



## **FORMATION STAGES OF THE DIWAN SYSTEM OF THE ARAB CALIPHATE**

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### **Abstract**

The article examines the emergence of the first Islamic state in the Arabian Peninsula, the period of the Rashidun caliphate and the formation of the ruling system of the Arab Caliphate on the basis of primary sources and scientific literature.

**Keywords:** Mecca, Yathrib, Medina, city-state, caliph, caliphate administration.

### **Introduction**

Islamic civilization, which has caused many significant changes in the history of mankind and has had a positive impact on the whole world, is recognized by Western and Eastern scholars. This civilization is fundamentally different from other civilizations not only because it is the last religion, but also because of its unique state governance, legislation, economy, and attention to science.

The emergence of Islam in the 7th century and the new way of life and system of governance that were formed under its influence radically changed the lives of the peoples of the Middle East, and also became the basis for the emergence of large Arab-Iranian-Turkish Islamic states in the Middle East.

In this article, we will focus on the emergence of the first Islamic state that laid the foundation stones for Islamic civilization and the establishment of a form of governance based on Sharia in it through a comparative analysis of sources.

At the end of the 6th century - the beginning of the 7th century, the tribal system in the Arabian Peninsula collapsed. The position of the chieftains, who owned the best lands, the largest number of livestock and slaves, declined significantly. This situation was widespread in the Hejaz. Mecca and Yathrib (Medina) were major trading centers in the region, and the caravan route from Syria to Yemen passed



through these cities. The tribes were divided into tribes, and the chieftains of the tribes were considered the largest and richest merchants. The Arab tribes, who had lived in isolation for thousands of years, united by the first quarter of the 7th century. The last religion, Islam, which emerged in the city of Mecca, became the only and main factor in the unification of the Arabs. After the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated from Mecca to Yathrib and entered the city of Medina[5:385], Yathrib came to be known as “Madinat-ur-Rasul” (City of the Messenger), or simply Medina[7:216]. The migration to Medina marked a turning point in Islamic history and ushered in a new era. In 636, Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab, recognizing the significance of this event, established the Hijri calendar, which is still in use in the Muslim world today[10:247]. In Medina, a community of believers, the ummah, formed around Muhammad (peace be upon him), consisting of the Muhajirin and Ansar. This community was not based on pre-existing kinship ties, but on the basis of a single Islamic teaching. The ummah was a democratic organization, and Muhammad (peace be upon him) was both the religious and military leader of the community[8:68].

From the first days of the Hijrah, Muhammad (peace be upon him) concluded a treaty between the Muhajirin and the Ansar. In this treaty, they came to an agreement and made a covenant with the Jews. They remained in their religion and their property was not affected. Their rights and obligations were defined. It begins with the following content: “This is the treaty of Muhammad (peace be upon him) between the believers of Quraysh and Yathrib and those who followed them, joined them and fought with them. They are one nation, distinct from all other people.” [5:393].

16 clauses of the treaty applied to the Muslims, and 12 clauses applied to the Jews, who were the closest neighbors of the Muslims in Medina. As a result of this treaty, Medina and its surroundings became a peaceful state, its capital was the city of Medina, and if the interpretation is permissible, the head of the state was Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the influence and power in it were in the hands of the Muslims [7:238].

The Prophet's first work in Medina was to build a mosque (Masjid Nabaviya). For this, the place where the camels sank was chosen. This mosque was not only a place of prayer, but also served as a center for regulating social relations, as well as a meeting place where councils and executive meetings were held[7:229].



The establishment of diplomatic relations between the first Islamic state founded in Medina and the major empires and states of that time was possible only after an important historical event in Islamic history - the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, concluded by the Muslims with their main enemies, the Meccan polytheists, in 6 AH (628 AD).

Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor Ahadjon Hasanov comments on this historical process as follows; “The Treaty of Hudaibiyah is more important than any victory in battle. If, for example, the first foundation of the first Islamic state was laid after the victory in the Battle of Badr, then after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the opportunity opened up to unite the entire Arabian Peninsula into one state under the banner of Islam” [10:295].

Also, after this treaty, letters were sent to the rulers of Byzantium, Sassanid Iran, Abyssinia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yamama, and Damascus, inviting them to Islam. Some accepted them, others rejected them. Through this, they were able to introduce themselves and their religion to them, and their relationships were learned.

Since the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent as a prophet not only to the Arabs, but also to all of humanity, the propaganda they began was continued by their followers - the caliphs.

The caliphs, who were considered successors of Muhammad, had both religious and secular power. Barthold: only “during the period of the pious caliphs did the supreme power in the Arab caliphate retain its theocratic character. During this period, the caliphs became not only religious leaders (imams), but also military leaders (amir al-mu'minin)” [3:18]. At this point, with due respect to Barthold's scholarly legacy, it should be noted that the term amir al-mu'minin was used only from the time of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab.

The work carried out during the caliphate of Abu Bakr Siddiq, who lasted two years and three months, is characterized mainly by the “Ridda Wars” against the apostates who had apostatized from Islam after the death of the Prophet, the compilation of the Holy Qur’an, and the beginning of military operations in the Iraqi territories.

Among the later Rashidun Caliphs, the era of Umar ibn Khattab stands out for its comprehensive reforms and the complete formation of the foundations of state governance. The work of Caliph Umar ibn Khattab as the Commander of the Faithful, their leader, was not limited to leading the prayers and managing the conquests in the north from afar. His main goal was to ensure the creation of the



most perfect society in the world, the most exemplary in all spheres of life, based on the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the teachings of the Sharia. As evidence of this, it is not without reason that at the end of the 20th century, non-Muslim experts ranked Umar ibn Khattab in fourth place in the list of people who have brought the greatest benefit to societies in the history of mankind [12:427].

By the 20s–30s of the 7th century, the first Islamic state was fully formed and the Islamic army was organized. They united the peoples who had accepted Islam under a single Islamic banner and penetrated the territories of the two largest empires of their time, Rome (Byzantium) and Persia (Sassanian Iran). As a result of military campaigns, vast territories under the rule of Rome and Persia were subdued in the 7th century and the first half of the 8th century.

Diwans were first introduced in the Caliphate during the reign of Caliph Umar ibn Khattab, in which the receipt of state benefits and the payment of salaries to soldiers were recorded[1:340]. During the reign of Abu Bakr Siddiq, al-fay (booty) was immediately distributed. By the time of Umar ibn Khattab, the socio-economic structure of the state had radically changed. In order to unite the diwans in one place, the Caliph established the Bayt al-Mal. All state expenses; Funds for military development, social welfare, and construction began to be collected from the Bayt al-Mal. All of this indicates that the Bayt al-Mal was founded during the reign of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab[9:127].

According to Sharia law, the collection of kharaj from all landowners and farmers working on state lands was mandatory, and the income from these lands was used to pay salaries to soldiers, officials, and servants, as well as to provide for the descendants of Muhammad [peace be upon him][4:122].

Umar ibn al-Khattab also carried out unprecedented work in social welfare matters. In particular, benefits were provided for the wives of the Prophet, participants in the battles of Badr and Uhud, those who emigrated to Abyssinia, those who participated in the capture of Mecca and the subsequent battles, and widows and orphans of soldiers. Also, comprehensive activities such as the introduction of allowances for the elderly, first weaned, and then nursing babies, assistance to disaster victims, and the organization of humanitarian aid from one country to another were implemented for the first time since the time of Umar ibn Khattab [12:444].



During the time of Abu Bakr Siddiq, a separate amil was added to the amils in Medina and its surrounding areas. During the time of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab, as many regions were included in the City State of Medina, a governor began to be appointed over the amils. The governors in the regions appointed the city amil themselves, but the caliph appointed the amil of the khiraj [9:133]. They were officials serving in the administration of the Arab Caliphate, dealing with economic and financial matters and collecting taxes from the population [1:151].

