots in the very first question of authority following the Prophet's death during the meetings at the Saqifa, as we have mentioned, and was subsequently raised with greater urgency and violence during the Great Fitna. The concepts of authority and religious authority then became increasingly complex with the emergence of the sultanate, particularly with the rise of the military leaders (the usurpers) who imposed their rule on a powerless Abbasid caliphate, when the Shi'ite Buyids began their rule in Baghdad in 946 CE.

It was essential to acknowledge this development in the practical reality of political experience within Islam and to provide a theoretical framework for it. The writings of the jurists specialising in Islamic political theory—particularly al-Mawardi and those who followed him (Abu al-Fara', al-Ghazzali, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Ibn Jama'ah, etc.)—indicate that their primary concern was the preservation of the unity of the ummah. They were correct in emphasising this. Islam emerged unscathed from the Mongol invasion despite the simultaneous collapse of the political system and the Abbasid Caliphate in 1208 CE.

Only an awareness of this historical context (*Islam et politique à l'âge classique, 2009, Paris*) enables us to understand the immense legislative effort that led the jurists to construct a discourse on legitimate politics. Their political jurisprudence came to express an urgent need for Islamic consensus, which was in crisis, by establishing a system of rulings concerning the organisation of authority and the state in general, thereby ensuring its acceptance and legitimacy (The State of the Jurists, 2015, p. 18). This recognition of the situation, and the simultaneous engagement with it, was reflected in the

foundational theoretical work of the Sunni school of jurisprudence. The jurist and judge Abu Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Mawardi (374 AH–450 AH, 974 CE–1050 CE); our choice of al-Mawardi in this paper is not because he was a jurist who sought to reconcile reason and revelation, as his rational jurisprudence did not achieve the same success as his political jurisprudence (Politics and Religion in al-Mawardi, 1997, p. 41) .

Al-Mawardi's uniqueness stems from his seminal attempt to define the relationship between politics and revelation. He was the first Muslim to undertake a comprehensive deductive analysis of the elements of Sharia relating to governance, the state and politics; this meant that he transferred the fundamental issue of the 'caliphate' – which had undermined the unity of Muslims – from the theological and philosophical debates amongst the various Islamic sects to the level of jurisprudence and legislation. Al-Mawardi brought politics down from the realm of abstract ideas to the constraints of reality and day-to-day governance (The State of the Caliphate, 2010, p. 45); his work **Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya** is not only the first of its kind, but also the most renowned in Islamic history.

Al-Mawardi appeared to be more concerned about the future of both the state and the community; he reflected on the conqueror, describing his rule as despotic and usurping, yet he recognised that his rejection of it did not negate reality, but rather deepened and exacerbated the legitimacy gap. Al-Mawardi established a precedent followed by later jurists of Islamic political law; one of his merits was that his rationality led him to open up jurisprudential thinking to the realm of the possible and the relative, moving away from the language of absolutes. Thus, his acceptance of the authority of the conqueror served as evidence of his realistic approach to the crisis of legitimacy.

Does this mean that al-Mawardi's political discourse is a discourse of crisis? (In Tyranny, 2011, p. 334) It is a discourse of crisis, but it is also a discourse of foundation. Mohammed Khatami (Religion and Thought in the Snares of Tyranny, 2004, p. 283) argues that the fact that the history of codifying the theory of the caliphate dates back to this era is evidence that the decline of any institution justifies a review of its foundations.

We now wish to pose a question with far-reaching implications. Why has jurisprudence monopolised discourse on both Sharia and the legitimacy of political authority and the state? For the latter is, first and foremost, a political issue—or so it appears.

Developments took place that made the jurists the guardians and interpreters of Sharia (Sharia and Authority in the Islamic World, 2007, p. 19). If we examine the matter closely, we find a connection between, on the one hand, the establishment of the principle of *ijtihad*—which opened the door wide to the development of an Arab-Islamic understanding of political matters— and, on the other hand, a convergence between al-Shafi'i's work—aimed at integrating the realms of governance and politics into the realm of religion through the methods of consensus (*ijma'*) and analogy (*qiyas*)—and the crisis of the Caliphate during the reign of al-Ma'mun... The greatest conflict and stake was the monopoly over the pinnacle of sovereignty and supreme legitimacy, which transcends all else. It was clear that Sharia was the domain of the jurists and that, in theory, it was binding upon the Caliph and his subjects; the Sharia derived from the Prophetic Sunnah posed an implicit threat to the authority of the Caliphate, and al-

Ma'mun alone identified this danger and worked to counter it, thereby placing Ibn Hanbal in the incident known as the 'Mahna'.

