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Session 2: Importance and Exigency of Discussing Islamic Political Theory

During the previous session, I mentioned to the dear listeners the list of topics on the Islamic political theory and the themes chosen for discussion in this regard so that they would know what subjects will be tackled in this series of talks. Today, as much as God, the Exalted, will allow, we shall talk about the importance of this discussion and its exigency in the present conditions of our society.

How the East and the West confront the Islamic Revolution

In order to clarify the urgency of this discussion, I have no option but to glance briefly at the history of our country and other Muslim countries during the recent past. As you know, throughout history, the materialist, hegemonic, domineering, and tyrannical minority has always been the cause of most tumults and seditions. The more human life becomes centralized, the more social systems advance on the basis of relevant rules and sciences, the pursuits (of the minority) are undertaken in a more scientific form and based on more precise rules and regulations.

At any rate, after World War II the global powers concluded that there were two power blocs in the world—the capitalist bloc in the West and the Marxist communist bloc in the East—and given the victories they attained during the war, they tried to impose their authority on the rest of the world and resisted the emergence of any other power to assume an air of dignity and rise up against them.

Meanwhile, throughout history, those who stood up against the sedition-mongers and corruptors have only been the prophets (‘a) and their followers. It was these religious ones who did not, at any cost, submit to tyrants and oppressors. For this reason, the tyrants regarded the prophets (‘a) and their followers as their enemies. However, after World War II, with the final expulsion of the Church from the political scene (which manifested religious power in Europe), they did not foresee another power emerging against them until the last three decades, when they unbelievably faced the astonishing movement in the Middle East and Iran.

Initially, they thought that the movement started in Iran was like the other Islamist movements which sporadically sprouted in some Muslim countries and were easily suppressed. They thought that by means of the specific methods they used and the experience they had acquired, they could successfully thwart it. As they proceeded they observed that this movement was different from others. Finally, thanks to the Islamic movement in Iran, a power emerged in this region, which, without relying on the Western and Eastern blocs, without using force and activities akin to coup d'états and violent harsh military moves, succeeded in toppling a Western puppet (king) and establishing an Islamic government in Iran.

Naturally, given the experiences they had acquired in combating the religious individuals, they resorted to different activities and plots, which you all know, and there is no need to mention them in detail. We shall only mention those plots. At the beginning, they ignited internal conflicts with the hope of paving the ground for the coming to power of a military junta that would protect the interests of the West. However, they observed that the people enjoyed such extensive power that the activities of splinter groups could not pose any danger to the Revolution. After experimenting with various plots and conspiracies including economic sanctions, global media propaganda against Iran, and the eight years war imposed on our people, they did not succeed in overthrowing the Islamic state.

The youth and the long-term cultural plot

Since the enemies failed to succeed in any area, they pinned their hope in one thing and that was a long-term cultural program. Along this line, they tried to gradually exert influence inside the country through various means. Having great experience in this area too, they tried to set up a center for the promotion of their ideas and views through which they extended a wave of propaganda to the various strata of society and slowly paved the ground for what they liked. Naturally their actions in this case as in others, were based on scientifically calculated grounds.

They witnessed the generation of the Revolution getting old and the future belonging to the youth—youth, who lacked sufficient information about the Pahlavi regime and its atrocities, and the sacrifices of the people before and after the Revolution; youth, who were only aware of their own demands, some of which were materialistic in nature—so they imagined that it was possible to exert influence on this great stratum which constituted the bulk of society and to whom belonged the future, and after a few decades to gradually pave the way for a protégé government that would protect their interests. In order to pave the ground for such a sinister aim, they conducted studies to identify the main factor behind people's support for the Islamic government, and found that they were willing to endure suffering, adversity, inflation, shortage, bombardment, and sanctions but not relinquish support for this government, which made them rightly conclude that this general support of the people stemmed from their belief and religion.

The triple axis of the cultural plot

The people of Iran are followers of the school [*maktab*] of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a), and take as their model the pure Imams (‘a) and the Doyen of the Martyrs (‘a) (in particular). The belief and conviction that they have to sacrifice their lives, properties and all that is dear to them for the sake of realizing the Islamic ideals, are planted in their hearts and have become part of their beings. However, the enemy is striving to weaken this conviction. They want to do something to make this future generation not become a votary of religious government.

They are inculcating in the minds of the young generation ideas that should weaken their belief in this kind of religious government, and in those who rule in the name of religion. This is because the people and the youth believe that religion must govern their lives, and the helm of government must also be in the hands of religious scholars and religious individuals headed by the *wali al-faqih*. So long as this belief occupies a special place in the hearts of the youth, there will be no chance of overthrowing this Islamic government.