During the time of Umar ibn al-Khattab, the expansion of the state chancellery increased the need for secretaries. As a result, a secretarial office was also established. Later, by the Umayyad era, the number of such secretaries had increased to five: the secretary of letters, the military secretary, the secretary of the taxes (khiraj), the secretary of the shurta service, and the secretary of the qadi [9:133].

During the reign of Uthman ibn Affan, one of the later Rashid caliphs, significant measures were taken in state administration. For example, the appointment of judges to provinces, the expansion of communal lands for the common use of the poor population, and the establishment of mirshab positions in cities, as in the time of Caliph Umar, are among these [12:475].

Divans played an important role in the administration of local government bodies. State administration was conducted in Arabic in all regions. Divans had separate tasks and functions.

1) The Military Affairs Divan, 2) the Internal Affairs Divan, 3) the Postal and Communications Divan are among them[8:73].

The Military Affairs Divan was responsible for the supply and armament of the army. It registered the standing army and determined the amount of property provided for their salaries and military service. The Finance Divan was responsible for determining and accounting the amount of taxes such as jizya, zakat, and ushr. The Special Postal Service Divan was responsible for the delivery of mail and government cargo. This Divan was also responsible for the construction of roads, caravanserais, and wells. In addition, this Divan also performed the function of a special police[6:501].

It is a gross error to say that the spread of the Arab Caliphate over a vast territory and the adoption of Islam by many peoples was due to large-scale military operations and the exemption of those who accepted Islam from the jizya tax. True,



sometimes such cases occurred. However, social justice, equality, and Islamic enlightenment revealed the essence of Islam to the people.

The fact that all spheres were regulated by the state in the Caliphate, the absence of strictly defined class groups, the absence of a special status for cities, the fact that in the early periods the population of the conquered territories was treated with tolerance and was allowed to preserve their forms of government, language, and courts [6:500] is nothing other than Islamic justice. Later, they benefited from the just policies of the Caliphate, and there were many cases where their hearts were inclined to Islam. In particular, during the reign of Umar ibn Abdulaziz, more than six million people, from the barbarians of North Africa to the nobles of distant India, voluntarily converted to Islam[2:93].

During the Umayyad period, the diwan work was further improved and became an integral part of the administrative system. The conquest of new lands, the large amounts of money received as booty, as well as in the form of khiraj and jizya, required their registration and regulation. The administrative system of the Arab Caliphate was based on the administrative system of the Sassanid state. Initially, the diwan work was conducted mainly in the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) language, and Persians, Greeks, and Aramaics worked in them. During the Umayyad period, there were 10 diwans in the administration of the Caliphate. In particular, the Diwan al-Mustafi (or Treasurer) was responsible for financial affairs, the Diwan sahib al-Shurat - for military affairs, the Diwan al-Insha (or Amid al-Mulk) - for official documents and correspondence, the Diwan sahib al-Barid - for transporting government correspondence, the Diwan al-Arz - for supplying the army, the Diwan al-Muhtasib - for market matters and controlling prices, the Diwan al-Qazi - for supervising compliance with the law, the Diwan al-Mushrifin - for supervising the spending of the treasury, the Diwan al-Diya - for supervising government lands, and the Diwan al-Waqf - for supervising lands belonging to religious organizations[1:340].

Although there was no such position as a minister during the Umayyad period, his duties were performed by the “Katib al-Kuttab” (administrator of the Diwan). That is why, at the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate, the person holding the position of “vizier” was selected from among scholars and scholars. Al-Fadl ibn Sahl was the first among scholars and scholars to combine two functions: ministerial and military affairs. This was due to military circumstances. The minister of a theocratic



state, who had high powers, had to be competent not only in the areas of governance, economics, and culture, but also in resolving political and military issues. The position of “vizier” was usually inherited. During the Abbasid Caliphate, religious and cultural affairs were mainly entrusted to the Persians, while military and administrative affairs were entrusted to the Turks. Later, the Turks also took over the affairs of the Diwan [11:126].

