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2. Political System

The Holy Prophet (s) founded an Islamic state after his emigration to Madina. This Islamic state continued for a time after the death of the Messenger of Allah (s) but soon collapsed. Therefore, it is among the duties of Muslims to strive towards its re-establishment and to safeguard it as long as humanity exists on this earth.

The Holy Qur'an obliges Muslims to establish governments and rule people on the foundation of justice and equality so that people can live happily under the Divine Just rule.

Thus, the meaning of political system is the system of government and state which administers the affairs of the Muslim communities.

Allah commanded Muslims to establish an Islamic state whose systems should be based on the principles of the Holy Qur'an and true Prophetic Traditions (sunnah). So, the Islamic state can be defined as:

"The state based on the foundation of Islam whose laws are taken from it."

Regarding a state which is not based on the foundation of the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Traditions, it cannot be considered an Islamic state even if the people of such a government are Muslims.

The Islamic state is the state which takes its laws from the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Traditions and which achieves justice and equality among the people. The Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others)..." Holy Qur'an (16:90)

"Surely Allah commands you to make over trusts to their owners and that when you judge between people you judge with justice..." Holy Qur'an (4:58)

"...and whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, those are they that are the infidels." Holy Qur'an (5:44)

Duties of The Islamic State:

Islam specifies the following duties for the Islamic state:

1. It should manage public services such as building schools, hospitals, mosques, roads, providing water and electricity, setting up a network of industry, agriculture, sciences and other amenities needed by society.

2. Taking responsibility for helping any citizen who lives in the state and who can no longer earn a livelihood due to sickness, infirmity, unemployment...etc., whether being Muslim or non-Muslim. In this case, the state should take the responsibility of supporting such individuals and providing them with their needs, be it food, housing, medical treatment, education or other needs.

3. Applying Islamic laws in society, and ruling according to these laws from the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Traditions.

4. Explaining Islamic laws and regulations to people and educating them according to Islamic principles, in addition to calling them to Islam and conveying its message to the whole world.

5. Maintaining security inside the state; defending Islamic homelands in case of being attacked by external aggression and preserving the sovereignty and interests of the Muslim Nation.

6. Establishing courts of law; appointing judges to mediate justly among the people; punishing criminals, fighting crimes and restoring the rights of the people.

If Muslims establish their own state, on the basis of the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Traditions, they will live in security, economic welfare, freedom and equality.

Principles of the Political System in Islam

The system of politics and rule in Islam is based on numerous principles of which we will confine ourselves to the following:

1. Consultation among Muslims: The Qur'an states this principle and disapproves of despotism and dictatorship.

"...and their rule is to take counsel among themselves..." Holy Qur'an (***42:38***)

Thus, all the members of the Muslim nation take part in managing the state's affairs and consult among themselves in order to achieve what is right and useful for them.

2. Right of Criticism and Reckoning: Every member of the Muslim Community has the right to criticise and enter into dialogue with the government over any step it takes. This can be done through the media,

and direct dialogue with the officials and consultative assemblies, and memoranda, ...etc.

3. Any qualified Muslim, man or woman, has the right to take part in government, politics and manage the state's affairs with the exception of the post of presidency and judge. Men alone should assume this responsibility. The reason for this is because of the innate characteristics which exist between men and women. For further explanation you may refer to Nahjul Balagha, Sermons and Sayings of Imam Ali (a).

4. Obedience to the Muslims' leader is obligatory as long as he complies with Islamic laws and obligations and establishes justice among the people. Should he rule in contradiction to the Book of Allah and Prophetic traditions, and ignore the rights of the people and practice injustice, the Muslims have no obligation to obey him. On the contrary, they should depose him and pledge their allegiance to someone else.

Imamate

In the family, the father is the one who is responsible for managing its affairs. He should supervise and educate the children. On the other hand, the children and other family members should obey him, listen to his words and advice.

In the school, we find that the headmaster is the one who is responsible for running, supervising and applying its rules, while other school members, staff and students, should obey him, listen to his directions and advice. The headmaster should guard the school and strive towards achieving progress in its study program and also preserve good education and solve its problems.

