

## The “Commandership of the Faithful” Institution in Morocco: Pertinent Points for the debate on the Caliphate (the *Khilāfah*)

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**Abstract:** The Commander of the Faithful Institution in Morocco spans over more than ten centuries as a system based on a pledge of allegiance (*bay'a*) in the form of a written contract between the Ummah, through representatives of its social constituents, and the Commander of the Faithful. By virtue of this contract, the Commander of the Faithful is vested with the legitimacy to rule in exchange for the commitment to serve and strive (i) to preserve the 'Umma's religion within the fundamental constants it has chosen in terms of creed ('*aqīda*), school of jurisprudence, fiqh (*madhab*), and spiritual behavior; and (ii) to preserve the lives of its people, their property and dignity, and maintain the general order. Through diligence in this commitment, the Commander of the Faithful ensures loyalty of religious forces, i.e., the '*ulamā*, sheikhs of religious orders (*zawāyā*) as well as the loyalty of the people who follow them. This system was based on the rules of interaction dealings of the Commander of the Faithful with the 'Umma, the state and society, and his keenness to preserve the spiritual ties with the Mashriq, the cradle of Islam, in parallel with the no less important intent to uphold the independence of Morocco in all matters.

This system caught up with the modern era with a great ability to integrate and benefit from the mechanisms that serve the purposes of religion in terms of justice, freedom and a decent life. This makes the system an epitome for those who deal with the challenges of the relationship between religion and politics in countries threatened by ideological currents that perceive the government as a form of Caliphate to be imposed by coercion and terrorism.

**Keywords:** Commandership of the Faithful, Caliphate, *Bay'a*, *Kulliyāt*, Legitimacy of Power in Islam, Islamic Jurisprudence.

Information drawn from the traditional heritage dating back to the era following the death of the Prophet, that is the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, indicate that the title of “Caliph;” i.e. successor to the Prophet, was borne by 'Abū Bakr when he took this position. His chances in succession were enhanced after he substituted for the Prophet, at the latter's command, in leading the prayer as '*Imām*. People were unanimously aware of the great weight of this title, as the awesome responsibility of shouldering this onerous burden by the infallible (the Prophet) was now assumed by a fallible person ('Abū Bakr). Was it not 'Abū Bakr who said: “I was appointed to rule over you, yet I am not the best among you?”<sup>1</sup>

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1. Reported by 'Ibn Hishām in his *Al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, vol. 4 (Dār al-kitāb al-arabi, 1990), 312.

The prevailing assumption that the ruler of the Muslims should follow the path of the Prophet in managing the affairs of the *'Ummah* posed an enormous challenge; nevertheless, the title is associated, at the same time, with a strong temptation, due to its religious as well as worldly loaded implications.

However, aware of the gravity of the title and its weighty responsibility the second caliph, 'Umar, bore instead the title of "Commander of the Faithful," (*'Amīr al-Mū'mīnīn*). 'Umar's position reflects, if anything, an expression of a high degree of piety. Yet, the central rulers of the two following dynasties, the Umayyads and the Abbasids, clung to the title of "Caliph," due to all that is associated with it, symbolically and effectively, in terms of legitimacy credentials. As of the title of "*'Amīr*," it was left to be used by some rulers of the emerging provinces in the peripheries or after the disintegration of the Islamic Empire.

The choice of the title *'Amīr al-Mū'mīnīn* was not made by coincidence or improvisation; in fact, it is rooted in the Qur'an when it says: "O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in command."<sup>2</sup> The word "*'Amīr*" comes from the command (or order) found in this verse.

The "Commander of the Faithful" Institution in Morocco dates back nearly thirteen centuries. It is represented today by King Mohammed VI, who is the thirty-ninth grandson of the Messenger through Ḥassan ibn 'Alī, and the sixteenth king of the Alawite dynasty. With its contractual, functional, and symbolic terms, this system continues to this day as a unique example in the Islamic world. A careful perusal of some aspects of it – (its past and present) – would shed light on the debate over the "caliphate" in the current context.<sup>3</sup>

The system of the "Commandership of the Faithful" in Morocco is not a mere reinvention of a traditional concept, the purpose of which being to reconstitute (somehow) the "dream of the caliphate." It is rather both a historical and current reality motivated by a number of significant elements. Its history took place consistently amid a great paradox represented, on the one hand, by the Moroccans' strong attachment to the spiritual and religious ties to the sources of Islam as they developed in the *Mashriq*; and, on the other hand, by a constant yearning for the preservation of political independence of this part of the Islamic West.

So enthusiastic were the Moroccans about Islam that in the seventh century *Hijra*, they recounted news (or rather a legend) which reported that they did not actually wait for the Arab conquerors to convert them to Islam, but a delegation from amongst them travelled to *Ḥijāz* to meet the Prophet, and brought Islam to them. Miraculously, the Prophet spoke to this delegation in the *'Amāzīgh* (Berber)

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2. *Al-Nisā'*, 58.

3. Some of the views mentioned in this article are based on the author's own experience as a minister, since 2002, of Religious Endowments and Islamic Affairs, in his capacity as responsible for the implementation of the vision of the Commander of the Faithful in fulfilling the primary *sharī'a* commitment, namely the protection of religion.

language, and the delegation came back home conveying the Prophet’s message to their people.<sup>4</sup>

After the conquest of Morocco, the local inhabitants suffered from extremely cruel and humiliating treatment by the Umayyad governors. Representatives among them went to Damascus, but their complaints fell on deaf ears. Following this, they revolted against the Umayyad Caliphate, thus putting an end to their subordination to the *Mashriq* in 122 *Hijra*.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that the Alawites’ propaganda in their conflict with the Umayyads and then with the Abbasids took advantage of this tension and the Moroccans’ feelings towards the Prophet’s lineage to influence them (i. e. the Moroccans). They, thus, triggered their feelings to receive with open arms ‘Idrīs ibn ‘Abdullāh, the sixth grandson of the Prophet through Hassan ibn ‘Alī. ‘Idrīs was the first Easterner (*Mashriqi*) to whom the Moroccans pledged allegiance as “Commander of the Faithful” in place in the year 172 *Hijra*. ‘Idrīs had arrived in Morocco defenseless with a very small group of people. He had fled from the *Mashriq*, after the Abbasids killed his brother Hassan in the “*Fakhkh*” battle near Mecca.<sup>6</sup>

This pledge of allegiance to a “Commander of the Faithful,” to a man whose lineage goes back to the Prophet and who entered Morocco peacefully, was a major historical event. It was one in a series of accumulated events that reflect what we have indicated about the Moroccans’ spiritual attachment to the *Mashriq*, and at the same time their determination to maintain their political independence. One of the far-reaching direct consequences of this pledge is that ‘Idrīs, this *Sharīfian* Arab prince, was wed to a Moroccan ‘*Amāzigh* (Berber) woman named Kanza. She became the mother of the first *sharīf* founders, who established the first ruling dynasty in a context of merger between two human elements and cultures.