Thus, this belief must be uprooted, but how? It is possible to spread ideas by means of a group of intellectuals. So they created a center within the cultural centers and universities to popularize and deceive certain individuals and persuade them to promote such ideas in society. In this manner, through the spread of these ideas, people, especially the young generation will entertain a doubt in their hearts and their firm belief in the Islamic government and the *wali al-faqih* will be undermined.

The weakening of the young generation’s belief in the Islamic government would be ideal for them, because once there is doubt in the hearts of the youth, a 13-year old youth will no longer be willing to put a hand grenade in his body and go underneath a tank. Such acts are only possible when the youth have indomitable faith in the hereafter, Reckoning and Book (of Account), and in the correctness of the path and values chosen. Once there is doubt in the hearts of the youth, it will pave the ground for the enemies’ objectives.

It was in line with this goal that they started their multifaceted movement through their disguised agents and scientifically calculated methods. They started their movement based on several axes:

1. Promotion of the Notion of Separation of Religion and Politics

The first axis of their movement and scheme was the separation of politics and religion. Many grounds were paved in order to promote this notion. For centuries this was done in the Western hemisphere and Europe. Many books were written and extensive studies were conducted. As a result of those activities in the West, the issue of secularism and the separation of church and state came to the fore. In order to attain that objective here, the ground needed to be paved. Of course, some grounds were also fertile. Such grounds and notions existed among those who played a role in the Revolution and also assumed responsibilities in the Islamic government afterwards. They believed in a boundary between religion and

politics, delivered speeches and wrote books. To strengthen this inclination by means of cultural activities done in the West was not that problematic.

Thus, one of the axes of the enemy's cultural activities is the promotion of this notion of separation of religion and politics. Of course, not all people will be influenced by this thinking. Those who lost their loved ones and property for the sake of the religious government, and endured difficulties will not easily be influenced by this thinking, especially in view of the fact that the Imam's celestial voice still reverberates in their ears, and the words narrated from the late Mudarris—"Our religion is our politics and our politics is our religion"—will not be forgotten that soon.

2. Denial of Wilayah al-Faqih

The second axis of hostile activity and xenomaniac [*gharbzadeh*]¹ intellectuals is to propound the idea that even when religion interferes in sociopolitical affairs, implements religious laws in society and observes religious values in politics, the religious government does not mean government of the *fuqaha*. It is enough that laws to be ratified in Parliament should pass through a filter to ensure that they are not against religion. The fact that these laws are not anti-religious means that the government is a religious one, because all the laws consistent with religion are implemented. The religious government is nothing different.

So, the second axis is that if they fail to convince all people that religion and politics are separate from each other, they will accept that religion and politics are joint, but say that religious government means the religious laws must be implemented whether the implementer has anything to do with religion or not. Whoever people elect for the implementation of religious laws will be the religious ruler. So, the religiousness of a government means that the religious laws are implemented, and not that the ruler is religious, knowledgeable and a *faqih*.

They acknowledge that religion has to interfere in politics, but do not accept that the implementer of religious laws must be a *faqih* or that the highest government post must be occupied by the *wali al-faqih*. The separating of religious government from the theory of *wilayah al-faqih* continues today as in the past. In newspapers, including national dailies and magazines, certain subjects are presented in different ways. The epicenter of this axis is formed in universities and other centers of gatherings, so as to influence those minds that still believe in the inseparability of religion and politics with the idea that a religious government is acceptable but *wilayah al-faqih* is not a corollary of the religious government.

This axis of activity can easily effect the youth who lack sufficient familiarity with Islamic laws and fundamentals of jurisprudence, especially if it is linked with many cultural mechanics and widespread propaganda. Yet, there are many in society who will not be influenced by this thinking and continue to consider the *wilayah al-faqih*, the bedrock of the Constitution, as the pillar of their thinking and action. They still maintain that this revolution is rightfully recognized in the world as the Revolution of *Wilayah al-Faqih* and the Government of *Wilayah al-Faqih*.

3. Concern about the form of Wilayah al-Faqih

In order to influence those who believe in *wilayah al-faqih*, they suggest the idea that *wilayah al-faqih* could have different connotations, and that the form of *wilayah al-faqih* implemented in Iran is alterable and subject to change, insinuating that, this form of *wilayah*, is not correct because it is inconsistent with principles of democracy and liberalism. Something, they say, must be done in order to make *wilayah al-faqih* conform to democracy and values accepted by the present world. So, the axis of the third intellectual movement is to alter the form of *wilayah al-faqih* in the Islamic Republic.

