

The Notions of Obtainable Politics in the light of Quran

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Abstract:

It is generally believed that the contemporary world of academia is divided between Divine and non-Divine philosophies. By considering the Divine theory in accordance to the human behavior, advocates of theory take it in the best interest of mankind. They argued that the Creator Himself guides the human being in right direction. Islam unlike modern concept of governance does not separate religion from politics and fulfills its legislative needs by means of Divine Law or Shariah. In Islamic system, the state through Caliph will have to establish Shariah of God by working on the restrictions set by Him and in conformity with His orders and commands. Yet he is allowed only to give lawful command and the people are also bound to follow only the lawful commands. In Islam there is no place for such a political order where a solitary individual or a group of persons have authoritarian or dictatorial rule. However, the Muslims, in all circumstances, must cling to the state authorities and are obliged to submit to the ultimate source of law given by the Almighty Allah in the Quran. Non-Divine theories, on the other hand mainly stress upon rationalization of human development and behavior in a certain direction. Leaving those theories aside, current study will focus on the political philosophy of Islam as prescribed by the teachings of Quran and Sunnah. The subject matter of the study is to see the possibilities regarding implementation of Islamic values in the contemporary state and society.

Keywords: Islamic state, politics, society, Divine theory, Shariah

Introduction:

If politics simply means "how to govern a state" then there are two different or even conflicting ideologies of the human beings regarding state. The

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first category is related to the man-made ideologies i.e. social contract, monarchy, aristocracy and democracy etc. The second, on the other hand, is the Divine Theory or to some extent theocracy of Islam.¹ The theory of the Divine Origin of the state is as old as the political thought itself. According to the theory, God has created the state as He did everything else. The theory can be summed up in three basic ideas; the state is created by God; the kings are divinely appointed; and they are answerable to God alone for their rule and no human authority.² In order to get eternal success the man should live his life in accordance with his teachings prescribed by Him in the Holy Quran.³

The Islamic concept of Politics kicked off with the establishment of the first Islamic State by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) at Madina. It not only provided an ideology to restructure the existing social, political and cultural aspects of human behavior but also gave a new meaning to the Arabic word of "Siyasat (politics)." Nkem Onyekpe describes the word politics as:

The struggle for power which itself is the authority to determine or formulate and execute decisions and policies, which must be accepted by the society...it is the struggle for power of governance, especially executive authority.⁴

Although the politics simply means "how to govern the state" but Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), being the greatest Politician of the world, laid down the foundation of politics on the prescribed way of Quranic injunctions. Unlike the ancient Greek mythology of 'Utopia' He by establishing the bases of Islamic rituals during his life time, Muhammad (PBUH) provided a practical model to be followed in future. During its execution, He did not ask for the implementation of Shariah from the very first day of the revelation but what he did was to educate and groom the nation first then shaped an Islamic state and in the third step, when he was in a position to fulfill the needs of the society gave a complete system based on justice leaving other existing systems aside.

By following the same pattern, practical application of the Islamic values in state politics can be materialized. To establish an Islamic state and even government, first we will have to groom and educate the society and then we will be able to change the total code of life according to the teaching of Islam and Holy Prophet which will provide a basis of an Islamic state and government. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) first prepared the society of the Muslims who were willing to obey Allah and the prophet of Allah and to accept the Islamic code of conduct in every field.⁵ Consequently, they had no hesitation to sacrifice their lives, wealth and time for the implementation of Quran and Sunnah and to establish an Islamic rule whenever they were convened

Contemporary Politics and Islam:

It is an admitted fact that the affairs of Politics or to run state affairs are directly related to the human beings. However, in a conservative Muslim society, there are two interrelated views regarding the practicability of politics i.e. one school of thought strongly believe that in spite of their claims, the politicians are using Islamic posture for their self gain not its true implementation in the

society. Secondly, on the other hand, the real spirit of politics can only be implemented through Islamic values and hence ignore other manmade ideologies. Talking about these thoughts and manmade ideologies Holy Quran says, "Thy people don't have knowledge about such matters but only speculate."⁶ It further makes its clear, "They only run after fancy nothing else, and don't do array of speculation anything except".⁷

However, on the other hand, the people, who believe in one Allah as a sole Creator and Source of best possible solutions to the human ills of entire universe, are on right track. Islam provides an inclusive vision of life covering all its aspects and segments. In point of fact, nothing in human deeds and actions is outside Islamic values. The concept of state should be understood on the basis of integrative principles of Islam. The attributes of sovereignty cannot be properly judged with the manmade concept of "welfare state" of the contemporary scenario. In point of fact, absoluteness indivisibility, universality or all-comprehensiveness, permanence, exclusiveness and inalienability, the chief characteristics or attributes of sovereignty, truly belongs to Allah Almighty. In the words of Quran, "Sovereignty belongs to Allah"⁸ and "remember Sovereignty belongs to Allah alone"⁹ and "remember; creation belongs to Him as well."¹⁰ Sovereignty of Allah is the fundamental principle of the Islamic concept of state. Along with this chief characteristic, Khilafat, consultation, obedience of Awulal Amr, equality of mankind, order good and punish wrong and payment of Zakat were the main ingredients of the Islamic state of Madina established in 632 A.D. However, with the change of priorities, most of the contemporary Muslim states cannot be called Islamic states.

