

Islamic Studies

~(Q#01)~

Political System of Islam

Introduction

Islam is a complete code of life that gives comprehensive guidance on all aspects of human life - political, economic, social and religious. As proclaimed in the Quran,

"We have sent down to you a Book which explains everything, a guidance, a mercy and glad tidings to those who believe in Allah."

Unlike, political system of the West where people are the sovereign in Islam sovereignty belongs to Allah alone and that power is exercised by man as His Khalifah. Political system of Islam ensures that everyone is receiving his basic fundamental rights. Caliph is responsible for the welfare of his state. Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib wrote a letter to Malik al Ashtar (Governor of Egypt) that develop love in your heart for your people and let it be a source of

kindness and blessing to them.

Political System of the West

Political system of the West developed after the Treaty of Westphalia which emphasized the separation of religion from politics. Christianity also emphasized this by saying,

"Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto Christ what is Christ."

so, democracy became central as said by Abraham Lincoln **"Government of the people, by the people and for the people."**

In democracy, majority rules and power depends upon the consent of the nation.

As Because of this, sometimes majority undermine the rights of the minority just like Ughur Muslims in China. Separation of religion from politics creates moral gaps which causes further leads to corruption, bribery and other social issues.

Fundamental Principles of Islamic Political System

(1) Sovereignty belongs to Allah

In Islam, sovereignty belongs to Allah Almighty and no one can make a law that is against or above Allah's commands. As mentioned in the Quran,

"The command is for none but Allah."

Maulana Abul Ala Maududi explains this by saying that sovereignty belongs to Allah alone and no human being or institution can claim it. Quran beautifully proclaims this by saying

"His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He gives life and death; he has power over all things."

(2) Man as His vicegerent:

Man is only the vicegerent of Allah and actual sovereignty belongs to Allah alone, man only exercise that power by Allah will unlike kings who believe that they can have unlimited powers.

As proclaimed in the Quran,

"When your Lord said to the angels that 'I am going to place a vicegerent on Earth' "

Maulana Maudud Maududi also emphasized this by saying that man is merely the vicegerent of Allah. Being Allah's vicegerent is a huge responsibility. That's why Hazrat Umar said that even if a dog sleeps hungry during night, I will be answerable to Allah.

(3) Functions and Responsibilities of Caliph

The main responsibility of a caliph is to protect the objectives of Shariah and oversee the economic and political affairs of the state. He is responsible for providing all the fundamental rights to his citizens. He should work for the general welfare of the state.

Hazrat Umar (RA) letter to Saadi bin abi Waqas (Governor of Iraq) stated that if you want to assess how much Allah loves you ascertain that from how much your people are satisfied by you.

(4) Shariah as law

In Islam, Shariah is a complete legal system. Its primary sources are Quran and Shariah, but

when explicit text is not mentioned that secondary sources come into play. Ijma (consensus of qualified scholars) and Qiyas (analogy) are used and when ever the text and precedent are silent then ijtihad should be used by the caliph. For Example, Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) fought against those who refused to pay zakat even when there is no text mentioned like that. Similarly, Hazrat Umar reduced imposed tax on horses.

(5) Rule of law

In Islam, everybody is treated equally. No one is above the law. Even Head of the state is answerable before his people, shura and courts. Justice is applied to everyone regardless of religion and position.

(6) Shura (Consultative Assembly)

Shura was established by Hazrat Umar RA during his time. This shows the democratic side of religion. Hazrat Umar said,

"There is no caliph without consultation."

So shura is responsible for selecting the caliph, holding him responsible

accountable, giving him advice as an advisory body and conduct ijma and lawmaking on various issues. Prophet PBUH also used to take decisions after consultation e.g. during The Battle of Badar, the decisions about the prisoner of war was taken after consultation and during The Battle of French, the strategy was decided after mutual agreement.

(7) Conditions for selecting a Caliph

Al-Mawardi and Shah Waliullah say that caliph is decided after shura select him and people in shura are selected by the general public. Women also participate in the decision making during the selection process just like it happened during Hazrat Usman's time. **Al-Mawardi** in his book '**Al Ahkam al Sultania**' says that a caliph should be just, Muslim, sane adult and of good moral character. He should be a scholar of Quran and Sunnah and he should have the ability to conduct ijtihad.

(8) Social Security

Islamic state is responsible for ensuring the welfare of its people. Food, shelter, healthcare and education facilities should be the responsibility of the state. If the Bayt-ul-Maal (public treasury) is empty then government should tax the wealthy persons. State should regulate the wealth so that it is not concentrated in one's hand.

(1) Foreign Policy of Islamic State

Islamic state's foreign policy should be of peace. It should enter into treaties with other countries based on justice and should not break it unless broken by the other party.

Conclusion

Islamic political system should maintain social order and protect its people from any internal and external aggression. Similarly, it should also protect the Muslim living in non-Muslim countries as well.