

# The Definition of Islamic State

## Question No. 1

**What does Islamic State mean? Does it mean the governance of the pious people, the implementation of Islamic precepts, or the origination of all elements of government from religion?**

“Islamic State” is the government consistent with Islamic teachings and is based on religion, and at least, not inconsistent with Islamic doctrines in any way. To grasp the accurate meaning of the Islamic State, it is useful to pay attention to the following points:

**First:** No doubt, the rulers and the governors' piety is a necessity, but not enough without observing Islamic decrees and rules in formulation and implementation of the laws; for Islamic State means an “Islamic-oriented” government. Therefore, commitment to the divine decrees is one of the essential and integral features of the Islamic State. The Holy Quran calls those violating this principle as infidels, stating that:

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

**“Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed: such are disbelievers” (5:44)**<sup>1</sup>

**Second:** Based on the second view, employing religious norms and not opposing them is not enough to call a government an Islamic State; the desired Islamic State is a government whose all pillars and aspects are derived from Islam and consistent with it.

Referring to Islamic texts, we find that Islam does not accept every of government. It supports a government with the following features:

1. Its rulers enjoy qualifications and characteristics determined and defined in Islamic texts.
2. They accede to power through definite ways – divine designation and popular acceptability.

3. They follow the norms and methods defined in Islamic texts in their government.

**Third:** Islamic State has degrees and levels. The supreme and ideal level is realized when all its affairs and principles are based on Islam and in harmony with it; but when it is not possible to establish an all-out Islamic State, the lower levels are to be established.

The lower level or the compulsive substitute of Islamic State is the government wherein divine rules and ordinances are observed, even though the whole system is not derived from Islamic teachings and not headed by the ruler appointed by God. Surely, such a state is acceptable only if the establishment of a “perfect Islamic State” is not possible.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. The Qur’an, Ma’ida (5) 44 (tr. Mohammad M. Pickthall).

<sup>2</sup>. For further information, see Muhammad-Javad Nawrouzi, *Nezam-e Siyasi-e Islam*; *Andishey-e Hawza*, 5th year, no. 1 & 2; *Vizhe Namey-e Velayat-e Faqih*, Razavi University of Islamic Sciences; Muhammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, *Porseshha va Pasokhha*, I, pp. 45-7.

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