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## Chapter 4: Political Trends And Foundations

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#### Prelude

The policies and starting points in *the general system of the virtuous community* embody the fundamental political and social constituents that make up the political and social framework within which the virtuous community functions and on the basis of which it can adopt a stance in all corresponding events and situations.

Any group that intends to move forward with accurate and purposeful steps that correspond with its faith and slogans and achieve its goals along the path of perfection must first of all adopt general, fixed policies according to which it can move forward and discontinue. It must also adopt a number of fundamental principles to achieve its goals and act according to a criterion which distinguishes true from false features to be adopted for its movement. These fundamental principles are the distinctive features of a certain group or community.

The fundamental principles of the religion of Islam are clearly belief in Almighty Allah and His Oneness; profession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's message of Islam and Almighty Allah's commands; and belief in the Hereafter and ensuing matters, such as settlement of accounts, judgment, reward, and punishment—which constitute the general doctrinal, intellectual, and ethical basis of a Muslim individual. As a second step, these principles play an independent role in the actions of the Muslim individual.

However, the political and social reality involves details that require more identification and clearer

delineation. In such cases, advantages are confused with disadvantages, personal views vary to a great extent, and slogans intertwine, making it critical to pinpoint the political and social frame—especially when we take into consideration the fact that there are various political parties and factions in Muslim communities—through which accurate positions can be assumed and distinctions be made between true and false views or right and wrong mottos and claims. Each party lays claim to being Muslim, raises slogans of adherence to Islam and attempts to justify its ideas and activities on the basis of texts from the Holy Qur'an and Holy Sunnah or on the basis of the supreme interests of Islam.

Under such conditions, the important role of the religious and *political referential authority* surfaces, because he is the most qualified and the most appropriate to specify the actual political attitudes towards secondary issues of both the Muslim nation and the virtuous community. Of course, such an authority must possess the faculty of inference in the fields of jurisprudence and policy, be pious and devout and have political and social experience.

## The General Political Trends during the Ages of the Holy Imams

### ('a)

Under this title, we will refer to diverse political trends that existed during the periods of the Holy Imams ('a) requiring clarification and a clear-cut position.

### Power-Seeking Trend

The one and only aim of the power-seeking trend was to come to power in order to gain personal goals, personal profit, esteem, authority, more income and satiation of man's natural inclination for supremacy, primacy and material desires.

Obvious examples on this trend can be noticed in the mutinous movement of Talhah, Zubayr, and `A'ishah against Imam `Ali, the Commander of the Faithful ('a), in al-Basrah and in the rebellion of the Umayyad and the `Abbasid dynasties in general, as well as in some external conflicts against these dynasties, such as the uprisings of `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr,<sup>1</sup> `Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Ash`ath,<sup>2</sup> and others. Despite variety in the degree of their tendencies and the influence on the goals of these movements, *gaining power was the most important objective of these power-seekers* who took action and gained positions in obedience to this objective. Of course, there were other issues which directed these power-seekers and their supporters to seize the most appropriate opportunity to act.

### Chaotic Trend

The second trend, characterized by disorganization, rejected the current political conditions on account of certain policies of the ruling authority that were disapproved of by a certain group or sect for various reasons. One reason was religious or human deterrents when a group or sect was exposed to oppression or persecution.

Another reason was excess by the ruling authority in going beyond religious boundaries or criteria according to the belief of a specific group or sect. In addition, personal interests, ignorance, and naivety sometimes played a role in the emergence of such rejection. In short, the general characteristic of this chaotic trend was absence of a clear-cut revolutionary program, since it adopted rejection as the basis of its political movement and searched for points of weakness to strike a chord of conflict with the ruling authority or other political trends.

The best example of a chaotic trend was the Khawarij who seized all opportunities possible to act against the ruling authority, especially when this would cause political conditions to worsen and the rejecting movements to increase.

For instance, the Khawarij raised the slogan of 'Judgment is Allah's alone' against Imam `Ali ('a) and against the Umayyad and `Abbasid dynasties thereafter.

Giving a general assessment of their political movement Imam `Ali ('a) used to describe them and their slogan as follows:

كَلِمَةٌ حَقٌّ يُرَادُ بِهَا بَاطِلٌ. نَعَمْ، إِنَّهُ لَا حُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ، وَلَكِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ يَقُولُونَ: لَا إِمْرَةَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ. وَإِنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ أَمِيرٍ بَرٍّ أَوْ فَاجِرٍ.

*The sentence is true but what they mean by it is false. It is true that judgment lies with none but Allah, but these people say that the function of governance is only for Allah. The fact is that there is no escape for people from good or bad rulers.*[3](#)

Imam `Ali ('a) also prohibited his Shi`ah and followers to fight against the Khawarij to the benefit of the Umayyads. He thus said:

لَا تُقَاتِلُوا الْخَوَارِجَ بَعْدِي، فَلَيْسَ مَنْ طَلَبَ الْحَقَّ فَأَخْطَأَهُ كَمَنْ طَلَبَ الْبَاطِلَ فَأَدْرَكَهُ.

*Do not fight the Khawarij after me, because one who seeks right but does not find it is not like one who seeks wrong and finds it.*[4](#)

He ('a) predicted that the Khawarij would finally turn into thieves and robbers:

كَلَّا وَاللَّهِ، إِنَّهُمْ نُطْفُ فِي أَصْلَابِ الرِّجَالِ، وَقَرَارَاتِ النِّسَاءِ، كُلَّمَا نَجَمَ مِنْهُمْ قَرْنٌ قُطِعَ، حَتَّى يَكُونَ آخِرُهُمْ لُصُوصًا سَلَابِينَ.

*By Allah, no! Not yet. They still exist in the loins of men and wombs of women. Whenever a chief would appear from among them, he would be cut down until the last of them would turn into thieves and*

robbers.<sup>5</sup>

Other examples of such chaotic trends were the movements of the Qaramitah (one of the factions of the Khawarij) and the Zinj, some of whom also sought personal interests and tried to make use of general rejection of the ruling authority in order to achieve those interests.

### Hypocritical Trend

The third trend was a destructive and hypocritical movement that pretended to abide by Islam and care for its higher interests including intellectual, cultural, and social development, but the spiritual and mental status of the representatives of this trend was far away from all that because they lacked religiousness, faith, and sincerity. Their one and only goal was to snare Islam and Muslims and destroy the infrastructure of Muslim society.

Examples of such trends can be seen in the political movements of the *Zanadiqah* (miscreants), the *Ghulat* (exaggerators), the *Nawasib* (the anti-Shi`ah), some dubious Esoteric (*Batiniyyah*) movements, and some wicked scholars who tried to trick Muslims through their constant transference (in loyalty) to different political trends or by sneaking into governmental positions.

Despite the gross damage that this trend caused Islam, its movement and existence lacked any real worth. However, offices of the ruling authorities, interest-seeking conflicts, and abhorrent political conditions did this trend a great favor when they allowed it to penetrate and impact the masses. Actually, this trend used to live on the margin of other movements. It make use of their weakness and mistakes, especially during the Umayyad reign. As a result, this trend could not withstand or maintain its independent form and appearance; rather, it continuously changed and took various forms that were colored by the current conditions in both political or intellectual developments.

### Reformative Trend

The forth trend was in reaction to the corruption and deviation that was erupting in the Islamic world and among the caliphate (i.e. leadership) and ruling authorities. This trend consistently attempted to resist deviation, reform corruption and openly renounce immoral conditions by calling people towards Almighty Allah and Islam through either the (divinely instructed) method of wisdom and excellent explication, or the method of sacrifice and uprising.

This trend was the closest to the movement of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). However, some inaccurate views have been witnessed in it.

The best example of this trend was the Talibite (i.e. descendants of Abu-Talib) and `Alawid (i.e. descendants of Imam `Ali (‘a)) movements, such as the movement of Zayd ibn `Ali, his son Yahya, and Husayn ibn `Ali of Fakhkh (known as *Sahib Fakhkh*) as well as the movements of Ahmad ibn Hanbal (the founder of the Hanbaliyyah jurisprudential school) and many others.

