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Chapter 12: The Mutual Relationship between the People and the Government (Part 3)

The Different Approaches in Discussing the Mutual Relationship between the People and the Government

The subject under discussion, i.e. the mutual relationship between the people and the government, can be studied and examined from different angles. One is from historical perspective; that is, for us to examine the governments existing in human societies throughout history and how they established relations with the people. This approach requires extensive work which is in need of historical information.

Another angle is to examine the present condition in the world and the relationships between the people and the present–day governments and it shall be in the form of a descriptive discussion. Under this approach, the relationships existing between the governments and the peoples under their respective jurisdictions in the different societies shall be stated from the perspective of the different schools and ideologies. Of course, this description shall be the groundwork for the succeeding assessment of the scale of desirability of the various elements of those relationships. At any rate, the nature of the discussion is a descriptive one.

Another angle is related to the viewpoint of Islam about the government and its relationship with the people. This issue can be examined from two perspectives: One is in the form of an imperative and theoretical discussion, while the second is in the form of a thematic and objective discussion. In the context of the actual observations of the Islamic government, the government's relationship with the people from the time of the Islamic government established in Medina by the Holy Prophet (S) can be examined as the evidence and basis for finding out and understanding the viewpoint of Islam on social issues.

In the same context, similar to this kind of relations can also be examined in other periods where

governments were founded in the name of Islam. What is more worthy to note for us is the examination of the relationship of the government during the period of the Islamic Revolution whose example was the Imam's relationship with the people. The mode of this discussion is an examination of actual and external cases. In this method, the society serves as a laboratory to be studied in order to arrive at a theory and to examine and evaluate it.

The other mode of the discussion is in the form of an analytical discussion keeping in view of the foundations of Islam, how should the government's relationship with the people be. In this method, while disregarding what relations have been established throughout the history of Muslim societies, the point is to know which of them is consistent with the standards and foundations of the Islamic thought and which of them is not. Reciprocally, in a comparative discussion, one can examine the type of relations of the governments with the people in the other schools and societies, especially in the West in the present time. In this method, one can study the said relations actually and externally (descriptive discussion) as well as on the basis of intellectual foundations they adopt in political philosophy (analytical discussion).

The fact is that many of these subjects can be expressed in theory, discussion, speech, or writing, but cannot be put into practice perfectly. Instead, a very wide gap (sometimes even to the extent of 180 degrees) between what is said and what is materialized in actuality can be witnessed. In the Muslim world, the same manifestations also exist. We have the theory of Islamic government but in different ages of the Muslim history, in some parts of the Muslim countries, some people obtained power to govern, adopted different methods of governance, and organized their relations with the people in such a manner that has not been far from that of the government of infidels. The governments of the likes of Hajjaj ibn Yusuf1 or some other Marwanites (descendants of Marwan ibn al–Hakam and their followers) under the name of Islam and even under the name of the caliph (successor) of the Holy Prophet (S) have been many throughout the history of Islam while they used to act diametrically in opposition to the objectives of the Islamic government and contrary to the theory of Islamic government.

Some people, especially those who are more inclined toward sociological discussions, say, "We do not have much concern with theoretical and hypothetical discussions. We rather observe the actual behaviors." In their opinion, Islam is that which the Muslims have while Christianity is that which the Christians have. For us to say that Islam is such-and-such, or Islam says that such a thing must be done, but in practice we observe that the actual reality among Muslims is something else, is a useless discussion. If we really intend to describe and explain the Islamic government, we have to see how the government of Muslims has been and what the condition of the present governments reigning in the name of Islam is.

