

## REVOLUTION IN IRAN: HOW ISLAMIC?

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A revolution and a reform both aims at the same through a change for the betterment of people generation – but measures adopted for the purpose in both the cases are distinct from one another.

A reform begins with thoughtfulness and existing conditions are prudently surveyed. Causes of social mal practice are carefully studied and then remedial measures are taken. On the contrary beginning of a revolution is marked by emotional fury and a passionate desire for revenge for which Action is taken to end people's adversity, caused by rulers' neglect and cooperation mostly in a violent temper. An old system is tramped down and new trend is set for the future. There is no doubt that a reformer mostly acts like a revolutionary. Both apply the lancet to the afflicted part of the body. But the difference is that a reformer first determines the place and extent of malady then he takes steps to remedy the situation and while using the lancet he also keeps a healing balm ready. But a revolutionary's lancet runs with the least discretion, without discerning between good and bad. Usually people's long suffering and living in abject poverty make them desperate and restless, paving the way for a revolution. It is also correct to say that a successful revolution brings to an end the affliction of the past, "buries the old" and lays the foundation of a new system.

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6. Levine, Op eit, P 38
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11. Al- Qur'an, 2:26
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13. Ibid 11, P 130 Vol. II 1325 A.H P. 201 Vol. I
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15. Ibid, 3:159
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17. Al- Qur'an, 45:58
18. Ibid 8:28
19. Tirmidhi, Imam Eisa, Sunan Tirmidhi (Egypt Mustafal Babi El-Halabi) 1375 A.H. P 298 Vol. I
20. Al- Qur'an, 25 :4

for if you get authority through begging then you would be directed towards your evil nature. But if you get it without request, then you would be guided right.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus we can say that the organized life of Islamic Millat is marked by the attainment of a moral consciousness, on the part of every member, of the ideal- the spiritual expansion of mankind and an incessant striving for the realization of the same. The Chief (Amir) and the counselor (Ahlarrai) are both to be guided by the divine commandments.

The Qur'an says:

“What is with Allah, is better and more lasting for those who respond to their Lord and Keep up prayer and their rule is to take counsel among themselves.”<sup>20</sup>

Islam is the comprehensive code of life, which established a system of responsible government- a government in which both the ruler and the ruled are responsible. Under the divine law, there develop a consultative procedure, where the ruler is to be aided by the few competent counselors, in determining the policy of government and in execution of administrative responsibilities. The Chief (Amir) is a representative of God as such mean a representative government. Under such a system of Government political as a trust, the ruler is the trustee of the subjects and responsible to God for their welfare. Islam is thus, a representative government, a rule of law and a government by consultation.

## **References**

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2. Ibid PP 13-15

electors. Both by injunction and convention the Khalifah is elective.

A candidate for Khalifah (Chief) is to be preferred only on grounds of seniority in excellence of character, sufficient knowledge and devoted service to the community. Party system is the chief characteristics of modern democracy. In Islam the basis of government is consultation (Mashawarat) affair of government in consultation with counselors in accordance with the teaching of the Qur'an "and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs; and when thou art resolved, them put thy trust in God." <sup>15</sup>

Thus the Chief (Amir) has to conduct the work of government with the help of Consultative Assembly (Majlis-i-Shura). Under such a system of government there can be no fixed party system. Parties may be formed on the basis of virtue, and good not evil.

In Democracy, the rules are responsible to the ruled. Democracy in actual practice, amounts to "Mob-rule", the psychology of "Mobs" and "Crowds", the laws of heredity and measurements of levels of human intelligence. <sup>16</sup>

A government is good; when it is really responsible and accountable for its acts. Islam for its acts, Islam imposes upon the chief (Amir) the duty of obedience to the divine law and upon the Muslim the duty of "Obedience to the Chief" <sup>17</sup> provided the Amir acts according to the law of Islam.

It has, therefore, been explicitly provided that the person in authority is held "accountable to God for the welfare of the subjects." <sup>18</sup> Unlike the prevalent practice in modern democracy, nobody is permitted in Islam to offer himself as a candidate for leadership of the state. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said: "Do not ask for political authority (Hukumat)

last.” The solidarity of the Muslim Millat is to be retained at all costs so that it may be able to accomplish the ideal of the unity of mankind. Natural deficiencies apart, all individuals are alike and should be treated alike. It is the good of the individual and humanity that should alone count.

While affording equal opportunities to all and admitting natural deficiencies, the Islamic basis of preference is virtue (Taqwa). The best among human are those who are most virtuous. “The most venerable is one”, “who fears Allah most.” Unlike modern democracy, Islam, thus, lays great stress on quality rather than quantity.