It can be observed that some of those who adopted of this trend won the support of the Holy Imams ('a) who either expressed their approval or, at least, acknowledged them for the principles upon which they based their movements. Nevertheless, the Holy Imams ('a) would not contribute personally to such movements in the main and would not instruct their followers to respond to these movements openly. In other cases they did not even permit such movements.

This means that the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) believed in the legal validity of the principles on which these movements were started and expected they would positively impact the Islamic state in general. On the other hand, when these movements were not comprehensive and revolutionary uprisings characterized by good planning, finality and requirements necessary for their success, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) deemed it unnecessary to require every individual of the Muslim community to play a role in it.

## **Revolutionary Trend**

The revolutionary trend was based on preferring the most important to the less important of the higher interests of Islam and advantages to disadvantages. Hence, before starting an uprising a comparison was also necessary between the corrupt and the most corrupt, and enduring the corrupt and rising against it in order to avoid the most corrupt.

A political movement here was not merely the process of raising slogans—even though they were right—or an ill-conceived campaign without knowledge of conditions, context and outcome. Nor was it a genuine and sincere sentimental passion or an expression of the righteous and noble feelings inside man; rather, the Islamic political movement was an assessment of a process of social change towards the best, spiritually and materially, and based on belief in Almighty Allah and on the true and genuine principles and doctrines of Islam. Furthermore, it depended upon a thorough objective investigation of reality and a full trust in Almighty Allah for other-worldly aid, divine support, and capability of assessing the future along with the outcome and consequences.

## **Political Foundations and Guidelines**

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) presented the foundations for a political movement aimed at achieving successful, sought after political change. The attitude towards secondary issues and policies could direct the political movement and prepare guidelines for it based on the following starting-points:

### **[1] Loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)**

The foremost fundamental constituent in this political movement is unconditional belief in the (divinely commissioned) leadership, *wilayah*, of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) as religious and political leadership which includes identifying religious rulings that had been conveyed by the Holy Prophet (S), identifying befitting attitudes to emerging new and future events, and distinguishing the true from the false.

Absolute loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and deep love and fondness for them would be considered among the major sources of true guidance and salvation in this world as well as the afterlife. This love is such that a spiritual and sentimental devotion to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) naturally evolves bringing about a patterning after their exemplary models of behavior, manners, obedience to Almighty Allah, piety, and high degree of abstinence from all forbidden acts.

From this premise, we can conclude the following:

**First:** The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) laid much stress on the role of their divinely commissioned leadership in building the Muslim society and establishing justice and morality. This point has been mentioned in many of their traditions, some of which have been cited previously. The following, however, is another tradition of the same purport:

Tariq ibn Shihab has reported Imam `Ali ('a) as saying:

الإِمَامُ دَلِيلٌ لِلْقَاصِدِينَ، وَمَنَارٌ لِّلْمُهْتَدِينَ، وَسَبِيلٌ لِّلسَّالِكِينَ، وَشَمْسٌ مُّشْرِقَةٌ فِي قُلُوبِ الْعَارِفِينَ. وَلَايَتُهُ سَبَبٌ لِلنَّجَاةِ، وَطَاعَتُهُ مُفْتَرَضَةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ، وَعُدَّةٌ بَعْدَ الْمَمَاتِ، وَعِزُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، وَشَفَاعَةٌ الْمُذْنِبِينَ، وَنَجَاةُ الْمُحِبِّينَ، وَفَوْزُ التَّابِعِينَ، لِأَنَّهَا رَأْسُ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَكَمَالُ الْإِيمَانِ، وَمَعْرِفَةُ الْحُدُودِ وَالْأَحْكَامِ، وَتَبْيِينُ الْحَالِلِ مِنَ الْحَرَامِ. فَهِيَ مَرْتَبَةٌ لَا يَنَالُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ إِخْتَارَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَدَّمَهُ، وَوَلَّاهُ وَحَكَّمَهُ. فَالْوِلَايَةُ هِيَ حِفْظُ التُّغُورِ، وَتَدْبِيرُ الْأُمُورِ وَتَعْدِيدُ الْأَيَّامِ وَالشُّهُورِ

*The Imam is the (true) guide of the guidance-seekers, the lantern of the well-guided, the path of those moving towards divinity, and the bright sun in the hearts of the Gnostics. His leadership is a cause of redemption, and obedience to him is imposed (by Allah) in this worldly life and becomes provisions in the life after death. He is the dignity of believers, intercession for the sinful, salvation for the lovers, and triumph for the followers, because he is the head of Islam, the perfection of faith, familiar with regulations and laws, and aware of the distinction between the lawful and unlawful. It is thus a rank that none can attain except those whom Allah has chosen, preferred, and designated for leadership and judgment. Wilayah then entails the defense of borders, management of affairs, and account of the days and months...[6](#)*

Abu-Hamzah has reported Imam al-Baqir ('a) as saying:

بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ: عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَالصَّوْمِ وَالْحَجِّ وَالْوِلَايَةِ، وَلَمْ يُنَادَ بِشَيْءٍ كَمَا نُودِيَ بِالْوِلَايَةِ

*Islam is based on five things: salat (performance of obligatory prayer), zakat (poor-rate), hajj (pilgrimage to the Holy House in Makkah), sawm (observance of fasting), and wilayah. No validation of anything is on the level of the validation of wilayah.[7](#)*

Through an authentic chain of authority, Zurarah has reported Imam al-Baqir ('a) as saying:

بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسَةِ أَشْيَاءَ: عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَالْحَجِّ وَالصَّوْمِ وَالْوَلَايَةِ.

*Islam is based on five things: salat (performance of obligatory prayer), zakat (poor-rate), hajj (pilgrimage to the Holy House in Makkah), sawm (observance of fasting), and wilayah.*

Zurarah asked, “What is the best among these things?”

The Imam (‘a) answered:

الْوَلَايَةُ أَفْضَلُ، لِأَنَّهَا مِفْتَاحُهُنَّ، وَالْوَالِي هُوَ الدَّلِيلُ عَلَيْهِنَّ.

*The best of them is the wilayah, because it is the key to them, and the wali (divinely designated leader) is the guide to them.* [8](#)

According to another authentically reported tradition, Zayd al-Shahham has reported that Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) said to him:

يَا زَيْدُ، حُبُّنَا إِيْمَانٌ وَبُغْضُنَا كُفْرٌ.

*O Zayd, to love us is faith and to hate us is disbelief.* [9](#)

They maintained that one who loves them must eventually repent and return to Almighty Allah and the sinful among those who love them would undergo a penalty in this worldly life and chastisement in the grave (*barzakh*) or the hereafter although with final alleviation. We can understand from this counsel that love for the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) is essential for guidance.

Jabir has reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

مَنْ رَزَقَهُ اللَّهُ حُبَّ الْأَيْمَةِ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي فَقَدْ أَصَابَ خَيْرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، فَلَا يَشْكُنُ أَحَدٌ أَنَّهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، فَإِنَّ فِي حُبِّ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي عَشْرِينَ خِصْلَةً: عَشْرَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَعَشْرَةٌ فِي الْآخِرَةِ. أَمَّا فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَالزُّهْدُ، وَالْحِرْصُ عَلَى الْعَمَلِ، وَالْوَرَعُ فِي الدِّينِ، وَالرَّغْبَةُ فِي الْعِبَادَةِ، وَالتَّوْبَةُ قَبْلَ الْمَوْتِ، وَالنَّشَاطُ فِي قِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ، وَالْيَأْسُ مِمَّا فِي أَيْدِي النَّاسِ، وَالْحِفْظُ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ وَنَهْيِهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَالتَّاسِعَةُ بُغْضُ الدُّنْيَا، وَالْعَاشِرَةُ السَّخَاءُ. وَأَمَّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ: فَلَا يُنْشَرُ لَهُ دِيْوَانٌ، وَلَا يُنْصَبُ لَهُ مِيزَانٌ، وَيُعْطَى كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ، وَتُكْتَبُ لَهُ بَرَاءَةٌ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَيَبْيَضُّ وَجْهُهُ، وَيُكْسَى مِنْ حُلْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَيُسْفَعُ فِي مَائَةٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ، وَيَنْظُرُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ بِالرَّحْمَةِ، وَيَتَوَجَّحُ مِنْ تِجَانِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَالْعَاشِرَةُ دُخُولُ الْجَنَّةِ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ. فَطُوبَى لِمُحِبِّ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي.

