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Governmental prerogatives

Question No. 14

What is the difference between the divine rulers' prerogatives in Islamic State and those of the Prophet and Infallible Imams?

Considering governmental prerogatives, there is no difference between the Prophet, Imams, and the Authoritative Muslim scholar; for by the governmental prerogatives, we mean the essential social issues without which the government would not enjoy the necessary power to further its goal, i.e. providing the prosperity and the common good of the society. By "absolute authority", we mean no more than this. Of course, the Prophet and Imams had other states and prerogatives as well, reserved for them. These, however, had nothing to do with governmental issues. The Prophet, for instance, had the right to interfere in the personal affairs of the individuals; but the Authoritative Muslim scholar has no such a right, for this is an issue outside the scope of social and governmental issues.

The governmental prerogatives of the Impeccable

Imam Khomeini says on this subject:

These are wrong illusions to think the Prophet's governmental prerogatives were more than Amir al–Muminin, or whether the latter's prerogatives are more than a Muslim scholar. Of course, the Holy Prophet's virtues and eminences are more than the whole universe, as is Amir al–Muminin's virtues after the Prophet; but having more spiritual eminences does not mean to have more governmental prerogatives. The same authority and prerogatives enjoyed by the Prophet and other Imams in summoning and mobilizing the army, appointing the governors, collecting taxes and expending it for Muslims' common good, have been accorded to the Authoritative Muslim scholar by God. Nonetheless, no specific person is determined. The general title of a "just religious scholar" has been stated. 1

In explaining the abovementioned issue, Imam Khomeini stresses the difference between "the genitive positions" and "the trusted positions". "Wilayat", as far as it means leadership and governance, is a

trusted position conferred by the Legislator to the qualified persons. Here, there is no difference between the Prophet, Imams and the Authoritative Muslim scholar. The difference is in the realm of genitive authority and the true spiritual positions. Thus, Imam Khomeini says:

For Imam, there is spiritual positions as well, separated from governmental duties; that is the status of divine vicegerency sometimes referred to by Imams themselves; this is a genitive vicegerency thereby all worldly elements are humble to the "Authoritative Guardian".

Elsewhere, he says:

[The Muslim scholar's Authority] is of trusted logical affairs and there is no reality for it except nomination.... In these affairs, it is not logical to think of a difference between the Prophet and Imams and the Muslim scholar.2

- 1. Imam Khomeini, Wilayat-e Faqih, p.40, 7th ed. 1377.
- 2. Imam Khomeini, Wilayat-e Faqih, p.41.

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