The pledge of allegiance to the Commander of the Faithful continued in seven successive ruling dynasties, three of which were founded by *sharīfs*, and four by ‘*Amāzigh* (Berber) tribes. Each of them contributed to building Morocco, as a state, a society, and a nation. They also contributed to human civilization in terms of values, sciences, and arts.

It is noteworthy to mention that the pledge of allegiance to ‘Idrīs ‘ibn ‘Abdullāh had settled a number of matters that would later on enter into the establishment of the global Moroccan entity. Among those matters three stand out:

4. See: ‘Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī, “Ashraf Buḳ‘a wa aqdas fī Nāḥiyat Murrākush,” *Majallat al-Maghrib* (Yūnyū- Yūlyūz 1936): 1-2, 18-22.

5. ‘Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Al-bayān al-mughrib fī akhbār al-Andalus wa al-Maghrib*, taḥqīq G.S. Colin et É. Lévi Provençal, vol. 1 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1983), 51.

6. A battle near Makkah in which the soldiers of the Abbasid Caliph “Hādī” attacked “Ḥusayn al-Ṭālibī” and killed him in the year 169/786. Chronicles mention that Idrīs’s arrival in Morocco was with the complicity of the postmaster in Egypt.

1. The linkage of Moroccans in a permanent relationship to the *sharīfs* on the basis of *maḥabbat at-tasharruʿ* (*sharīʿa*-loving)<sup>7</sup> and not *maḥabbat at-tashayyuʿ* (Shiʿism-loving), which is a mechanical inclination to ʿAlī’s family. That is why the rulers in Morocco persisted in protecting the Sunni school, a fact which explains why the Fatimid Shiite state did not take hold in Morocco.<sup>8</sup>

2. The Moroccans’ adoption of the *Mālikī* School of jurisprudence. ʿIdrīs’s arrival coincided with ʿImām Mālik’s death in Medina; some of Malik’s students brought his jurisprudence school (*madhab*) to Morocco; Malik’s stand regarding the Abbasids struggle with the Alawites is well-known.

3. The choice of this jurisprudence school paved the way for a later choice at the level of dogma, which is the adoption of the ʿAshʿarite creed. The Maliki doctrine remains to this day a theoretical pillar for the scholars’ stand against the terrorist *takfīrī* trends, including those who embrace the project of the caliphate.

During the eleventh and fifteenth centuries A.D., the three ʿAmāzīgh dynasties, i.e., the Almoravid, the Almohad and the Marīnīd, made considerable efforts in building a rich Moroccan-Andalusian civilization. Under the influence of the ʿulamāʿ (religious scholars), the Almoravid rulers expressed an unparalleled example of what we might call “political piety,” when they chose, away from any pressure,<sup>9</sup> to bear the title, “Commander of Muslims,” instead of “Commander of the Faithful” out of respect for the central political unity in Baghdād, notwithstanding what had become of the Caliphate map in the fifth century of the *Hijra*.

But emboldened by its strong efforts to build a political entity that extended from the ocean to the borders of Egypt, and from the River Niger basin to Toledo in Andalusia, the succeeding Almohad dynasty not only restored the emblem of the “Commander of the Faithful,” but its rulers bore the title “Caliph” as well. In fact, some chronicles report that the reason why the Almohad caliph Yaʿqūb al-Manṣūr did not respond to Salāḥ-al-dīn al-ʿAyyūbī’s request for the participation of the Almohad fleet in the war against the Crusaders was that in his message, al-ʿAyyūbī did not address Yaʿqūb al-Manṣūr with the title “Commander of the Faithful.”<sup>10</sup>

Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, Arab tribes flocked to *al-Maghrib al-aqṣā* (Morocco), an event which changed the ethnic nature of the Moroccan population.<sup>11</sup> In the sixteenth century, after the fall of Andalusia, and in view of the military and material superiority of the northern bank of the Mediterranean,

7. What was mentioned in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah in the recommendation of this deep respect, not what resulted from the partisanism towards ʿAlī in confronting Muʿāwiya, then his descendants confrontations with the Umayyads and then the Abbasids.

8. The Fatimid *daʿwa* originated in Morocco, but the *fuqḥāʿ* (jurists) throughout chased it, so it left the Far Maghreb and settled for a time in Ifrīqya, then it left for Egypt, until it met the same fate.

9. It is necessary to point out here the authority that the jurists had over the rulers of the Almoravid dynasty.

10. This may be a secondary reason, but the background of the Almohads not participating in the Ayyubid war against the Crusaders is justified by the burden that Morocco was carrying in confronting the Christians in Andalusia, and fear of the ambitions of the Ayyūbids in the Western Mediterranean.

11. The migrations of Banū Hilāl and Banū Sulaym reached al-Maghrib Al-Aqṣā in the twelfth century, and the migrations of the Maʿqil tribes two centuries later.

the Iberians set out to conquer the world, thus occupying a number of Moroccan coastal cities on their way. Within the context of the necessary mobilization to liberate the occupied sites, and the renewal of the state in the context of the new ethnic composition, the *Amāzigh*, who were the leaders of *jihād* against the Iberians, requested that the *Sharīfs* be reinstated to power. So the Saadi dynasty<sup>12</sup> assumed it with a basic justification that was not explicitly expressed, yet it was indeed the objective justification, namely “arbitration,” considering that the *ashrāf* were neutral and respected by *Amāzigh* and Arab tribes alike. This arbitration has become one of the new tasks of the Commandership of the Faithful since the sixteenth century.

Since 1668 A.D. the succeeding dynasty, the Alawite dynasty,<sup>13</sup> had to deal with a situation represented by a previous shrinking of the kingdom’s territory, and the presence of an expanding power on the country’s eastern borders, which was the Ottoman state that inherited the “central” caliphate and extended its influence to Central Maghreb territory (Algeria).