The above outlook is a sociological one which does not give much value to theoretical and value–laden discussions. In this outlook, they examine the actual happenings and pass judgment on the basis of the events. Perhaps, throughout these two decades after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, you might have observed such an approach in some writings or speeches. Prior to the Revolution, there were

those who used to discuss and speak in the name of Islam and Islamology, saying, "Islam is that which can be witnessed in the practice of the Muslims. For us to imagine that Islam is something different from what we can observe in the practice of the Muslims is nothing but sheer illusion, dream and imagination." However, the fact is that we, the Muslims, believe that Islam is that which has been ordained by God the Exalted or that which is required through the statements of the Holy Prophet (S) and the pure Imams ('a). Islam is that which is introduced by the Qur'an. Therefore, the truth of Islam is not exactly consistent with what the Muslims have done or are doing.

You can take this point as the theory of Islamic government after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. If they say, "The theory of the Islamic government and the Islamic revolution must be presented through the actual happenings and performance of the Islamic Republic," such an outlook is wrong and such a method is incorrect because in many cases there may be deviations and that which was desirable might have not been realized. There is a difference between theory and practice.

Of course, those who want that whatever they have accepted in theory is also realized in practice will always try to see to it that their behaviors are gearing toward the ideal point and their movement's trend as ascending, and if they suddenly and unexpectedly do not achieve their ultimate goal, at least the direction is something which is always near the ideal target. But if the direction of the movement is not like that, we have not promised that throughout its path, this government is totally and definitely the ideal Islamic government and that we have to defend it thoroughly. We will defend the present government so long as it is consistent with the principles and foundations of Islam as well as the principles and theory of the Islamic government. As to whether there is deviation or not throughout its lifespan, we do not guarantee that since they are ruling in the name of Islam, certainly everything is proper and we defend all its particularities.

Is there any considerable period throughout human history wherein a religion government (prior to Islam) or an Islamic government (after the advent of Islam) has been perfectly established according to what God wanted and the requirement of the doctrine? My answer is, "I do not know." If there is really such a thing, it was only a short period during the time of the Holy Prophet (S) and an equally short period during the time of the Commander of the Faithful ('a). But in other times, whatever has transpired to the followers of other religions and Muslims, or done in the name of religious or Islamic government, we do not know them as completely religious or Islamic, and we defend only that extent which is consistent with the religious or Islamic foundations and principles. We also criticize wherever there is deviation.

Yet, those who have sociological inclination do not pass judgment in this manner. They say, "The Islamic government is the same thing which exists and is practiced in Iran." As such, if lack of success and deficiencies are observed, it is clear that the Islamic government has these deficiencies. The outcome of such a statement will be this one: If this government fails to realize its objectives, it will become clear that Islam cannot actualize whatever it says and promises. Therefore, in their opinion, that defect will be from Islam. We pointed out earlier that in our opinion, such a judgment is not accurate, because Islam

may have given admonitions and orders, but for whatever reason we have failed or did not desire to act upon those admonitions and orders, we might have still failed to reach the ideal point.

Descriptive Study of the Mutual Relationship between the People and the Government in Islam

Concerning the relationship between the government and the people in Islam, one method is to utilize actual studies, observations and examination of external evidences. That is, we have to see what has happened in the Muslim governments and which relations have existed among the governments and the people. It must be noted that the outcome of these studies does not bespeak of the relationship between the government and the people in Islam. In reality, it expresses the relationship between the government and the people in the government of Muslims.

The fact is that in many cases, actions have been done in the name of Islam, which apart from not being a source of pride for the school of Islam, are in fact a source of ignominy for Islam. There are many examples in this context. One of the examples is the same affairs for which we sit in lamentation during the days of the month of Muharram. Under which name were they governing those who ruled in Sham, martyred the children of the Messenger of Allah (S) and took as captives his daughters? They used to regard themselves as the caliphs of the Messenger of Allah (S) while they used to drink forbidden drinks in their parties, engage in vain talks, recite profane poetry, listened to notorious songs, and watched dancers, while they ruled under the name of Islam.

These issues are not new and are not related to today and yesterday. There were also musicians and singers who used to sing national songs. They used to praise the tribes and families, the nobles and the ancients of these people, taking pride in their fathers. During those days, these issues existed and they are not confined to the present that in the name of national culture and Islam, many works contrary to the religious law are done. The fact is that these cannot and must not be attributed to Islam.