Now, let us ponder on the great Islamic society. Does it need an Islamic government? Does it require a head-of-state for organising the economic, judicial and political affairs? Should it be able to stand against corruption, spread virtue and good morals, and direct the society towards worshipping Allah and obeying Him? Should it explain Islamic laws and strive towards the progress of the society? Should it solve society's problems according to an Islamic foundation, or is there no need for such a government?

Certainly, we can see the need for the existence of such a sincere, just government. It is obligatory for the Islamic state to be supervised by sincere and qualified leaders who strive towards meeting the needs of the society and educating people about Islamic ideology, laws and behavior. It has to provide people with public services such as medical treatment, assistance to the poor, building infrastructures, mosques, universities, industries, establishing an army, courts of law and other government offices.

The Islamic society needs a government and a just head-of-state who is able to manage the affairs of the Muslim Nation. Muslims call this head-of-state an Imam. He is the one who leads all Muslims.

Imamate in Islam

Islam gives much importance to Imamate (leadership). The Holy Prophet, Muhammad, (s) was the Imam and head-of-state of the Muslims during his blessed life in addition to his being a Prophet and Messenger of Allah, the Most Gracious.

Allah the Almighty says:

***"Surely your guardian is only Allah, and His Messenger, and those who believe, keep up prayer and pay poor-rates* (*zakat*) *while they bow down." Holy Qur'an* (*5:55*)**

The commentators of the Holy Qur'an unanimously agree that this verse was revealed in relation to Imam Ali (a) and that he is the master of the Muslims.[1](1) At the end of the Farewell Hajj (the last Hajj performed by Prophet Muhammad (s) before his death), the Prophet (s) raised the arm of Imam Ali (a) in the presence of tens of thousands of Muslims and asked:

"Am I not more appropriate to rule over you than yourselves?"

"Yes, O Messenger of Allah!" the multitude cried.

"Am I not more appropriate to rule over the faithful than himself? He asked them.

Again they replied in unison, *"Yes, O Messenger of Allah!"*

"Then this man," he said referring to Imam Ali (a), *"is the master of whom I am his master. O Allah! Support whoever supports him and desert whoever deserts him."* *

The Prophet (s) is quoted to have said:

"I leave behind me among you two heavy things: The Book of Allah and the offspring from my family. If you cleave to them you will never go astray."

Therefore, the above-mentioned hadith clearly states that the Imamate should have been in the hands of Imam Ali (a) and his offspring.

Leadership of Muslims at Present Time

It is unanimously agreed that the Islamic *ummah* is in need of a fair Islamic government headed by a just leader, who establishes right and preserves the ummah's interests. The existence of both the Islamic state and an Islamic leader are a necessity and a religious duty. All the Muslims should strive to establish the Islamic state, abiding by Islamic law and ruling according to the Prophet's (s) traditions so that Muslims can live in security and serenity.

The Muslim leader should have the following qualifications:

1. He should be a jurisprudent (*faqih*) who is learned in Islamic laws and teachings.

2. He should be just, pious and committed to Islam.

3. He should be competent and capable of managing the Muslim affairs.

Applying Islam's laws and abiding by Islam's teachings require a broad and exact knowledge of Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions. This can only be found in the jurisprudent (*faqih*) and those learned in Islamic teachings.

Abiding by and embodying justice, is also a required condition, so that there is no chance of the coming to power of a corrupt Muslim, who not only does not adhere to Islam, but also wields authority in a perverse and unjust way which is forbidden in Islam.

Allah, the Most High says:

"And lean not on those who are unjust, lest the Fire touch you..."Holy Qur'an (***11:113***)

"...and whoever judges not according to what Allah has sent down, they are the transgressors." Holy Qur'an (***5:47***)

1. While Imam Ali (a) was in prayer in the Holy Prophet's Mosque in Madina, a man came seeking charity. No one took any notice and he was about to leave disappointed when Imam Ali (a) pointed his finger towards him while he was bowing in prayer. The man took the ring from the Imam's finger. While this was happening in the Mosque, this verse was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (s).

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