Yet, the Shariah assures both politico-social and religious triumph. It outlines each possibility for the advancement and progress on the path of uprightness. By looking closely into the Quranic verses, the matter regarding politics and establishment of Islamic state becomes easier to understand and apply. A number of Muslim political philosophers time and again provided political scheme for the Islamic state-system.

Al-Farabi, one of the most prominent political philosophers of the Muslim world, describes the verities of the states other than "ideal state". Apart from the classification of states i.e. State of Necessity (Daruriya), Vile State (Nadhala), Base and Despicable State, Timocracy (Madina Karama), Tyranny (Taghallub) and Democracy (Madina Jama'ya), Al-Farabi has a definite place for the trait of political character over other nations.¹¹ Similarly, Al-Mawardi in his famous work *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah* provides a comprehensive detail of public administration and the rules of government. Strongly believing in Imamatus, he says, "It is the foundation on which the rules and regulations of the government depend. The real objective of the state is the rule of justice and truth and to bring tranquility and peace to its citizens."¹²

However, Al-Ghazzali, by adopting the historical method about the development of the state idea of a state indicates numerous historical and traditional instances in his analytical study and to probe the truth mainly in the tradition of the Apostle of Islam, his companions and successors. He spells out

the essential characteristics of a perfect ruler, "the ruler of an Islamic state should have intelligence, acquaintance, accurate proportion of things, courtliness, love for his people, diplomatic bends, strong will-power and must be well-informed of the present news and the past history of rulers".¹³

Similarly famous Muslim political scientist, Ibin Khaldoon, presented three possible types of governments in an Islamic state;

- a. Physical monarchy: where the ruler use to rule for his own interest and follow those policies which may help him to prolong his rule.
- b. Political Monarchy: rule according to his own ideologies in order to bound the people for the interest of the subject and protect them from the loss of his subjects.
- c. Khilafat (caliphate): where the ruler of an Islamic state use to run the state affairs directly related to people in accordance to Shariah in order to fulfill their worldly needs and the needs of hereafter.¹⁴

The majority of Muslim political philosophers strongly believe that the Creator of both heaven and the earth Allah clearly provides that kingdom and His Khilafat on earth are only means to implement true Islamic injunctions. It would be done under the guidance of Imam who is naib of Allah on the face of Earth. Describing about the institution of Caliphate Quran says, "Allah has promised to those from amongst you who believe and do righteous deeds that He would surely make them His caliph on earth."¹⁵ As discussed earlier, Ibn Khaldoon believes that though this divinely guided state under a Khalipha, man can attain his supreme good which is his happiness in the Hereafter. However, talking about the functions of Caliph, Muhammad al-Buraeny says, "Caliph is a like a source and his associates who assist him to rule are like streams which flow from it. If the source is clear, there would be no destruction from sediment in the channels. If the source is opaque, there will be no anticipation of attaining the channels".¹⁶

In spite of caliph's pivotal position in the administration, the mutual consultation among the Muslims before taking any action is a commandment of the Holy Quran. It clearly says, "Not only that put the Apostle, while he is enjoined to trust only in God when he has made up his mind, is also advised to consult even those who are enemies at Herat".¹⁷ In point of fact, with the establishment of such a system, Allah gives an assurance to the true believers that they will forever subdue the nonbelievers, who will ultimately be left with no friend or ally. Quran says, "And if these non-believers had given you a battle, they were sure to turn on their heels, and they would have found no protector and no helper."¹⁸ In the same context, Allah obliged Himself to grant every kind of assistance to the believers and promise to keep them superior and honored, "It is our bounden obligation to render succor to the true believers"¹⁹

However, the most important and sacred duty of the believers is to ensure a system of governance under *amr bil maruf wa nahi an al munkar*. The Quran requires that Muslim to enjoin upon each other to do good and prevent others from committing wrong. During the course of this process, the followers will receive an ultimate success, as Quran says, "Do not grieve, and you only

shall dominate, if you are true believer."²⁰ It further declares, "And honor is only for Allah, His Prophet and those who believe."²¹ This Divine declaration clearly shows that the only method to increase honor, enormity, dominance, distinction and asset lies in their strong conviction. If their association with Allah and Prophet Muhammad (PBHU) is deep and firm, they would get the status of owners of each and every thing on this earth but if not, on the other hand, their disaster and decline are bound to follow. As Quran clearly reveals, "And let Time be witness: verily man is in a great loss except, of course, those who believe and do righteous deeds and who enjoin truth and enjoin patience".²²

It is clear from the words of Quran that true believers (Muslims) first have to attain qualities of pure character in order to achieve high position here and in life hereafter. It is accepted that strength of faith are the distinctions of disposition and the despondent political, economic and social conditions of the contemporary Muslims is mainly a consequence of flaw in their faith and character. For this time Quran predicts, "An era will come in the near future when Islam will exist merely in name and the Quran will exist merely in writing."²³ As a matter of fact, it is necessary to inspect responsible factors causing the obliteration of the faith?