In any case, the issue of the relationship of the governments, which were in power in the name of Islam, with the people throughout the history of Muslims can be examined. As we have stated, they have no identical actions. In fact, they have been very different from one another. Sometimes, they have been near to Islam to some extent while at other times a hundred percent anti–Islamic. Be that as it may, this historical discussion is not so much useful for the point we are presently driving at.

In this historical method, what may be useful for us is an examination of some examples of governments which we regard as Islamic and can be cited as an appropriate reference for understanding the theory of Islam. A vivid example of them is the government of the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali ('a). It is so good that this year is the Year of 'Ali ('a) and 'Ali's Conduct, and there are those who identify and examine the characteristics of the government of 'Ali ('a) and present to the society the result of those examinations in the form of articles, or discussions and research works.

Of course, innovation in research and avoidance of repeating and rewriting of the earlier writings as well as attention to our needs, especially the issues which we demand today, should be observed. We should strive to answer the questions of the society today from the life conduct of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) How to govern? How should one behave with the people? How should the people organize their relationship with the government? When the Imam (*r*) was in Paris, foreign journalists frequented his place of sojourn to ask him, "What is the nature of the government that you want to establish?" The Imam used to reply, "The model of our government is the Islamic government."

They used to ask, "What does the Islamic government mean? How should it be? What is your model?" The Imam used to reply, "The model of our government is the government of the Commander of the Faithful ('a)." By means of it that the personality of 'Ali ('a) has become known to all societies and peoples of the world irrespective of religious affiliations and nationalities, and everybody has learnt of something from the life and conduct of 'Ali ('a) as well as his justice. The Imam used to say, "The model of our government is the government of 'Ali ('a)." As to what extent that the Imam succeeded in putting into practice this model in our revolutionary society can be examined. But what is fair is that the Imam did not indulge in negligence as far as it was related to him.

The eminent Imam followed his master [mawla] as far as that which was related to him was concerned. His simple living, nightly acts of worship, benevolences to the deprived classes of the society, wailings and lamentations, seeking of divine assistance, attachment to the truth, overcoming the pressure of the nearest ones, and not preferring his and his family and relatives' interests are all indicative of his imitation of 'Ali ('a). During last year's Year of Imam Khomeini, they were supposed to familiarize us better with the Imam, but unfortunately, they made us instead more alien to him. Subjects under the rubric of the Imam's viewpoints were discussed and published and most of them were contrary to the viewpoints of the late Imam. What can be done?! It was the same during the time of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Commander of the Faithful ('a). The late Imam spoke on a certain day and then the following day they would distort his sayings notwithstanding the fact that no leader in the world was as simple as him in his language. Sometimes, he used to say, "I do not know how to speak so as to prevent them from distorting my speech!"

In any case, the life of Imam was so similar to that of his grandfather (Imam 'Ali). Yet through a single man, a government cannot be set aright, as the saying goes, "One flower cannot bring about the spring season." As far as he could, he used to be watchful of those who were around him and directly under his authority. Sometimes, he would admonish them while at another time, reprimand and criticize them. As far as I remember, I heard from high–ranking officials of the country saying, "It never happened that we came to the Imam without him expressing criticism.

Whenever we visited him, he had a criticism." Even his nearest kin whom he loved so much, whenever they had a point of weakness, the Imam would remind them. Of course, a reminder does not mean that it must be done completely. The point is that he used to play his role. If we would like to show two

examples of government as exemplar Islamic governments throughout the history of Islam, one is the government of 'Ali (\dot{a}) and the other is the government of Imam Khomeini (r).