*He whom Almighty Allah endues with love for the Imams of my Household has in fact gained the benefit of this world and the next world. He must not then doubt Paradise being his final abode. Verily, love for my Household entails twenty features—ten in the life of the world and ten in the hereafter.*

The features of this worldly life are: (1) asceticism, (2) aspiration to work, (3) religious abstinence, (4) inclination for worship, (5) repentance before death, (6) pleasure in night worship, (7) absence of envy for that which is possessed by others, (8) observance of commands and prohibitions of Almighty Allah, (9) aversion for this world, and (10) generosity.

Features on the Day of Resurrection include: (1) the person's Record of Deeds will not be opened for settling his account, (2) he will not be called to weigh his good deeds against his wrongdoings, (3) he will be given his Record of Deeds in his right hand, (4) an acquittal from hellfire will be recorded for him, (5) his face will be brightened, (6) he will be dressed in garments of Paradise, (7) he will be granted the right to intercede for ten individuals of his relatives, (8) Almighty Allah will look at him with mercy, (9) a crown of Paradise will be placed on his head, and (10) he will be allowed to enter Paradise without being called for reckoning. So, blessed be to those who love my Household. [10](#)

Imam `Ali ('a) is reported to have said to al-Harith al-A`war:

لَيَنْفَعَنَّكَ حُبُّنَا عِنْدَ ثَلَاثٍ: عِنْدَ نَزُولِ مَلَكِ الْمَوْتِ، وَعِنْدَ مُسْأَلَتِكَ فِي قَبْرِكَ، وَعِنْدَ مَوْفِقِكَ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ.

Verily, your love for us shall help you in three situations: (1) when the Angel of Death comes to you, (2) at the interrogation in the grave, and (3) when you are standing before Almighty Allah for judgment. [11](#)

Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Fadhil al-Hashimi has reported on the authority of his father that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said:

إِنَّ حُبَّنَا، أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ، لَيَنْتَفَعُ بِهِ فِي سَبْعِ مَوَاطِنَ: عِنْدَ اللَّهِ، وَعِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ، وَعِنْدَ الْقَبْرِ، وَيَوْمَ الْمَحْشَرِ، وَعِنْدَ الْحَوْضِ، وَعِنْدَ الْمِيزَانِ، وَعِنْدَ الصِّرَاطِ.

Verily, love for us—the Ahl al-Bayt—shall be helpful at seven stations: (1) on meeting Almighty Allah, (2) at death, (3) in the grave, (4) on the Day of Assemblage, (5) at the Divine Pond, (6) at the Scale, and (7) on crossing the Discriminating Bridge (sirat). [12](#)

**Third:** The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) also affirmed that true patronage to them is in fact abiding by their course, keeping on the path of piety and religiousness, and exerting all possible effort to apply religious laws to one's life. Accordingly, a true Shi`ite is one who practices struggle with the carnal self. The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) asserted that actual application of one's love for them and true loyalty to them is manifest in patterning one's behavior and conduct after them.

In this respect, Imam al-Baqir ('a) declared:

مَا شِيعَتُنَا إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّقَى اللَّهَ وَأَطَاعَهُ، وَمَا كَانُوا يُعْرِفُونَهُ إِلَّا بِالتَّوَاضُّعِ وَالتَّخَشُّعِ وَأَدَاءِ الْأَمَانَةِ وَكَثْرَةِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ.

*Our Shi`ah include only those who fear and obey Allah. They must be characterized by modesty, submission, fulfillment of trusts, and abundant remembrance Allah... [13](#)*

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

شِيعَتُنَا أَهْلُ الْوَرَعِ وَالْإِجْتِهَادِ وَأَهْلُ الْوَفَاءِ وَالْأَمَانَةِ وَأَهْلُ الزُّهْدِ وَالْعِبَادَةِ؛ أَصْحَابُ إِحْدَى وَخَمْسِينَ رَكْعَةً فِي الْيَوْمِ وَاللَّيْلَةِ، الْقَائِمُونَ اللَّيْلَ الصَّائِمُونَ النَّهَارَ، يُزَكُّونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَيَحْجُونَ الْبَيْتَ وَجَعَتْنِي بَيْنَ كُلِّ مُحَرَّمٍ

*Our Shi`ah are the people of piety, diligence, loyalty and honesty. They are also the people of asceticism and worship. They offer fifty-one units of prayer in a single day and night. They pass their nights in worship and their days in fasting. They purify their wealth, perform the pilgrimage to the House of God, and refrain from committing any forbidden act. [14](#)*

Imam `Ali ('a) has defined the Shi`ah as follows:

شِيعَتُنَا الْمُتَبَاذِلُونَ فِي وِلَايَتِنَا، الْمُتَحَابُّونَ فِي مَوَدَّتِنَا، الْمُتَزَاوِرُونَ فِي إِحْيَاءِ أَمْرِنَا، الَّذِينَ إِذَا غَضِبُوا لَمْ يَظْلِمُوا، وَإِذَا رَضُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا، بَرَكَتٌ عَلَى مَنْ جَاوَرَهُمْ، سَلَامٌ لِمَنْ خَالَطُوا

*Our Shi`ah include only those who meet the needs of each other for the sake of their loyalty to our leadership, love each other for the sake of our pleasure, and exchange visits for the sake of proclaiming our affairs. They do not oppress when they are enraged and do not exaggerate when they are pleased. They are a blessing for their neighbors and tranquility for their associates. [15](#)*

**Fourth:** In addition to the belief in Almighty Allah, the message of Islam, the Hereafter, the Qur'an, and the Ka`bah, love for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and loyalty to them represents one of the major pivots on which all Muslims agree unanimously because the Holy Qur'an has affirmed their purity and the obligation of bearing love for them and keeping good relations with them, saying:

قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

**Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives. (42:23)**

In conclusion, love for and loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is one of the basic features of Islamic unity and the firm link between the virtuous community and the other individuals of the Muslim nation.

On account of the Ahl al-Bayt's tireless efforts to establish this course, the Muslim nation now unanimously agrees on love for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in spite of multiple attempts exerted throughout history to confront them, draw Muslims away from them, and separate their followers from them.

## [2] Renunciation of the Enemies of Allah and the Enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)

Another aspect of the political process outlined by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is that it is not sufficient only to identify the political trend, show loyalty and love for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and believe in their divinely designated leadership; rather, it is necessary in addition to abide by the course and policy of renouncing the enemies of Almighty Allah, Islam, and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Anchored in this fact, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are known for their animosity towards wrongdoers, forbidding any sort of cooperation with them and resisting them through various means and methods uninfluenced by personal benefit and restricted interests. This political profile sketches out the nature of the relationship of the virtuous community with repressive and deviant ruling regimes and is represented through two main trends:

The **First Trend** is civil opposition, which denotes the minimum political attitude against such ruling regimes.

The **Second Trend** is religiously supported war (*jihad*) in which various political, propagative, and military activities are carried out characterized by readiness for self-sacrifice and martyrdom.

Choosing one of these two trends depends on (1) the actual identification of the circumstances and capabilities of the virtuous community, (2) the identification of the scope of deviation and injustice that is being practiced by the ruling authorities towards the people and Islam, and (3) the extent of the impact and change that can be made by this activity on the actuality of the Muslim nation.

The political position of renouncing the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is based on the principle that to hate and provoke the hostility of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is unbelief (*kufr*), because it is in evident opposition to the Holy Qur'an that has openly stated this reality. There are many traditions that show hatred of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is *kufr*.

