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Session 15: The Islamic Government, Challenges and Cultural Plots

A review of the previous discussions

Our concern was to elucidate the Islamic political theory which states that the law which is either directly stipulated by God the Exalted in the Holy Qur'an or enacted by the Holy Prophet (*s*) and the infallible Imams (*'a*), or by a person designated by an infallible Imam (*'a*), is binding in society. In any case, the law must be pleasing to God and in accordance with Islamic standards.

Those who oppose the idea that religious laws must rule and be implemented in society can be divided into three. The *first* group essentially does not accept religion. Such people do not want particular religious laws to be implemented in the country. Thank God such people are very few in our society.

The *second* group is of the opinion that the jurisdiction of religion is separate from that of society and politics. It regards religion as concerned with personal affairs and the relationship between God and man, saying that problems pertaining to social life have nothing to do with religion. This trend is generally called "secularism" or the separation of religion from the problems of life.

The *third* group really believes that Islam has sociopolitical laws but it is unconsciously influenced by eclecticism and Western culture. Some of its views are inconsistent with Islam.

The clergy and its crucial duty of guidance

In any case, in accordance with the duty set by God, the Exalted, we need to point out these truths as much as possible in order to clarify the Islamic stance and prevent intellectual, ideological and religious deviations. Some of our friends and well-wishers think that engaging in these discussions in these particular sociopolitical conditions is unnecessary, while others think that it is harmful, as it encourages differences in opinion and conviction.

They imagine that the more we strive for intellectual and ideological unity and avoid issues that lead to dispersion and separation is beneficial for society. Out of good intention, there are also some who say, “Instead of holding such discussions, engage in more positive activities in society, assume positions of authority and render services which are beneficial for society.”

Let me say to these colleagues most of whom are well-wishers and with good intentions: Our concern is the religious duty which God, the Exalted, has placed upon our shoulders. It is incumbent, first and foremost, upon the prophets and infallible Imams (*‘a*) and then upon the *‘ulama’*.

It is a tortuous path full of dangers, not mere verbal opposition, but accompanied by abuse, calumny, foul language, and at times, exile, imprisonment, torture and libel, and sometimes, even assassination. These difficulties have been experienced throughout history by the prophets and infallible Imams (*‘a*). On our part, we have no choice but to tread this path even if our friends reproach and criticize us. As God, the Exalted, says:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَى مِن بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ أُولَـئِكَ يَلعَنُهُمُ اللّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّاعِنُونَ﴾

“Indeed those who conceal what We have sent down of manifest proofs and guidance, after We have clarified it in the Book for mankind—they shall be cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers.”[1]

Those who are aware of the truth of religion and conceal it on account of personal gains and group interests will incur the curse of God, the angels and holy saints [*awliya’*]. As mentioned in the noble *hadith*,

...إِذَا ظَهَرَتِ الْبِدَعُ فِي أُمَّتِي فَلْيُظْهِرِ الْعَالِمُ عِلْمَهُ وَ إِلاَّ فعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللهِ

“When innovation in religion [*bid‘ah*] *emerges in my ummah, it is incumbent upon the scholar* [*‘alim*] *to reveal his knowledge* (*of the religion*) *otherwise the curse of Allah shall be upon him...”*[2]

Based on this, we have two options: Either we endure the reproaches and criticism of friends and the calumny of enemies, and in return, seek the pleasure of God, or prefer the praise of some people and thus, incur the curse of God. We prefer to endure slanders and not incur the curse of God. Thus, this crucial responsibility is placed upon our shoulders and for the likes of us, dealing with these matters is more urgent than anything else.

It is true that today we have problems along our borders, and, in future military dangers may arise. It is true that members of our consular staff and 35 drivers are held captive by the deviant and retrogressive Taliban in Afghanistan, which has upset our nation and government and prompted public

demonstrations, protests and been referred to international commissions.

