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# THE MINISTER

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## THE MINISTER

Dhul Qadah - Muharram 1429

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(It is not necessary that the trustees may agree with the writer's view.)

# For Your Consideration

Syed Shamim us Sibtain Rizvi

Self-criticism and realisation are the most important factors for progress individually and collectively. If we find and acknowledge our defects and drawbacks, this is the first step to success. I should say, regretfully, that our way and style of life is just to praise others just to please them and in so doing we cheat ourselves.

Constructive criticism with sincerity is the duty of everyone. When our Sustainer and Protector is God, why should we bow down before selfish people who are the rotten onions who spoil society? This has become the attitude of every one of us. We have lost the courage to speak the truth. Like an office receptionist with an artificially smiling face, we welcome and praise each other and do not dare to exercise our religious right

and duty.

Our younger generation has got the capability to advance but they are deprived of a say in their own future. They have not been given chances by their elders to learn their faith. Every clerk, doctor, professor, businessman, unemployed or retired person makes himself a religious leader for political reasons. And when they seriously think about religion, they think only of the present. As for the future, they say they will deal with the future in the future. How can it be possible for the future to be bright when at present there is no link between the religious leaders and the younger generation? Let us form a link with the help of Allah (s.w.t.) and brighten the future for the younger generation.



# Irfan and Tasawwuf

By Dr Ahmad Ahmadi

## Sufi Practices:

These are of three types:

1. *Ibadah*: Outward forms of worship as prescribed by the *Shari'ah*, such as prayers (*salat*), fasting (*siyam*), *khums*, *zakat*, *jihad*, etc., which are practised by all the Muslims without any difference among them.

2. *Riyadah* (spiritual exercise): It is meant for the training of the individual and teaching him to remember God verbally or by heart, i.e. recitation of His Names in manifest and concealed ways. It also includes forty-day seclusions (*chillah*) and observance of the prescribed journey or stay at one place for a particular period for performing the recommended acts of worship (*mustahabbat*).

3. Special rites and observances, such as obedience to the rules of the

monastery (*khanaqah*) and to the instructions of the spiritual guide (*murshid*). It also includes certain recommended acts such as participation in devotional music and dancing and such other practices which vary between different Sufi brotherhoods. For further clarification, one may refer to books like *Misbah al-hidayah*, *Miftah al-kifayah*, *Kashfal-Mahjub*, etc.

Occasionally there arose some differences between the Sufis and the adherents of *Shari'ah* in regard to their observances and religious rites, leading to controversies, and several books were written to refute and repudiate each other's views. In this respect the following books may be consulted:

*Kitab tabsirat al-'awam* by Sayyid Murtada Da'i al-Razi, *al-Fasl fi al-milal wa al-'ahwa'* by Ibn Hazm, *Asrar al-tawhfid*, the works of al-Majlisi

and Aqa Baqir al-Behbahani, Aqa Muhammad Ali al-Kirman-shahl, Hajj Muhammad Ja'far Kabutarahangi, Hajj Mulla Zayn al-Abidin al-Shirwani, etc.

Detailed accounts pertaining to them may be obtained from books like *al-Rawdat*, *Mustadrak al-wasa'il*, and *Tara'iq al-haqa'iq* etc. Mulla Isma'il al-Khwajawi (d. 1173) has written a book in Persian in refutation of the doctrine of the unity of being (*wahdat al-wujud*). Most of the Sufi poets in their verses have overtly or covertly ridiculed the staunch followers of *Shari'ah*.

### **Haqiqah (Absolute Truth)**

As mentioned earlier *Sharfah* is the recognition of the path towards God, whereas *Tariqah* is treading that path through self-purification and by traversing the stages of detachment (*takhliyah*), adornment (*tahliyah*), and enlightenment (*tajliyah*), and consequently crossing the 'seven valleys,' viz. yearning

(*talab*), love (*'ishq*), gnosis (*irfan*), contentment (*istighna'*). Divine Unity (*tawhid*), perplexity (*hayrah*), and poverty and self-annihilation (*faqr ila fana'*).

*Haqiqah* or realization of the Absolute Truth is arrival at the ultimate destination, which is nearness to God and vision of His *rububiyyah* (Lordship). According to al-Lahiji, *Haqiqah* is the unveiled manifestation of the Divine Essence, achieved after disappearance of the mists of all distinctions and false plurality by the light emanating from the Divine Essence. It is said that the first stage of *Haqiqah* is *shuhud* (witnessing of the Divine Reality), and its last stage is annihilation of the finite self in God (*fana' fi Allah*). Thereafter comes the stage of attaining eternity with God (*baqa'bi Allah*). In the same way as the Words of God are unlimited, so also the stages of realization of *Haqiqah*.