As a remedy of today's political or social ills, the Holy Book clearly describes the improvement of capability to uphold the requisite stage of the true convictions of Islam. The definitive rise to respect, dignity and fame is depending, one way or the other, on the completion of an extraordinary task which has been so amiably assigned by Allah. For this the believers have been assigned in the Quran, the eminent place of *Khayr al-umam* (the finest among all umahs). However, this political and social achievement mainly depends upon the purifications of soul and body, knowledge, virtue, brilliance of behavior and the ultimate capability to act blamelessly. Quran clearly directs the individuals and the rulers to be conscious of Allah's command and not prone to follow their individual ambitions.²⁴

Although Quran does not provide a system to elect their representatives yet it has offered a system of mutual consultation among the Muslims in the appointment procedure.²⁵ After the demise of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), four orthodox pious caliphs were elected through different electoral process, however, the spirit of true democracy can easily be felt during their nominations. After their selection, the ruler is given ultimate authority to maintain law and order. The Muslims, irrespective of their personal dislike, communal support or religious reservations, must obey the ruler. As Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) clearly directed the believers, "Whether they like it or not, it is obligatory on the faithful to listen and to obey their rulers except when they are ordered to commit a sin. If they are ordered so, they should neither listen nor obey".²⁶

However, Islam, like any other contemporary organized system of the developed countries, provided a practical scheme of check and balance. Practically, the Caliph like a common man used to face a judicial trial whenever the court summoned him because the Islamic political system makes the

executive responsible to the people and Allah at the same time. In point of fact, the responsibility of the ruler is much heavier than a common Muslim who is accountable for his deeds and actions only.

One of the major functions of the Islamic state is to ensure justice to all, irrespective of their caste, creed, language, colour and sex. However, one step ahead from individualism to collectivism, Islam directs its followers to seek combined political or social goals for eternal success. Ummah, a political terminology, is used instead of individual character. "You (followers of Muhammad): you are the noblest of all Ummah, in that you have been brought out for (the benefit of) mankind. You enjoin the good and forbid the evil and you believe in Allah"²⁷ It further says, "There has to be a group of people among you who call towards the good, and bid the fair and forbid the unfair and it is these who are successful."²⁸

In present-day world, the entire Muslim Ummah is divided into more than fifty independent and sovereign states with different political systems. Although OIC (Organization of Islamic Courtiers) is providing a platform to raise their voices yet it is far away from an Islamic union of the Muslim states. Quran, in order to strengthen unity among the Muslims, clearly describes, "The believers in Islamic ideology and belief system are in single brotherhood."²⁹ However, their internal matters and vested interests are the main hurdle in this regard. Most of the Muslim rulers are not elected heads and the true representatives of their population consequently they used to follow those policies which may help to prolong their rule.

Concluding Remarks:

At the end of this discussion we may conclude that in most of the modern states, there is no stable norm by which to judge between good and evil, and between right and wrong due to the only possible criterion of "national interest". However, in the absence of moral standards, diverse groups of people have extensively different views as to what constitutes the nation's best interests. Obviously, it is religion that can offer such a commandment and with it the foundation for an agreement, within any group, or a moral obligation binding on all members of that group.

Islam, a complete code of life, provides guidance in every aspect of life for eternal success. It covers aspects of everyday life in its entire spheres-corporal, religious, individual, economic, social and political etc. Unlike modern concept of governance, Islam does not separate religion from politics and fulfills its legislative needs through Divine Law or Shariah in ordinance of the Quran and Sunnah. In point of fact, the Shariah cannot be misrepresented because of its divine nature. Its every ordinance is formulated according to the real nature and genuine provisions of human life which by their very nature is not subject to transform.

Although, Quran does not envisage the western concept of democracy, constitutional monarchy or theocracy etc. but provides the basis of governance to a constitutional republic. Even the term Khilafat does not provide any specific

category of government. It simply denotes that human beings should execute the will of Allah on earth as His deputy or agent. The state will have to accomplish the purpose and objective of God by working on the restrictions set by Him and in conformity with His orders and commands. It is prime responsibility of the Islamic state to provide security and order in the society so that Muslim may perform their religious and political affairs. The character of Caliph is more like a guardian of faith and the commodity of their citizens but anybody with administrative power is permitted only to provide legal command and the nation is bound to obey only the legitimate instructions.

Islam does not offer a political system where a solitary individual or a group of persons have dictatorial or authoritarian rule. However, the Muslims must adhere to the state authorities in every situation. Muhammad (PBUH) has described the ruling elites as al-jama-ah and bound all believers to in no way depart themselves from it. Being believers in one God, Muslims are required to submit their will to the commandments given by Allah in the last Book. However, in order to meet this demand, an economic and political amalgamation of the Muslim community representing different parts of the world is indispensable. In point of fact, the believers who would strive for the righteous path would be helped by the Creator as Quran clearly says, "Allah has promised to those from amongst you who believe and do righteous deeds that He would surely make them His caliph on earth."

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