In our opinion, however, the danger of the capture of 40 to 50 Iranians by enemies is not greater than the danger of the capture of thousands of our Muslim youth in universities by the agents of America. The bondage of our youth by the agents, functionaries and proponents of Western culture is far more dangerous than the capture of a number of Iranian citizens by a deviant group. It is true that they are experiencing difficulties and tribulations but they shall be rewarded by God.

When our dear youth, especially the children of martyrs and freed prisoners of war, however, are on the verge of intellectual and religious deviation and bondage, what could be more serious? Should no one feel a sense of responsibility in this regard?

(Some people may say, "You are thinking erroneously." Well, if man is free to express his views, at least as a person who is engaged in religious and Islamic sciences for more than 50 years I also have the right to express my views.)

Our concern is their opposing our claim that Islamic and divine laws must govern society, and raising doubts already mentioned in previous discussions. They say that implementing the laws of Islam in society is discordant with the natural rights of man. One of the natural rights of man is freedom which is manifested in freedom of thought, expression, religion and political views.

By nature, every person has the right to choose whatever religion he or she likes, change his or her religion; express and promote any view and belief he or she has. If Islamic laws must govern this country, there will be some who do not want these laws. They all have the right to express their views, cast their vote and say that "We do not want these laws". Those who totally reject religion to express such a view is not surprising, but unfortunate when the same is sometimes expressed by those who claim to be religious, and worse, even use an Islamic appellation for themselves, and introduce themselves as followers of the Imam!

Promotion of destructive Western freedom in the national press

This state of affairs has reached a point where it is posed in newspapers—sometimes with a serious tone and at times as humor, sometimes as a quotation from a certain writer, a young man or a woman—Why, in principle, a man can have many wives while a woman cannot have many husbands. They also suggest that a communal wedding be held and a number of men share a single wife!

It is worth noting that these issues are not from periodicals of communist countries. Instead, such issues are presented in newspapers of the Islamic Republic! There is also someone who delivers a speech in an Islamic university, which he describes as an Islamic institution, in which he says, "Today, opposing a leader or the Prophet is nothing. Even if people want to demonstrate against God, no law has the right to prevent them!"

If these words are uttered in a non-Muslim country or by a person who is an infidel or a polytheist, it will not surprise. But in reality, these words have been uttered in the Islamic Republic, under the sovereignty of Islam and under the rule of *wilayah al-faqih,* in universities, and no one is confronting them. Sometimes, a student protests but it is of no avail. It is for this reason that I feel a sense of responsibility and I hereby declare that these utterances are dangerous innovations in religion and are repugnant to the foundation of Islam.

If there are people who want to make these utterances in their speeches, at least they should not do so in the name of Islam, so that the difference between Islam and *kufr* remains clear. This freedom of religion and freedom of expression is a fruit of Western culture which is deceitful and ostensibly pleasant but innately venomous. It might be appropriate for Western culture, but certainly not to this extent for our Islamic culture.

Religion in Western culture today, is a matter of taste, like inclination toward a political party. If for example, in a country a number of political parties are already functioning and the following day, another party is registered and announces its existence, transferring from one party to another, is not surprising. The same applies to religion in the West, especially in America, where every day a new religion or sect is founded. This is astonishing for us. More than a century ago, someone named "Bab" emerged saying, "I founded a new Islam and the Imam of the Time expected by the Shi'ah has already appeared."

This set everybody wondering how someone could claim that a new religion had emerged. (Of course, outside Iran particularly in America, this corrupt sect is publicized as "modern Islam", where it is not surprising at all.) But every year, a number of religious sects are founded in Canada, America and European countries. For instance, the main Christian denominations are Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism and Protestantism. Protestantism alone has more than 500 sects officially registered in Western countries.

Last year, I visited some Latin American countries. I noticed that several new sects were founded whose preachers were busy propagating their respective sects. Such innovations are very common there. It is announced in a newspaper that a priest has founded a new religion or a new sect, and people easily transfer from one sect to another. This is what they called "freedom of religion".