Khwajah 'Abd Allah al-'Ansari says: "Consider *Shari'ah* to be

the body, *Tariqah* to be the heart, and *Haqiqah* as the soul." Ibn Sina states: "An '*arif*' ascends spiritually and observes the universe of sanctities and makes use of his power of imagination (*khayal*) to relate his observations, whose expression is impossible and whose meanings are incomprehensible for the common. He further says that what is perceived by the 'eye of certainty' (*'ayn al-yaqin*) cannot be acquired through positive demonstrative knowledge (*'Um al-yaqin*). The *salik*, the *murid*, and the '*arif*' can achieve communion with God through *kashf* and *shuhud*, and are blessed with the beatific vision. This nearness and unity with God cannot be attained through ratiocination.

Khwajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, in his *Sharh al-'Isharat*, while stating the difference between the ascetic (*zahid*), the devotee (*'abid*) and the gnostic (*'arif*), says; "A *zahid* who is not an

*'arif* resembles craftsmen and tradesmen who barter in exchange of their commodity. An '*abid* who is not an '*arif*' resembles a labourer who works for wages. Although there is difference between the deeds of a craftsman and a labourer, yet so far as their objective and intention, i.e. receiving of wages or reward, is concerned they are similar to one another. However, the *zuhd* of an '*arif*' is aimed at being permanently attentive to God, turning from everything else. His abstinence is a sort of purification of his conscience (inner being) so that it restrains him from being engaged in anything other than God. In his state of concentration and attention, he does not care for anything else and looks at them with contempt. The '*arif*' is in search of the Absolute and does not seek anything else. He worships, because he considers only God worthy of all worship. An '*arif*'s worship is not on account of fear or hope. He does not love God

for the sake of paradise, but because God Himself is his objective.

Amir al-mu'minin Ali (A) says, "My God, I do not worship Thee for fear of Hell or in hope of Heaven. I bow my head before Thee since I consider Thee only worthy of worship."

Some Profound Doctrines of Irfan:

*1. Tawhid (Divine Unity):* According to the 'urafa' multiplicity does not exist. All reality is essentially one. The human souls and selves despite their multiplicity are one. Multiplicity is the product of the categories of time and space and applies only to the physical world.

In the world of spirit there is nothing except unity (*wahdat*). Since the soul belongs to the World of Command' (*'Alam al-'amr*)" it is beyond multiplicity. The Holy Quran says:

*They will ask thee concerning the spirit. Say: 'The spirit is by command of my Lord. You have been given of knowledge nothing except little. (17:85)*

The Quran also says: *It is He Who created you from one living soul (7:189)*

The unity of soul is generally expressed metaphorically as a single light which is reflected in mirrors of different colours:

*The world was a gallery of coloured glasses,  
In which have fallen the rays of existence;  
Every glass, red, yellow or blue,  
Reflected the light on its own hue.*

The world of existence is like a wave or a bubble which is visible but not real; the sea is the only reality. The reality of the world of existence resembles the rays of the sun, which are scattered everywhere but in reality are coming from only one source.

Mawlawi says:

*All of us were simple and like  
a single pearl,  
We had no body and were  
indistinguishable;  
We were like the pearl of the  
sun,  
We were without knots, crystal  
clear like water;  
When that pure light  
descended upon us and gave  
us form,  
It was multiplied like the  
shadows of a rampart;  
Destroy the rampart with the  
catapult,  
So that the difference between  
one and the other may  
disappear.*

In the terminology of the 'urafa', reality is one and is manifest everywhere. Everything is a sign of God and the rays of Divine light are reflected in all beings. The Holy Quran says that man's body was created out of mud and the Divine spirit was breathed into him (38:71-72). Whatever is real is true, and is one, and what is true and one is necessarily eternal. Hence

the soul is a Divine spark and is eternal and uncreated.

According to the world view of the 'urafa', the sensible world does not have an external existence, and is like the back side of a mirror, the soul being the mirror's face. The world is body and God is its soul. The soul is one and single. The relationship between God, the Spirit, and the individual soul is explained in three ways: 1) creation (*khalq*); 2) incarnation (*hulul*); 3) emanation (*sudar*).

The theory of creation is of Semitic origin. The theory of incarnation (*hulul*) is explained with reference to the Christian belief that Christ is Son of God. The theory of emanation owes its origin to Neo-Platonic philosophy. All 'urafa' have made use of these three doctrines for propounding their views.

The Sufis occasionally interpret emanation (*sudar*) as the intense yearning of the

Beautiful to 'appear' in the process of illumination (*tajalli*). Hence Jami, the poet, interpreted the tradition "I was a hidden treasure," in his composition *Yusuf wa Zulaykha*, in terms of Eternal Beauty and Its desire to be 'seen.'

