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Preface

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

أَلْحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ

وَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلىٰ سَيِّدِنَا وَ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِيْنَ وَ لَعْنَةُ اللهِ عَلىٰ أَعْدَائِهِمْ أَجْمَعِيْنَ

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and may the blessings of Allah be upon our Master and Prophet, Muhammad, and his pure progeny, and may the curse of Allah be upon all their enemies.

Indeed, the theory of *wilayat al-faqih* [guardianship of the jurist] can be regarded as the most important foundation of the political system in Islam during the period of occultation [*'asr al-ghaybah*] of the Imam of the Time [*imam az-zaman*]1 (*'a*).2 It is the theory that practically proved during the last quarter of the 20th century to all and sundry that religion is competent to administer the affairs of society. Relying on this idea, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ha□rat3 Imam Khomeini (*qs*),4 was able to establish the Islamic government system and to administer it well notwithstanding the opposition of all imperialist powers in the world.

Though the notion of separation of religion and politics and the irresponsiveness of religion in solving social problems and its incompetence in administering the society have been vigorously propagated since the end of the 16th century in the West by both political scientists and statesmen and also acknowledged by the ecclesiastical authority, a Muslim cleric who was a source of emulation was able to bewilder both friends and foes by setting up a government system based on religious principles, values, laws, and in brief, the religious thought.

By emphasizing the slogan that "Government is the practical philosophy of all Islamic laws" and refusing to give any name to the new government other than "Islamic republic" and that is, that omitting the word "democratic" suggested by some for this government, he has shown in theory and practice that the

“Islamic republic system” under the axis of *wilayat al-faqih* is a purely religious system, and that this new system which is detached and distinct from all the current systems in the world, in spite of the arbitrary claim of the opponents, is able to administer the society successfully.

Now that two decades[5] have elapsed after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the beginning of the rule of Islam and *wilayat al-faqih* system in our beloved Iran, our nation’s avowed enemies who correctly realized that the secret behind the perpetuity, independence, grandeur, and honor of this country is people’s fidelity to religion and *wilayat al-faqih,* are hatching various cultural plots to undermine the Islamic ideology and cast doubt upon the Islamic and religious beliefs, principles and values of our people and society with the aim of weakening the principle of *wilayat al-faqih* which is one of their strategic objectives. Regrettably, a group of intellectuals render assistance, consciously or unconsciously, to this trend through actions, behavior, speech, and writings.

We believe that in the current status of our society, *wilayat al-faqih* constitutes the central pillar of Islam, and its safety contributes to the splendor of Islam and Islamic laws and values in the society. As such, we have decided to elucidate this theory, support it academically and logically, and enlighten the general public, particularly the young generation of our country who probably know very little about this theory and its ramifications, and thus discharge a small part of our religious duty.

Observing the academic coherence of the discussion, we have endeavored to avoid using technical and complicated terms and dialectical methods so that the discussion may appeal to those who have little familiarity with the seminarian and academic issues and terminologies. We have also tried, as far as possible, to use simple words and expressions and avoid dealing with complicated and ambiguous topics.

Likewise, we have tried to deal with all the aspects of this theory to address the subjects which we find significant and controversial. However, things like the brevity of content and the readers’ patience and the time that they have been taken into account as far as possible.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that this work contains a number of speeches, articles, books, and question-and-answer sessions of the erudite professor, Ha□rat Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi (may his sublime presence endure), which have been compiled, edited and published by the author. Since the theory of *wilayat al-faqih* constitutes part of the Islamic political theory, those who are willing to be familiar with the different aspects of it may refer to the other two pertinent books of the author, viz. *Huquq va Siyasat dar Qur’an* [Law and Politics in the Qur’an] and *Na□ariyyeh-ye Siyasi-ye Islam* [Islamic Political Theory] (Volumes 1 and 2).

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Esfand 1378 AHS
(Circa February-March 2000)

1. It refers to Im□m Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Mahd□, the Twelfth and Last Im□m from the Prophet’s Holy Progeny who is

presently in the state of major occultation [ghaybah al-kubr] and will appear on the appointed time in the future to fill the world with truth, justice and faith after being engulfed by falsehood, injustice and unbelief. For further information on the Islamic belief on the Mahd, see yatull h Ibr h m Am n, Imam Mahdi: The Just Leader of Humanity, http://www.al-islam.org/mahdi/nontl/index.htm; [1] yatull h Sayyid Muhammad B qir as-Sadr and yatull h Murtad Mutahhar, Awaited Savior, http://www.al-islam.org/awaited/index.htm [2]. [Trans.]

2. The abbreviation, "'a" stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, 'alayhis-sal m, 'alayhimus-sal m, or 'alayh s-sal m [may peace be upon him/them/her], which is used after the names of the prophets, angels, Im ms from the Prophet's progeny, and saints ('a). [Trans.]

3. Hadrat: The Arabic word Hadrat is used as a respectful form of address. [Trans.]

4. The abbreviation, "qs" stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, quddisa sirruh [may his soul be sanctified], which is used after the names of pious people. [Trans.]

5. It is now three decades after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution (February 11, 1979). [Trans.]

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Links

[1] http://www.al-islam.org/mahdi/nontl/index.htm;

[2] http://www.al-islam.org/awaited/index.htm