"Islamic Protestantism" as a conspiracy against Islam

Some expect that there shall also be freedom for the religion in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thus, for a long time they have suggested the emergence of "Islamic Protestantism". As far as I know, it was Fath-'Ali Akhundzadeh (Akhundof) who first proposed that there should be a "protestant sect" in Islam. After him, other "intellectuals" promoted this in their speeches and books, suggesting that "Islamic Protestantism" should come into being in Iran.

Today, in America, it is propagated that there should also be a new "Martin Luther" in Iran, a new

“protestant religion” and a “modern Islam” which is consistent with modern conditions, insisting that the Islam which came into being 1,400 years ago is of no use in life today!

One should not be surprised if America makes such a suggestion because their goal is to obliterate Islam. They themselves have said that for this task they have a particular program and allotted a specific budget. They have confessed repeatedly that their Archenemy at this stage is Islam.

But what is surprising is that gradually this propaganda is gaining ground in our country, and there are those who explicitly question the essential and fixed laws of Islam in newspapers and magazines. For instance, they question the injustice between man and woman in laws of inheritance, woman given no right to have many husbands, or the like, and sometimes, they ridicule the essential laws of Islam.

As you may recall, during the initial years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, when the bill regarding the law of retaliation [*qisas*] was passed, they said, “The bill regarding *qisas* is inhuman,” and the Imam (*q*) said that if they had made this utterance consciously, their Muslim spouses would be *haram* for them and the right of ownership for their property would be transferred to their Muslim inheritors and their lives would no more be held in honor. Of course, laws pertaining to apostasy [*irtidad*] are not only confined to the person who denies *qisas* and its laws.

Denial of any essential law is tantamount to apostasy. But we can observe today, that without any shame and hesitation, individuals explicitly reject the essential laws of Islam in newspapers and magazines of the Islamic Republic, and sometimes in newspapers founded through grants from the Muslims’ public treasury. Some people should remind them that the decree of the Imam pertaining to the deniers of *qisas* is not only confined to the issue of *qisas*.

It can sometimes be observed that laws unanimously accepted by the Shi‘ah and Sunni *fuqaha* and are not opposed even by the Sunnis are questioned and mocked! Should the concerned authorities not address these problems?

Should they not be reminded that such dangers pose threats to our young generation? Those who have neither heard the speeches of the Imam nor studied his lectures can be influenced by the questions raised in newspapers published in the Islamic Republic and think that the Islamic political system and the Islamic state also agree with these ideas and that the same are Islamic ideas! There should at least be a venue to announce that these ideas have nothing to do with Islam.

The notion that religion is a matter of taste and that man can choose whatever religion he likes and then change it once he no longer likes it, is dangerous. In Western countries, sometimes a teenager goes to the church with his friend who says, “I like so-and-so church more,” and thus changes his religion.

The said teenager will also be influenced and in following his friend, he will also change his religion. They think that religion is like a garment which a person can wear today and change tomorrow. Islam does not endorse the view. “Choose whichever you accept for the state guarantees this freedom as a

natural right of the people." Islam regards religion as the most important matter in the life of man and that felicity and perdition in this world and the hereafter depends on 'choosing the right religion.'

So, the reason behind these discussions is the existence of such dangers which we can feel, discern and even witness sometimes, and by struggling against them discharge our duty.

Real meaning of natural right

The best definition of "natural right" is that it is a need demanded by the nature of man and no one should deny it. So, talking and expressing views are among the demands of man's nature and no one should prevent them. We have said that eating and drinking are also among the demands of man's nature. In fact, it is the most natural right of every man to eat, but merely because eating is a demand of man's nature, does a person have the right to eat anything that belongs to others? Is there no law that specifies which is *halal* and which is *haram*, and whose property a person has the right to consume and whose property a person has no right to consume?

Is there any reasonable person who can accept the notion that man is free to take whatever he likes from anybody. Talking is also a natural right of man, but it does mean that he can express anything everywhere and for whatever reason and motive. How can the law afford to dictate what things to eat or not to eat, and how can religion decree that pork and alcoholic beverages should not be consumed, when eating and drinking are natural rights of man? The same is the case with talking: The subject of talk, its time, place, and limitation are determined by law.

More or less, this idea has been accepted everywhere in the world. Regarding religion, however, the Westerners say, "You can say whatever you like because religion is a personal matter of taste which is irrelevant to the serious concerns of life and at most, it is related to the relationship between man and God and this relationship assumes different forms. Choose whatever form of relationship with God you like.

This religion is a straight path; that religion is another straight path. Idol-worship is a straight path; Islam is also a straight path!" But what Islam states is something else; of course, we mean Islam which has been propagated by Hadhrat Muhammad (*s*) and not the "modern Islam" to be brought by Babs and Martin Luthers. We are referring to Islam which Hadhrat Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah (*s*) introduced.

Traditional interpretation as the only authentic interpretation of Islam

They say, "Yes, we also accept the same Islam but it has diverse interpretations. You express a particular interpretation of it." One of the products of Western culture is to advance different interpretations and understandings of religious texts. As I have mentioned before, sometime ago a

Christian sect was founded in Canada. The founding priest of the said Christian sect was asked, “What is your opinion about homosexuality?” He replied, “For the meantime, I do not want to express my opinion but I tell you that the Bible should be interpreted anew!” This is because homosexuality is explicitly condemned in the Torah and the Gospel just as it is condemned in Islam. These gentlemen also say, “Islam and the Qur’an must be interpreted anew!”

We declare that we are among those who regard as credible the 1,400 year-old interpretation of Islam by the Shi‘ah and Sunni *‘ulama’*. The “Islam” we are talking about is that which has been interpreted by the pure Imams (*‘a*) and thereafter by the *‘ulama’* of Islam for the past fourteen centuries. We take that interpretation as the criterion. If new interpretations arise according to which Islam and all its laws must be changed and a new “Islam” be formulated, we do not accept and have nothing to do with that “Islam” and also, I don’t think that our Muslim people would be attached to such “modern Islams” to be brought by Babs and Martin Luthers.

The Islam which we know, talk about and adhere to is the one whose sources are the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s) and the pure Imams (*‘a*) and whose essential and definite laws have been elucidated by the Shi‘ah and Sunni *fuqaha* for the past fourteen hundred years, especially those laws about which the Shi‘ah and Sunnis have no difference of opinion.

This Islam tells us, “Just as you have to observe limitation and regulation in eating and drinking, limitation and regulation must also be observed in talking.” Religion is not a garment to be worn today and be removed tomorrow. One must conduct research and accept the religion of truth.

In the domain of Islam, there is ample proof to establish its truthfulness and no one can say that the issue has been obscure for him and that he failed to identify the truth unless there were shortcomings in his research. If a person in a Micronesian island says, “I failed to grasp the truthfulness of Islam,” he might be excused. But living in the domain of Islam, in which for the past fourteen hundred years the greatest *‘ulama’* of Islam have written the most valuable and important books about Islam, if a person says, “I failed to identify the truth,” I don’t think that he can be excused.

In any case, the Islam we know states, “Just as you need to observe limits in eating and drinking, you need to do likewise in talking. You have no right to say whatever you like. You must follow the Islamic rules. Once you act beyond the Islamic rules, it is to the detriment of Islamic society. As you know, one of the prohibited acts mentioned in the treatises on practical laws of Islam [*risalah al-‘amaliyyah*] is to buy and sell deviant books. Islam does not grant the right to anyone, especially the one who does not possess the power to distinguish truth from falsehood, to go everywhere, listen to any talk or read any writing. As this noble verse explicitly states,

﴿...وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ﴾

"When you see those who gossip impiously about Our signs, avoid them until they engage in some other discourse…"[3]

And regarding the faithful, the Qur'an forbids them to mingle and sit together with those who put religion into question:

﴿وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ ان إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللّهِ يُكَفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلاَ تَقْعُدُواْ مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُواْ فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا مِّثْلُهُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ جامِعُ المُنَافِقينَ وَ الْكَافِرينَ فى جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعاً...﴾

"Certainly He has sent down to you in the Book that when you hear Allah's signs being disbelieved and derided, do not sit with them until they engage in some other discourse, or else you* [*too*] *will be like them. Surely Allah will gather hypocrites and disbelievers, all together, into hell…"[4]

Thus, those who talk about Islam but establish relationship with the enemies of Islam and promote their words are the same hypocrites [*munafiqun*] whose abode, together with the infidels [*kafirun*], is hellfire.

Once again, I emphasize that Islam commands: "Go and search for the truth and argue with the enemies of Islam. With the truth that Islam teaches, you shall overcome them. However, as long as you have not acquired enough capability to defend your doctrines and values, you should not accompany and mingle with the misguided and wicked ones."

It is like the advice given to an athlete to undergo training before participating in wrestling. A youngster who has not yet undergone enough training should not challenge a veteran wrestler as he shall surely be defeated and his backbone broken. This does not mean campaign against freedom. This is an admonition to a youngster to learn Islamic sciences and teachings and then argue with the enemies.

In any case, the Islam we know has limited freedom, and regards as untenable the argument that since talking is a natural necessity of man, talking must be free because man also has other instincts such as the sexual instinct; eating and drinking can also be considered as natural rights that should not be restricted. Just as the consumption of every food is unacceptable to a reasonable person, the same is true of talking. Being an innate necessity does not justify its unbridled use. Reason and religion should determine its limits based on the material and spiritual interests of society which have been specified and introduced by religion.

Legitimate freedom

While interpreting my petitions, there are those who have said, "So-and-so commits a fallacy because we have not said that freedom must be absolute. Our point is that there should be legitimate [*mashru'*] freedom." I ask: What do you mean by *mashru'*? Do you mean that which is acceptable to religious law

[*shar'*]? In lexicography, there are two meanings of the word "*mashru'*". Its first meaning is what religious law [*shari'ah*] has declared as lawful. (Of course, it is improbable that they refer to this meaning of *mashru'* because those raising these issues are not attached to the *shari'ah*.)

So, if *mashru'* is that which *shari'ah* permits, it means that freedom must be within a framework permitted by the *shari'ah*. The other meaning of *mashru'* is that which is legal. According to this meaning also, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as stipulated in the Constitution, the law must be concordant with Islam. Our Constitution consistently points out that all rules and decrees must be concordant with Islam, and in essence, the raison d'être of the *fuqaha* in the Council of Guardians as reflected in the Constitution is to examine the bills to be ratified by the Islamic Consultative Assembly—whether they are consistent with Islam or not.

Even assuming that all the people and deputies in the Majlis (apart from the deputies of minority groups whose rights are also protected) are Muslim, religious and devoted, they may sometimes tend to be negligent and approve a bill which is against Islam. In keeping with the Constitution, the ratified bills of the Majlis are examined by the Council of Guardians—whether they are consistent with the Constitution and Islam, or not. The *fuqaha* of the Council of Guardians confirm the Islamic nature of the ratified bills while the lawyers of the Council confirm the consistency of these bills with the Constitution.

If our Constitution does not regard it necessary for all laws to be Islamic, then what is the raison d'être of the Council of Guardians? And for what purpose is all the emphasis on the sovereignty of Islam and the absolute guardianship of the jurist [*wilayat-e mutlaq-ye faqih*] stipulated in provisions of the Constitution? One should not be surprised if so-called lawyers say, "Since the Constitution stipulates that freedom must be observed, no religion or law has the right to limit that freedom!"

Does the Constitution clearly stipulate that freedom should be *mashru'*, or not? It is you who say "*azadiha-ye mashru'*" [legitimate freedom]. What do you mean by "legitimate freedom"? If *mashru'* is derived from *shar'* [religious law], then "legitimate freedom" means freedom which the religious law endorses. And if *mashru'* means "legal" [*qanuni*], then according to the Constitution, freedom which has been approved by the religious and canonical laws are "legitimate freedom".

Religion and law as restrainers of freedom

Freedom cannot be above law. Those who claim that freedom is above religion and law should answer these questions: In principle, what is the purpose of religion and law? What is the essence of law? Is law meant to point out that an action should be done in a specific manner? Does it permit and forbid certain acts or not? I have no option but to repeat some of the previous points. Every law explicitly or implicitly says actions should be restricted and must be done within a certain framework.

Thus, in principle, the essence of law is to restrict freedom. If law and religion do not permit the restraining of freedom, their existence is useless. As it includes sociopolitical laws, religion filters and

restricts the social and political actions of man and decrees that certain actions should be done within a specific framework. If religion means other than this, what is the purpose of its existence?

If religion has been revealed so that everyone should behave in whatever way he or she likes, what then is its function? And what is its role? The existence of religion and law has no meaning other than limiting the liberties of man. Hence, to say that freedom is above both religion and law is absurd. Yes, under the name of religion some people may suppress the legitimate freedom of people and prohibit what God has made lawful through superstitions and ethnic customs.

For example, in some parts of our country, some ethnic tribes unfortunately still prohibit what God has made lawful and in the culture of our present society some lawful things are also still considered abominable. Had it not been for such an attitude in society, so many types of sexual corruption would have been prevented. The Commander of the Faithful (*'a*) said:

لَوْ لا ما سَبَقَ مِن ابْنِ الخَطّابِ فِي الْمُتْعَةِ ما زنى اِلاّ شَقِيّ.

"Had ('Umar) ibn al-Khattab not prohibited fixed-time marriage [mut'ah],[5] *no one would ever commit adultery and fornication [zina] except a wretched person."*[6]

Regrettably, in our culture this thing made lawful by God, which is a key solution for many problems, is still considered abominable. Yes, if there are those who under the name of religion want to declare lawful that made unlawful by God, it is abominable. Apart from being abominable, it is also unlawful [*haram*] and it is a kind of religious innovation [*bid'ah*]. The same is true for its opposite. Forbidding the lawful is also an innovation:

انَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ اَنْ يُؤْخَذَ بِرُخِصِهِ كَما يُحِبُّ اَنْ يُؤْخَذَ بِعَزائِمِهِ

"Verily, God loves people to benefit from the permissible [mubahat] and lawful [halal-ha] things just as He loves them to perform the compulsories [wajibat] and shun the unlawful [muharramat] things."[7]

Thus, under the name of religion, or under the name of tribalism or local, ethnic and clannish prejudices nobody has the right to declare unlawful what has been made lawful by God. In the same manner, setting limits on freedoms is unlawful and an innovation. But if what is meant by "freedom" is illegitimate freedom, no one should expect religion not to oppose it!

This is because freedom can either be legitimate or illegitimate. If legitimate, both religion and law declares it lawful and is not opposed to it, and there is no point in saying that religion or law has no right to deprive society of legitimate freedom. If a religion permits something, how can it prohibit what it has permitted?

This is contradictory in itself. But if a certain freedom is illegitimate and religion has prohibited it, it is meaningless to say that religion has no right to prohibit it. This is another form of contradiction.

Necessity of restraining freedom

It can thus be deduced that we also regard freedom as a very noble element permitted by God and a prerequisite for the material and spiritual exaltation, advancement and perfection of man. We believe that if man does not possess the gift of freedom, he cannot consciously choose a religion and act upon its commandments, for his conviction will have no value. The advancement and perfection of man lies in his conscious acceptance of religion. This is also the meaning of *"There is no compulsion in religion."*[8] We believe that freedom is one of the greatest gifts of God, but is most beneficial when used within limits specified by the Giver of the gift:

﴿وَمَن يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللّهِ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ...﴾

"...And whoever transgresses the bounds of Allah—it is they who are the wrongdoers."[9]

Transgressing the bounds set by Allah leads to wretchedness and deprivation of the divine gift. The same thing which leads to man's felicity will result in his misery. Once a person consumes food beyond limit, he will get sick and it may even cause his death. Once gratification of the sexual instinct which is a divine gift goes beyond limits, it will bring about social corruption and inflict dangerous diseases and sometimes even the extinction of society. The Islamic state not only guarantees legitimate freedom but at the same time, it has to prevent illegitimate freedom.

The skepticism expressed in newspapers is that by holding these discussions, I allegedly want to omit the article on national sovereignty from the Constitution. They say, "According to the Constitution, the people are masters of their own destiny. So, if they are compelled to follow religion only, they will no longer be masters of their own destiny!" This skepticism is so deceptive. I say to them: Is this the only thing mentioned in our Constitution? Is it not stipulated in the same constitution that sovereignty belongs to God the Exalted?

Does not the same constitution say that the laws to be implemented in the country must be in agreement with Islam? Are these facts not mentioned in the Constitution with the article that people shall be the masters of their own destiny? It may be said that these two articles of the Constitution are contradictory and are in need of interpretation and solution. But if we try to analyze them carefully, we will understand the purpose of the two articles. Once it is stated in the first article that sovereignty belongs to God and then it is stated that the people are masters of their own destiny, it means that under the aegis of God's sovereignty, the people are masters of their own destiny.

Thus, those who are outside Islamic society and not among the people of this country have no right to

impose their own ideas, preferences, religion, and law on us. America has no right to impose its law on us. It is the people of this country who are supposed to vote for their own desirable law and they have already voted in favor of Islamic law.

In his speech at Ahwaz University, a certain person has said: “Even if the people demonstrate against God, the law is not supposed to prevent them!” Is this what the sovereignty of the people means? Does the Constitution say so? If a certain person who is unfamiliar with the Constitution makes such utterances, it is understandable.

What is surprising is that a certain person who regards himself a legal expert makes such a claim! He may say, “We do not accept your interpretation of the Constitution.” In reply, it must be said that if there is an ambiguous point in the Constitution, its authorized interpreter is the Council of Guardians. If you accept this constitution, you will see that it does not give you the authority to interpret it. If you really believe in this law, you have to seek its interpretation from the Council of Guardians. It is this Council of Guardians which is the guardian of Islam and the Constitution and is composed of Muslim jurists whose function is to guard and protect Islamic laws. Once your view is approved, you have the right to trample Islam under your feet!

1. Surah al-Baqarah 2:159.
2. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 57, p. 234.
3. Surah al-An‘am 6:68.
4. Surah an-Nisa’ 4:140.
5. For information on the issue of mut‘ah, see, among others, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba’i, Al-Mizan: An Exegesis of the Qur’an, trans. Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1992), vol. 8, under the commentary on Qur’an 4:24, pp. 104-111; Sayyid ‘Abdul-Husayn Sharafuddin Musawi, Questions on Jurisprudence, trans. Liyakatali Takim (Ontario: Hydery Canada Ltd., 1996), chap. 4, http://www.al-islam.org/masail/4.htm; [1] Sachiko Murata, “Temporary Marriage in Islamic Law,” Al-Serat 13, no. 1, http://www.al-islam.org/al-serat/al-serat_muta/title.htm [2]. [Trans.]
6. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 12, p. 253.
7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 69, p. 360.
8. Surah al-Baqarah 2:265.
9. Surah al-Baqarah 2:229.

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