The individual is to be valued for what he has in him and what he is capable of achieving. Accordingly, the right to participate in the government will also be limited to such individuals as have reached a level of moral advancement, which can enable them to perform their duties in a political life. The door to moral advancement is not shut to the rest of individuals. Guidance is, however, necessary in every sphere of individual life, and “the true guidance is the guidance of Allah.”<sup>14</sup>

An individual can obtain God’s guidance by observing manifested in the law of Islam. The bad feature of modern democracy is its corruption; bribery is rampant; election is wasteful and there is a natural distrust for national leaders. Democracy claiming to depict the wishes of the people has an innate tendency towards insubordination and anarchy. The main defect of the democracy is that it is too democratic.

It gives the right of vote to everyone on the principle of “one man one vote” and does not pause to consider whether the voter contain the requisite qualifications to exercise the right. In Islam, the right of vote is not given to every individual, but certain qualification have been prescribed the candidates and

The aim of Islamic state is the spiritual expansion of humanity and the ethical ideal of Islam “enjoin good and forbid wrong” as enunciated in the Qur’an, gradually unifies individual and groups into a well-knit people the Muslims called Millat. “For these who do good in this world is good” and “certainly the abode of the hereafter is better.”<sup>10</sup>

Peace and good relations as the watchwords of modern democracy can exist only when the Islamic conception of the unity of mankind is realized. Love of human being implies that glory lies not in the mere possession of power, but in the attainment of noble ideal through the use of legitimate power, government should not exist for the personal glory of one or many, but for the good humanity.

The spirit basis of Islamic life is righteousness, which consists in acting according to the law of Islam; a democrat has an abiding faith in the individual capabilities, but has been criticized for ignoring the characteristic imperfections of ordinary men. Government by popular majorities, it is believed is a rule by the average man. A democracy is interested not in promoting the worth of exceptional individual, but in increasing the basic comforts of ordinary individuals.

The mediocre majority pulls down individuals of distinctive capacity and achievement to its own level. Under such a situation, a community of all individuals or most of them and in it the ordinary individual, cannot effectively and usefully participate in the affairs of government. Democracy does not seem to suggest any remedy for this demerit. In, Islam, according to the ideology the whole humanity has been regarded as one.

According to the Qur’an : “All people” are “signal community.”<sup>11</sup> But in respect of time, said the Prophet Muhmmad (Peace Be Upon Him), “the Muslim Millat is the

politics has a positive impact on the personality of the participants and consequently on the stability of the democratic systems, and greater participation will produce better laws. "Prospective on democracy that minimize popular participation of policies favorable to more affluent members of society." <sup>8</sup>

The fact of a large non-voting population in Western democratic, particularly the United States, signifies than a sickness of democracy. Democracy has in fact displayed its own inherent defects in its working, yet the remedy of democracy has been suggested as more and more democracy. Finer has mentioned postulates of democracy and believed in the fundamental honesty of man, his practical common sense, solidarity of the community and the existence of general will.

He observed that under a democratic government.

"We have the assures that the sphere of our private life- our family, our diversions, our worship, our work- will not be invaded except by due process of law in which we have am equal say with any. We rest tranquil that officials and judges will not abuse us and that they themselves will have to answer for discrimination and bias and Unauthorized invasions of our private and public life to a public tribunal in which we, as of right, sit as judge and jury." <sup>9</sup>

Democracy has been criticized as "aimless", inefficient and economically unjust. "A government of the people", can be knocked to pieces in no time. Almost every polity has, as its basis an ethical ideal and every organized life is marked by the existence of certain laws and institution. Islam also provides for these and Islamic life is to be lived according to Islamic laws and institutions, which in pursuance of an ethical ideal are creative of social order and political development.

representation has at various times been based on a geographic region rather than population.

In England a system of "rotten boroughs"<sup>6</sup> developed in which possible for one member of parliament to represent a few hundred people, while another member represented hundred of thousand of people. Democracy is based on the Principle of popular sovereignty. Although modern representative democracy requires popular participation, the scope and form of that participation are different from Athenian democratic practices in two ways.

First the number, the number of people included in the political community is larger. Representative democracies in modern times claim maximum popular participation and have extended the right to vote to include everyone except criminals, youth, the insane and non-citizens. "Modern representative democracies, are characterized by pluralism; the existence of a variety of associations that are autonomous or independent from government diminution."<sup>7</sup>

In democracy must citizens play no direct role in making laws, with the exception of engaging in such practices as deciding on referenda and initiatives, other forms of political participation are permitted. Some citizen join interest groups for the purpose of influencing elected officials and appointed bureaucrats to act in particular ways.