## [3] Equilibrium in Interests and Priorities

As directed by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), a true political movement must be according to a precise hierarchy of priorities,<sup>16</sup> i.e., the interest of the Muslim nation and Islamic faith must always precede the private interests and advantages of the virtuous community in particular and all private interests in general.

This political trend signifies one aspect of *taqiyyah* in the approach of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) where it means to give up some personal practices and advantages in order to save the general interests and unity of Muslims such that these activities be restricted and given the shape of higher interests to avoid the total suppression and damage of the nation. This will be demonstrated in the volume dealing with the security system of the virtuous community where the issue of *taqiyyah* will be further discussed.

This sort of conduct was a unique phenomenon in the history of the virtuous community from the

beginning of the period of Islam after the Holy Prophet (S), as is inferred from Imam `Ali's posture towards the three caliphs because, although he knew he was the rightful holder of leadership of the Islamic state (a fact that he stated openly in his famous sermon called *al-Shaqshaqiyyah* (No. 3 in *Nahj al-Balaghah*) as well as on other occasions), he abided by this political trend which he himself explained on many occasions, including the following:

وَاللَّهِ، لَأُسَلِّمَنَّ مَا سَلِمَتْ أُمُورُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهَا جَوْرٌ إِلَّا عَلَيَّ خَاصَّةً

*By Allah, so long as the affairs of Muslims remain intact and there is no oppression perpetrated except upon me, I shall keep quiet.* [17](#)

In addition, it can be observed that Imam `Ali ('a) corresponded with the general political movements of the three caliphs and would advise and support them for the sake of the general interests of Muslims.

The same applies to the state of affairs of Imam Hasan ('a) in connection with Mu`awiyah when he signed a truce in order to maintain the power of the Islamic state and save the blood of Muslims, especially the virtuous among them, from being shed and also to maintain the survival of the virtuous community.

At the same time, many of Imam Hasan's elite companions insisted that he renounce such a truce and enter armed confrontation with Mu`awiyah that would lead to martyrdom. This position was later taken by his brother, Imam Husayn ('a), not with Mu`awiyah but in his conflict with Yazid due to various changes in the circumstances.

The impact of this third political trend can be also discerned in the conduct of the other Holy Imams ('a), such as al-Sadiq, al-Kazim, and al-Ridha—peace be upon them—who had sufficient opportunities to ignite expansive revolutions against the deviant rulers but refrained from such acts because of the higher interests of Islam taking priority over their private interests and a thorough comprehension of the current political situation.

The same trend also applied to leading scholars of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), especially in the current age, shown in the positions taken by Shi`ite religious scholars towards the Ottoman Empire when it was exposed to the crusades of the West and their standpoints on present issues of the Muslim world. Under such conditions, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) stood along with other Muslims to defend the Ottoman empire which had itself treated the Shi`ah unjustly and been deviant in many of its practices and laws. The one and only reason for such support was that this empire raised the slogan of Islam and represented the Muslim Nation against the opponents of Islam.

#### [\[4\] Unity of the Muslim Society](#)

The next principle on which the political trend of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is founded is the maintenance of the

structure of Muslim society and the firm social ties that must increase among Muslims, such as mutual love, affection and respect which contribute to the unity of Muslims and create strong alliances among the individuals of the Muslim nation.

The features of this unchangeable political trend can be traced in the narrations that are reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) emphasizing the need of this aspect in their political and social movement as a whole.

It is possible to make out the points indicating this trend in the following instructions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a):

(1) The virtuous community is required to coexist and interact with the other Muslims in a broad and perfective unity and is not permitted to live in isolation within Muslim society because the individuals of the virtuous community are in constant need of exchanging services with others.

In *Usul al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through an authenticated chain of authority that Murazim reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

إِنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ لَكُمْ مِنَ النَّاسِ. إِنَّ أَحَدًا لَا يَسْتَغْنِي عَنِ النَّاسِ حَيَاتَهُ، وَالنَّاسُ لَا بُدَّ لِبَعْضِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ.

*Verily, you cannot escape dealing with people. No one can dispense with others throughout their lifetime since people are in an indispensable need of each other.* [18](#)

Hudhayfah ibn Mansur has reported that he heard Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying:

مَنْ كَفَّ يَدَهُ عَنِ النَّاسِ فَإِنَّمَا يَكْفُ عَنْهُمْ يَدًا وَاحِدَةً وَيَكْفُونَ عَنْهُ أَيِّدِيًا كَثِيرَةً.

*Whoever refrains from reaching out to help others will have surely stopped one hand (his own) from helping others, while many hands will refrain from reaching out to him.* [19](#)

According to this fact, one of the basic approaches of the enemies in the course of opposing the virtuous community was their attempt to isolate this community from Muslim society. [20](#)

(2) The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) stressed abiding by the manners of good association as prescribed by Islam in order to strengthen the pillars of Muslim society and their social ties by visiting the sick, attending funeral ceremonies, and paying attention to sentimental and emotional aspects of life.

Husham al-Kindi has reported that he heard Imam al-Sadiq ('a) say:

إِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تَعْمَلُوا عَمَلًا نُعِيرُ بِهِ! فَإِنَّ وَلَدَ السُّوءِ يُعِيرُ وَالِدَهُ بِعَمَلِهِ. كُونُوا لِمَنْ انْقَطَعَتْ إِلَيْهِ زَيْنًا، وَلَا تَكُونُوا شَيْنًا. صَلُّوا

فِي عَشَائِرِهِمْ، وَعُودُوا مَرْضَاهُمْ، وَأَشْهَدُوا جَنَائِزَهُمْ، وَلَا يَسْبِقُوكُمْ إِلَى شَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ، فَأَنْتُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِ مِنْهُمْ. وَاللَّهُ، مَا عُبِدَ اللَّهُ بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنَ الْخَبْءِ... التَّقِيَّةِ

*Avoid committing any act due to which we may be disgraced. Verily, an immoral son brings disgrace to his father because of his deeds. Be good for the sake of those to whom you devotedly belong and do not be bad examples against them. Build good relationships with them, visit their sick, attend their funeral ceremonies, and let them not precede you in performing any act of decency because you are worthier than them in such acts. By Allah I swear, Almighty Allah has never been worshipped through a matter more appreciated by Him than concealment—dissimulation (taqiyyah).[21](#)*

(3) The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) instructed their followers through a set of rules and regulations determined for social relations to be committed to pledges, covenants, and commercial contracts that they concluded with other Muslims so that these commitments would act as solid ethical and legal bases for their relations with others.

Imam `Ali (‘a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ الْعُهُودَ قَلَائِدُ فِي الْأَعْنَاقِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ؛ فَمَنْ وَصَلَهَا وَصَلَهُ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ نَقَضَهَا خَذَلَهُ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ اسْتَخَفَّ بِهَا خَاصَمْتُهُ إِلَى الَّذِي أَكْذَبَهَا وَأَخَذَ خَلْقَهُ بِحِفْظِهَا.

*Verily, pledges are necklaces worn around the neck up to the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, whoever fulfills their pledges will gain proximity with Almighty Allah, whoever breaches them will be rejected by Him and if one underestimates their importance, a suit shall be brought against him before the One Who has affirmed the fulfillment of pledges and commanded His creatures to adhere to them.[22](#)*

Imam `Ali (‘a) is also reported to have said:

لَا تَغْدُرَنَّ بِعَهْدِكَ، وَلَا تَخْفِرَنَّ ذِمَّتَكَ، وَلَا تَخْتَلِ عِدْوَكَ، فَقَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ عَهْدَهُ وَذِمَّتَهُ أَمْنًا لَهُ.

*Never breach your pledges, never violate your obligations, and never trick your enemy (by violating your covenant with him) because Almighty Allah has made the pledge and promise to him (i.e. the enemy) as a security for him.[23](#)*

He (‘a) is also reported to have said:

غِشُّ الصَّدِيقِ وَالْغَدْرُ بِالْمَوَاتِيْقِ مِنْ خِيَانَةِ الْعَهْدِ.