Since preserving the land with its borders is one of the tasks of the Commandership of the Faithful, the rulers of the Alawite dynasty have preserved the borders which they found in Morocco against both an Islamic state (which was the Ottoman state) and against the threats coming from Christian countries in the north. Only limited portions of the territory were subjected to occupation.

The Commandership of the Faithful invests its historical credentials with absolute confidence in dealing with the manifestations of the present time, that is adapting to the new developments, while remaining thoroughly loyal to its original authentic nature. By present time manifestations, we mean areas of effective delivery, concrete work, and realistic political efficacy. Any shrewd analyst of the events that have been unfolding for the last two decades, that is, during the reign of His Majesty King Muḥammad VI, inevitably notes that in the context of undertaking the mission of the Commandership of the Faithful, there are distinctive features of this era, compared even to the preceding epochs. Thus, the debate about the position of the Commandership of the Faithful in the literature of *al-siyāsa al-shar‘iyya* “sharia politics” or *al-aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* “ordinances of Islamic Governance” becomes merely a matter of formalization. In fact, the circumstances for exercising power and the conditions for implementing the pledge of allegiance (*bay‘a*) in the history of Muslims have kept open a wide gap between what should have existed and what was actually possible, with a relative disparity in the effects caused by the rulers’ personas per se.

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12. Moroccans brought the Saadian dynasty to power because they were Ashraf (descendants of the Prophet) even though some questioned that lineage belonging. What is important is the piety expressed by the ‘Amāzigh leaders of jihad, seeking a consensus that was necessitated by the circumstances of the Iberian and Ottoman threats.

13. The tribesmen of the southeast came with the company of their grandfather al-Ḥasan al-Dākhil in the seventh century hegira. He and his descendants had their share of jihad in Andalusia and then in confronting local leaders before nominating the family to reunify the country between Amazigh and Arab elements, in the interest of religion and the benefit of worldly life.

In other words, what historical research can reveal about the actual practice of governance in Muslim countries, both centrally and locally, will be much more useful than what can be induced from the allegations of the various sects on the issue of allegiance or commandership. The political history of Muslims, in terms of ruler-ruled relationship, may differ in its characteristics from the history of others only to the extent that the culture of justice with which individuals and groups are imbued, and motivated by religious ethics, may have actually mitigated more or less the intensity of the otherwise hostile relation between them.

The reader of the history of Morocco will identify seven founding dates when the Commandership of the Faithful rose and was renewed in circumstances imposed by the interests of the greater community at large. The specifications of what is known in the literature of *al-ahkām al-sultāniyya* “ordinances of Islamic Governance” as the case of individual *taghallūb* (government by force) does not necessarily apply to these seven founding dates because when an individual *taghallūb* happens, it is always carried out by a great social force and with a specific reformist ideology. The following section will present the seven reference dates for the evolution of the institution of the Commander of the Faithful in Morocco.

1. The pledge of allegiance to Mawlāy ʿIdrīs ʿibn ʿAbdullāh by Moroccan ʿAmāziḡh who received him, and the rise of the first Commandership of the Faithful in the ʿIdrīssī dynasty,<sup>14</sup> as an independent local establishment in Morocco;

2. The rise of the Almoravid dynasty<sup>15</sup> by the large Sahara group of *Ṣanhāja* desert tribes, a rise motivated by religious reform incentives;

3. The rise of the Almohad dynasty<sup>16</sup> by the Maṣmūda mountain population, likewise, with the backdrop of religious reform;

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14. It was reported that the tribes pledged allegiance to Idris ibn Abdullah to “rule over them, lead their prayers and conquests” (ʿIbn ʿAbī Zarʿ, *Al-ʿanīs al-muṭrib bi rawḍi al-qirṭās ft akhbār mulūk al-Maghrib wa tārikh madīnat Fās* (Al-ribāṭ: Dār al-Manṣūr li al-ṭibāʿa wa al-wirāqa, 1972), 10). This was the first version in the contract of the Commandership of the Faithful in Morocco for what later became known as the five necessities of the *Sharīʿa*. Kanza, the ʿAmāziḡh wife of ʿIdrīs ʿibn ʿAbdullāh, played a significant role in the Ashraf’s continuing to rule in local principalities when she partitioned the provinces and subsequently the tribes to be allocated to her grandchildren from Idris II. Her husband, ʿIdrīs al-Dākhil, was assassinated by the Abbasid Caliph while Kanza was pregnant with the son who ruled under the name of Idris II or Mawlāy ʿIdrīs al-ʿAṣḡhar, and who built the city of Fez.

15. The Almoravids built their legitimacy on unifying the tribes in an unprecedented way, on urban projects such as building Marrakesh, extending the borders of the country to the east and in Andalusia and the islands of the western Mediterranean, and on saving Islam in Andalusia by scoring the victory of al-Zallāqa. In all their work, they were supported by Maliki jurists in Morocco and Andalusia.

16. They initially relied on a massive groups of mountain people, who were motivated to expand in the plains, and at the beginning they adopted a doctrine in which the branch’s jurists were excluded; they justified violent dealings towards the violators, then they refrained from that. They were inclined towards spirituality. They expanded the state’s territory to the fullest extent and further increased the inheritance of the Almoravids in all fields and invented ostentation and grandeur and unprecedented administrative systems, and lately took good care of scholars and philosophers.



4. The rise of the Marīnīd dynasty<sup>17</sup> thanks to the *Znāta* nomadic tribes. They too had revisionist religious aspirations;

5. The Mandating of a family from the south, the *Tagmadūrtī* family,<sup>18</sup> to lead the effort of liberation of the sites occupied by the Iberians on the coasts; hence the establishment of the state of the Saadian *Sharīfs* at the beginning of the sixteenth century;

6. The Mandating of the Alawite *Sharīfs* to rule. They came from the lineage of a man brought originally from Ḥijāz by the people of the *Tāfīlālt* region in southeastern Morocco to bless their *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) caravan. His descendants were later sworn allegiance to, out of necessity to restore the internal unity that had been spoilt by the ambitions of belligerent local families. At the time, several coastal parts were still occupied by the Iberians and foreign threat was looming over the country from both the east and the north;

7. The Moroccans’ struggle between August 1953 and November 1955 for the return of King Muḥammad ‘ibn Yūsuf (Muḥammad V) from exile. It was a struggle for independence and for the preservation of the monarchy which was jeopardized by the colonial stratagem.

As for the process of renewal of the pledge of allegiance to individuals who are to be entrusted with the Commandership of the Faithful within each of the ruling projects mentioned earlier (that is, the ‘Idrīsī, the al-Moravid, the al-Mohad, the Marīnīd, the Saadian, and the Alawite), it was conducted mostly through the “crown prince” system, which has been considered by jurists as the best one to ensure continuity.