Of course, this does not mean that all the rest were or are at fault; rather, the Imam had certain peculiarities both in his own personality and the social conditions which appeared to him by the will of God. These conditions will not be provided for everybody exactly. On the other hand, the rest could not play the role which he used to play because they do not have all the social bases and conditions. Therefore, I mean to say that the rest are blameworthy though there are also those whose certain behaviors could be criticized and have defects which they can afford not to have. Anyway, human beings are not stereotypical machines. Instead, everyone has his own certain peculiarities just as people's knowledge, faith, piety, willpower, and management skills are diverse. Apart from innate characteristics of individuals and their personality differences, skills are different among them. Of course, we have to thank God that after the Imam, today we have his substitute, and by His will, God will prolong his sublime presence with us.

Whatever the case may be, historical examination is also a method of examining the relationship between the government and the people. One can find the ideal behavior of rulers toward the people in the life of 'Ali ('a) and that of the Imam (may Allah be pleased with him). In this regard, all of us have heard or read certain things, and we can narrate them to others. There are so many outstanding points in the life of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) that if someone intends to express, after a whole year of sitting together and conversation, there will still be many things to be said.

One day, while 'Ali ('a) was standing on the prayer niche and preparing to utter the *takbirat al-ihram* after reciting the *iqamah*, a woman entered the mosque and shouted, "O 'Ali! Wait." He did not commence the prayer. Instead, he turned toward the woman and asked, "What are you saying?" She answered, "The governor whom you sent to our place is an oppressor; he is ill-mannered... etc." The Imam of the congregation and Islamic ruler was standing in the mosque, recited the *iqamah* and wanted to utter the *takbir*, and a woman came to lodge a complaint against the governor of her city. While tears flowed in his eyes, 'Ali ('a) said, "O God! You know that I am not pleased with his oppression." He then said, "Bring me a pen and a paper." After reciting the *takbirat al-Ihram* of his prayer, he wrote the order of dismissal of the said governor and gave it to the woman. Thereafter, he uttered, "*Allahu akbar*!"

Where in the world have you ever heard that the relationship between the government and the people is similar to that government? These examples are so many that if they are inscribed and painted in golden tableaus and displaced in the museums of the world, every fair-minded person who takes a look at them will be shocked out of astonishment and amazement. Can a person be as free as such?! Which school is this?!

There were also similar instances in the life of the Imam (r). Of course, there is a very wide gap between 'Ali (a)' and the late Imam, but examples similar to the life conduct of the Commander of the Faithful (a) can be observed in his behavior. In this age and in this world, according to the testimony of all his friends

and foes, he is the most beloved person ever seen in this century throughout the world. The enemies also confessed that during the last century, there has not been any person in the world as beloved as the Imam. Although not in words, his enemies secretly loved him and were enamored by his personality, justice and sincerity. His inner and outer being, word and action were one. He would do whatever he would say, and say whatever he would do. His heart was indeed burning for all people—young and old, child and adult, man and woman. Whenever he saw that someone was deprived, he would really be upset.

Prophet Moses ('a) heard in the Mount of Sinai that a number of his people had become idol—worshippers, but there was no change in his state of emotion. When he returned from the Mount and saw people worship in idol, it was at this moment that he threw the heavenly tablets, his color changed and took hold of the beard of his brother Harun ('a) in front of people and said, "Did you disobey my command?" Prophet Moses ('a) knew it beforehand, but knowing is different from seeing. The Imam also knew that there were many deprived people in the society, but whenever he would see an orphan or a deprived person, he would be so touched and he felt a sense of responsibility.

This is one method of discussion through which we examined the Commander of the Faithful's conduct with people so as to know how the government's relationship with people in Islam is.

By disregarding the actual cases taking place, in the analytical discussion we have to note what the intellectual and theoretical foundations of Islam require in the realm of governance. How should the government's relationship with people be? We shall tackle this subject in the next meeting, and in the remaining time of this session I shall deal with a subject in the field of historical and actual discussion of the mutual relationship between people and government.

