

# The Advantages of Islamic State

## Question No. 8

**What is the difference between Islamic State and non-religious or laic governments? Does Islamic State have any advantages over non-religious forms of government?**

While religious and non-religious forms of government have some similarities, they are different from several aspects. Some of these differences are as follows:

### 1. Difference in goals

Non-religious governments – including democratic, monarchy, and oligarchy forms – are in one sense minimal governments.<sup>1</sup> In other words, their most basic goal is fulfilling the worldly wants or needs of the society and the citizens and do not have any goal above it; but a religious government pursues two goals: fulfilling the worldly needs as well as the otherworldly and eternal needs.

The goals of the Islamic State: the most important philosophy and goal of establishing an Islamic government are as follows:

a) Establishing divinity and belief in God's Unity on the earth and releasing people from servitude and following all other than God:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

***“And verily We have raised in every nation a messenger, (proclaiming): Serve Allah and shun false gods ...” (16:36)***<sup>2</sup>

b) The scientific, cultural and educational growth and upliftment of human beings, making them free from ignorance and imbecility:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

***“He it is Who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the Scripture and wisdom, though heretofore they were indeed in error manifest.” (62:2)***<sup>3</sup>

c) Releasing masses of people in general and the oppressed in particular from oppressive rulers and chains of servitude:

وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ

***“... and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear.” (7:157)***<sup>4</sup>

d) Establishing a good society and ideal utopia by establishing Islamic justice:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ

***“We verily sent our messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the Scripture and the Criterion to establish justice among people.” (57:25)***<sup>5</sup>

e) Complete enforcement of celestial laws of Islam with all its dimensions (including economic, legal, social, political, military, ... dimensions).

## **2. Difference in the government's functions**

The duties and functions of non-religious governments are as minimal as their goals; that is their most essential duty is providing health, education and security. With the failure of minimal government, “welfare state” was put forward and providing welfare and development came to be known as the government's duties. Besides, in equalitarian governments, establishment of social justice is also known as one of the government's functions. Anyway, none of these governments have subsumed the effort to prepare the ground for growth and perfection of human virtues and his eternal felicity within their agenda.

In contrast, the Islamic State assumes much more responsibilities; that is, in addition to providing the above-mentioned services, it must endeavor to work out appropriate plans for religious and spiritual training of the society, developing high human virtues, and promoting piety. It must lead the society towards everlasting felicity and struggle with the factors of the fall and liquidation of human's real personality and the obstacles in the way of humanity's growth and perfection.

The Holy Quran depicts the spiritual figure of the righteous government:

الَّذِينَ إِن مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

***“Those who, if we give them power in land, establish worship and pay the poor due and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity; and Allah’s is the sequel of the events.” (22:41)<sup>6</sup>***

### **3. Difference in methods**

The difference in the goal and functions of the religious and non-Islamic States will be effective also in choosing the methods and values.

In governments with no concern for religion, planning will be void of consideration for eternal and fundamental values and principles of religion. The final authority in such governments would be the instrumental reason. Indifference towards values would cause the idea of “the goal justifies the means” to be the dominant principle, ignoring the moral ideals and principles; unless the dominant culture of the society imposes special values and does not tolerate any defiance of them.

### **4. Difference in the source of legislation**

In non-religious governments, the origin of law is nothing other than the desires, wants, worldly interests, and transient attitudes of human beings. In contrast, the “Islamic State” is based on the principle of God’s Unity. The main origin of law in this attitude is only God; He who is the creator, the owner and the Lord of the man. Thus, from the viewpoint of the philosophy of religious rights, it is only God who has the right to decide in human affairs. Besides, He is more knowledgeable about the good and evil of the man and leads them to the best way of achieving eternal goodness and felicity. Therefore, just one law is legitimate, i.e. the law enacted by God or by those permitted by Him to do so, and this is the law completely consistent with the principles and rules accepted by the Holy Legislator. Evidently, the sources of legislation in such a system are mainly discovery and inferences of the divine law and adjusting them to the needs of the time.

### **5. Difference in the rulers and the agents**

In laic and secular governments, no qualification other than the relative competence of social management is necessary for a leader. In Islamic government, however, the qualifications of the leader – including the specific principles as well as the common principles shared by other political views – are as follows:

#### **A. Scientific qualification**

The so-called “Fiqhahat” which means the accurate recognition of the legal and jurisprudential decrees of

Islam in all aspects of social and individual affairs, because it is presumed that what is set as the criterion for action and legislation is the very divine law. Having a leader capable of inferring divine decrees in major social affairs, finding religious decrees in different issues, and enforcing them seems necessary for the community. Scientific qualification discussed here is divided into two parts:

1. Necessary awareness of the ongoing situation and the needs of the society, and the ways for directing the society towards fulfilling those needs and overcoming the problems. This awareness is necessary for any leader in any government and without it the administration of the society faces serious problems.
2. A deep and sufficient awareness of Islamic doctrines and the ability to infer divine laws and apply them in major and minor matters in consonance with the requirements of the time. This characteristic is an exclusive requirement of the Islamic State, for the main goal in this kind of government is the dominance of divine values, norms and laws, and realizing this is impossible without an Islamicist insightful leader competent in inferring divine laws in all arenas of the social needs.

### **B. The management competence**

Knowledge and awareness is a necessary – but not sufficient – condition for the macro-level and micro-level managements. In the area of management, some features are not simply attainable by acquiring specific knowledge and skills; these are: the ability to decide on time, especially in times of crisis; taking initiative for getting out of dead ends; innovation and the ability to cause growth and development; and not losing opportunities while avoiding haste. Rather, these features depend on the person's psychological qualities, intelligence, tact and policy, maturity in facing various problems and difficulties, and mental promptitude.

This kind of qualification is not restricted to the management of the Islamic society; rather, management in any society and in any organizational rank necessitates these qualifications. It has been said that “management is partly knowledge and partly technique and art”.

### **C. Moral qualification**

In Islam, the moral qualification of the leader of the Muslim community, his justice, piety, chastity, trustworthiness, braveness, non-selfishness, and his avoiding whim, ambition and other moral vices have been much emphasized. This is of importance from several aspects:

- 1) Since the ruler of the Islamic community must establish justice and enforce divine laws, he himself must follow them wholeheartedly and be completely committed to religious norms by heart and in practice. Imam Hussein (a.s) says:

*“the leads of the affairs and rules must be in the hands of those theist scholars who are trustworthy and devoted in observing what is licit and what is illicit in divine laws”.*<sup>7</sup>

- 2) The leader of the Islamic community is responsible for both administrating community and religious

instructing and training of its members. Therefore, he himself must enjoy moral virtues and Islamic etiquette, and avoid making mistakes and erroneous behaviors so that he can direct others to perfection and prevent them from moral impairments. Imam Ali (a.s) says: *“Someone who sets himself a leader for people should begin with instructing himself before instructing others”*.<sup>8</sup>

3) From viewpoint of sociology and educative psychology, the rulers and the prominent figures of any society automatically function as a model for a large section of the society, their behavior and way of life seriously affect the people and their behaviors. This effect is so great that the Prophet says:

*“the people follow the same religion as their rulers”*.<sup>9</sup>

Here, it must be noted that the ideal and ultimate point of these features is “Infallibility”. Thus, in the first place, the Islamic society must be administered by the infallible (Prophet or Imam), and in the Occultation period, someone who is closest to the infallible Imam – as far as the above-mentioned qualities are concerned – takes on the leadership as Imam’s deputy. Such a person is called “Waliy-e Faqih” (“Authoritative Muslim scholar”). Thus, it has been stated in article five of the Constitutional Law of IRI that: “In Occultation period, the authority and the leadership of the community is taken on by a just and pious Muslim scholar who is aware of the time and is a brave and tactful director”.

From what we have stated up to now, several basic advantages of religious (Islamic) government over non-religious and laic governments are clarified:

1. Islamic State concerns itself about eternal felicity of human beings and thus, in addition to playing the role played by other governments, is active in preparing the ground for human’s growth and sublimation as well.
2. Islamic State is a law-abiding government, relying on the purely divine laws.
3. Islamic State is administered by righteous rulers, thus enjoying a high immunity to the risks of autocracy and corruption of power.

<sup>1</sup>. This sense of “minimal” is different from its sense in political sciences. In this sense, all these regimes are considered minimal, for “being minimal” means paying attention exclusively to this world, which is the common feature of all non-Islamic States.

<sup>2</sup>. The Qur’an, Nahl (16), 36.

<sup>3</sup>. The Qur’an, Jum’a (62), 2.

<sup>4</sup>. The Qur’an, A’raf (7), 157.

<sup>5</sup>. The Qur’an, Hadid (57), 25.

<sup>6</sup>. The Qur’an, Hajj (22), 41.

<sup>7</sup>. Mustadrak al-vasa’il, 17, 315, bab 11.

<sup>8</sup>. Nahj al-Balagha, Aphorism no. 73.

<sup>9</sup>. Bihar al-Anwar, 103, 7.

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