Citizens also work in political campaign in order to support candidates who favor their views. They conduct meetings, write pamphlets an article, take out newspaper advertisement and hold peaceful demonstrations- all with the goal of influencing policy.

Thus we see that in democracy voting power is not a sufficient democratic resources of people, participation in



possesses some of the features of direct democracy but is different in some important ways. Characteristics that are somewhat similar are popular participation, political equality, and majority rule. Representative democracy is different from direct democracy in that it is a system of representative government based on free elections and a system of limitations on state activity.

Participatory democracy and representative democracy are referred to a political democracy. "The basic premise about political democracy is that government can do whatever it wishes and remain democratic so long as its duty elected officials act in accordance with approved methods."<sup>3</sup>

In principal, at least in the minds of some supporters of democracy in its political form, all that democracy signifies is a method by which "majorities make decisions affecting public policy."<sup>4</sup>

Islam emphasizes the Islamic ideals of "human community", (Ummat-i-Wahidah), "Human Worth" (Taqwa), "Justice" (Adl) and "Trusteeship" (Amanat).<sup>5</sup>

Political ideals apart democracy as a form of government has also varied in the west, there is constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary sovereignty in Britain and a Presidential type of government in the United States of America. Modern democracy has not however, lived up to the noble ideals of Islam and consequently a number of evils have crept in the body politic.

In modern representative democracies the principles of political equality remains, but various devices have been used to prevent a complete realization of this goal. In many countries, Britain and United States being examples,

## Islam and Democracy Qur'an and Hadith Perspective

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Islam is the first comprehensive system of life, which pronounced the notion of group life (Jamaat) and commands the practice of ideals of Islam for the welfare of human being. Islam is regarded as fountain of basic law for the guidance of Islamic government. Islam stands for the realization of the noble ideal of human welfare both in this world and the next.

Democracy is literally derived from two Greek words: Demus meaning the people and Kratein meaning to rule. Democracy is popular sovereignty or rule by the people and is form of government distinguished from "rule by monarchy, rule by hereditary aristocracy, rule by the most educated, rule by the elders and rule by the religious and other elite."<sup>1</sup>

It is said that democracy means rule by the people, however does not reveal enough about the meaning of democracy. There are three of the principal uses of the term 'democracy, participatory democracy, representative democracy and economic democracy'.<sup>2</sup>

Participatory democracy is a form of direct democracy, which emphasizes on popular participation majority rule and political equality. Participatory democracy is possible in small communities. With the emergence over the past few centuries of political communities containing diverse ethnic, religious and racial groups, larger numbers of people, and more sophisticated economics, a different kind of democracy has developed as representative democracy.

A representative democracy or indirect democracy

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Environmental Impact Statements, Resource Paper no. 78  
– 3 (Washington, D. C.: Association of American  
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53.Ibid., pp. 15 – 29.

36. Relative attribute means any adjectival idea about God pertaining to some aspect of his action; Pooya, Fundamentals, p. 13.

37. Al Quraan, s, 21, vs. 101 –7.

38. Ibid., s. 68, v. 4.

39. Nahjul Balagha, Sermons, p. 286.

40. Al Quraan, s. 4, vs. 58, 80.

41. Ibid., S. 57, v. 25.

42. Nahjul Balagha, Sermons, pp. 246 – 59.

43. For an elaborate discussion see Pooya, Fundamentals, pp. 20 – 22.

44. Al Quran, s. 7, v.26; see also s. 49, v. 13, s.5, v. 2.

45. Ibid., S. 2, v. 247.

46. Ibid., s. 2, vs. 31 – 32.

47. Ibid., s. 96, vs. 1 – 5.

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49. Ibid., s. 17, v. 85.

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- 29.Ibid., s.55,vs.8, 9, 10.
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- 32.Ali Tehrani, Iqtisad-I-Islami [Islamic Economics] (Mashhad: Khorassan Press, 1974), pp. 209 – 11.
- 33.Nahjul Balagha, Sermons, Letters, and Sayings of Hazrat Ali, trans. M. Askari Jaferi (Karachi: Khorasan Islamic Centre, 1960), p. 287.
- 34.Ibid., p. 280.
- 35.Grace is defined as “ to give out of sheer love without expecting any return”, whereas “justice means ‘He keeps everything in its proper place and according to merit, so that the system should function as one harmonious unit representing the absolute unity of its Creator and Administrator..... Whatever He gives is out of sheer love but in accordance with the merit and appropriateness of the state of the receiver” (Pooya, Fundamentals, p. 113).

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22. Al Quraan, s. 45, vs 12, 13; s. 31, v. 20; s.14, vs. 32, and 33.
23. *Ibid.*, s.10, v.14.
24. *Ibid.*, s.2, v.30.