

5. POLITICAL SYSTEM

The political system of Islam is based on two basic realities:

- (i) *The personal position of Allah vis-a-vis this universe, particularly men. He is not only their Creator and Supporter but also their real Master.*

- (ii) *The personal position of man.* He is not only created and supported by Allah (the Supporter of all the worlds) but is also His humble slave and His vicegerent in this world.
- The political system which Islam has constructed over these two basic realities has the following salient features:
1. The supreme authority and sovereignty actually rest with Allah alone. No individual, clan, community or even the whole mankind has an iota of share in it. Man is by birth His slave.

The decision rests with Allah only, Who hath commanded you that you worship none save Him (12:40).

2. Allah alone is the real Legislator. The constitution given by Him is the constitution of man's life. It alone governs the life of man. No individual or institution has the Power to make one for himself or others.

3. The Prophet of Allah s.a.w. is the representative and the expounder of His injunctions and pleasures. By virtue of this position he acquires the status of a subordinate legislator and therefore his orders call for the same obedience that is due to the original Legislator.

And whatsoever the Messenger giveth you, take it. And whatever he forbiddeth, abstain (from it) (59:7).

The obedience of the Messenger is nothing but the obedience of Allah:

4. *Whoso obeyeth the Messenger obeyeth Allah (4:80).*

For the exact implementation of the Divine injunctions, the setting up of a collective system and a governing institution is but indispensable.

"The installation of Imam is obligatory here is a consensus of opinion over it". (*Sharah 'Aqaid-i-Nasfiah*, p. 110).

In technical terms it is known as 'Khilafat' or 'Imamat' or 'Amarat'. This institution is comprised of one man who is called 'the Khalifah' or 'the Imam' or 'the Amir'.

5. Everyone who professes faith in Islam is a citizen of the Islamic State. This provision not only includes such Muslims who are born in that state but every Muslim, to whatever country he belongs, becomes its citizen when he enters it.

And the believers, men and women are protecting friends one of another (9:71).

6. Non-Muslims cannot become the real citizens of an Islamic State. Their position is but of the second-rate citizens. In technical terms they are called "the Zimmis". This is so because an Islamic State is responsible for their life, property and honour. Their rights do not depend on the pleasure of the state or the Khalifah but have been pre-determined by Allah and His Messenger s.a.w. and an Islamic State is duty-bound to fulfil them.

7. It is the duty of the Khalifah to run the affairs of the state in accordance with the Divine injunctions, maintain justice among the citizens of the state, defend the state and the nation and above all fulfil the mission of Islam. Allah has bestowed upon them, sent the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and constituted the Muslim community. In respect of these duties he is answerable to Allah as well as the Muslims.

8. There is a council of advisors to assist the Khalifah in his heavy responsibilities. It is incumbent on him to run the affairs of the state in accordance with their advice. Allah ordained the Prophet s.a.w. to seek the advice of his companions in all important matters:

And consult with them upon the conduct of affairs (3:159)

9. Such a person is appointed as Khalifah whom the Islamic soc

society considers most suitable for this heavy responsibility and whose appointment is accepted by the overwhelming majority of the people. He comes into power through election and can be dismissed from his office if he fails to do his duty. If his negligence is aggravated and he deviates from the fundamental principles of Khilafah, it becomes the duty of the Islamic Society to dislodge him from the office.

10. Islam has not specified any method for the election of the Khalifah. All it has done in this field is that on the one hand it has defined the purpose of his election and on the other given guiding principles for doing so. Any system of election which is consonant with these two requirements, the purpose and the guiding principle for election, would be an Islamic System. The purpose is that such a person is elected who is better than the others in knowledge, fear of Allah, sagacity, talents and practical capabilities and who commands the respect of the people and is trusted by them. The guiding principle is that he is elected by such persons who hold a distinguished position by virtue of their intelligence, love of religion and power or decision. The public at large concurs their decision. The guiding principle is provided for a better attainment of the purpose of election.

11. The office of the Khilafah, or for that matter any office of the government, cannot be given to a person who himself desires or demands it:

"By Allah, we will not confer the office upon one who demands it or is covetous about it" (*Bukhari*).