*Among the examples of breach of pledge are to cheat one’s friend and to break one’s covenant.[24](#)*

(4) The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) urged their followers to maintain high standards of conduct among people at both individual and collective levels so that they would become leading examples for the people and leave an estimable impact on them in the fields of guidance and concord. In this respect, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through an authentic chain of authority that Safwan ibn Yahya reported Abu-Usamah Zayd al-Shahham as saying that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said to him:

إِقْرَأْ عَلَيَّ مَنْ تَرَى أَنَّهُ يُطِيعُنِي مِنْهُمْ وَيَأْخُذُ بِقَوْلِي السَّلَامَ وَأَوْصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَالْوَرَعَ فِي دِينِكُمْ وَالْإِجْتِهَادَ لِلَّهِ وَصِدْقَ الْحَدِيثِ وَأَدَاءَ الْأَمَانَةِ وَطُولَ السُّجُودِ وَحُسْنَ الْجَوَارِ، فَبِهَذَا جَاءَ مُحَمَّدٌ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ. أَدُّوا الْأَمَانَةَ إِلَى مَنْ أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهَا بَرًّا أَوْ فَاجِرًا، فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، كَانَ يَأْمُرُ بِأَدَاءِ الْخَيْطِ وَالْمَخِيطِ. صَلُّوا عَشَائِرَكُمْ وَاشْهَدُوا جَنَائِزَهُمْ وَعُودُوا مَرْضَاهُمْ وَأَدُّوا حُقُوقَهُمْ، فَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ مِنْكُمْ إِذَا وَرَعَ فِي دِينِهِ وَصَدَقَ الْحَدِيثَ وَأَدَّى الْأَمَانَةَ وَحَسَنَ خُلُقَهُ مَعَ النَّاسِ قِيلَ: هَذَا جَعْفَرِيٌّ. فَيُسْرُنِي ذَلِكَ وَيُدْخِلُ عَلَيَّ مِنْهُ السُّرُورَ. وَقِيلَ: هَذَا أَدَبُ جَعْفَرٍ. وَإِذَا كَانَ عَلَى غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ دَخَلَ عَلَيَّ بِلَاؤُهُ وَعَارُهُ وَقِيلَ: هَذَا أَدَبُ جَعْفَرٍ. فَوَاللَّهِ لِحَدِيثِي أَبِي، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، أَنَّ الرَّجُلَ كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي الْقَبِيلَةِ مِنْ شَيْعَةِ عَلِيِّ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، فَيَكُونُ زَيْنَهَا؛ آدَاهُمْ لِلْأَمَانَةِ وَأَقْضَاهُمْ لِلْحُقُوقِ وَأَصْدَقَهُمْ لِلْحَدِيثِ، إِلَيْهِ وَصَايَاهُمْ وَوَدَائِعُهُمْ. تُسَالُ الْعَشِيرَةُ عَنْهُ فَتَقُولُ: مَنْ مِثْلُ فُلَانٍ؟ إِنَّهُ لَأَدَانَا لِلْأَمَانَةِ وَأَصْدَقُنَا لِلْحَدِيثِ.

*Deliver my greetings to anyone you regard as obeying me and following my orders: I advise you to fear Almighty Allah, act piously in the affairs of your religion, work painstakingly for Almighty Allah, be honest in your speech, fulfill your trusts, prostrate yourselves before Almighty Allah for considerable periods, and observe good neighborhood. Verily, these are matters with which the Prophet Muhammad (S) came. You should return to their owners that with which you were entrusted, be the owners righteous or dissolute. The Messenger of Allah (S) would order his followers to return items of safekeeping even if it had only been a needle and thread. Build good relationships with your clans, present yourselves at their funeral processions, visit the sick among them, and fulfill your duties towards them.*

*Verily, if one of you shows piety in his religious affairs, only speaks the truth, and behaves politely with others, they will refer to him as belonging to Ja`far and they will say that this is the way Ja`far educates his followers. This will please me and fill me with delight. If one does the opposite, it is I who will be defamed and offended, since people will say that Ja`far has educated his followers with these ill manners. I swear by Allah that my father ('a) told me that a Shi`ite in a clan would be the best of that clan's individuals, the most trustworthy, the most observant of their rights, and the most honest. The other individuals of that clan would always keep their wills and trusts with him, and when they are asked about him, they will answer that he was unmatched among them, since he was the most trustworthy and the most honest.* [25](#)

Habib al-Khath`ami has reported that he heard Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying:

عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَرَعِ وَالْإِجْتِهَادِ، وَاشْهَدُوا جَنَائِزَهُمْ وَعُودُوا مَرْضَاهُمْ، وَاحْضَرُوا مَعَ قَوْمِكُمْ مَسَاجِدَكُمْ، وَأَحْبَبُوا لِلنَّاسِ مَا تُحِبُّونَ لِنَفْسِكُمْ. أَمَّا يَسْتَحْيِي الرَّجُلُ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَعْرِفَ جَارَهُ حَقَّهُ وَلَا يَعْرِفَ حَقَّ جَارِهِ؟

*Adhere (all of you) to abstinence (from acts of disobedience to Almighty Allah) and piety, attend funeral ceremonies, visit the sick, present yourselves in the mosques with your people, and desire for others whatever you desire for yourselves. Is it not shameful to one of you when a neighbor observes your right but you do not observe his?*[26](#)

We conclude that the policy of maintaining Islamic unity signifies an unchangeable and major principle in the political trend of the virtuous community.

## **[5] The Role of the Nation in Political Change**

The **fifth** principle on which the political trend of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is founded is their assertion that the Muslim nation must play a considerable role in the process of changing political conditions, either by acting directly or contributing to create a process of change or by monitoring and observing the progress of this process, its outcome and results. To summarize this approach, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) believe that the nation is the tool of the process of change; therefore, it is necessary to mobilize and change the public psychologically and spiritually so that they become capable of bringing about that change. At the same time, the nation is both the subject and the object of that process of change, and the sought objective of this process is to guide people towards Almighty Allah and the right path which leads certainly to attainment of divine perfection.

An investigation of the following points gives us a clear understanding of this view:

(1) The concept of the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) about the leadership of Muslims is that Imamate is a divinely designated position, in the sense that an Imam is assigned on the strength of a nomination made by the Holy Prophet or the preceding Imam. Notwithstanding, we find that in actual practice the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)—after having been removed from this divinely designated position because of political circumstances that Muslims encountered immediately after the Holy Prophet's demise—emphasized the people's role in the processes of political change.

It is evident that Imam `Ali ('a) became Caliph as the result of a direct election of Muslims living in al-Madinah, while Abu-Bakr claimed the position as a result of election by some people who held a (private) meeting at *saqifah* of Banu-Sa'idah, `Umar held the position due to direct nomination by one person—Abu-Bakr, and `Uthman came to the position as a result of the vote of four persons out of six persons that `Umar had named to choose the following caliph (without requesting the opinion of other Muslims on the issue).[27](#)

The same thing applies to the rulers of the Umayyad and `Abbasid dynasties who totally deprived the nation of its role in a direct election or even consultation.

All this took place against explicit divine wording (*nass*) and in spite of the slogan that was raised by the followers of the School of Consultation (*shura*). Apparently, this slogan lacked any substance and was raised just to revoke the divine and Prophetic texts on designating Imam `Ali and his descendants ('a) as

the leaders of the Muslim nation.

It is also clear that the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in general political situations used to take the public view into consideration, as shown in Imam `Ali’s stance to the question of arbitration immediately after the Siffin War even though he had originally not supported the validity of this situation.

Nevertheless, the Imam (‘a) based his stance on the general viewpoint of his army and declared it after discussion with the Khawarij.[28](#)

The same thing can be said about Imam Hasan’s truce with Mu`awiyah and Imam Husayn’s open rejection of Yazid’s demands after being certain that the people of Iraq unanimously agreed with him in this matter.

(2) The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) adopted a policy that admitted multiple political parties and opposition even if those parties were in the wrong and lacked any legal or actual justification. This policy was obvious in the general setting of Imam `Ali (‘a) who did not take any suppressive procedures against his political opponents as long as they did not use a weapon or power to face him politically. The most obvious example of this policy was Imam `Ali’s attitude towards the mutinous movements of Talhah and al-Zubayr and of the Khawarij after the issue of arbitration—when they isolated themselves from the Muslim community and refrained from carrying out their general duties towards society—as well as many other persons who objected to the Imam’s policy of allowing various sorts of opposing political activities.

(3) As has been discussed in the first chapter of this book, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) established an exclusive method of choosing a judge or a referential authority in the issue of issuing religious verdicts. This method then developed into the system of religious referential authority (*marji`iyyah*) by which a religious authority was elected by the people through natural and direct voting for a nominee that met the requirements of the office. In this system too, the two processes of electing the most qualified person and the people getting to know him grew in the nation so gradually that it became the norm in all issues.

The same method is applied while choosing a deputy of the referential authority—a method that takes form by means of gradual approval of the people, familiarity with and consent for that person.

(4) The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) paid very special attention to the weak, poor, and needy Muslims in general, as well as the lower class of the Muslim society, such as non-Arabs, slaves, and others who later on represented the vast majority of the Muslim community. The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were famed for taking good care of these social classes and depending on them such that some individuals of (the tribe of) Quraysh protested against Imam `Ali’s manners towards the non-Arab Muslims who they used to call ‘the red-faced’, as mentioned in their famous complaint to Imam `Ali (‘a), “Those red-faced ones preoccupy you more than we do.”

The majority of the Muslim community, these lower-classed people, bore much love for the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as a natural result of the care that was shown for them.

This extraordinary attention and care for these classes can be observed in the following section of Imam `Ali's famous *Epistle to Malik al-Ashtar*, the governor of Egypt:

اللَّهُ فِي الطَّبَقَةِ السُّفْلَى مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا حِيلَةَ لَهُمْ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْمُحْتَاجِينَ وَأَهْلَ الْبُؤْسَى وَالزَّمْنَى، فَإِنَّ فِي هَذِهِ  
الطَّبَقَةِ قَائِعًا وَمُعْتَرًا، وَاحْفَظْ لِلَّهِ مَا اسْتَحْفَظَكَ مِنْ حَقِّهِ فِيهِمْ، وَاجْعَلْ لَهُمْ قِسْمًا مِنْ بَيْتِ مَالِكَ، وَقِسْمًا مِنْ غَلَّاتِ  
صَوَافِي الْأَسْلَامِ فِي كُلِّ بَلَدٍ، فَإِنَّ لِلْأَقْصَى مِنْهُمْ مِثْلَ الَّذِي لِلْأَدْنَى، وَكُلُّ قَدٍ اسْتُرْعِبَتْ حَقُّهُ، فَلَا يَشْغَلَنَّكَ عَنْهُمْ بَطْرٌ،  
فَإِنَّكَ لَا تُعْذَرُ بِتَضْيِيعِ التَّافِهِ لِإِحْكَامِكَ الْكَثِيرِ الْمُهِمِّ. فَلَا تُشْخِصْ هَمَّكَ عَنْهُمْ، وَلَا تُصْعِرْ خَدَّكَ لَهُمْ، وَتَفَقَّدْ أُمُورَ مَنْ لَا  
يَصِلُ إِلَيْكَ مِنْهُمْ مِمَّنْ تَفْتَحِمُهُ الْعُيُونُ، وَتَحْقِرُهُ الرِّجَالُ، فَفَرِّغْ لِلْأُولَئِكَ تَقَاتِكَ.

*Beware! Fear Allah when dealing with the lower classes of the poor who have none to sponsor them, who are forlorn, indigent, and helpless and are greatly torn in mind—victims to the vicissitudes of time. Among them, there are some who do not question their lot in life and who in spite of their misery, do not go about begging. For God's sake, safeguard their rights; for upon you rests the responsibility of protection. Assign for their benefit a portion of the state treasury, wherever they may be, whether close at hand or far from you. The rights of the two should be equal in your eyes. Do not let any preoccupations cause you to forget them, for no excuse whatsoever for the disregard of their rights will be acceptable to God. Do not treat their interests to be of less importance than your own, never put them outside the scope of your important considerations, and note those who look down upon them and of whose condition they keep you in ignorance.* [29](#)

### [The Role of the Nation in the System of the Virtuous Community](#)

The following points summarize the role that can be played by the nation in the general system of the virtuous community:

(1) The public play the role of selecting and identifying the Islamic leadership in the Age of Occultation. In the periods of the Holy Prophet (S) and Imams (‘a), the leadership of the Muslim community is designated directly by Almighty Allah while, in the Age of Occultation, this position must be held by the most qualified *religious referential authority* (namely, *marji`*) who is designated by Almighty Allah, too, but in the light of meeting the requirements and qualifications that authorize holding this position, as declared by the Ahl-Bayt (‘a). However, the role of the nation in this respect is to decide on the person who best meets all these requirements and qualifications. [30](#)

(2) The nation is responsible for choosing the civil administration of the Muslim community. There are two aspects of social activity. One is the application of Islamic laws to the actions of the nation in general and of the virtuous community in particular to lead them to perfection through laws and regulations that must be practiced by the authority. The other aspect is related to the administration of private worldly affairs of the people and must be decided by the people themselves. This aspect includes the areas of permissibility in the religious code of Islamic law (i.e. issues that are determined to be permissible: *ja`iz*) in its all-comprehensive significance which covers issues that are determined to be recommended

(*mustahabb*), disapproved of (*makruh*), or allowed (*mubah*). These areas of affairs have been left for man to choose for himself whether to perform them or not.

Sometimes, this permissibility requires a social order to stop contradiction of personal wills or to put different interests, desires, and inclinations in accord. When this takes place, the administration of these affairs is left to people to do what best fits their desires and achieves their interests according to their personal experiences.

Because the office of management cannot be held by everyone, a special group from the community may select the most qualified person for this office. In constitutional terms this body is called a municipality council.

Legality of such a management council can be achieved through sanction by the supreme religious authority or where majority selection is unanimously supported by Muslims in general. Compliance becomes binding after such unanimity, as is indicated by considerable traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), such as the Holy Prophet's following instruction in his Farewell Sermon:

ثَلَاثٌ لَا يَغِلُّ عَلَيْهِنَّ قَلْبُ إِمْرِيٍّ مُسْلِمٍ: إِخْلَاصُ الْعَمَلِ لِلَّهِ، وَالنَّصِيحَةُ لِأَيِّمَةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَاللُّزُومُ لِجَمَاعَتِهِمْ.

*The heart of a real Muslim must always stay true to the following three matters: (1) sincerity in deeds that are intended for Almighty Allah, (2) loyalty to the leaders of Muslims, and (3) abiding by unanimity.* [31](#)

(3) The public may give advisory opinions to the leadership, since such advice demonstrates true interest by both in the general welfare of the community. A need for such consultation is necessary to achieve the highest social standards; however, this system is not necessary in the case of the leadership of the Infallible and divinely-directed Imams ('a).

This common interest embodies a good ground for confirming and consolidating the relationship between the leadership and the nation, as is indicated by the following Qur'anic text:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۗ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۗ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

***Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough or hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you; pardon them therefore and ask pardon for them, and take counsel with them in the affair, but when you resolve a matter, then place your trust in Allah. Surely, Allah loves those who put their trust in Him. (3: 159)***

Although the Holy Prophet (S) did not require consultation in order to realize the reality of a situation, consultation had a considerable impact on the relationship and psychological and spiritual connection

between the leadership and the public. This common interest contributes to educating the public on undertaking responsibility, playing a role in general issues, realizing the actual circumstances of issues and becoming familiar with facts and approaches to various issues of Muslims.

In the case of the religious authority that is selected on the basis of election after meeting the qualifications, the consultation of the nation contributes significantly in discerning the accurate attitudes towards the issues involved. In the light of this fact, texts from the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Sunnah emphasize the significance of consultation and mutual counseling in the individual and social lives of the Muslims.<sup>32</sup> The following Qur'anic text is one example:

وَأْمُرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ

*...and their rule is to take counsel among themselves. (42:38)*

(4) The public is required to supervise and assess the level of procedures that are taken by the leadership or the selected administrative body. Such supervision can be classified into two aspects:

**First**, supervision of the qualities in the leadership or the religious authority that authorize him to hold this office—knowledge, piety, and excellent management—and the observed scope of harmony between his conduct and these qualifications.