No Sultan or King had ever ascended the throne of Morocco on the basis of other than the pledge of *bay‘a*. Every Sultan or King was sworn the pledge allegiance as “Commander of the Faithful,” whether the one who is sworn allegiance to is officially called by that title or not. Available facts indicate that this appointment is not just an issue of the elite jurists or others, but it is rather a matter of interest for all, because it concerns them in terms of security and justice. It is also important to them from the point of view of religious commitment matters, whose echo resonates in the mosques, regardless of how small or remote they may be. Thus, the conditions forming the basis of allegiance, which consist in the commitment of the one who is sworn allegiance to in terms which are known and clearly defined within the framework of religion, are well known to those who swear allegiance. These conditions are not purely customary terms, but they are expounded in the books of jurisprudence, and their perception is firmly rooted in the collective conscience and

17. The Marinids restored moderation in creed and in the authority of Maliki jurists; they built schools, especially for rural students. During their reign, the features of Moroccans’ religiosity and the rules of their dealings between the rulers and the ruled were established.

18. Relating to their cradle Tagmadart on the Dara’ a River winding towards the west, this coming out of the margin is a steady practice in the emergence of Moroccan ruling dynasties.

tangible in life. Such perception is also manifested through different expressions in the shared language.

In Morocco, the terms *bay'a* (pledging allegiance to someone) and *mubāya'a* (the act of giving a pledge of allegiance) are always mentioned whenever a new ruler comes to power, whether he has borne the title of “Caliph” or “Commander of the Faithful” or “*Sultan*.” Over the centuries, this has been done on the basis of the same conditions, whether the latter are formulated in general terms or in detail. These conditions fall within the obligations that the jurists call “*al-kulliyāt al-khams*,” “The Five Necessities”<sup>19</sup>: the preservation of religion, the preservation of the soul (security), the preservation of the mind, the preservation of property and the preservation of family dignity and honor.

The term *bay'a* is derived from the verb *bā'a* (to sell), which implies that the group “sells” the legitimacy of its being ruled to the person who receives the pledge of allegiance in exchange for a “program” of services represented in the commitments to those fundamentals as they are specified in the books of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and in the treatises on the “Supreme Imamate”<sup>20</sup> (*al-'Imāma al-'Uzmā*). From this vantage point, the term “allegiance,” which is usually used in European languages, is not an exact equivalent for the term “*bay'a*,” because its meaning, which has a Feudal (Middle Age) connotation, does not include the dimension of the contractual conditions mentioned previously.<sup>21</sup>

References to facts of the allegiance contract were mentioned in history books, as full texts or parts. However, the original manuscript texts of a number of pledges of allegiance that took place in the last four centuries have reached us. The Royal Records Directorate in Rabat “*Mudīriyyat al-Wathāiq al-Malakiyya*,” has published copies of these documents in 2011 under the title “The Pledge of Allegiance as a Continuous Contract between the King and the People.” Senior *'ulamā* are commissioned to write the text of the pledge of allegiance, which then is signed by *'ūdūl* (competent accredited witnesses) and attested by judges. The contract lists the names of the persons who pledged allegiance and their representative status. Among them are the most senior *ashrāf*, the *'ulamā*, the *sheikhs* of *zawāyā*, army chiefs, leading merchants, heads of corporations, and tribal leaders. First, a general pledge of allegiance is drafted in the presence of the Sultan, followed by the pledges by various cities, tribes and social groups. Once the pledge of allegiance is concluded,

19. The Five Necessities are the major issues dealt with the *Sharī'a* purposes and objectives, namely all matters which bring interests and avert corruption;

20. *Bay'a* is a contract whereas allegiance refers to an unconditional loyalty to a person, not to a contractual pact.

21. Among those who addressed the issue of certainty (i.e, security) as a condition for the validity of transactions, is the jurist Muḥammad al-Kīkī (XVIII<sup>th</sup> century). The author of this paper gave a lecture on the subject under the title “Law and Necessity” at Berkeley University in 1995. Al-Kīkī's book was published and edited by the author of this paper in Beirut under the title “*Mawāhib dhī al-Jalāl fī Nawāzil al-Bilād al-Sā'iba wa-al-Jibāl*.”



copies of it are read out in mosques and hung up in some shrines which have a special religious status.

In the context of the national movement action to regain the independence of Morocco in the thirties of the twentieth century, Sultan Muḥammad 'ibn Yūsuf was placed at the center of nationalist demands. At that time, people began to challenge the colonizer and to celebrate the anniversary of the pledge of allegiance to the Sultan in 1927. This *bay'a* celebration continued until independence, and later, during the reign of his successor, King Ḥassan II. This celebration is called “Throne Day.” A “renewal of allegiance” ceremony is held on the day following it and is attended by representatives of the various social components. As Morocco was ushered into parliamentary life based on elections, the task of renewing the pledge of allegiance was transferred to the locally elected. This is one of the manifestations of the smooth integration shown by the institution of the Commandership of the Faithful into its time context.

Concerning the renewal of the pledge of allegiance at the religious level, it is achieved through prayers of supplications for the Commander of the Faithful in the Friday sermons from the pulpits of the mosques. This symbol has a particular historical depth. When history books mention the phrase “The sermon took place in the name of so-and-so,” this means that this person was the legitimate ruler of his time.

The pledge of allegiance on the basis of commitment to “the five necessities of *Shari'a*” constitutes a reference for the conscience of the governed. In the past, the person to whom the pledge of allegiance was sworn would provide, within the limits of the existing material means, religious, judicial and educational services. But his most important services consisted in protecting the territory and precluding sedition. Since the Wattasid era (fifteenth century), in the Moroccan religious scholars' view (*Fuqahā*), the priority has always been to avoid “vacancy” (that is, the vacancy in the Commandership of the Faithful office) because the presence of the Commander of the Faithful is condition for ensuring the validity of transactions, as no certainty is possible without a Commandership that guarantees security.<sup>22</sup>

Keen on preserving their survival by way of maintaining a balance between their forces and those of their neighbors, the tribes did assist in this stability without interference from the central government. They even made compromises with the ruler for mutual benefits, which is why the latter was satisfied, ultimately, with the minimum amount of tax collection and services. He also accredited their candidates for mediation activities. The existence of a ruler who is not a tyrant is half of the required solution; the other half is the ruler's awareness that he owes his rise to power to the support of the group's strength and will. In fact, it is possible to illustrate the manifestations of such compromises throughout history.