Al-Ma'mun attempted to impose the Greek-inspired principles advocated by the Mu'tazilite school as the official doctrine, and Sunni jurists who opposed this were persecuted; the conflict ended in a Sunni victory, which served as conclusive proof – according to H. J.B. (Studies in Islamic Civilisation, 1979, p. 6)—of the independence of the religious system from the Caliphate and other political institutions, and that rulers cannot exercise oversight over the sources of religious authority, as these belong solely to the community; furthermore, that the Caliphate itself derives from that authority and serves as its political symbol. These events were of fundamental importance for the future of Islam as a whole, as they prevented it from becoming tied to any specific political system, and provided the religious system – the 'religious institution' – and the community with the freedom necessary to develop on the basis of Islam's intrinsic nature and logic.

With another eminent Orientalist, highly respected by Arab social scientists, the picture becomes clearer. 'H. J. ' (Studies in Islamic Civilisation, 1979, p. 186) , states: 'It is at the very heart of Sunni doctrine that the ummah is founded upon Sharia, that its historical development proceeds in stages ordained by God, and that its continuity depends on the strength of an infallible consensus; Since this is the case, it was the duty of the jurists—who are the guardians of the Ummah's conscience—to stand up and clarify for each generation the legitimate nature of its political system. They regarded this issue as linked to that of the Caliphate, and the Caliphate, fundamentally—insofar as it is a system—is considered a symbol of the sovereignty and authority of Sharia.

Throughout history, the image of the 'caliphate' among the Muslim masses has been steeped in messianic expectation, yearning for a decisive return in which justice of a mythical essence is realised; it is within this consciousness that the collective imagination has been woven (Islam: Ethics and Politics, 2011, p. 45). This religious vision, imbued with a high degree of symbolism, should not obscure from our view the purely worldly nature of political authority in Islam, nor how it has been seized and exercised from the events at the Saqīfa to the present day.

This profound intertwining of religion and the state in both aspects of Islamic theory is a reflection of the 'real' historical trajectory that has consistently run parallel to both, owing to their simultaneous emergence and throughout the stages of theoretical development—not the other way round. (The historical trajectory was not a reflection of the theory.) According to Abdel-Jawad Yassin (Religion and Religiosity, 2012, p. 99), the theory here did not interpret the text (revelation), but rather interpreted social reality as it unfolded in history: The Shia established an organic link between religion and the state that was not called for by the founding text; they did not merely incorporate religion into the objectives of the state, but rather incorporated the state into the pillars of religion. As for the Sunni theory (including the Ibadhi school of thought), although it did not make the Imamate a pillar of faith, it did regard it as a necessity for the establishment of religion, a fact which leads to an eternal link between religion and the state.

The Sunni political theory, as 'H. J.' observes (Studies in Islamic Civilisation, 1979, p. 2012), was in reality nothing more than an intellectual interpretation of the nation's actual history; it was not a theory

divorced from historical facts. That entire grand and imposing edifice of exegesis of the sources is nothing but a retrospective justification of prior historical events which were confirmed by consensus and validated by the historical experience of Sunni society. Consequently, there was no significant difference between the jurists' theories on the subject of the caliphate and the actual reality of governance in Islam.

06. Conclusion:

The 'events' constituting Islamic history were precisely three: the event of the Prophethood, the event of the Ummah, and the event of the State' (The Group, Society and the State, 2015, p. 384). Whilst everyone agreed that the aim of the first event was the establishment of the ummah, or the community of believers and Muslims, a notable difference of opinion arose regarding the third event. Historians, from the third Hijri century onwards, have held that it was the Prophethood that established the state, just as it established the ummah, and that the latter's conditions for existence would not have been fulfilled had it not been for the establishment of the state.

However, jurists and theologians have maintained that the project of the ummah is far broader than that of the state. Authorities and states are inherent to human society; whereas the 'ummah' established by the Prophethood and by Islam extends beyond the realm of political authority alone; indeed, its nature and objectives also differ from those of the state. Some theorists of the state (and some exegetes of the Qur'an) have argued that the ummah comprises two categories: the ummah of response (umma al-ijaba) and the ummah of call (umma al-da'wa). The ultimate aim of the ummah's project is for these two ummahs to coincide in time" (The Group, Society and the State, 2015, p. 186).

The intrinsic political dynamics within Islamic society were such that they led to the formation of an Islamic political community and sphere, closely linked to the essence that forged the community's cohesion: religion, which serves simultaneously as a belief and a bond" (Fitna and Division, 2011, p. 76) Secondly, in the Islamic experience, politics did not present itself merely as a practice, but also as a subject of reflection that would lead Muslims to establish their own field of knowledge: from kalam and fiqh to the theory of the caliphate.

The Caliphate does not refer to the state, but rather to a form of authority in which sovereignty lies with the text and the community; it emerged as a theory at a later period, particularly with al-Mawardi. Prior to that, it was 'discourse on the imamate', in which Sunni scholars responded to the views of the Shi'a and the Khawarij; thus, 'political jurisprudence', in its true nature and essence, was a codification of past governance in Islam, particularly during the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. It was not a codification of its future.

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