**Second**, supervision of the quality of procedures and conformity with the totality of unequivocal laws of religion and with what the public needs from the leadership to achieve their desires and interests.

Indications of this special role of the public can be pointed out in the traditions about enjoining the right and forbidding evil, such as the famous speech of Imam Husayn ('a), recalling his grandfather, the Holy Prophet (S), as saying:

مَنْ رَأَىٰ سُلْطَانًا جَائِرًا مُّسْتَجِرًا لِحَرَامِ اللَّهِ نَاكِثًا لِعَهْدِهِ مُخَالِفًا لِسُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ يَعْمَلُ فِي عِبَادِ اللَّهِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ فَلَمْ يُغَيِّرْ عَلَيْهِ بِفِعْلٍ وَلَا قَوْلٍ، كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُدْخِلَهُ مَدْخَلَهُ.

*If one realizes that an unjust ruler is violating the prohibitions of Allah, breaching his pledge with Him, opposing the traditions of His Messenger (S), and treating His servants with wrongdoing and aggression, but that person does not try to change that injustice by a deed or a word, Allah will surely associate him with that ruler.*<sup>33</sup>

The public can practice supervision either directly, through constitutional means, or through civil organizations such as the press, political parties and other establishments that grant freedom of expressing personal views.

(5) The public are required to support, refer to and act sincerely towards the religious leadership. This aspect can be understood from traditions like the following:

**A.** Texts that reveal the obligation of obedience to the religious leadership:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ  
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ﴿٥٩﴾ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

***O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you; then, if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you believe in Allah and the Last Day; this is better and more suitable in the end. (4:59)***

**B.** Texts that reveal the obligation of swearing allegiance to the Imam and the obligation of recognizing the Imam of one's age, such as the following traditions:

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً.

*Whoever dies before recognizing the authority (i.e. Imam) of his time has died as non-Muslim.*

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَيْسَ فِي عُنُقِهِ بَيْعَةٌ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً.

*Whoever dies without paying homage (to an Imam) has died as a non-Muslim.* [34](#)

**C.** Texts that reveal the obligation of giving advisory opinion to the leaders of Muslims, such as the previously mentioned tradition of the Holy Prophet (S) about the three things that must find no place in the heart of a true Muslim.

## **[6] Observation of Regulations and Standards**

The sixth principle on which the political trend of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is founded is their emphasis on Islamic regulations and standards in the process of building a virtuous community and making political changes. Such regulations and standards can monitor the features of change and the scope of its progress. The Holy Qur'an has emphatically displayed a set of distinctive features and qualities of true perfection to be the criterion of preference among Muslims.

First of all, belief in Almighty Allah and following true guidance are the basis of all distinctive features that the Holy Qur'an shows, because unless there is belief in Almighty Allah, one's file is absolutely sealed, no matter how excellent his distinctive features are. Declaring this fact, the Holy Qur'an states:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمَانُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فَوَفَّاهُ حِسَابَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

***As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert, which the thirsty man deems to be water. When he comes to it, he finds it to be naught, but he finds Allah is there to pay back to him his reckoning in full. Allah is quick in reckoning. (24:39)***

Let us now refer to a summary of these distinctive features:

### **(1) Piety and Abstinence from Violating Prohibitions of Allah**

The Holy Qur'an has highlighted the role of these two features in the process of change and also in discriminating and preferring one Muslim over another:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

***Surely, the most honorable of you with Allah is the most pious of you. (49: 13)***

### **(2) Knowledgeability**

Knowledgeability in this regard stands for the recognition of Almighty Allah and the familiarity with the facts of this universe, religion, divine revelation, religious code of Islamic laws and the divinely ordained provisions.

In the previous chapter of the cultural aspect of the virtuous community, we found that the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), through their school and followers, ensured a special interest in knowledge of various types depending on the significance that the Holy Qur'an has given to it, as revealed in the following texts:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

***Say: Are those who know and those who do not know alike? (39:9)***

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

***Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high degrees. (58: 11)***

### **(3) Struggle, Self-Sacrifice, Exertion of Efforts, Spending and Charity for the Sake of Almighty**

## Allah

No human community can ever attain perfection and achieve its goal by any means other than hardship, toil, distress, affliction, and sacrifice. Confirming this fact, the Holy Qur'an states:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ ۖ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ

***Do you think that you would enter Paradise while yet the state of those who have passed away before you has not come upon you. Distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently so that the Messenger and those who believed with him said, “When will the help of Allah come?” Now, surely, the help of Allah is nigh. (2:214)***

The Holy Qur'an has also determined *jihad* (used in its common sense meaning the exertion of all possible effort) to be one of the features that discriminates people because it is a phenomenon capable of perennial practice with definite outcomes and purports:

فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً

***And Allah has preferred those who strive and fight by a great reward, above those who hold back. (4:95)***

## (4) Actual Freedom

Actual freedom entails freewill and choice independent of inner pressures—such as desires, inclinations, and lusts—and external pressures, such as fear of tyrannical rulers, delusions, and myths. One who possesses this quality will definitely be free in choosing the correct path realized by one's reason and knowledge.

This genuine freedom embodies one of the features of individuals and societies due to which a society is preferred over another:

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَمْلُوكًا لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَمَنْ رَزَقْنَاهُ مِنَّْا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا ۗ هَلْ يَسْتَوُونَ ۗ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۗ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

***Allah sets forth a parable: consider a slave, the property of another, who has no power over anything and one whom We have granted from Ourselves a goodly sustenance such that he spends from it secretly and openly. Are the two alike? All praise is due to Allah! Nay, most of them do not know. (16:75)***

## (5) Comprehension of peoples' equality and justice

Another distinctive feature by which one is preferred to another is having the belief that all people are equal and treating them all with justice and fairness because they are from the same origin and are equal in rights, duties and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the basis of sex, color, blood, lineage or kinship. Privileges that are granted are according to one's deeds, hard work and deference. In the previously cited point, we referred to the Holy Qur'an's criterion of preference, piety.

The aforesaid features compose the philosophy advocated by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in the process of social change as well as the criterion of its actual progress and development. The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) also followed a fixed outline in their policy towards human society and in their endeavors to construct a virtuous community.

Advancement in physical sciences and civil advancement in the essential means of life, including the means that facilitate life styles, are also important according to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). However, it is necessary to pursue advancement only if it contributes to the achievement of these criteria or has some bearing on it. Sometimes, advancement becomes contingent upon and owes its existence and development to these criteria.

1. – `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam, of the tribe of Quraysh and the clan of Asad, had the kunyah (i.e. epithet) Abu-Bakr, which was the kunyah of his maternal grandfather. His mother, Asma', the daughter of Abu-Bakr, emigrated (to al-Madinah) while she was pregnant and gave birth to `Abdullah.

He participated in an expedition to Africa with `Abdullah ibn Abi-Sarh and killed the commander of the Roman army; namely, Georges, in AH 64.