22. The author of this paper has published a study on this Bay'a in his book *fī Tārīkh al-Maghrib* (Maṭba'at An-najāh al-jadīda: 2019).

Perhaps the conversion of the general principles of the fundamentals of *Shari'a* into concrete detailed action programs was not possible to undertake before the availability of the means that are now accessible. Also, perhaps the attempt to impose some restrictions in this matter was the reason for the crisis that was brewing between Sultan Mawlāy 'Abd al-Ḥafīḍ and some scholars of Fez who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, introduced in the pledge of allegiance some details in the form of a program which was somehow inspired by what was happening in the Ottoman empire. The Sultan denounced those details because it was customary that the pledge of allegiance remained general without the need to mention where and how it was to be implemented.<sup>23</sup>

If the contract with the Commandership of the Faithful is basically rooted in religion, the content of that *bay'a* contract for the two parties included matters related to daily life. In effect, the efficacy of the Commandership of the Faithful in the history of Morocco to this day is the result of this historical, actual contract; such efficacy is prominent in all matters of religious identity and its foundations. It is also effective in matters of life, in every matter related to nation and state building, community servicing, and all that is related to these aspects in terms of civilization, culture, and contribution to Islamic society in particular and to universal culture in general.

With its fundamental constituents and constants (Ash'arism, Malikism, and al-Junaid's Sufism) religious identity reached this day and age thanks to the keen supervision of the Commandership of the Faithful since the era of the Marīnīd dynasty in the fourteenth century. Help towards this came from the *'ulamā* (religious scholars) and the sheikhs of *zawāyā*. Its political importance lies in protecting the nation from religious dissent, in barring the way to foreign interference, and avoiding disturbing the general public with matters pertaining to peculiar aspects. These are constant objectives mentioned by the jurist 'Abd al-Wāḥid 'ibn 'Āshir al-Fāsī four centuries ago, in his introduction to "*al-Murshid al-Mu'īn 'alā aḍ-Ḍarūrī min 'Ulūm ad-Dīn*"<sup>24</sup> "A Concise Guide to the Basics of Religion." There is no doubt that the mission of the Commander of the Faithful in this respect has become more crucial due to the risk of infiltration of terrorist ideas through different types of beliefs. Similarly, this task has become all the more difficult in an environment where freedom can be exploited for destructive purposes.

As for the fundamental components of the *'Umma* that have reached this age under the auspices of the Commandership of the Faithful, they are represented, despite cultural plurality, in the consensus of the majority on the religious principles in whose framework "Commandership of the Faithful" as a tenet has to be constantly highlighted, all the more so in the present context wherein everything is now subject

23. The author's reminder of the framework of religiosity chosen by Moroccans indicates the feeling of the importance of the issue with regard to reassurance of the general public.

24. That which some Sunni jurists put as condition is to belong to a Qurayshi lineage.

to inquiry and questioning. Whereas in the past, this matter was a taken-for-granted conclusion, it has now become necessary to stipulate explicitly in the constitution the Islamic religion, the monarchy, and the commandership of the faithful as a symbol of the guarantees required for rationalizing governance and preserving territorial integrity.

The changes that have taken place within society have entailed changes in several aspects of the state's form and functioning. Prominent among these changes are the following:

1. Society, which was in the past organized in tribes in rural areas and faction communities within cities, has today developed into a nation. In fact, it can be said that this transformation process did not come all at once; it is the result of centuries of processes, especially as a consequence of expansion in trade and disintegration of old ethnic and regional alliances;

2. Individuals, who made up the people, have now become men and women citizens. They have rights and duties, which have crystallized into concepts, names and slogans that were never so remarkably detailed in the past;

3. Society is no longer represented by notables or by privileged individuals. It is now represented through elections by competing candidate representatives on the basis of the pledge of serving the public interest through programs presented to people in a formally codified system;

4. The new form of political supervision of society has become, by virtue of the law, the prerogative of political parties, organizations and civil society associations governed by law. All of them have emphasized, more than ever before, the role of the Commandership of the Faithful in ensuring unity and security of Moroccans and protecting their choices in religion, politics and major development orientations as well as in international relations;

5. Several mechanisms aimed at accountability have multiplied through dedicated, competent institutions;

6. The people are moving, on the one hand, along the path of local territorial commune management now entrusted to the locally elected and, on the other, through management at the national level by the discussion of the laws of government at the level of Parliament by nationally elected representatives.

Regarding the consequential changes at the state level, they are mainly represented in the following:

1. The government is now formed essentially from within the elected parliamentary majority;

2. The principle that the rule of law applies to all is fully adopted;

3. As part of its mission, the state, in addition to protecting the nation, has elaborated laws and created mechanisms for various types of services intended to benefit the general public.

The purpose of recalling these consequential changes is to show the originality of the system of the Commandership of the Faithful, not just in incorporating the recent changes in its mechanisms, but in investing them to serve the authentic values on which this system is based, and in expanding further the objectives subsumed in the pledge of allegiance.

Morocco has not reached this situation, characterized as “modern,” by developing in isolation, but rather through concurrent voluntary and imposed encounters with universal history. That the credit for these encounters is mentioned is subject to amazement, as some think that values and principles have been – old and new – identical, and that only misuse and oblivion took place. On the two sides of this debate, fundamentalism thrives. Among the manifestations of continuity in the role of Commandership of the Faithful is its ability to keep the vast majority of the people immune to doubts about the values of religion or the interest-based discourse that modern history has brought along, hence the importance of achieving harmonization between concepts and agreement among terms used.

History shows that these entities – nation, state, and society – are not novelties any more than the Commandership of the Faithful itself. Similarly, the relationship between the Commandership of the Faithful and the aforementioned entities in Morocco was not an invention, especially entities like tribes, merchants, scholars, and sheikhs of the *zawāyā*. A historical event which looked contradictory to this was brought about by the colonial era; the colonizer largely disrupted the task of direct supervision of worldly affairs performed by the Commander of the Faithful both toward the state and society. The colonial power tried to make it seem as though the *Sultan* (the Commander of the Faithful) was just a religious leader, for if he had kept managing worldly matters, he would have resisted many projects that were behind the colonial process.

