

The Status of God and People in Islamic State

Question No. 28

What are the roles of God's consent and the faithful people's consent in Islamic State? Which one has priority?

1. The government's divine-orientation: The Islamic State is essentially a "divine-oriented" government. Therefore, God's will and consent is the most essential cornerstone of the Islamic State. This point must be noted, however, that God wishes the man's felicity and good fortune. His will is exactly equal to the man's felicity and salvation.

2. People's consent: People's consent has certainly a high status in Islamic system; it must be noted, however, that their will and consent are along God's will and consent. That is:

Firstly, The Most High God has ordered the rulers to do their best to win people's consent, and they will be questioned on this duty. Imam Ali (as) writes in his letter to Malik Ashtar: *"Fill your heart with people's love and affection. Never be like a beast who grabs the opportunity to devour them. ...for you are dominant on them, and the one who governs you is superior to you, and God is superior to the latter. God has entrusted you the responsibility of managing people's affairs, and this is a test for you. Never enter a fight with God, for you would not tolerate His chastisement"*.¹ Here, oppression to people has been equaled to a fight with God.

Secondly, People's consent and will is noted insofar as it is not against God's consent and His law. Imam Ali (as) says: *"No creature deserves obedience when God is to be disobeyed..."*²

Altogether, the following points are worth noting about the status of people's consent and will in Islamic State:

1. The Islamic government itself is formed based on people's will, and is never imposed upon them. In other words, Islamic State is for a religious society and the religious society accepts nothing but the

Islamic State.

2. In cases where the Legislator has not issued a certain order on a specific subject, leaving it to the government to choose the way, it is necessary [for the government] to consider people's will in a way consistent with their common good. If, however, their will is contrary to definite divine rules, their will is not considered and followed.

Therefore, Islamic government is neither like dictator and autocrat governments which do not consider any value for people's will, and nor like the so-called democratic governments which claim following people's will unquestionably (though this claim has never been realized). Islamic government is a third way wherein people's will is respected in accordance to divine will and decrees – which guarantee the human's felicity and good end in this and the other world.

1. Nahj al-Balagha, letter 53.

2. Nahj al-Balagha, Wisdom no. 165; Bihar al-anwar, 1, p. 227.

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