The outcome of the discussion so far is that intellectually and theoretically, all efforts of the enemy and the Global Arrogance are focused on weakening this government in three ways. Practically, they have implemented certain programs, but the long-term program, which they hope the future generation in this country will accept, is an intellectual one. The first axis of the said program is the promotion of the notion of separation of religion and politics which will be accepted by a certain group.

The second axis is to argue that religion and politics are inseparable but the religious government is separate from *wilayah al-faqih*. This theory may also affect a certain stratum of society. The third axis is to suggest to those who are firm and unflinching in their belief in *wilayah al-faqih* that *wilayah al-faqih* is acceptable but this form of *wilayah al-faqih* implemented in Iran must be altered. In sum, they are aiming to create a sort of doubt in the hearts of the youth, in a bid to weaken their belief in this system and its values. In doing so, a door will be opened for the Global Arrogance to penetrate Islamic society and even Islamic government.

Those who will be influenced by any of these three notions—wherever they are, whatever posts they occupy, whatever stratum of society they belong to, and whatever social standings they have—could be of great help to the Global Arrogance in the attainment of its objectives.

Our responsibility vis-à-vis the triple axis of the enemy's plot

In view of the fact that the enemy is concentrating its efforts around this triple axis, those who are attached to this system—and thanks be to Allah, the absolute majority of people are attached to this system, a manifestation of which is the march demonstrations held occasionally, which astonish the world with the massive participation of the people—should be vigilant so that none of these plots succeed. For this they have to be firm in their acceptance of the theory of inseparability of religion and politics. They have to believe, that even if any other religion could be separated from politics, Islam cannot.

Secondly, they should be firm in asserting the fact that the religious government does not only mean the Islamic nature of the laws to be ratified by the Parliament, or their being not inimical to Islam. Instead, the bedrock of religious government is that the implementers of the law must be aware of and devoted to Islam to be the best proponents and implementers of divine laws. If it is not so, what is the benefit of a

law written on a piece of paper yet not observed by its implementers?

Was it not written in the Constitution of the past regime that Shi'ism was the official school of thought [*madhhab*] of Iran? Yet, to what extent did this law influence the behavior of the government which was totally subservient to the non-believing, atheistic enemy?

As long as there is no authoritative and faithful implementer, anything written on paper will be of no benefit. Thus, if an Islamic law is passed by the Islamic Consultative Assembly, but the one occupying the highest government post is not attached to the law, nor has the intellectual, religious power or inclination to implement it, there is no guarantee that the said law will ever be implemented. So, it is important for us to strengthen our belief in the principle of *wilayah al-faqih* and to explain this theory on the basis of solid proof in order to fortify our faith, and convince our future generations that the Islamic government can survive only under the auspices of *wilayah al-faqih*.

Thirdly, they must be convinced that the form of *wilayah al-faqih* implemented in Iran, for the past two decades, the same *wilayah al-faqih* ordained in the school of the *Ahl al-Bayt* ('a), cannot be altered. The third stage is a secondary issue which must be addressed after explaining the first two stages. Therefore, to attend to the two stages takes precedence, and as such, the subject of our discussion is entitled, "The Political Philosophy of Islam".

The need to choose suitable methods to foil the enemy's plot

In view of what has been said about the goals of their cultural activities, the enemies have designed the following three types of plot and conspiracy: the separation of religion and politics, the separation of the religious government and *wilayah al-faqih*, and casting doubt on the correctness of operation of *wilayah al-faqih* in Iran. We will, thus, be confronting three groups of people. The first group consists of those who believe in the separation of religion and politics. According to them, the jurisdiction of religion is the temple, mosque and mosque, while the jurisdiction of politics is society at large.

Obviously, in dealing with such people a particular manner of discussion must be adopted. In dealing with those who acknowledge the religious government but has another view about the designation of its head, the discussion must be in a different manner. Similarly, if a person does not believe in God at all, the discussion must be started by proving the existence of God and, thereafter, prove the general and particular apostleship. But in dealing with a person who believes in God and some prophets and does not believe in the Prophet of Islam (s), the discussion must begin with the particular apostleship.

Undoubtedly, whatever discussion we hold must depend upon the different levels and stages of acceptance of people. Some will have accepted certain principles and reached successive stages. Others may not have accepted even the initial stages.

Therefore, in examining and talking about the abovementioned situations, we require different methods

of discussion. In other words, if we want to prove the existence of God to a person who does not believe in Him, it is pointless for us to quote a verse of the Qur'an or a saying of Imam as-Sadiq ('a). That person does not believe in God, let alone believing in the Qur'an and *ahadith*! In guiding him, one has to use only rational proof and the intellectual method.

Those who accept the religious government have gone a step forward, and in dealing with them one has to present the content of religion acceptable to them. We have to cite a proof from that content of religion. As such, the sources of discussion shall be the Qur'an and *Sunnah* while the method and type of discussion shall be narrative and historical. But once the talk is about the performance of the system, one has to refer to historical documents and accounts, and the narrative and religious argument will be of no use anymore.

The behavioral methods being used must be examined and assessed. Since our discussion has various dimensions, we cannot use only one method. In some of its dimensions we will have to use the rational method while in some others we will have to give religious proof, and yet in some other dimensions we will have to use the historical method and actual field studies. What has been said is for the consumption of those, who in the course of discussion may find fault and question, "Is the discussion rational or narrative?" For this reason, I shall point out that our discussion has different aspects and each of them have to be examined by its particular method.

The Definition and Jurisdiction of Religion

There is another basic issue here, which is of course, a separate subject for discussion and investigation, so, mentioning it should suffice for the moment.

The question is: What is the extent of religious jurisdiction? Does the jurisdiction of religion encompass all aspects of human life? Or, should some aspects of human life be delegated to the intellect, knowledge and will of the people. Before learning whether government and religion are related or not, and whether the separation of religion and politics is true or not, we need to know religion first.

Those who wish to examine at the outset, through an external method, the principle of the need for religion and the extent of its jurisdiction in the life of man will question — Is politics a part of religion in Islam or not? In this context, their arguments deal with the extent of expectations from religion, and whether they should be maximum or minimum— that is, does the jurisdiction at religion encompass all arenas of human life or it just encompasses a part of it and most of the human life aspects should be left to the intellect; science and desires of people.

When the advocates of non-interference of religion in government defined religion, they acquired a definition of religion in keeping with the secularist inclination. For example, they said that religion is meant to organize the spiritual relationship between man and God. Or, in a somewhat broader and more extended sense, religion is something which can be influential in the otherworldly life—assuming that the

otherworldly life exists—and in organizing the life of man in relation to the hereafter. Naturally, if religion is defined as such, it can easily be said, “What does politics have to do with religion?”

Politics has nothing to do with the relationship between man and God, for it only deals with the relationship between human beings, and is, therefore, beyond the jurisdiction of religion. Politics is related to the life in this world and has nothing to do with the other world.” In addition, if the jurisdiction of religion covers only the things which man is incapable of understanding, it follows that wherever the intellect passes judgment, it is no longer within the jurisdiction of religion; jurisdiction of religion lies where there is no place for intellect!

If in presenting the definition of religion, we limit its jurisdiction and scope, confer all matters to the human intellect and understanding, religion will not be needed in areas where our intellect is capable of solving problems. We will need religion only in cases which the intellect is incapable of understanding and solving. With the passage of time and the advancement and divergence of human life, the need for religion will decrease because, religion is meant to meet needs which the intellect is incapable of meeting. In the beginning, man could not benefit much from science and civilization. He was still in need of religion since he could not solve many problems with his intellect.

Gradually, his need for religion decreased and since recent years he seems almost free of its need. Yes, secondary issues which he could not understand with his intellect, and had no hope of solving them soon, he referred to religion. (Regrettably, it must be stated that some so-called Muslims have claimed that at this time when the human intellect has reached perfection, we have no more need for religion, revelation and devotional commandments.)

Given this outlook and explanation, it is concluded that politics has no relation with religion. Once we can solve and settle political issues by relying on the intellect and rational arguments and investigations, we are no more in need of religion!

What has been said is among the misgivings expressed in this regard to which we shall answer in brief. It must be stated that the definition they have given to religion, regarding it to be related only to the otherworldly life and relationship between man and God, is false and unacceptable. The claim that political issues of man have no relation with God and are beyond the domain of relationship between man and God is alien to the true nature of religion. Religion means the code of proper human conduct according to the will of God.

If in belief, in the acceptance of values and in his individual and social acts man acts in accordance with the will of God, he is religious. On the contrary, if his beliefs are against the will of God, his accepted values are inconsistent with the values acceptable to God, his individual and social acts are contrary to that which are pleasing to God, and if he has any defect in any of them, his religion will be defective. Religion, therefore, embraces all the above domains.

The need to know religion through its sources

If we want to define religion, we have to see how the One who has revealed it and its followers define it. If we coin a definition that says sociopolitical issues are beyond the domain of religion, this is not the religion sent down by God. In order to know the religion of God, its scope, mission and aim, we have to examine its sources and content.