After Morocco’s independence, and due to this temporary disruptive absence, part of the general public opinion seemed to surmise that the new government system was heir to colonialism in its form, laws and regulations. Instead of endeavoring to refer to the pre-colonial institution of the Commandership of the Faithful, some currents of this public opinion began to lean towards a fundamentalism that transcends history, and become literally nostalgic for an era considered to be the ideal epoch in the history of Islam, namely that of the Prophet’s epoch. It is here where lie the roots of the so-called Islamist currents that arose in general through imitating currents having an idealistic conception of what a system should be like within the framework of the Caliphate.

Therefore, the discussion here is about the dual character of the institution of the Commander of the Faithful, as its bearer watches over the affairs of religion on the one hand, and he is on the other hand considered as the head of the Royal institution, that is, the head of state. This discussion is a pedagogical and procedural discourse at the same time, as it has the potential of contributing to the restoration of a collective conscience that had suffered the above-mentioned rift during the colonial period, followed by the confusion that happened after independence. One should note that, after independence, the Commandership of the Faithful strived to preserve the religious identity of Morocco within the confines of its fundamental constants. For this purpose, it resisted the adverse strong winds of the Cold War, when the freshly liberated people from colonialism were in search of a midway alternative between conservatism and renovation. Likewise, it has confronted the unbridled, putschist, leftist organizations, in addition to facing the sectarian expansion creeping from abroad, annulling the propaganda of Arabist nationalists. It also curbed the expansion of the Middle Eastern Islamic fundamentalist movements, in addition to curtailing internal political currents operating under the cover of *Mahdawī* features.

The king, who combines the competence of overseeing religious matters, in its special sense, (i.e. acts of worship and transactions) as well as directing the management of religion in its general sense (that is all aspects of living and of daily life), is one and the same figure. Likewise, the entity of the *'Umma*, whose bond and stroma are part of the body of society, is one entity. However, the conduct of political matters, which include together the two dimensions (the King and the *'Umma*), is what requires a real differentiation that does not stop at just the formal aspect.

In effect, the components of the legitimacy of the Commandership of the Faithful in Morocco are based on elements of historical legitimacy. For even if the Sunnis do not require that one be from the tribe of *Quraysh* to establish the Supreme Imamate,<sup>25</sup> Moroccans consider the belonging of the Commander of the Faithful to a *sharīf* lineage as an attribute of perfection, of holy selection, as well as a reinforcement of the required moral guarantees. Whereas the basic elements of legitimacy, at the forefront of which is protection, justice and caring for life, are neither dwindling nor increasing, their very historical lexicon must be updated so that it may convey the same content, yet with an ever-renewed understanding. Thus, the relationship of the Commandership of the Faithful to the *'Umma* is manifest in several aspects, including:

1. The intrinsic value of the Commander of the Faithful as a *sharīf* with a spiritual lineage;
2. His being considered as the ultimate reference in rulings, according to the creed foundations of the *'ulama*;

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25. Its meaning is what is *ḥalāl* and what is *ḥarām* in definitive texts; everything else lends itself to *ijtihād* and consideration.

3. His being considered the Supreme Imam, who is represented in mosques by the *'imāms* personnel;

As for his relationship with the state, it is seen in the following:

1. In today's language his being the guarantor of the state's provisional services to the nation in preserving the five necessities of religion, such as security, protecting property and honor, and preserving dignity;

2. His being the guarantor of conformity between the positive state laws and the religious provisions in a way that ensures the regulation of *ijtihād* in jurisprudence and the satisfaction of normal interests by legislation. This is what the Commander of the Faithful expressed in a speech about the Family Code to Parliament, when he said: "I do not make lawful what is unlawful; nor do I make unlawful what is lawful."<sup>26</sup>

Hence, the laws of his country are *Sharī'a* laws, whether in terms of conformity with positive textual provisions, or by simulation to past legal *ijtihād* treaties of day-to-day cases (*nawāzil*), or in terms of being laws that are included in a temporary unspecified public interest that *ijtihād* process allows by analogy diligence.

As for the Commander of the Faithful's relationship with society, it is particularly evident in the following:

1. His being a symbol of unity within cultural pluralism;

2. His being the guardian of the fundamentals of religion in a unity that guarantees serenity within society;

3. His ensuring the provision delivery for religious needs viewed, as social needs (e.g., mosques and their religious personnel, solid religious education).

It is clear from these three patterns of relationship of the Commander of the Faithful with the nation, the state and society that the position of the King, as head of state, is in fact an extension of his status as Commander of the Faithful. Therefore, there is no discrepancy, contradiction, or incompatibility between the two positions. Thus, if we were to transform the formal wording of what is stipulated in the legitimacy of the Commander of the Faithful (as mentioned in the books of *Sharī'a* policy) to the modern language of action implementation, we would certainly find that the current practice of this institution is inclusive of various necessary as well as improvement seeking matters. We would find great depth in such practice and a wealth that was neither possible nor perceived by most conventional theoreticians of the essays on government.

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26. The texts of the transfer of customs are among the requirements of protecting religion under the auspices of the Commander of the Faithful in this era, the transfer of norms to the law to regulate the field and preserve the rights of religious officers, which prompted the issuance of a number of sharifian *dahirs* (laws issued by the Commander of the Faithful on religious matters).



It follows from the aforementioned that the Commander of the Faithful, as long as he remains committed in principle to preserving the institutions of *Sharī‘a* and endeavors to apply it, must earn the primary and actual loyalty from all those concerned about religion and who proceed from the latter point of view. On top of these are the ‘*ulamā*’ (religious scholars), then the imams by association. Any lack of insight regarding this issue is the result of either the absence of a global, local or universal historical awareness, or shallowness and deviation in political awareness. In the language of formalization in *Sharī‘a*, we can say that the difficulty of this type of being well-versed in the *fiqh* of religion came about as a result of the political tyranny from which Muslims had suffered throughout history.

Several aspects of this tyranny occurred in the name of religion, which caused the ‘*ulamā*’ to distance themselves from the five necessities and from reordering priorities, while prompting them to focus on details. The five necessities being nothing but the major political issues, the result regarding the behavior of some ‘*ulamā*’ is to shun politics, to hate it or the people who practice it, or to judge them on the basis of irregularities, no matter how small or insignificant they appear, perpetrated by some individuals. It is from this perspective that the ‘*ulamā*’ of Morocco today use the term (‘*ālim al-‘umma*’) “the scholar of the ‘*Umma*” as opposed to the scholar (‘*ālim*’) “affiliated, biased, or deviant from the fundamental constants,” their idea being that the great politics is the one of the Commandership of the Faithful at the national level.