As regards the theory of emanation (*sudur*) and incarnation (*hulul*), it is stated that although man is created, he is made in the image of God:

*God created man in His own image. Holy Quran.*

The ideas of creation and incarnation combined together come very close to the simile of the water and the ocean. Mawlawi says:

*I existed the day when there were no names,*

*Nor was there any sign of the named;*

*The named and the name are derived from 'us,'*

*Since that day there was neither I' nor 'we.'*

The will of man is the will of God, and all that is existent or non-existent is God. God is everywhere, and the allegory of *simurgh* in *Mantiq al-tayr* and other similar mystical allegories in Sufi literature indicate the element of pantheism in the characteristic Sufi doctrine of *tawhid*. God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. He is one and the eternal. He has the knowledge of everything and is omnipresent. He is sempiternal and shall remain for ever. The whole universe is witness to His existence, and He shows Himself to the nearest of His servants.

*(To Be Continued...)*

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# General Beliefs

Ayatullah Jafar Sobhani

From the Quranic point of view, there are two types of saints of God: the outwardly manifest saint, who is known by the people, and the saint who is hidden from view, unknown by people, even though he lives among them and is aware of them.

In Sura al-Kahf, both types of saint are mentioned in the same place: one was Moses b. Imran, the other was his travelling companion, by land and at sea, known by the name of al-Khidr. This saint of God was such that even Moses did not know his true identity, and it was only through God's guidance that he came to know who he really was, and come to benefit from his actions, as it is said:

*Then they found one of Our slaves, unto whom We had given mercy from Us, and had taught him knowledge from Our Presence. Moses said to him: May I follow thee, so that*

*thou mayst teach me right conduct, of that which thou hast been taught?* (Sura al-Kahf, 16:65-66)

The Qur'an then relates the useful and beneficial actions of this saint, making it absolutely clear that though the people did not know him, they nonetheless benefited from his influence and his holiness. The Imam of this age is akin to the companion of Moses, being unknown even while being a source of beneficence for the *umma*. Thus, the occultation of the Imam does not imply any separation from the community; rather, he is described in a hadith related from the *ahl al-bayt*, as being "... like the sun hidden behind a cloud, unseen by the eyes, but nonetheless bestowing light and heat upon the earth."

In addition, throughout history, there have been many among the pious and the pure

of heart—souls worthy of being honoured by him—who have been made aware of his presence, and have benefited—and continue to benefit—from it; and through them, others have also come to receive the blessings of this Imam.

The customary means of governance in human collectivities involves a leader performing certain actions alone, and delegating other actions to his representatives. It is true that since the Imam's occultation, which was the result of various factors, people have been deprived of direct, physical contact with him; but it is still possible for the followers of the Imam to benefit from his presence and guidance in a variety of ways, spiritual, moral and legal—through those who represent him in these different spheres, as well as directly, as mentioned previously.

The reason behind the occultation of the Imam of the Age is steeped in divine

mystery; and it is possible that we will never be able to fathom it in all its profundity. The temporary occultation of a spiritual leader is not without precedent; examples of this phenomenon are to be encountered in previous religious communities. Moses was hidden from his people for forty days, which he spent in the place appointed for him by God (Sura al-A'raf, 7:142).

Jesus concealed himself, by God's will, from his community; and his enemies, intent on killing him, could not find him (Sura al-Nisa, 4:157). The Prophet Jonah also was concealed from his people for a certain period (Sura al-Saffat, 37:140-142)

In general, even if one is unable fully to grasp the mystery of a particular phenomenon, whose authenticity is however fully confirmed by traditional sources, there should be no reason to doubt or deny the phenomenon; otherwise, a large part of the divine rulings,

pertaining to essential axioms of the Islamic faith, would be subject to doubt also. The occultation of the Imam of the Age is no exception to this rule, and the absence of information on the mysterious reality of this phenomenon does not give one license to doubt or deny it. Nonetheless, it can be said that the mystery of occultation can be understood within the limits imposed by human thought; and we would present the case thus:

This Imam is the last of the divinely guided and protected personages; he is to bring about the final consummation of the great and ardent hopes of the Muslims—the inauguration of universal justice and the unfurling of the flag of *Tawhid* throughout the world. The fulfilment of this hope requires a certain passage of time, so that the requisite intellectual preparedness, and spiritual readiness on the part of humanity be attained; only then can the world properly

receive the just Imam and his followers. Naturally, should the Imam appear before these preliminary conditions are in place, he might well meet with the same fate as that which befell the other Imams, namely, martyrdom; and thus, he would leave this world without having witnessed the realization of the great hopes vested in him. The wisdom inherent herein has been alluded to in certain hadiths. Imam Baqir said: 'There is an occultation ordained for the *Qa'im* [lit. 'the one who rises up'] prior to his appearance.' The narrator of this hadith asked the reason for this. The Imam replied: 'To prevent his being killed.'

In addition to this narration, there are hadiths mentioning [the need for the] trial and purification of humanity, which means that mankind, during the period of the occultation, will have to undergo trials imposed by God, in order to test the firmness of their faith and beliefs.