This is so because the Islamic concept of government is different from the ordinary. It is a responsibility and security rather than a right, and one would be answerable to Allah for it.

"This (covetousness) for Imamat will be source of disgrace and humiliation except in case of the one who holds it with justification and justifies its holding" (*Muslim*).

For this reason no sensitive Muslim ever ventures to aspire for it. On the Day of Judgement, when he will be presented before Allah, he shall be liable to answer for the rights of the people for whom he was made responsible in this world. The Prophet (peace be upon him) once said:

"In this connection the best among people is one who detests (this office) most" (*Muslim*).

If a Muslim attempts to secure an office while he is ignorant of the responsibilities attached to it, how can you expect him to perform his duty properly. He is not even aware of them.

12. It is not lawful for anybody to deny the Khilafat of one who is duly elected for this office. One who does so treads not the path of Islam but of ignorance.

"Who dies in a state without a pledge of obedience to Imam, he dies the death of ignorance" (*Muslim*).

His refusal to acknowledge an elected Khalifah is in fact disobe-dience of the entire Islamic State and a declaration of war against it.

13. It is the bounden duty of every citizen to obey the orders of the Khalifah:

Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority (4:59).

Disobedience of his orders is virtually the disobedience of Allah and His Messenger s.a.w.:

"Whosoever disobeys the Amir, he disobeys me" (*Muslim*)

But if the Khalifah orders something sinful then disobedience of his orders is an obligation:

"If the Amir orders for the disobedience of Allah, then one should neither listen to him or obey him" (*Muslim*).

One is not only required to submit to the authority of the Khalifah but has to wish him well wholeheartedly as well. It is a duty, a constituent of Islam and a characteristic of piety.

"Allah's Messenger said: *Din* is another name of devotion. We said: To whom? Thereupon he said: To Allah, His Messenger and the ruler of the Muslims" (*Muslim*).

14. It is a right, rather a responsibility of every Muslim to keep strict vigilance over the Khalifah and his subordinates. They are to be checked whenever they err. If they follow a wrong cause, they are to be made to pursue the right one. When Abu Bakr (r.a.) was elected the Khalifah, he reminded the people of this right of theirs and strongly emphasised the need for making the Khalifah answerable.

"Set me on the right, if I go astray" (*Tabari*).

15. Laws are framed for all such matters in respect of which express Divine injunctions are not available. These laws are made by the Khalifah and his advisory council.

16. The Islamic State is responsible for the life, property and honour of every citizen regardless of his religion. Similarly every citizen is free to practise his religion and enjoys complete freedom of conscience. This freedom is, however, subject to the restriction that no one is allowed to incite people to revolt against the State. Nor has anyone the liberty to say things which lead to disruption and disorder in the society or cause a moral decline. No one is to be deprived of his freedom without a proper trial of the charge levelled against him.

17. The aim of the establishment of an Islamic State and the responsibility of its government are very noble and vast. The following verses of the Qur'an determine its basic principles:

Verily, we sent our Messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance, that mankind may

observe right measure, and He revealed iron (57:25).

O David, Lo! We have set thee as a vicegerent in the earth, therefore judge aright between mankind (38:27).

Those who, if We give them power in the land, establish worship and pay the poor-due and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity (22:41).

The first two verses in general and the third one in particular make the purpose of the establishment of the Islamic State clear. The former two verses are indicative of the fact that the function of the government is to establish justice in the society. This is the purpose which all governments strive to attain, or at least claim as their cherished goal. This is the object which makes the existence of a government indispensable. The third verse adds further to this general purpose of the government. It spells out that the real object of the Islamic State is to form a society which establishes the prescribed prayer, pays the Zakat (poor-due), embraces piety and inclines people to virtue, resents what is forbidden in religion and also dissuades others from it. This is the purpose an Islamic State is devoted to and which gives a distinguishing character to it. It is not to be found anywhere else. Not even by way of window-dressing. This object has four principal features i.e., prayer, Zakat, affirmation of the good and the negation of the evil deeds. A careful examination would reveal that it is in fact synonymous with establishing the religion in full measure, making a ceaseless endeavour for enlarging the sphere of religious beneficence and waging an untiring struggle to give a true Islamic colour to the Society.