To this end, the religious field has witnessed measures that strengthen the neutrality of mosques and their religious personnel, and which reform religious education.<sup>27</sup> In this context, the al-Qarawiyyīn University system is undergoing an overhaul as innovative education mainstems have been created such as *al-‘Ālimiyya al-‘Ulyā* (the Highest ‘*Ālimiyya* Degree) designed to train a new generation of ‘*ulama*’ who master foreign languages and study humanities. Also, the Higher Council of ‘*Ulamā*’ had, upon request from the Commander of the Faithful, supervised the revision of religious education curricula in public schools, by reviewing the texts of these courses around four concepts which are: existence (man’s relationship with God), universalism (man’s relationship with other people and creatures), human rights (the rights of God, the rights of self, the rights of others), and the acts of “giving” i.e. *al-Jūd* (giving and doing good for people).

Today’s solution to the political problem pertaining to the legitimacy of government has been attained through elections on the basis of a system of power sharing as well as designation of clear prerogatives for each group of actors in public affairs. This has led to revisiting the status of the intervening players in religious

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27. If the state does not bear the expenses of religious needs, private entities are prepared for this, which creates a state of polarization and dispersion and the partiality of religious discourse, especially in mosques. Due to the keen interest of the Commander of the Faithful to preserve this neutrality, the state budget allocated for this matter has doubled manifold.

affairs, namely the *'ulamā'* (religious scholars) and the imams, regarding aspects in which no ambiguity can be tolerated.

The affiliation of the category of the *'ulamā'* and the category of *imams* to that which is comprehensive, constant and unanimously agreed upon puts these two groups in the position of *'Umma* with the Commander of the Faithful. The players involved in the detailed political affairs operate at the level of society. The *'ulamā'* and the *'imāms*, though enjoying full citizenship status and rights, must commit to neutrality. Thus, because they have chosen to perform religious functions for the benefit of the community, the least they can do is to conceal their personal inclinations regarding political parties' programs. They are appointed to assist the Commandership of the Faithful in protecting religion and faith, and their neutrality is part of that protection.

Building this model, whose elements we have mentioned, and in which the Commandership of the Faithful is the focal axis, amounts to building a system that solves several political problems and addresses vital issues, such as:

1. Reassuring the people clung to their religious identity that there is no fear concerning their faith, as the Commander of the faithful is its ultimate protector from ignorance and distortion, as well as the guarantor of its security;

2. Meeting the people's essential needs for religious practice, in terms of training and education;<sup>28</sup>

3. Abiding by the law and respecting the freedom chosen by the overwhelming majority in response to those who call for a separation between religion and state, while accepting pluralism which recognizes the legitimacy of other religions in Morocco, such as Judaism, which has been present in Morocco since pre-Islamic times, and Christianity, whose temples serve the Christian community in a normal fashion. This situation does not overlook reservations about religious activities with foreign political ambitions if they appear to be ambiguous;

4. Offering the possibility to hold debates in the public sphere about special intellectual concepts regarding religion, so far as they do not threaten public order or have deleterious effects on society's general interest.

The greatest relevance of the Commandership of the Faithful in this day and age is that it is a reference for all parties and players, thus rendering possible the institutional integration between the specifics of religion and the progress of history, which is, a parallel development in all aspects. As it is being built in Morocco, this system seems to enjoy consensus even from political trends that are least concerned with religion, but that are concerned about the supreme interest of the country

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28. It relates to the document that the Supreme Council of *'Ulamā'* published in 2005 (along with a French translation) under the title: "The Response of the Supreme Council of *'Ulamā'* to the Request of the Commander of the Faithful about the public interests in relation to issues of managing public affairs."

and are well aware of the dangers of religious sedition on the life of the nation, the state and the community. However, the temptation of religious advocacy as a political investment still remains a threat, and does not only concern the behavior of fundamentalism attributed to religion, but extends even to opposing currents.

What has been achieved in the last two decades in terms of the manifestations of the activities of the Commandership of the Faithful in Morocco promises a developing model in which religious supervision makes significant positive contributions, such as:

- A discourse that introduces religion as a service to decent life and to securing immunity against the “dream of the caliphate,” which is associated with errant perceptions of applying *Sharī‘a* through violence and hostility towards universal gains;
- A system in which the material and psychological cost of life is minimized when reconsidering its meaning and quality.

For these purposes, the Commandership of the Faithful operates with an abundantly rich stock of intimate relationships accumulated by people over the centuries; relationships that are replete with a strong sense of people’s concerns and expectations, concomitant with the awareness that this action takes place in a context in which many types of constraints and ambiguities threaten the auto-immunity of private intellectual and managerial systems.

Reading this system can be useful in understanding the problems raised in relation to the subject of the caliphate and in pondering over the following:

- In 2006, His Majesty Mohammed VI, Commander of the Faithful, received a prominent European diplomat, and conversation touched on the religious policy in the Kingdom. The diplomat asked: “How can Morocco help others in managing religious matters,” to which His Majesty answered “We do not export our model of managing religious affairs”;
- What should be understood from this answer is that a political system based on the Commandership of the Faithful is not necessarily related to an imperial perspective, because diversity is a deep concept in the Islamic perspective, without being incompatible with unity, synergy and cooperation in righteousness and piety;
- Preserving religion, a responsibility entrusted to the Commander of the Faithful, requires that definitely attested law provisions (by the Qur’ān) may not be changed. The rest of the laws issued by the government are in essence *Sharī‘a* laws by virtue of their interest-based intentions. Accordingly, the public has to be educated and enlightened about the corrupt, delusional, “violent and coercive” nature of the “Caliphate” system supposedly expected to legitimize the establishment of an Islamic government;

- That the Commandership of the Faithful guarantees the establishment of *Shari'a* five necessities that are translated in the constitution into a language that corresponds to the *fiqh* language of jurisprudence from the perspective of its very purposes. Moreover, the Constitution sets provisions for the establishment of institutions serving everything that falls within the Islamic axiomatic principle of “enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong”;

- Providing space for the '*ulamā*' to work in a constitutional institution makes them a reference for the provision of legal opinions (*fatwā*) based on independent reasoning to find solutions that are innovative (*ijtihād*). A case in point in this field is the independent judgments which the '*ulamā*' brought about in the drafting of the Family Code;

- At the behest of the Commander of the Faithful in 2005, the Supreme Council of '*Ulamā*' issued a fatwa about a public interest issue. In this document we can read:

“The legalization of that which constitutes an interest that takes into account the necessities and public needs has become a requirement for managing public affairs. Adopting it can handle all issues, including the mechanisms of power alternance, from the standpoint of the pursuit of public interest, which should be accompanied by the renewal of contemporary jurisprudence in matters that require it.”