Theological arguments demonstrate that the existence of a *ma'sum* Imam in the midst of society is a great blessing from God, and a source of authentic guidance for people. It is clear that if people are receptive to this manifestation of divine grace, they would benefit from all the blessings inherent in his being; but, in the absence of this receptivity, they would be deprived of this blessing, the cause of this deprivation emanating from the people themselves, not from God or the Imam.

The Imam of the Age, having seen the light of day in the year 255 AH, is now over eleven centuries old. In the light of the vast power of God, accepting such a proposition is not difficult; for, in truth, those who find this idea hard to accept forget that the divine power is infinite:

*And they rate not God at His true worth.* (Sura al-An'am, 6:111)

In addition, one should recall that in past communities there

were many persons of exceeding old age, such as the Prophet Noah, whose prophetic mission lasted for some 950 years, according to the Qur'an (Sura al-'Ankabut, 29:14). Indeed, if God, who is omnipotent, can keep the Prophet Jonah alive in the belly of a whale until the Day of Resurrection (Sura al-Saffat, 37:140-144), can He not bestow a long life on the Imam who is His proof on earth, sustaining him through His blessings and His grace? The answer is clearly in the affirmative. In the words of a poem:

Almighty God who does with ease  
the whole wide world sustain,  
Can with His Might, should  
He so please,  
His proof on earth maintain.

Nobody knows the time when the Imam will appear; this, like the time appointed for the Day of Resurrection, is known only to God. Therefore, one cannot believe anyone who claims to have this knowledge,

or who specifies a given period within which the Imam will appear. Leaving aside the question of the precise moment of his appearance, we should note that in certain hadiths, mention is made of general signs indicating his

appearance; these are divided into two categories, those that are deemed 'definite' and those that are 'indefinite'. Detailed elaboration on these signs will be found in books of theology and Hadith.



**Important dates of this month**  
**Subject to the sighting of the moon**

- 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008 ..... 2<sup>nd</sup> Dhul Qadah 1429
- 10<sup>th</sup> November 2008 / 11<sup>th</sup> Dhul Qadah 1429 ..... Birthday of Imam Ali Reza (a.s.)
- 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008 / 26<sup>th</sup> Dhul Qadah 1429 ..... Moon Confronting Scorpio
- 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008 / 27<sup>th</sup> Dhul Qadah 1429 ..... Moon Confronting Scorpio
- 29<sup>th</sup> November 2008 / 30<sup>th</sup> Dhul Qadah 1429 .....  
 ..... Martyrdom of Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.)
- 30<sup>th</sup> November 2008 ..... 1<sup>st</sup> Dhul Hijjah 1429
- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2008 / 7<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah 1429 ..... Martyrdom of Imam Baqir (a.s.)
- 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008 / 9<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah 1429 ..... Day of Arafat
- 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008 / 9<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah 1429 ..... Martyrdom of Muslim Ibn Aqeel (a.s.)
- 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008 / 10<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah 1429 ..... Eid Al Adha
- 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008 / 18<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah 1429 ..... Eid Al Ghadeer
- 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2008 / 23<sup>rd</sup> Dhul Hijjah 1429 ..... Moon Confronting Scorpio
- 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 / 24<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah 1429 ..... Moon Confronting Scorpio
- 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 / 24<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah 1429 ..... Eid Al Mubahala
- 29<sup>th</sup> December 2008 ..... 1<sup>st</sup> Muharram 1429

# Islam and Economics

Sayyid Mujtaba Musawi Lari

Man has always had to wrestle with the task of exploiting nature's resources to extract his livelihood therefrom. In the primitive centuries, as Aristotle said, life organised itself socially "to make it possible to live: and continued, to make it possible to live well." In the last four centuries a "science of economics" has been deduced from the statutes regulating human relations and the exchange of goods which developed through this social organisation. Faced with the vast expansion of a technology and affluence, this "science" has broken into two opposing camps.

On the one side "Capitalism" or "free enterprise" believes that nature should take its course in economics, so that an enlightened self-interest causes the genius of some finally to level out to the benefit of all. This is the

doctrine for which the Western bloc stands.

On the other side "Communism" holds that the means of production must be controlled by a proletariat state, so that a just and equal sharing of all the benefits of human endeavour is imposed on society.

The rivalry for absolute power between these two ideologies hangs over the modern world with a menace like the sword of Damocles.

We must ask Marxists whether their "classless society" can be ensured by the single measure of making the means of production joint property and abolishing a moneyed class, when in fact a diversity of classes exists arising from other than economic causes.

While in Soviet Socialist Republics no bourgeois

propertied class existed, other classes distinguished by occupational and environmental differences did exist: e.g. factory-workers, agriculturalists, civil servants, clerks, party officials and numerous others. Should the physician and the nurse receive equal pay? Or the manager and his intern?