One of the Umayyad caliphs, Marwan ibn Hakam, introduced the dinar as a single currency for international trade and the dirham for tax collection throughout the caliphate. At the time of the arrival of the Arabs in the ancient cultural centers of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt, feudal society was taking shape. With the introduction of Islam and the Arabic language in these regions, the primitive communal system of the Arabs was destroyed [8:70]. After the death of Marwan ibn Hakam, his son Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (65–86/685–705), the fifth Arab caliph of the Umayyad (Marwanid) dynasty, organized state affairs. During his reign, the diwans, which had been operating in Persian and Greek, were converted to Arabic. The letters of the Arabic alphabet were supplemented with additional dots and strokes. For the first time in Islam, gold dinar coins began to be minted [1:210]. As we have already mentioned, only silver dirhams were minted during the caliphate, starting from the time of Umar ibn al-Khattab.

There were also some who minted money among the emirs appointed to the territories. Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad was the first to mint “Arabic-Sassanian” coins in Balkh, which had Pahlavi and Arabic inscriptions on the Sassanid coins. The Pahlavi inscription on them read “Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad,” and the Arabic inscription read “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim,” the main Muslim phrase. These coins were minted in Balkh in 62/681-82, that is, after Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad left Khorasan [1:210].

The first caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, Abu al-Abbas al-Muttalib as-Saffah (104 – 136/722 – 754), was the first to introduce the position of minister in the Islamic state. During his reign, the word “Muslim” began to be used in the divans instead of the word “Arab”, since the Abbasids came to power thanks to the support of the non-Arab peoples living in the eastern part of the caliphate - the Persians and Turks (al-Ajam). Abu al-Abbas was a very generous person, loved science and literature. Islam, the last and most complete religion, was not only the spiritual basis of Muslim ideology, but also played an important role in the formation of a political



union, the ummah. This factor, starting from the Arab Caliphate and continuing in the Samanid, Ghaznavid, Delhi Sultanate and even Baburian periods, made the Qur'an and Sharia law the primary law and excluded any form of government based on worldly thinking [6:497]. The rapidly spreading Islam aroused great interest and hope among the masses. Because they realized that their previous religions, idols and statues, were incapable of restoring social justice and uniting the people in one cause. The initial efforts frightened the wealthy nobility. However, soon tribal chiefs and influential merchants also began to accept Islam one by one [8:69].

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is worth noting that after the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) established the first Islamic state in Medina, its foundations were laid on the basis of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The gradual expansion of the first Islamic state led to the establishment of a system of governance based on Sharia in the conquered territories. In Andalusia from the 8th to the 16th century (Spain), in Central Asia from the 8th to the 20th century (except for the Mongol period), in the countries of North Africa, Egypt, the Ottoman Empire from the 8th to the first quarter of the 20th century, that is, until they were conquered by the colonial empires of Europe, in the Middle East (in some countries), Iran and a number of other countries, a system of governance based on Sharia has survived to this day.

Over the course of several thousand years of human history, some of the most ancient civilizations established a system of governance based on the worldly thinking and deliberation of a group of people, while in some states, state affairs were conducted and laws were developed based on the personal desires and whims of one person, that is, the ruler. After the emergence of Islam, the foundations of statehood were established in the Near and Middle East regions based on its Sharia rulings, and laws were developed that reflected the interests of all members of society on an equal basis, and on its basis, high stages of statehood development were achieved. Therefore, even today, the political governance, legislation, and tax system of Muslim statehood are being studied not only by Muslims, but also by non-Muslim lawyers, political scientists, and economists.



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