Having taken advantage of the public grudge against the Umayyad ruling authorities after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn ('a) and the event of al-Harrah, `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr declared a mass insurrection in Makkah and the groups of the Khawarij, the escapees from al-Madinah, and others joined his revolt. The Umayyad ruling authority sent its forces, under the command of Husayn ibn Numayr al-Sakuni, to besiege him in the holy city of Makkah. They struck the Holy Ka`bah with manjanik (a weapon carrying stony-balls that are thrown on strongholds and fortresses) and burnt it down. These acts infuriated the Muslims and `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr gained more support and aid. At the same time as the situation attained its climax, the royal house declared the death of Yazid ibn Mu`awiyah. As a result, pressure on `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr decreased, granting him an opportunity to declare himself the caliph (i.e. ruler; vicegerent of the Holy Prophet (S)). The peoples of Egypt, Hijaz, Yemen, Iraq, and Khurasan (northern Persia) swore allegiance to him, but the people of Sham (currently Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine) ho paid homage to Marwan ibn al-Hakam. `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr declared al-Madinah as the center of his sovereignty and remained in power as caliph until `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan held the leadership of the Umayyad rule. In AH 72, the Umayyad ruler (i.e. `Abd al-Malik) ordered an army, under the command of Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi, to suppress `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr's revolt, so the latter moved to Makkah, but Hajjaj followed him there and a war that lasted for six months and seventeen nights flared up in the center of Makkah. This war ended when `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr was killed in AH 73 after his supporters gave him up so terribly and surrendered themselves to Hajjaj in huge groups, one of which included about ten thousand persons. Among those who left `Abdullah and joined Hajjaj were the sons of Hamzah and Habib. As a consequence, Hijaz came under Umayyad dominion once more. (Quoted from Tarikh al-Tabari 3:360-538 and Dr. `Abd al-Salam al-Tarmanini, Ahdath al-Tarikh al-Islami bi-Tartib al-Sinin, Chronological Events of the History of Islam, Events of AH 73.)

2. – `Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Ash`ath ibn Qays al-Kindi belonged to the lineage of the kings of Kindah. The governor of Iraq, Hajjaj, appointed him as the commander of a military operation against the Turkish king Rutabil, who ruled the territories beyond Sajistan. Hence, `Abd al-Rahman invaded some parts of these territories, seized some strongholds, and took over

some of the spoils. He then wrote a letter to Hajjaj informing him of these events and suggesting that he would not enter the lands of Rutabil without examining the approaches and exit routes of these lands. However, Hajjaj accused him of weakness and failure and ordered him to continue the takeover of those lands. `Abd al-Rahman, then discussed Hajjaj's orders with his companions who disapproved of them and agreed on forsaking obedience to Hajjaj. Hence, they swore allegiance to `Abd al-Rahman that they would depose Hajjaj and throw him out of Iraq. Some of them drew attention to the fact that if they deposed Hajjaj it would mean opposing `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan because the former was appointed by the latter, so they agreed on deposing `Abd al-Malik, too.

In AH 81, `Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Ash`ath entered al-Basrah where all the people, including important personalities like the aged chiefs and the famous reciters of the Holy Qur'an, swore allegiance to him in deposing Hajjaj and `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan. When he was informed, Hajjaj wrote a letter to `Abd al-Malik informing him about `Abd al-Rahman's mutiny and asking for more troops to fight against him.

In Muharram AH 82, the two armies met in a place called al-Zawiyah where they fought a violent battle. In this clash, `Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Ash`ath overcame the troops of the Umayyad ruling authorities, defeating the tribes of Quraysh and Thaqif who ran away and joined Hajjaj. In the last days of Muharram AH 83, the two armies met again to fight, but this time Hajjaj was the victor. After his defeat, `Abd al-Rahman retreated towards Kufah, but Hajjaj chased him and a battle took place in an area near Kufah called Dayr al-Jamajim. In this battle, Hajjaj overcame him and forced `Abd al-Rahman to leave for Basrah. Hajjaj chased him again and fought against him in a place called Maskan where he defeated him a second time. This new defeat forced `Abd al-Rahman to retreat to Sajistan and join Rutabil.

In AH 85, Hajjaj wrote a threatening letter to Rutabil asking him to arrest and surrender `Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Ash`ath to him. Consequently, Rutabil arrested `Abd al-Rahman and sent him to Hajjaj. As soon as he had `Abd al-Rahman in custody, Hajjaj executed him and sent his head to `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan. (Quoted from Tarikh al-Tabari 3:624-652 and Dr. `Abd al-Salam al-Tarmanini, Ahdath al-Tarikh al-Islami bi-Tartib al-Sinin, Chronological Events of the History of Islam, Events of AH 85.)

[3.](#) – Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 40.

[4.](#) – Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 61.

[5.](#) – Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 60.

[6.](#) – `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 25:169-170, H. 38 as quoted from Rajab al-Barsi, Mashariq Anwar al-Yaqin.

[7.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:18, H. 1.

[8.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:18, H. 5.

[9.](#) – Al-Barqi, al-Mahasin 1:247, H. 464 (Ed. The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly).

[10.](#) – Al-Daylami, A`lam al-Din, pp. 451; `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 27:163, H. 14 as quoted from the previous reference book.

[11.](#) – Al-Daylami, A`lam al-Din, pp. 461; `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 27:164, H. 14 as quoted from the previous reference book.

[12.](#) – Al-Barqi, al-Mahasin 1:250, H. 471; `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 27:158, H. 4 as quoted from the previous reference book.

[13.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:74, H. 3.

[14.](#) – Shaykh al-Saduq, Sifat al-Shi`ah, pp. 2; `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 68:167, H. 33 as quoted from the previous reference book.

[15.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:236-7, H. 24; `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 68:190, H. 46 as quoted from the previous reference book.

[16.](#) – A list of priorities has been displayed and discussed in the second book of this series and also in our book entitled 'al-wihdah al-islamiyyah min manzur al-thaqalayn, (Islamic Unity from the Perspective of the Two Weighty Things—i.e. the Holy Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)).'

[17.](#) – Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 74.

[18.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi 2:635, H. 1.

[19.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:643, H. 6.

[20.](#) – This point has been discussed in the previous discussion of treating psychological pressures.

[21.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:471.

[22.](#) – Al-Amudi, Ghurar al-Hikam 9:274.

[23.](#) – Al-Amudi, Ghurar al-Hikam 85:218.

[24.](#) – Al-Amudi, Ghurar al-Hikam 57:37.

[25.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 8:398 H. 2.

[26.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:635, H. 3.

[27.](#) – In this section, we do not intend to discuss whether these restricted elections were right or unjustified; rather, we only want to refer to the point that Imam `Ali ('a) himself had not agreed to hold the position of caliphate without direct election by the people. Referring to this election, Imam `Ali ('a) says in his famous sermon known as al-Shaqshaqiyyah:

فَمَا رَاعَنِي إِلَّا وَالنَّاسُ إِلَيَّ كَعُرْفِ الضَّبِّعِ، يَنْتَالُونَ عَلَيَّ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ، حَتَّى لَقَدْ وُطِئَ الْحَسَنَانِ، وَشُقَّ عِطْفَايَ، مُجْتَمِعِينَ حَوْلِي كَرَبِضَةِ الْغَنَمِ. فَلَمَّا نَهَضْتُ بِالْأَمْرِ تَكَثَّرَتْ طَائِفَةٌ، وَمَرَقَتْ أُخْرَى، وَقَسَطَ آخَرُونَ.

At that moment, nothing took me by surprise like the crowd of people rushing towards me. They advanced towards me from every side like the mane of the hyena so much so that Hasan and Husayn were getting crushed and both shoulders of my garment were torn. They collected around me like a herd of sheep and goats. When I took up the reins of government, one party broke away and another turned disobedient while the rest began acting wrongfully...

[28.](#) – In Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 127, Imam `Ali ('a) says:

Your own group unanimously suggested the names of these two men and we took the pledge from them that they would not exceed the Qur'an but they deviated from it and abandoned the right way although both of them were conversant with it...

[29.](#) – Nahj al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 53.

[30.](#) – Further discussions of this question (i.e. the role of the nation in the general system of the virtuous community) have been cited in my book of al-hukm al-islami bayna al-nazariyyah wa'l-tatbiq (Islamic Government; Theory and Application) 172–179.

[31.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 1:403–404, H. 1, 2.

[32.](#) – Further discussions of this question have been cited in my book of al-hukm al-islami bayna al-nazariyyah wa'l-tatbiq (Islamic Government; Theory and Application); Chapter: Constitution System, a Genuine System, pp. 113–137.

[33.](#) – Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Umam wa'l-Muluk (known as Tarikh al-Tabari) 4:304; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 4:48 (with little difference).

[34.](#) – The references of these two traditions have been previously cited in this book.

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