

The position of “enjoining good” (amr bi ma’ruf)

Question No. 40

How much is “enjoining good and forbidding evil” acceptable in Islamic State and by rulers in governmental affairs?

Here, we should say that the prominent and salient instances of Islamic State were the Prophet’s government and that of Imam Ali (as). The Holy Prophet behaved, in the course of his divine government, in a way that – in spite of his Impeccability – all people could easily comment on social issues and the Prophet’s behaviors.

His true successor, Imam Ali, also behaved in the same way. Imam’s treatments show that he wanted to train the society in a way that people would never feel a gap between themselves and the authorities, so that they could express themselves easily. One of his invaluable sayings which best reveals such a relation follows:

“I do not like you to think I’m pleased if you admire and praise me... then, do not speak to me the way you speak to the tyrants! I don’t want you to praise me unduly... then, do not refrain from saying what is right or counseling justly...”¹

Such a behavior is actually treating the members of society with respect, and prepares them to express their opinions, criticize, enjoin good and forbid evil up to the highest social status.

A similar manner is found in Imam Khomeini’s way of life. He says:

“It is incumbent upon all people to supervise affairs; if I deviated even a little bit, they must admonish me not to do so and to preserve myself.”²

He also says: “A Muslim must be so [dutiful] that if a person – even the Muslims’ leader – deviated, he would take out his sword to make him return to the right path.”³

- [1.](#) Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 216.
- [2.](#) Imam Khomeini, Sahifi-ye nur, 7, pp. 31-35.
- [3.](#) Ibid, p.34.

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