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ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY: ISSUES ABOUT COMPATIBILITY OF VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Resolutions in Arab countries which caused last years again raised the questions about compatibility of democracy principles and Islam values. Many different questions exist about this issue among Western scholars and Muslims also think about it.

First of all, there is a need to begin with the notion of democracy and its political interpretations and than raise the question about their compatibility, relying on some of the fundamental provisions of the Koran.

Democracy in classic Western sense is a regime where rule is determined by people. People choose the ruler and can remove him power. Democracy gives people the right to choose the direction of the development of society in any field: economical, public, cultural and political. This regime gives all people equality to the law. There are not repressions or political persecutions in the countries with democratic regime.

Democratic regime uses such measures as elections, referendums, majority rule, variety of political parties, right of minority opposition, freedom of media and independence of judges. To cut a long story short, democracy means that the source of power is human-being and human-being has a right to decide what is allowed and what is not.

The most famous Muslim thinkers (Abdo, Taymiyya and Ibn-Khaldun), modern political scientists of Arab countries (Rauf Izzat, Muktadir Khan and Shadi Hamid) and scientists-imams (Yusuf Qaradawi) rely on Koran and Hadith of the Prophet and prove that there is not contradiction between democracy as political regime in which instructs such regime.

For example, Islam forbids to lead the prayer people whom Muslims are dissatisfied. The first four caliphs were elected and decided upon by the Ummah. Therefore, We can claim that democracy emerged from Islam. Also there are a lot of examples that Muslims used to use the right to express their opinion in current issues of political governance and in scientific circles of lawyers. A lot of democratic methods were used by Muslims and now it supports examples from the early history of Islam.

If we consider the concept of democracy as majority rule and participation of people in political decision-making process, we should call this process «Shura» or collective meeting. Shura guided by Islam. Shura's council is compulsory for ruler. If the ruler is elected to such conditions, he has the right to cancel this contract and rely

on another opinion, because observance of accepted conditions is mandatory for the Muslim.

Islamic Shura is known to be close to democracy and essence of democracy corresponds to the Islamic Shura. Shura was made the foundations of Islamic life. Islam orders to ruler to ask for advice.

Modern Western society think that democracy is the regime where people elect rulers they want. People ask them for their actions in order to reject dictates if they are contrary to the Constitution. The same concept is inherent in Islam: «If the rulers are ordered to commit a sin, you will not have to do it». The best view of Jihad is a speech which was made to criminal ruler. And it means that resistance to dictators and viciousness would be better before Allah than war with an external enemy, because resistance can be the reason of war.

We can see that Koran connects dictatorship and collapse of society which leads to spiritual and moral degradation of the people. The word «Guluvv» is used in Koran in respect of dictators. The Guluvv means exaltation and humiliating submission of people. Koran condemns dictators who liken themselves to God and censure people who resignedly follow the will of the dictator and blindly follow the instructions. People are responsible or partly responsible for the emergence of dictators, because they are politically passive. Islamic ruler is not sinless authority. Ruler is just a man who can make a mistake or make the right decision. The ruler can be justice or injustice. And the Muslims have a right to correct him if he is wrong and direct him if he deviated from the right path. From the Islamic perspective elections and voting is evidence that the candidate is worthy to lead the society. A person who is eligible to vote has to comply with. He should be honest, fair and should have a sense of duty and responsibility. Perjury is a great sin. Those people who do not participate in the elections violate Allah's imperative to testify. Many islamists consider that democracy contradict to Islam. And evidence that democracy is based on the majority opinion. All issues are solved by vote and decision is executed.

Islam, by the way, has no such means and opinion is not accepted only because majority of people consider it to be correct. The situation is opposite, Islam considers the heart of the matter and tries to find out is the decision match to the truth or not? If the decision matched to the truth, it would accept even if only one man supports it. But if the decision doesn't match to the truth, it would be rejected even if it was supported by 99% of people.

To tell the truth, the Koran states that the majority is always in a lie, followers of truth are always scarce. But logic mind, Shariah and reality say: «The decision has to accepted relying on something. If there are some controversies, the opinion of majority has to be more relevant. And opinion of two people who are closer to the truth has to be more important than the decision of one man. Even if it is the voice of Prophet, only if it is not the opinion of Allah.»

We can be convinced than democracy is the basic essence of Islam and its content has principles of freedom. But freedom from the point of view of Islam doesn't

mean that the man is free from every restrictions and regulations to the detriment of others, such «freedom» is anarchy. Because of it Islam sets rules and regulations which ensure freedom of everybody.

And it doesn't mean that every democratic country is Islamic. It means that every Islamic country has to be democratic

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