The fatwa also says: “The '*ulamā*' of Morocco have chosen their path to politics under the leadership of the Commandership of the Faithful. Therefore, they have commissioned the incumbent to whom they have pledged allegiance to govern them, to put right their religious and worldly conditions, and to protect their choices from idle talk, immoderation and extremism.”<sup>29</sup>

- With regard to extremism, and in view of the support of '*ulamā*' for the Commandership of the Faithful in raising people's awareness about the dangers of this immoderation, the Supreme Council of '*Ulamā*' organized in 2007 a symposium entitled: “Refuting the Allegations of Terrorism,” in which the '*ulamā*' explained the flaws of the arguments of terrorism by refuting eleven of its statements, including the saying about “The Necessity of Establishing the Caliphate” according to the perception of terrorism.<sup>30</sup>

- The Commandership of the Faithful in Morocco, established through steeped action in history, is based, to this day, on the *bay'a* pledge of allegiance in order to preserve the five necessities of religion and the interests it contains in harmony, without discrimination. In addition, it is always involved in reforms of justice and development matters in all their forms. In parallel, it strives to strengthen immunity against the kinds of threats engendered by ignorance, impersonating, and extremism,

29. This was published by the Supreme Council of '*Ulamā*' under the title *Hukm al-shar' fi Da'awā al-'Irhāb* (Maṭba'at An-najāh al-jadīda: 2007).

30. The author of this paper gave a lecture on “The Contribution of Managing Religious Affairs in the Kingdom of Morocco to Combat Terrorism” before the Security Council in New York, on September 30, 2014.

in an atmosphere in which the world suffers from confusing slogans and from conflicts of interest.

These elements can be useful in showing the possibility of persuading any sound conscience which is disconcerted in the relationship between religion and politics in Islam. However, it is unlikely that the trend which denies history take stock of this example – a trend which will persist in clinging to the “dream of the caliphate” (with all that is associated with it in the ignorant minds, such as resorting to violence in the name of *jihād*). The advocates of this trend will not learn any lesson, not even if the dream turns into a nightmare, convinced as it is that establishing the caliphate project through violence is the outcome that pleases God.

This is where the duty of the preachers lies: to show the people that what pleases God is justice, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and collaborating on righteousness and piety. Such purposes cannot be accomplished through coercion.

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العنوان: مؤسسة “إمارة المؤمنين” في المغرب: معطيات دقيقة للمناقشة حول الخلافة.

ملخص: امتد قيام نظام إمارة المؤمنين بالمغرب لأزيد من عشرة قرون. فهو نظام قائم على البيعة وهي عقد مكتوب بين أمير المؤمنين وبين الأمة ممثلة في الموقعين الذي هم رؤوس الجهات الدينية من أشراف وعلماء ورؤساء زوايا وقبائل ومن ممثلين عن مكونات اجتماعية حضرية واقتصادية وعسكرية.

ويتم التعاقد في البيعة على أن يلتزم المبايع بالكلية الشرعية الخمس وهي: حفظ الدين والنفس والعقل والعرض، وذلك في إطار ثوابت الأمة في العقيدة والمذهب والتصوف السني. وهذا الالتزام يضمن أمير المؤمنين تأييد القوات الدينية والاجتماعية المختلفة وعلى رأسها العلماء ومن ورائهم فئات الشعب المختلفة.

هذا النظام قائم على قواعد تفاعل بين المبايع وبين الأمة، بين الدولة والمجتمع ومن ضمنها الحرص على حسن العلاقة مع المشرق مع الحرص في نفس الوقت على استقلال المغرب ورعاية خصوصياته. استطاع هذا النظام أن يتكيف مع مستجدات العصر الحديث ودمج آليات تحدم مقاصد الدين في العدل والحرية والعيش الكريم. وهذا ما يجعل منه مثالا لمن يواجهون في بلدان أخرى تحديات العلاقة بين الدين والسياسة حيث تهدد تيارات أيديولوجية بفرص ما تسميه بالخلافة باللجوء إلى الإكراه والإرهاب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إمارة المؤمنين، الخلافة، البيعة، الكليات، مشروعية الحكم في الإسلام، الفقه.

**Titre: L'Institution de "Commanderie des Croyants" au Maroc:  
Points pertinents pour le débat sur le Califat (*al-Khilāfah*).**

**Résumé:** L'Institution de Commanderie des Croyants au Maroc remonte à plus de dix siècles. C'est un système basé sur un serment d'allégeance "*bay'a*" sous forme d'un contrat écrit passé entre la Communauté, Umma, dont les signataires représentent ses constituantes sociales et le Commandeur des Croyants. En vertu de ce Contrat le Commandeur des Croyants acquiert la légitimité de mener le pouvoir en contre partie de son engagement à préserver pour la nation ses cinq fondamentaux agréés par la Tradition: La religion selon le credo ash'arite basé sur le principe de modération, la doctrine malikite en jurisprudence et la tolérance envers les voix spirituelles modérées; La vie des personnes; La raison dans le domaine de l'ordre public; La propriété des biens et la récompense du mérite; La dignité des gens.

En honorant cet engagement, le Commandeur des Croyants s'assure le soutien des autorités religieuses, les '*Ulama* et *Shaykhs* des *Zawiyas* qui exhortent de leur part l'ensemble du peuple à la fidélité. Ce système s'est développé à travers les siècles dans le souci d'établir des usages de respect et des sentiments de révérence. Tout en préservant les liens avec l'orient, berceau de l'Islam, le régime marocain a veillé à préserver l'indépendance et la spécificité du Maroc.

De nos temps, ce système s'est bien adapté avec l'ère moderne en montrant une grande habilité dans l'intégration de mécanismes qui servent les finalités de la religion en matière de justice, de libertés et d'accès à une vie décente. Il donne ainsi l'exemple à ceux qui se trouvent en face des défis liés aux rapports entre la politique et la religion dans des pays menacés par des courants idéologiques qui essaient d'imposer par contrainte terroriste le régime politique qu'ils appellent la *Khilafat*.

**Mots-clés:** Commanderie des Croyants, Califat, *Bay'a*, *Kulliyāt*, Pouvoir et autorité en Islam, Jurisprudence Islamique.