

The Book
of Great
Quotes

Sayings from the Rightly-Guided Caliphs

ابو بكر
رضي الله عنه
عمر
رضي الله عنه
عثمان
رضي الله عنه
علي
رضي الله عنه

2nd
EDITION
Fully revised
& updated

Compiled, Edited, and Introduced by
Flamur Vehapi

Foreword by
Burhan Al-Din Fili

“An outstanding compilation of enlightenment and guidance extracted from the wisdom and experiences of the best of the Muslim nation (ummah). The content of this book can serve as a life compass for Muslims and others alike.”

—**Didmar Faja**, author of *Echoes of the Prophet*

“*The Book of Great Quotes* is more than just the sayings of the early caliphs. It is a superlative synthesis of the very core of Muslim values. It is both succinct and beautiful at once. It is a must read for Muslims and non-Muslims alike that is hard to put down and leaves us wanting more. Vehapi provides us a well documented, easy to read collection of sayings of the first four caliphs of Islam that reminds us what it means to be Muslim.

—**Brandon Mayfield**, author of *Grains of Destiny*

“A delightful collection full of relevant knowledge and gems of wisdom for our time.”

—**Naser Bresa**, author of *Retrospectiva* and *Alo, Komiteti?*

“Beautifully written ... an impressively splendid work.”

—**Salma Ahmad**, president of ISGP, Portland, OR

Revised and Updated Edition

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Flamur Vehapi

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Crescent Books

PUSTAKA PERDANA



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To my beloved parents,
siblings, as well as to
Ryenne and Suhail,
the treasures of my soul.

Also the people of Palestine
who have been struggling
for nearly a century to free themselves
from the shackles of colonial occupation.

#FreePalestine

TO OUR BELOVED TUN DR MAHATHIR,

Wise words from the 4 Legends to
another wise Legend.

Dear Tun,

May the muslim world have more
leaders like you: a visionary, wise,
principled and brave.

May Allah reward you and beloved
Tun Siti Dr. Siti Hasmah abundantly
and bless both of you always.

from:

Ismail Khan & Nasreen Ayaz

July 2025

Also by Flamur Vehapi

- Berke Khan of the Golden Horde*, 2024
The World According to Sami Frashëri, 2024
Kosovo: A Brief Chronology, 2023
Verses of the Heart: Poems, 2021
Ertugrul Ghazi: A Very Short Biography, 2021
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The Alchemy of Mind: Poems, 2016
Sfidat Jetike: Poezi, 2002

Translations

- The Expansion of Islam* by Sami Frashëri, 2025 (2nd. ed)
The Album of Aphorisms by Sami Frashëri, 2019



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A Brief Timeline of the Early Caliphate^a

- 610** Prophet Muhammad ﷺ receives the first revelation of the Qur'an
- 622** The Hijrah takes place—Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his followers flee the Quraysh persecutions and settle in Madinah; the Islamic calendar begins
- 628** The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah is signed by the Prophet ﷺ and the Quraysh, and peace is established in the region between the Muslims and non-Muslims of Makkah
- 630** Makkans violate the peace treaty. In return, the Prophet ﷺ goes to capture Makkah but the city surrenders voluntarily; the Makkans are forgiven for their past violations
- 632** Prophet Muhammad ﷺ passes away; Abu Bakr as-Siddiq is chosen as his representative (i.e. caliph)
- 634** Abu Bakr passes away; Umar bin al-Khattab is put in charge by the Muslim leadership as the next caliph
- 638** Muslims capture Jerusalem (the city is considered

^a See *Appendix C* for a timeline of the history of Islam and Muslims.

to be Islam's third holiest site after Makkah and Madinah)

- 644** Umar bin al-Khattab is assassinated; Uthman bin Affan becomes the next caliph
- 656** Uthman is assassinated, and many, though not all, accept Ali ibn Abi Talib as the fourth caliph
- 661** Ali is assassinated; Muawiyah I takes control of the caliphate and founds the Umayyad dynasty, moving his capital to Damascus