Descriptive study of the Mutual Relationship between People and Government in the Democratic system

Just as we can have an actual examination of the government's relationship with people in the Muslim world, we can also perform the same actual studies about the government's relationship with people in other schools. We all know that the political developments in the world and the people's intellectual and rational advancement, especially in the West, finally ended at the point where the best form to govern is for us to set aside religion. The best model of government is the democratic government and it represents the sovereignty of the will and demand of people in all spheres. Of course, as to how this government be established both in theory and practice, certain events took place until it reached the present stage in the contemporary world whose common and ideal mode, particularly in the advanced countries, is the democratic model; that is the government by which every person describes everything through his own thinking and will.

Now, in an actual study, one can examine how democratic government is run in the world. In other

words, we shall examine in practice what is said that democracy is the government or sovereignty based on the will of the people, and see how the governments that rule in the name of the people actually govern, what their duties and role are, and how their relationship with the people is.

By dispensing with every sort of fanaticism, we want to examine one example of government in one of the most advanced countries which claims to be the champion of democracy and defender of human rights, viz. the United States of America. In this actual examination, we want to see how government takes form in America, what form the power structure there is, and how the government's relationship with the people is.

By considering what the Western and American scholars themselves have reflected through examinations, statistics and actual instances they have written in the pertinent books and articles, with utmost neutrality and in plain language we declare that the government whether that of the Republican Party or that of the Democrat Party, is a medium between the capitalists and the masses. What plays the pivotal role in the policymaking of these countries is the interests of the capitalists.

Of course, the capitalists consist of different groups ranging from the landowners to the industrial giants such as manufacturers of airplanes, spacecrafts and war armaments and producers of electronics, computers and Internet–related software and hardware, and other technologies at the disposal of mankind today. This number is only a small population which does not exceed ten percent of the American population or even less. The rest of people have no share of the national capital except meager food for survival. Of course, there is competition among these capitalists, and in order to win the competition, a certain group works more with the Republican Party just as some others support the Democrat Party. The common aim of both groups is the triumph of capital. In the words of the eminent Imam ('a), their conflict is a mock war and they are not very inimical to each other. In fact, their objective is to ensure the interests of the capitalists.

But how is the ruling parties' relationship with the capitalists? They take money from them to fund their electoral campaign so that as a result their party would win the city, federal and presidential elections and take the government and power in their hands. If there is no money paid by the capitalists, one of them will not come to power. Many of these financial assistances are official, registered in the offices, legal, and nothing is wrong about them. Yet, in accordance with their principles and laws, much other assistance are bribery and embezzlement. In one of the European countries (which is known everywhere and thus, there is no need of explicitly mentioning it) a party ruled in the country for many years and made successes for the country in different areas such as economic progresses. Then, it became clear how much bribe money it took and presently the issue on the legal trial against their heads and leaders is raised.

The fact is that in America, the government's relationship with the capitalists is a master-slave relationship. They collect money from the capitalists so as to win in the elections and later on provide for their demands. These demands will be provided for by the statesmen both in the legislative the

Congress and the Senate and the executive branch. Since the pulse of work is in the hands of the executives, they have to ensure the interests of the capitalists. We hear every day that through a thousand tricks and ruses, the US Secretary of Defense departs and goes to different countries in order to sell a certain amount of war ammunitions and earn money.

For what? So that the life of the owners of war industries is ensured. If he does not do it, tomorrow they will not vote for his party. What does it mean for them not to vote? It means that they will not give money to the party for its election campaign. Winning in the election depends on campaign while campaign depends on money while money, in turn, is in the hands of the capitalists. The capitalists have to give money so that the parties can launch an election campaign in order to win and to form the government as a result of their election victory. In this manner, the aim of forming the government is to ensure the interests of the capitalists.

In this way, the connection between the government and the minority group of capitalists will be established. So, how shall be their relationship with the masses? It will be a relationship of a deceitful fox for deceiving its preys in which it has to carry out diverse propaganda so as to satisfy the people and control the society in whatever way. Of course, this work requires a highly advanced psychology because the people consist of different groups including religious groups, religious minorities, young and old, retirees, and men and women. As to how each of these groups and guilds are pleased so that the propaganda is effective on them requires a particular psychology.

In the countries where the people imitate the Americans, they do the same things. In the extremely underdeveloped or developed countries which take America as a model, they try, for example, to identify the religious minorities and to contact them and promise them thus, "If we succeed in controlling the government, we will appoint governors and mayors who are natives from among you," so as to win their votes. They also take into account a special propaganda campaign for women. They say, for example, "Once we assume the helm of government, we will give you these liberties." Among these, the most important and diverse election campaigns are focused on the youth. They are always the greatest preys of the politicians.

These works are not confined to only one or two countries. In fact, in all democratic countries these approaches are observed. The ethnic minorities, religious minorities, women, and youth are the main targets of propaganda campaigns of the politicians in the world. In these neighboring countries, in India for example, whenever we want to hold election campaigns there are many parties which bribe the Muslims.

During the election campaign period, they try to give promises and pledge to the Indian Muslims, who are a considerable religious minority (with a population of about two times that of our country), thus saying, "Once we obtain power, we will do this and that for the Muslims," in order to win their votes. They promise the ethnic minorities who live along the countryside to officially recognize their language and culture, and respect their customs and traditions, and similar other things. For what these promises

and propaganda campaigns in this manner are? They are meant to deceive the masses.

To be a Mercenary of the Capitalists as the Real Role of the Governments in the Western Democracy

As such, the basic and important role of the governments in the democratic countries is to serve as mercenaries of the capitalists and to deceive the masses. Which act are they doing which cannot be included in these two things? What and where is this promised heaven that they make to you and me, saying, "You set Islam aside and you will achieve this progress and development and human rights will be observed in your countries"? Alongside some of these industrial advancements and developments, only God knows what oppressions, crimes and corruptions are made.

They are willing to relegate the whole humankind to quagmire just to protect the interests of a few. Don't you believe?! For instance, just observe what Hollywood is doing in America. Hollywood is a filmmaking company which is not concerned about anything except the protection of its interests. In a study and survey they conducted, it became clear that most of their viewers are adolescents who like violent scenes. As such, more than eighty percent of films that Hollywood is producing have violent scenes. What are the repercussions of watching these films? Its smoke will first irritate the eyes of the people. Today, the worst and most corrupt country in the world in terms of crimes committed by youngsters is America. A day during which a crime is not committed by this class in America is very rare. More than two hundred million firearms are in the hands of people and have become the toys of their children.

This is because their lives are in danger and they have to arm themselves and their children to defend themselves and not let anyone harm them in the street. In going and coming from school, the children of those who are affluent are escorted by employed policemen. The children are not safe from the metro to school. Why are these (film producers) allowed to be free to show these violent scenes, moral corruptions and sexual promiscuities to the youth and adolescents and corrupt their morality? Why are they trying to sell these films to the other countries? What is the reason for the persistence in selling them? The answer is: In order to get money in return.

Canada is one of the close trading partners of the United States and its neighbor as well, and as it was frequently said before, it is the "private yard" of America. This country which is considered the main partner of America in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)4 is not permitting the Hollywood films to be freely sold there and the people of Canada to watch those scenes. Of course, you have to bear in mind that the scenes existing in Canada itself are hellish scenes for us and we cannot tolerate them. In spite of the corrupt life they themselves have, they are not willing to watch American films! Why does America insist on selling these films without being censored and is this part of their trading agreements?

The only reason is for the film producing companies to get money and profit and also give a share to the

ruling party so as to be able to launch an election campaign and by obtaining votes it can remain in power and meet the demands of the companies. This form of government is the same promised heaven they promise, saying, "If our government becomes democratic, it will become like America. That is, a puppet government at the service of the capitalists and a deceitful fox for the masses.

Question and Answer

Question: Is there no practical experience that can be used as the perfect model for the Islamic government? If the answer is negative, can it be accepted that the Islamic republican government starts in the form of trial and error, and has to continue in this form?

Answer: When we said that we could hardly show a perfect model of the Islamic government, it does not mean that there are defects in theory and the rules of Islamic administration. Instead, it is due to the nature of man. Man is not a being that can be stereotyped and confined to a specific space and path and not stray from it. This is because man is an autonomous being. As such, consciously or unconsciously in practice, people in general will commit violation including those who hold administrative positions. These individuals (public servants) do not come from the Divine Throne or heaven.

They are also people. This is regardless of whether the creams of the crop are elected according to the Islamic standards or garner votes according to the same democratic standards and through election campaigns. Even we who are engaged in theory and theorizing in the Islamic government, whenever we are so strict with respect to the necessary qualifications of the position–holders and believe that the government should be close and similar to the government of the Infallibles ('a) as much as possible, we refer to the intelligence and not to the method, for all positions to be held by infallibles is not possible.

Even during the time of presence of an infallible Imam, infallibility ['ismah] pertains only to the intelligence. During the time of the Commander of the Faithful ('a), were there no individuals sent by the Imam ('a) as governors who committed violations and treacheries, embezzle the public treasury, left and joined Mu'awiyah? He was in the government of 'Ali ('a) and had a decree of appointment from 'Ali ('a) but he used to misappropriate the public treasury, leave and go to another person because he knew that if he went to 'Ali ('a), everything he embezzled would be taken from him.

The reason for this is not the existence of defect in the theory of the Islamic government. The nature of man is such that it tends to choose, and based on the choices that people make, not everybody can be angel. Finally, there are defects; violations will be made; and at least, mistakes will be committed. Therefore, the ideal will never be perfectly realized. Of course, during the time of the advent of Wali al-'Asr ('a) as to what extent it will be close to the ideal state, I do not know. We hope that we will experience that time and benefit from its blessings. Nevertheless, during the time of the advent, will all violations be stopped? Will no one be oppressed anymore? In each of the works to be done by the different administrative workers of the Imam ('a), will the laws of Islam be accurately implemented? These questions are worthy of reflection. God willing, we have to experience and see that time. What is

certain is that the violators will be punished but we have supporting basis and guarantee that there will be no violation at all.

Now, in these circumstances, should we discard the ideal form of government and no longer take such a government as our goal? The answer is negative. The nature of man is such that he should take into account the ideal point, move toward it and try to get closer to it as much as possible. So long as we see that our government is such that Islamic standards are observed more and has a rising trend, we have to be pleased to have good people, not that Islam is good because Islam by itself is good. If we succeed in bringing ourselves closer to Islam and better observe the Islamic values, we have to thank God that our society succeeded in making itself closer to the ideal scheme of Islam.

Therefore, to expect that a government is formed in which no violation is ever made and the Islamic standards are observed is an improper expectation. But to expect that day by day we can get closer to it and put into practice more the ordinances of Islam is not an inopportune expectation; of course, provided that we also strive harder.

- 1. Hajjaj ibn Yssuf ath-Thaqafi (d. 714 CE) was a lieutenant appointed by the Umayyad caliph, 'Abd al-Malik (r. 685-705 C.E.). In order to suppress dissent in Mecca, he ordered the bombardment of the Sacred Mosque. He is famous for his bloody persecution of the Shi'ah, particularly for having killed Sa'id ibn Jubayr (d. 713 C.E.), who was one of the early exegetes of the Qur'an. It is reported that Hajjaj was tormented by the image of this martyr in his dying moments. [Trans.]
- 2. Takbirat al-Ihram: the recital of Allahu akbar [God is the greatest] which is the formal beginning of prayer. [Trans.]
- 3. Iqamah: a shortened form of adhan, heralding the commencement of prayer [salah]. [Trans.]
- 4. Members of NAFTA are the United States of America, Canada and Mexico.

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