Someone once said: “I do not accept Islam because the arguments being advanced to substantiate its authenticity are weak, or—God forbid—I have proof of its falsity and incorrectness.” Such a claim is debatable. It is improper and illogical for someone to say with the assumption of accepting Islam that “Islam is that which I say and not what the Qur’an, the Prophet and the Imams have said, and to which the Muslims are attached.” If a person wants to argue about the correctness or incorrectness of Islam, whether he adheres to it or rejects it, he has to know Islam first, by referring to the commandments of God, its Founder and Revealer, through the Qur’anic order to know religion and present its definition and jurisdiction, we have to refer to the religious sources, viz. the Book and the *Sunnah*, and we should not define religion according to our ill-founded opinion, or base it on the definition of an American or European orientalists whose words do not constitute a proof for us.

If a person wants to talk about Islam of the Muslims, he has to talk about the Islam which has been elucidated by the Qur’an, the Prophet (s) and the Imams (‘a), and based on this Islam which originates in the Qur’an and *Sunnah*, he should define and state its jurisdiction, and not base it on an Islam defined by a certain orientalist, writer or statesman in a certain encyclopedia which is certainly of no value to us. Islam confines the jurisdiction of religion to human intellect and understanding as one of the means of knowing Islam.

Meanwhile, once a person who has little knowledge of the Arabic language—though he has no knowledge of the exegesis, nay brief exegesis, of the Qur’an—refers to the Qur’an, he will realize that Islam has not neglected social issues but dealt with them. How can it then be said that religion is separate from politics?!

If religion is that which is revealed in the Qur’an, it embraces sociopolitical issues, deals with civil, penal and international laws as well as devotional matters and personal morality. It has prescriptions for family life, marriage, child-rearing, transactions, and commerce. What then, is outside the jurisdiction of Islam? The longest verse in the Qur’an is about transactions, loan and mortgage. If Islam is really the religion introduced in the Qur’an, who can say that Islam has nothing to do with the social life of people?

If issues pertaining to marriage and divorce are not a part of religion, issues related to trade, mortgage, selling, and usury are not related to religion, and the issue on *wilayah* and obedience to the one vested with authority [*uli’l-amr*] is not part of religion, what then is a part of religion, and which religion will we be talking about? As far as the Qur’an is concerned, it has repeatedly talked about these issues.

Some say, “We do not accept the religion which embraces sociopolitical issues!” Well and good! After all, those who did accept Islam were not few. Now, there are still those who do not accept Islam, and we have no hostility with them. If they want, they can come and talk with us so that we can show them this universal Islam, and if they do not want, they are welcome to choose whatever they want:

﴿وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ﴾

“And say, [This is] the truth from your Lord: let anyone who wishes believe it, and let anyone who wishes disbelieve it.”²

Those who say that they accept Islam, and not regard it as encompassing all these issues, yet express concern about each of its social laws are totally lost. Is that which is in the Qur’an and *Sunnah* not Islam? They neither accept its prayer and other forms of worship, nor its laws; neither its sociopolitical laws, nor its marriage and divorce laws. What remains of Islam, and which Islam are they talking about? Their words can do no more than deceive a number of ignorant individuals.

Religion means divine baptism in the life of man:

﴿صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً﴾

“The baptism of Allah [sibghat Allah], and who baptizes better than Allah?”³

The life of man can have either a divine or a satanic hue. If this life has a divine color, it epitomizes Islam. If we want to discuss the origin and source of divine baptism, we need to know the religious references, and apart from the Qur’an, the *Sunnah* and rational proofs, we do not know of any other Islamic source. Based on these sources, Islam encompasses all devotional and political, social and individual domains, and a cursory and casual glance at the Qur’an is enough to clearly prove that it is impossible for the religion referred to in the Qur’an to set aside sociopolitical matters.

A set of laws and values which do not deal with social and political issues, has nothing to do with Islam, because Islam, which has been explained in the Qur’an and which we are defending, includes the totality of political, social and devotional matters. Politics is considered as one of its essential elements and main domains. We have nothing to do with “Islam” which is presented according to the writings and statements of European and American writers. We regard them as alien to the spirit and substance of pristine Islam.

¹. Xenomaniacs: those infatuated with foreign and especially Western models of culture. This is the translation of a Persian term, gharbzadegan or gharbzadeh-ha, popularized by Jalal Al Ahmad (d. 1969) who was a writer of great influence in his book Gharbzadegi (“Xenomania” or “Occidentosis”). See its English translation, R. Campbell (trans.) and Hamid Algar (ed. and anno.), Occidentosis: A Plague from the West (Berkeley: Al-Mizan Press, 1984). [Trans.]

². Surah al-Kahf 18:29.

[3.](#) Surah al-Baqarah 2: 138.

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