A Note from the Editor

The process of gathering these sayings from such a vast body of literature has been far from easy. The most challenging part was compiling and verifying the sayings of Ali ibn Abi Talib. Many quotes I encountered had, whether intentionally or not, been attributed to him. Some seem to believe that attributing others' quotes to Ali will somehow elevate his status—failing to realize that few in human history have reached his level of wisdom, grandeur, and standing.¹

Each of the sayings included in this collection has been carefully selected and cross-checked for authenticity and accuracy. A wide range of reliable sources—books, articles, websites, and apps—were consulted to ensure that the maxims presented here are accurate. Many of these sayings appear in slightly different wordings, depending on the source, so I have chosen the sources with the versions that seemed most coherent. In cases where clarity or better flow was needed, I made editorial adjustments and indicated such changes as 'paraphrased for clarity' or 'slightly paraphrased.' Quotes of uncertain origin or those primarily found on limited online platforms were not included in this book due to my inability to verify their sources during preparation. I have tried to be even more rigorous in that regard with this new edition of the book. However, what I have excluded does not imply they

are inauthentic, as more reliable sources may be identified in the future.

The introductory commentaries in this work are derived from Qur'anic exegesis, the vast *hadith* literature, and the referenced works listed at the end of the book. The Qur'an translations primarily come from Abdel Haleem's *The Qur'an* and Sahih International's *The Qur'an*, though other translations were consulted as well. The *hadith* literature frequently referenced includes Imam al-Bukhari's *Sahih al-Bukhari* and Imam Muslim's *Sahih Muslim*, along with collections like *Sunan Abu Dawud*, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*, *Sunan Bayhaqi*, and Ibn Kathir's *al-Bidaya wal Nihaya*, among others cited in the endnotes and the bibliography.

Lastly, in honor of the Prophet ﷺ, the Arabic honorific 'ﷺ' (meaning 'peace and blessings of God be upon him') follows his name throughout the text. However, for ease of reading and to avoid distraction, I have not consistently applied honorifics after the names of his Companions (the *Sahabah*),^a particularly since this book is intended as a casual read for both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences.

^a For honorifics and their meanings, see *Glossary* at the end of this book.



Foreword

This book is a testament to the timeless wisdom and guiding principles of the great caliphs of Islam. Through their sayings, preserved and cherished across generations, we glimpse not only the values and ethics that define Islamic leadership but also insights that resonate deeply with universal themes of character, justice, and spirituality. In a time when the teachings of these influential figures are as relevant as ever, this collection offers readers a direct link to the insights of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, whose lives and words have shaped Islamic thought and moral philosophy.

It is essential for both Muslims and non-Muslims to understand the wisdom of these caliphs, as their guidance extends far beyond the confines of any single faith. Their sayings reflect a universal call to integrity, humility, and compassion—principles that are crucial for today's world. Through these words, readers encounter not only a deep reverence for God but also an emphasis on self-accountability, the pursuit of knowledge, and the importance of community, all of which transcend religious or cultural boundaries.

Flamur, with his extensive research and deep knowledge of Islam and its key historical figures, is uniquely qualified to compile these profound teachings. His commitment to presenting these sayings with authenticity and clarity has produced a work that

is both accessible and richly scholarly. This book serves as an invaluable resource for anyone seeking to understand the depth and breadth of Islamic wisdom, preserved here with care and devotion for readers of all backgrounds. Exceptional and unique, well prepared and greatly presented—simply a work of art.