There are yet other differences amongst people which exist in reality—Lenin's "reality in which we have to orient ourselves." People differ in age, sex, inclinations, tastes, physical strength, appearance, reasoning powers, ideas and outlooks.

A Soviet economist wrote: "It is impractical to impose absolute equality right across the board. If we were to pay professors, thinkers, politicians and inventors exactly the same as manual workers, the only end-result would be the abolition of all incentives to brainwork of any kind."

Capitalism claims that only by private enterprise and personal property can an economy be achieved such that the standard of living of all classes constantly rises and the difference between rich and poor constantly diminishes. Against this claim must be set the report of an enquiry arranged by Walter Reuther, President of the U.S.A. United Auto Workers Union, in his capacity as chairman of the "America Society to Combat Hunger." This committee affirms that ten million Americans suffer from undernourishment; and asks the president of the republic to declare a state of emergency in 256 cities, situated in 20 of the states, where the danger is most grave. As causes of this under-nourishment, the committee cited the aftermath of World War II coupled with a number of defects in America's internal economy. The Secretary of Agriculture took extreme measures to purchase from abroad and commandeer from within all

foodstuffs he could lay hands on to fill the gap (UP).

We are bound to ask, therefore, how far any regime, whatever its claims, has succeeded in equalising the classes, eliminating differences and building a sound and just society?

Both Socialist and Capitalist regimes base their systems on theories which are revered without any regard to moral and spiritual values. The aim of each is to increase affluence, and nothing more. Islam's philosophy reverences the whole man in his world setting. It orders society's material behaviour and benefits, while at the same time legislating for moral virtues, spiritual perfections, and a higher standard of living. By this it means, not simply the material, but the mental, the spiritual, the moral, the altruistic, the philanthropic standards which enable all men to live each for all and all for each.

Western law supports property-rights and gives preference to those of capitalists over those of workers. Soviet law, in their own words, exists to strip the individual of all property rights and to extirpate capital as a personal possession, giving preference to the workers' group throughout.

Both systems are grounded in human reasoning and judgment.

But Islam's law is grounded in Divine Revelation. Its legislation is not a human expedient. It does not set class against class; but helps each group to respect the excellence of other groups. Dictated by the Lord of all creatures for the general good and for the good of all, it permits no class to lord it over others nor allows injustice to break in. A ruler is in it only an ordinary person with a particular set of duties, himself under law, wielding power solely to ensure that the Divine

commandments are obeyed in society. Since confidence reigns that God's Law is sovereign, peace and quiet obtain.

Islam on the one hand opposes Capitalism's doctrine that the rights of property-ownership lie outside the limits of state control, and its permitting "free enterprise" to exercise aggression and tyranny of the stronger over the weaker in an exaltation of the rights of the individual to the detriment of the rights of society as a whole: and, on the other hand, does regard the sanctity of property as a fundamental.

Prosperity is the stone on which independence and freedom are built within a social order. The common good must be the regulating principle governing personal ownership of property. Islam therefore equally opposes the Communist total rejection of private enterprise and property, which entrusts the key of bounty to the state, reducing the individual to so

subordinate a position that he is left with no intrinsic value in himself as a person, being regarded as a state tool—a stomach for the state to fill and thereafter exploit, as a farmer does his horses and cattle.

Communists hold that private property is not natural to man. They aver, without advancing evidence to support the thesis, that the first communities of primitive man held all things in common in cooperation, love and brotherhood, neither did any man say that aught that he had was his own. The human "community" started as communist with everything in common and parted to each as his need required. The claim to personal ownership of anything, they contend, only developed by slow degrees until it reached the terrifying excesses it manifests in today's world.

Their Utopian "Golden Age" is, alas, a pipe-dream: for the facts show that personal ownership is not a result of the

development of acquisitive tendencies in a particular environment. Property is coeval with the appearance of man on earth: it is as germane to human nature as all the other innate urges, and no more to be denied than they are. Modern economists say that the universal sense of ownership of property, which is found in every tribe on earth and in every epoch, can only be explained if it is a primal instinct. Man wants to be the sole master of the goods that minister to his needs, in order to feel truly free and independent.

Further, a man feels that goods which owe their existence to the hard work of his hands are in a way an extension of himself, deserving of the same respect as he demands for the integrity of his personality. Finally, he feels the inner urge to build up a store to ensure his future and that of his family, developing thereby a thrift and economy which make him lay up a provision against a rainy day. This store

he thereafter guards jealously as "his own". The community's wealth grows with the increase in private property and productivity, for a social unit subsists by the industry of its individual members. The incentive to hard work lies in its rewards in personal ownership and in increased ease of living. Wherefore society must concede to the individual the right to own what his toil has created, since society's own welfare is itself a product of that toil.

Islam, with its practical and realistic approach to man as he is, recognises the importance of the urge to own as a creative factor for all social progress; and therefore legislates to secure a man possession of all that his hand has won for him by proper and lawful means, regarding his productivity as the guarantee of his right to ownership.

Islam rejects the contention that oppression, exploitation and violence are inevitable

concomitants of private ownership; for they only appear where the legislative power is held by the richest class, and by them, as in Western lands, directed solely to the protection of their own interests.

Since Islamic Law derives solely from the supreme overarching Authority of God, it is wholly impartial: so no law can be devised by it with the aim of protecting the rich or injuring the poor. From its inception, Islam has recognised private property, but always only under such conditions that violence and oppression are ruled out of court.

Islam holds that it is wrong to wrest factories out of the hands of those who founded them and who, by patient endurance of hardship and toil, built them up to give labour to many, goods to society, and, of course, also profit to themselves. For Islam holds that such resort to violence in removing the means of

production from the hands of men of initiative is injurious to social security and to respect for the rights of the individual.

It discourages the spirit of invention and initiative and enterprise. Nonetheless the government can and should so control the administration of great industries and the establishment of factories that social justice, equity in profit, public benefits and the government's own finances are properly cared for.

In sum, Islamic economics gives joint primacy to both individual and community. It equably balances the interests and rights of these two elements by guaranteeing a free economy while safeguarding the freedom of the individual member and the benefit of the whole community simultaneously by certain reasonable and necessary regulations on private ownership. The urge for such ownership it recognises as innate, and therefore germane to human

nature, so that the only limits which may be imposed upon it are those dictated by the general interests of the whole society, which of course contains the best interests of each single member. Islam regards the instinct to possess as an incentive divinely implanted to inspire men to hard work for the improvement of the means of livelihood and of their increased production: yet regulates the expression of this incentive with conditions that obviate violence, oppression, exploitation, extortion and other forms of misuse of freedom.

These conditions safeguard the interests of society and are limits on individual independence in no way injurious to liberty, since both communal living and individual freedom must impose those limits on behaviour which will guarantee the survival of both individual and community; and must therefore outlaw profiteering, embezzlement, malversation, hoarding, miserliness, avarice, usury, forcible seizure of other people's property and all similar criminal and anti-social methods of amassing capital.

**\*\*\*\*\***

**Request**

**Without your financial assistance and moral support this society can not continue its selfless activities.**

**S. I. Education Society is highly in debt due to recession in every respect and difficulties.**

**Please do donate generously.**

**I am authorised to utilize khums and other charity money in this sacred work of *Tabligh*.**

**With thanks and dua,**

**The Patron**

# Shia Political Thought

By Ahmad Vaezi

## First Argument

In his famous book "Islam and the Foundations of Government" (Al-Islam wa Usul al Hukm) Shaykh Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888-1966) sought to justify the separation of religion and political authority on the basis of religious evidences. He argued that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) did not intend to establish a political state in Madina and that Islam did not support the rise of any particular social system.

This assertion totally contradicted the traditional belief, which held that the Hijrah (migration to Madina in 622) marked the beginning of the Prophet's political activity and the realization of Islamic governance. Abd al-Raziq argued that the Prophet was the bearer of a religious message; he did not have a government, nor did he seek to establish a kingdom in the political sense or anything

synonymous with it. Rather, his authority was sacred, derived from God so that he could deliver the divine revelation. According to Abd al-Raziq, this did not entail political leadership; it was the mandate of a Prophet and not of a Sultan.

To justify his view, Abd al-Raziq refers to several verses of the Qur'an. He believes that according to these, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was only a messenger, commissioned to deliver God's revelation to the people and nothing else.

*We have sent you only to give good news and to warn.*  
[Chapter 17, Verse 105]

*The duty of the messenger is to convey the message clearly.*  
[Chapter 27, Verse 54]

*Yet we have sent you only to give good tidings and to warn.*  
[Chapter 25, Verse 56]

*Tell him: I am only a warner.*  
[Chapter 27, Verse 92]

Abd al-Raziq argues that if the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had other roles, such as that of a political leader, then the Qur'an would clearly have announced them. In order to justify his positions, he argues that every state requires a political structure that contains specific institutions and administrations, but that Muhammad's leadership was devoid of these necessary elements of government. In fact, according to this point of view, political authority only appeared in the Islamic community following the demise of the Messenger of God. Consequently, striving for the establishment of a government is not considered part of Islamic teachings.

However, contrary to Abd al-Raziq's opinion, there is a mass of historical evidence that clearly demonstrates the Prophet's role as both a political and religious leader. In fact, many western thinkers,

such as Anthony Black, agree that the Prophet's objective was not merely to establish a new identity by replacing old tribal customs. According to these thinkers, he addressed political power as well as spiritual and cultural authority. Black writes:

*His purpose was to construct out of tribal confederacies a new people driven by his own sense of moral mission. Judaism had preached an all-embracing (ethnic) law, while Christianity had preached spiritual (universal) brotherhood. But, neither seriously addressed the problem of military power and political authority; both had accepted life under alien, pagan rule. Muhammad preached spiritual brotherhood, plus an all-embracing law, and universal political control to be achieved.*

The activities of the Prophet Muhammad following the Hijrah brought about revolutionary changes to the

Arabian Peninsula. These cannot simply be interpreted as the ordinary behavior of a religious leader. Included here are concise examples of his political deeds, which could not have been issued without political authority.

He assembled a number of hostile tribes and forged them into a new community (ummah). This is essentially a political endeavor, which is embodied in what Montgomery Watt refers to as the "Constitution of Medina", a document that outlines the nature of the state that the Prophet was intending to establish. The charter incorporates articles concerning the rights and duties of the various tribes and social groupings that formed this new society, including their obligations regarding one another, criminal events and the rights of non-Muslim members of this community.

He delegated both religious and political responsibilities to his companions. Some, such

as Amr ibn Hazm, were sent to lead the prayers and teach the people about the Qur'an. Whilst others, such as Abu Musa al-Ashari and Saed ibn Aas, were dispatched as representatives to collect taxes (zakat), arbitrate disputes and punish criminals as well as to educate people about Islam. Sometimes, the Prophet would assign companions to exclusively governmental capacities, such as when he sent Abu Sufyan to gather taxes in Najran, while Amr ibn Hazm remained his religious representative in that region.

The Prophet (pbuh) was a general, a diplomat and a judge. He led the army, entered into treaties and agreements with various tribes, and passed judgment in criminal cases. Issues such as war, diplomatic relations and legal arbitration are all obviously included in political authority and have no connection to a specifically spiritual mandate. Furthermore, it is unreasonable to compare the

structures of a modern state and the Prophet's authority in Madina in order to determine whether he established a political state.

Dr. Senhoury, for example, argues that the political order established in Madina adequately met the demands of simple tribal community, thus there was no need to establish a complex social order when the Prophet's political system was appropriate to the requirements of his age and society.

Some thinkers, such as Abid al-Jaberi, contend that because the word "dawlat" (state) was not adopted as a political term until the beginning of the Abbasid-era, the political concept of an Islamic state did not exist either. According to Al-Jaberi, the Prophet (pbuh) established an "ummah" as opposed to a state. However, although it may be true that the term dawlat was not prevalent in Arab vocabulary at the time of the Prophet, it is

not the name that constitutes a state. Rather, it is the nature of the authority that establishes an Islamic government, thus it is irrelevant whether the term "state" was adopted or not.

Although Abd al-Raziq refers to several verses of the Qur'an in order to justify his opinion, which is that the Prophet (pbuh) had no role beside that of a messenger, the verses that he submits as evidence do not confine the character of the Prophet to a single attribute. A clear distinction must be made between a relative restriction and an absolute or definite restriction. The latter confines the character of a subject to one feature, whilst the former refers to a restriction in a limited scope of attributes. For example, someone supposes that x is both a writer and a poet. You correct his opinion by telling him that 'x is only a writer'. However, this does not mean that x has no other qualities apart from being a writer, because your statement restricts his character in relation to only two attributes.

All the verses to which Abd al-Raziq refers fall into the first category, which is that of relative restriction. They are merely emphasizing that the Prophet has no responsibility towards those who disbelieve in his call. Certainly, the Prophet as a human being has many other qualities and duties. Therefore, emphasis upon one issue within a specific context does not nullify the possibility of other tasks or characteristics. Take, for example, following verses:

*to war.* [Chapter 8, Verse 65]

*And judge (rule) between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires.* [Chapter 5, Verse 49]

*Your Wall is none but Allah and his Messenger.* [Chapter 5, Verse 55]

*And We did not send a messenger except that he should be obeyed....* [Chapter 4, Verse 64]

*O Prophet, urge the believers*

*(To Be Continued...)*

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### Activities

- English Monthly Magazine “The Minister”.
- Urdu Monthly Magazine “Al-Moballigh”.
- Audio Magazine “The Voice”.
- Religious Madressa. (Mon, Tue and Wed).
- Islamic Library (a collection of manuscripts and printed books in Arabic, Persian, English and Urdu languages).
- Weekly Religious Gathering:  
 Thursday 8:00 pm – Dua-e-Kumayl and Majlis  
 Friday 8:00 pm – Dinner, Lectures (English & Urdu),  
 followed by questions and answers.  
 Saturday 7:30 am – Breakfast followed by lecture on  
 Different topics.  
 Sunday 11:00 am – (First Sunday of every month)  
 Medical Lecture by a Doctor.  
 We need Momeneen’s views and help.

# Rules concerning the mosque

Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei

**Q:** Given that performing prayers in one's local mosque is recommended, is one permitted to forsake that mosque in order to perform congregational prayers in the town's *Jami'* [major or central] mosque?

**A:** Yes. Particularly to take part in the central mosque's congregation.

**Q:** Is one permitted to pray in a mosque if some of those who constructed it claim that they did so specially for themselves and their tribe?

**A:** Once a mosque has been built it does not belong to any specific tribe, group, family or nationality: a mosque is for all Muslims, and anyone wishing to pray there may do so.

**Q:** Is it preferable that women pray in the mosque or at home?

**A:** The merits to be had from praying in a mosque pertain to women as well as men.

**Q:** At present there is a short wall between the *Masjid al-Haram* and the area designated for *sa'y* [the ritual walking] between *Safa* and *Marwa*. The wall is half a meter high and one meter wide and is shared by both the *Masjid* and the *sa'y* area. Are women allowed to sit on this wall when they are menstruating and thus not allowed to enter the *Masjid al-Haram*?

**A:** Yes, unless it becomes established that the wall is actually part of the mosque.

**Q:** May one exercise or sleep in one's local mosque? What is the ruling with regard to other mosques?

**A:** A mosque is not a gym and

sleeping there is *Makruh*.

**Q:** Is it permissible to use the courtyard of a mosque as a place of instruction for youngsters so that they may acquire awareness of matters intellectual, cultural, ideological and military? And what is the *shar'i* rule of carrying out such instruction on the balcony of a mosque which is out of use due to shortage of suitable places for the mentioned activities.

**A:** The presence of the young in mosques and the setting up of religious classes with the permission of the imams and the mosque authorities are both desirable and recommended. However, it depends on the conditions of the *waqf* of the yard and balcony of the mosque and in any case you must first seek the advice and permission of both the imam and the supervisory committee of the mosque itself in this regard.

**Q:** In some areas, particularly in villages, people hold wedding ceremonies in mosques. That is to say, the part of the celebration which involves music and dancing takes place in private houses, while the wedding banquet is served in the mosque. Is this permissible?

**A:** Food may be served to guests in a mosque, but it is not in keeping with the nature of a mosque to hold the actual marriage ceremony there. And of course, the playing of corrupt and sensual music is forbidden absolutely.

**Q:** A cooperative builds a residential estate, and it is initially agreed upon by all those involved that the project will include public buildings such as mosques. Now that the project has been completed, some of the shareholders have objected to the construction of a mosque on the site. Does this constitute a breach of

agreement and do they have the right to object in this manner?

**A:** If the company began the construction of the mosque with the agreement of all the shareholders, the objection of some of those shareholders to the construction of that mosque after it has been built and endowed will be invalid and ineffectual. If, however, they voice their objection before the mosque is endowed, it will be wrong for the company to go ahead with the construction of the mosque without the permission of all of those who are funding the project and on whose land the mosque is being built, unless the members have committed themselves to the construction of a mosque as part of an irrevocable contract [aqd lazim], in which case they will be unable to change their minds and withdraw from their agreement.

**Q:** In order to counter the influences of non-Islamic culture, a number of students

from primary and secondary schools in our area were gathered in the mosque to play music in the form of small 'bands'. Members of these bands also study the *Qur'an*, *ahkam* [the practical rules of Islam] and Islamic ethics (*akhlaq*) in groups arranged according to age and ability. What is the ruling on such activities? What is your ruling on the playing of instruments such as the organ? Is one allowed to practice the organ in the mosque, provided that one observes *shar'i* standards and the code of practice which is enforced by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and which prevails, for example, in the country's radio and television organisations?

**A:** Stemming the tide of non-Islamic culture which threatens us does not require the use of musical instruments, particularly in the mosque. It is obligatory on all Muslims that they show respect for the sacred status of the mosque, and for the acts of worship and propagation of religious

teaching and enlightening revolutionary ideology which take place there.

**Q:** Is it permissible, according to Islamic law, to show films distributed by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance (in Iran) to people in the mosque who come there to attend *Quran* lessons and recitals?

**A:** It is not permissible to convert the mosque into a place where films are screened, although it is okay to show films occasionally when the need arises, provided that the imam does not object.

**Q:** Does Islamic law object to the relay of exhilarating music through the mosque loudspeakers as part of the

birthday celebrations for the infallible Imams?

**A:** The mosque clearly has a special, sacred status in Islam and Islamic law, and if the playing of music is deemed inappropriate to that status, it will be forbidden, even if the music being played is not exhilarating.

**Q:** Is it permissible to relay recitals of the *Quran* and revolutionary songs through the mosque's loudspeakers prior to the *azan*?

**A:** Yes, as long as no-one living in the vicinity of the mosque objects to the noise, and relaying is done for few minutes (short time) prior to the *azan*.

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## **Album**

Mo'mineen attending the daily Ramadhan programme at  
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