Burhan Al-Din Fili

Author of *The Spectacular Escape* and
Katirdhet Hadithe (Forty Hadith)
Michigan, USA



Introduction

Throughout history, the world has witnessed remarkable leaders who have shaped civilizations. Many are still celebrated today, while others have been forgotten or, in some cases, deliberately overlooked. Within Western writings, the wise leaders quoted and discussed in the following pages belong, unfortunately, to the latter category. Though these exceptional figures didn't build palaces or write extensive volumes, they left behind a legacy unmatched in human history. Inspired by the message of their teacher, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, they continue to touch hearts, influence minds, and inspire lives around the world. These great polymaths are known as the first four caliphs of Islam: Abu Bakr as-Siddiq r.a., Umar bin al-Khattab r.a., Uthman bin Affan r.a., and Ali ibn Abi Talib r.a.

These caliphs, along with many who followed, were remarkable figures in every sense of the word. They embodied true leadership qualities that resonate even today. Unlike many modern leaders who seek votes and make empty promises, the caliphs were chosen based on their character and qualifications by a council of elders, scholars, and community heads, receiving pledges of allegiance from the people, both men and women, young and old. In contrast to certain contemporary rulers, these caliphs often hesitated to accept leadership roles, fearing they might not fulfill

the weighty responsibilities entrusted to them. Abu Bakr, for example, initially asked that someone more suitable be appointed, but the nascent Muslim community knew there was no one more qualified than him.² After accepting the role, he humbly said, “If you find what I say and do to be right, then support me. If you find it wrong, then advise me and correct me.”³ How many of today’s leaders would welcome such accountability or invite the people to correct them?

This work offers a brief and humble glimpse into the lives and wisdom of these great Muslim leaders. For those interested in deeper exploration, further resources are listed in the bibliography at the end of this book.



The Caliphs and the Caliphate

A caliph, or *khalifah* in Arabic, is a successor to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and a spiritual leader of the Muslim community. This means that after the passing away of the Prophet ﷺ, the leaders of the Muslim world were to be the successors of the Prophet ﷺ.⁴ The dominion of the caliph is called a Caliphate, a term greatly misused and abused today.⁵

There have been a number of caliphs throughout Islamic history, but the most commonly known are the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, also known as *al-Khulafa al-Rashidun*.^a These outstanding personalities, close Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, include Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (r. 632-634), Umar bin al-Khattab (r. 634-644), Uthman bin Affan (r. 644-656), and the son-in-law of the Prophet, Ali ibn Abi Talib (r. 656-661). During the reign of these Rightly-Guided Caliphs, the Caliphate grew well beyond the known Arabian territories; all of this occurred within thirty years of their rule. After the assassination of Ali and the resulting civil war, however, the governor of Syria, Muawiyah ibn Sufyan, took over the Caliphate and gradually it turned into a family dynasty.⁶

The dynasty that originated with the rise of Muawiyah I is known in history as the Umayyad dynasty. The dynasty reigned

^a Also known as the 'Rashidun Caliphs.' See *Appendix B* for a list of caliphs and sultans.



Flamur Vehapi is a researcher, chronologist, poet, literary translator, academic, and success coach. He received his B.S. in Counseling Psychology with a minor in History from Southern Oregon University, and his M.A. in Conflict Resolution from Portland State University. Currently, he is an Education and Leadership Ph.D. candidate at Pacific University. In 2009, Flamur received the Imagine Award for Community Peacemaking.

He taught social sciences at Rogue Community College and Southern Oregon University, after which he taught at various institutions in the Middle East. He has authored eleven books and translated two of Sami Frashëri's works. Flamur and his family currently live in Oregon.

“Flamur deserves our thanks for reconnecting us with this priceless wisdom.”

—Joel Hayward, author of *The Leadership of Muhammad*

“Skillfully compiled ... highly commendable.”

—Imad M. Bayoun, author of *Belief and the Human Mind*

“An amazing collection of pearls of wisdom... a must read!”

—Amber Haque, co-author of *Islamic Psychology Around the Globe*

“The content of this book can serve as a life compass
for Muslims and others alike.”

—Didmar Faja, author of *Echoes of the Prophet*

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Cover Image: Calligraphy of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs:

(from right to left) Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali

