Political Education –
A Synopsis of its Religious Foundations
and Principles in Islam

Ali Maleki

Faculty of Human Sciences,
Islamic Azad University, Qom, I. R. Iran

Ali Shirkhani

Faculty of Human Sciences,
Islamic Azad University, Qom, I. R. Iran

Muhammad Turabi

Faculty of Human Sciences,
Islamic Azad University, Qom, I. R. Iran

Political education in Islam is based upon certain concrete foundations. God, man and the world have always been of special interest to humans. Thomas Hobbes, one the most important theorists in the West, considers stability, security, avoidance of civil war and disunity as the highest goal in building a "power structure" in a country, and considers "political education" inevitable in order to maintain such a state. He mainly focuses on the duties and civil obligations of citizens towards the ruling political system. However, in the contemporary political thought of Islam, there are certain principles that, in addition to the duties of citizens concerning the political system, emphasize upon the human duties towards the system which is based upon the sovereignty of God. The primary question which arises is, what are the principles of political education in contemporary political Islamic thought? The epistemological, ontological and anthropological

Corresponding author: aliqom53@gmail.com

Corresponding author: rooz1357@gmail.com

Corresponding author: mtorabi1418@gmail.com

foundations, and the principles adopted from them, provide for the theoretical discussions necessary for political education in contemporary political thought. Accordingly, we will analyse these and other related principles. After analysing the content of the works and studying the sources, we will outline the basic principles and the foundations of political education in Islam. Similarly, we will prove that the contemporary political thought of Islam possesses a framework which is based upon a number of principles and doctrines which are in line with the worldly and afterlife requirements of mankind and help to build a strong, powerful and productive society. The investigation in this article confides itself in descriptive and analytic methodology.

Keywords: *education, politics, political education, foundational principles*

Introduction

In recent centuries, political education has gained special importance in the field of humanities. Discussions of ancient Greek schools, especially Plato's and Aristotle's ideas about politics, ethics and education have always held a special position in the science of politics. However, later on, especially from the Machiavelli era, education and ethics were exploited in order to secure the interests of those in power and those who had the means to exploit others. The purpose of ethics was to serve the political arena in general and to preserve and sustain political power in particular. Meaning, the usage of ethics in politics was not meant to dignify humanity and honour them, rather, it was used in order to achieve personal whims and desires, more importantly to preserve and sustain power. Of course, this distinction was also made by the Sophists in ancient Greece, who were, in fact, the promoters of non-ethical political thought. In the discourse of the Sophists, "politics" was defined, more or less, as a science of language and speech. The one who could master it was considered to be more successful in society. At the same time, however, there were other people, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, who believed that politics should be in the service of morality. The Socratists' were the advocates of "morality" whereas the Sophists did not give their primary preference to it. Nevertheless, with Machiavelli, this issue was raised more impudently and it expanded rapidly. It became a tool that was exploited by those who had the thirst to gain power. However, Machiavelli did recognise the importance of ethics, especially for leaders and politicians, and believed that the concept of morality and modesty acts as a soft power and those in authority should pretend to possess them. David C. McClelland and David H. B. Burnham in their famous work on "power" according to

Machiavelli write, "The most elementary point is that it should seem that they possess them. I even dare to say that if they behave modestly in all their affairs, then it will be harmful to them but to pretend to have them is useful" (McClelland & Burnham 2000: 54). Generally speaking, after Machiavelli, the main goal in the realm of politics was to struggle to preserve power rather than to have a principled strategy for the betterment and service of mankind in order to attain worldly and eternal prosperity. Thus, after the introduction of "power" as an un-substitutable alternative to morality in the realm of politics, there was no or very little scope for morality and education in their particular sense in politics.

This trend is more evident in the thoughts of Western political scholars such as McAure, Lasswell, and so on. Lasswell says: "Politics is a science that teaches us: who wins, what did the person win, where did the person win, how did the person win and why did the person win?" (Abdul Hameed 2006: 22). Its meaning: who has the power, what does it want, what is the purpose, which tools did the person win with, and what was the intent and purpose of the person's victory? Therefore, we see that politics is, firstly, to struggle in order to achieve power and thereafter to preserve and sustain it. However, in Islam and in the thought of Islamic scholars, politics is a plan and a strategy, which is in line with human and God given talents, in order to guide and achieve the interests of Islam. In other words, "education" is the subject of politics and politics is at the service of education and ethics. With this approach, we will try to clarify the concepts and the generalities of the principles of political education in the field of contemporary Islamic political thought. In the western thought however, especially in the thought of Thomas Hobbes, education is essentially the concept to implement the social and political disciplines and rules in the minds of citizens. This process is carried out, according to the book of Behemoth, by instilling fear among the people with the help of historic narratives which stress upon the negative and destructive events. Behemoth[1] or the "long parliament" is an important work written by Hobbes in order to protect *Leviathan*. This work is translated by Hossein Bashirieh, a Maxwell School teacher at Syracuse University, who had previously translated the *Leviathan*. Hobbes deals with political education in this book. He tries to analyse the events of England in the civil war from 1640 to 1660 from the aspect of political science. The pattern of the book *Behemoth* is based upon the theme of student-teacher

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1 "Behemoth" is derived from the name of the great beast that is mentioned in the *Torah*. It is regarded as the monster of the land, whereas, "Leviathan" is considered as a sea monster. Similarly, the "Long parliament" was established by the British king Charles I. He established it after the "Short parliament" during his tenure in which he ruled without a parliament for 12 years. This parliament functioned until March 1660.

dialogue. The book describes the process of retardation, the collapse of sovereignty and the return to the norm of war against anyone and everyone. As Bashirieh writes:

> Hobbes explains the principles of political education not through the general concepts of thought, but through the analysis and investigation of political history by bringing up historical examples. He believes that people will not reach those principles through thought and reflection, rather these principles should be taught to them. Accurate historical narration and analyses ares the best way to illustrate those principles, because history is the description of the nature of mankind (Zareh 2016).

In fact, *Behemoth* provided the ground for the emergence of another dimension in Hobbes's scientific thought which led to the development of a new political knowledge that emphasized political education. He considered political education to be like the knowledge of moral and scientific education which, in his own words, is the "science of conscientiousness" and should be passed on to the general public. In other words, people must not only have civil and moral education, but also "state education". The main focus of state education or political education is to recognize the responsibilities and the duties, which are more important in maintaining peace and order, over rights. In Hobbes's opinion, "political education is essential for the establishment and maintenance of peace, security and stability. In fact, political education in Hobbes's theory is the basis of civil education in a democratic society" (Ibid). With this in mind, we will explore the foundations and the principles that govern the duties and expectations of the citizens in protecting and safeguarding the political system in order to establish and maintain peace and security in the Twelver Shiite thought.

1. Concepts

1. 1. Politics

The definition provided by Imam Khomeini is one of the most comprehensive ones for politics, he says: "Politics is to guide society. It tries to address various issue of society from various aspects and guides it towards the best of its interest. To know the best interest of society and to guide the nation towards it. The ability to achieve such a fate is only possible for a prophet or a messenger and consequently for the wise scholars" (Imam Khomeyni 1990: 432).

1. 2. Political Education

In the broader sense of political education, the following components are of significant importance:

a. A comprehensive look at the events of the society, region and the world;
b. Having the ability to analyse in such a way that one can distinguish the correct thought from the incorrect one;
c. Having a sense of obligation and responsibility towards the ruling political system;
d. Having a sense of responsibility towards oneself, the people of the society, the people of the world etc.;
e. Dynamics in socio-political relations.

All these components are the product of political education in Islamic thought. In other words, political education brings the person towards political insight and saves him from being exploited to the worldly power and leads them towards reality. God in chapter "Yusuf", verse number 108 says: "This is my way. I summon to Allah with insight, I and he who follows me. Immaculate is Allah, and I am not one of the polytheists" (Qarai 2003).

The late Allameh Tabatabai, while explaining the verse says, the "Sabili" which is mentioned in the verse means invitation with insight and certainty towards the pure faith and the pure monotheism. It is obvious that in this "Sabili" is restricted only to those people who are pure in their religion and are certain that the world has a Lord. This certainty is achieved through insight and belief (Tabatabai 1997: V/ 378).

Holy Prophet Muhammad says: "A scholar who has insight cannot be easily deceived by the on-going day-to-day events of life" (Majlisi 1983: 307).

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib while emphasizing gaining insight says: "No one will be able to successfully carry this flag except the people of insight and knowledge about the truth" (Fayz al-Islam Isfahani 1999: 173).

1. 3. Twelver Shiite

The Twelver Shiite is the most important and the largest group of Shiites who believe in the immediate caliphate of Imam Ali after the Prophet through direct and explicit instruction of the Prophet. They not only believe in the immediate Imamate of Ali but also adhere to the Eleven of his children known as the Twelve Imams.

The formation of this group and its appellation, which uphold the immediate successorship of Imam Ali after the Prophet, in accordance with historical narrations and traditions, goes back to the life of the Prophet himself. One of the companions of the holy prophet named Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari narrates: "We were in the presence of the holy prophet when Imam Ali entered. As soon as the prophet saw him, he said: 'by the one in whose hand is my life! He and his Shiites (followers) will be victorious on the day of judgement'"(Shaikh Toosi 1993: 251). In another instance the Prophet Muhammad says to Imam Ali: "O Ali! You and your Shiites (followers) will be in paradise" (Majlisi 1983: 199).

At this juncture it is worth mentioning that after the demise of the holy prophet during the time of the second caliph, Umar, it was forbidden to write, mention and transfer traditions. This prohibition continued for around a hundred years until the time of Imam Muhammad ibn Ali al-Baqir. It was finally lifted during the reign of Umar bin Abd al-Aziz. On the other hand, due to the involvement of the caliph in external affairs, a good opportunity was created for Imam Baqir and his disciples to gather and develop traditions and narrations of Prophet Muhammed and other Imams. This gained momentum and reached its apex during the time of imamat of Imam Sadiq (732–765), wherein the Imam was able to strengthen the foundations laid by his preceding Imams and the Prophet. Imam Sadiq took the opportunity and the political suit, which ultimately led to the transfer of the caliphate from the Umayyad's to the Abbasids, and continued the scientific and cultural movement started by his father, Imam Baqir. Taking into consideration the needs of the society and urge for their upliftment, he created many scientific and academic institutions. He educated and trained many students in various prevailing rational and traditional sciences. Some of his renowned students were Hisham bin Hakam, Muhammad bin Muslim, Jabir bin Hayyan etc. Therefore, the main focus of disseminating knowledge for the Shiites leant on the shoulders of Imam Sadiq and that is why the majority of the traditions the Shia have come from him (Ja'fariyan 2002: 325–335).

It was from this time that the Shiite thought gained an independent identity and came to be known as the Ja'fary school of thought. In fact, it was during this very period that the boundaries of the Sunni school of thought started gaining an independent identity as well and started getting distinguished among other ideologies. Therefore, it can be said that in reality, Imam Sadiq took a step further in establishing the Shiite school, the school whose early foundations were established during the time of the Prophet himself and the time of other Imams. Therefore, due to the efforts of Imam Sadiq at spreading the Shiite aspect of jurisprudence and

theology, the Shiite school of thought came to be known as the Ja'fary school of thought.

The reign of Imamate of Imam Sadiq has been a turning point in the Shiite movement which has influenced and has had a permanent effect on the Shiite ideology. Mainly because, this period was a period in which various schools and religions were formed. On the one hand, there were different Sunni schools of thoughts being formed whereas, on the other hand, there were many new movements trying to establish themselves like the *Kharijites*, *Murjiah* and *Gandhiyah*. Similarly, there were other groups which identified themselves as the Shia but did not believe in the ideology of the main stream Twelver Shia, like the *Kisaniyya* etc. Therefore, in order to distinguish this school of thought from the others, followers of this school, who were taught and trained by Imam Sadiq, were known by the name "Ja'fary school of thought" since the meaning of the word "Shi'a" in the era of Imam Sadiq had a general meaning and was not specific to the Twelver Shiite thought.

Therefore, during the time of Imam Sadiq, he trained students and then sent them to other places in order to strengthen the beliefs of the people and to teach them true principles of Islam. He also used this opportunity to make boundaries and differentiate between the various competing schools of thoughts and taught them the true teachings of Islam as taught by the prophet, thereby solidifying the position of the Shia thought, which originated and was formed by the prophet himself. Consequently, the followers of Imam Sadiq came to be known as the Imami Shiiite or the Ja'fari Shiite and due to importance of the time of Imam Sadiq, the Imam came to be known as the head of the Shiite thought (Khwajuyaan 1997: 78).

2. Foundations of Political Education in Contemporary Islamic Political Thought

2. 1. Epistemological Foundation

Political education is based on the views expressed in relation to knowledge and its sources. Views that take into account the validity of discussing belief, justification and validity of knowledge, its source and its types, are related to the science of epistemology (Fa'ali 1998: 29). With this in mind, the concept of epistemology here, means the views which discuss the sources of knowledge in the field of political education. Political education in Islamic thought is primarily based upon two epistemic sources of revelation and wisdom. The Islamic political educational thought is not only affected by these two sources, rather, all the principles are encompassed by it. God has

introduced the Holy *Quran* as a guide and blessing which offers good tidings to the Muslims. In Chapter "Nahl", verse 89, He says: "We have sent down the Book to you as a clarification of all things and as guidance, mercy and good news for the Muslims" (Qarai 2003).

Allamah Tabatabai in his exegesis of the *Quran* (*al-Mizan fi Tafsir al--Quran*) says: "The Holy *Quran* has no prestige except that it is a guide for common people. Therefore, the apparent meaning of the word 'all things' which is used in the verse, refers to all the characteristics that are related to this aspect of guidance, such as, true knowledge with regards to the origin and the resurrection, good virtues, the divine sharia's, stories and the advice which people are in need of at the beginning of their journeys in order to find their way. The *Quran* has an explanation for all these things" (Tabatabai 1997: V/469).

In the traditional exegesis of this verse it is mentioned that Imam Sadiq, peace be upon him, said: "Surely, I know what is in the skies and what is in the earth, and I know what is in the heaven, and I know what is in the hellfire, and I know what was before, and that which will be until the day of resurrection". Then, the Imam fell silent for a while and after realising that people were surprised by this statement and were unable to understand the depth of it, he said: "I know all this from the Book of Allah, the exalted, for He says in His book: 'explanatory of everything'" (Ibid: 473). The prophet, peace be upon him, introduces the *Quran* as the best explanatory and a guide towards the most profitable ways (Majlisi 1983: 177). Even Imam Ali, peace be upon him, introduces the *Quran* as a light that sets the believer on the highways of righteousness and salvation (Fayz al-Islam Isfahani 1999: 414). Accordingly, Divine revelation is the most important source of knowledge to gain guidance and education, especially in political education.

The second epistemic source in Islam in order to gain political education is "reason". Reason is of utmost importance as it is only through its application that the understanding of the meaning and purpose of the Holy *Quran* is possible. God, in the second verse of chapter "Yusuf" in *Quran* says: "Indeed We have sent it down as an Arabic *Quran* so that you may exercise your reason" (Qarai 2003).

The main faculty of the of reason is to achieve guidance, illumination, thought, logic, reasoning, etc., the one who is unaware of the power of reason and understanding is like a car that moves in a dark night without lights (Motahhari 1981: 29). Therefore, it can be said that revelation and reason form the two epistemological bases in political education and can be used to extract the methods and programs for the realization of political education.

2. 2. Ontological Foundation

The world is the creation of God. In chapter "An'am", verse number 102, God says: "That is Allah, your Lord, there is no god except Him, the creator of all things; so worship Him. He watches over all things" (Qarai 2003).

The universe has not been created by chance, rather it has been created by someone powerful and wise, as such, no flaws or defects can be seen in it. In chapter "Mulk", verse number 3, God says: "He created seven heavens in layers. You do not see any discordance in the creation of the All-beneficent. Look again! Do you see any flaw?"(Ibid)

With this approach, ontology represents only a branch of philosophy which tries to understand and establish the truth. In other words, it strives to understand phenomena which exist in the world, even though there is a possibility that this existence might not be actual. This is similar to the product of our imagination and thought or to mathematical symptoms that have a visual aspect but are not bound in time and space. Or, like those that are simply abstract, like virtues and justice. There is a special relationship between them. For example, heat vaporises water, light illuminates space, plants and animals use resources like food and water to sustain themselves, humans grow and ascend to higher levels with the help of education or education has a role in building a perfect human and a perfect society. This relationship of influencing the other and getting influenced by the other is real and not false or imaginary. In view of the prospect of causality, which is pivotal in the ontological view, it can be said that, the cause of the vaporisation of water is heat, the cause of illumination is light, the cause of progress and development in humans is education and similarly vice versa. Therefore, as we can consider an origin, a goal, a resurrection etc., for existence, similarly, we can also consider an origin, a goal and an end for education in its general sense and political education in particular. With this view, the function of political education in the framework of monotheistic ontology leads to the sovereignty of monotheism. Similarly, it leads to "the expansion of monotheism in the realm of society and politics which leads to the formation of a monotheistic system, the rule of divine laws in society and the negation of corruption and oppression. In Islamic philosophy, monotheism is the source of all beliefs and judgements" (Nowroozi 2009: 29). In the Holy *Quran* as well, God has graced us with creation and thereafter completed His favour upon us by guiding us. Meaning that, God is the creator of existence and thereof He has taken upon Himself to guide it. From this assessment, the *Quran* has a monotheistic ontological view i.e., the acceptance of God's unity in the two domains of Creation and Lordship, the result of which is divine sovereignty. And people are urged to govern their destiny in the

light of divine sovereignty (Ibid: 69). Based on this, political education is realized in line with the above idea and introduces its clauses on the bases of the acceptance of the sovereignty of the sharia alongside divine sovereignty in the framework of Sharia and religion.

2. 3. Anthropological Foundation

The subject of political education is human. Therefore, it is based upon certain anthropological foundations. What is intended by anthropological foundations here, are general views about humans in terms of their essence, their nature and their peculiar characteristics. God, man and the world are the three pillars of human thought that have always been the subject of attention for scholars of humanities. Based on the notion, "One who has knowledge about oneself has knowledge of the Lord", anthropology is considered as a preliminary to understand God and has an important position amongst Islamic as well as the Western scholars. Hobbes's teachings in political education stem from his anthropological foundations, which are, of course, rooted in materialism. Hobbes speaks of man as the "human wolf". His purpose is to describe the state of man in its natural state. The Hobbesian man is created in an instance, without having a past nor any social connections. It is dominated by natural, instinctual and irrational forces. Hence, the natural state of his affairs is wild in nature and the only way out is through a social contract in which all the rights and powers are unilaterally been entrusted to the state in order to guarantee peace and security. It is worth mentioning that, in that contract, the state itself is not bound to uphold its side of the agreement. Therefore, Hobbes believed that people should have education in order to believe in the legality and the legitimacy of the state and the government. They should be well taught in order to avoid controversies and distrust towards each other, especially due to the fear of humans returning to their normal default condition.

In the teachings of divine religions, especially Islam, after God, "human" is the most important axis in the creation of the world. The directing of prophets and heavenly books is for "humans" to reach ultimate bliss (Misbah Yazdi 2009: 1). In the *Quran*, God introduces "humans" as His representative and His caliph on earth, He says to the angels, I will make him a caliph of the earth. In the chapter "Baqarah", verse number 30, it says: "When your Lord said to the angels: 'Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on the earth'" (Qarai 2003).

Meaning, after the existence of the al-Mighty creator, humans have a very special place in ontology. This special station actually refers to human capabilities and competencies. But, in the face of these features, God intro-

duces them by mentioning some of their negative qualities. These features include humans being oppressive, followers of their carnal desires etc.

These two sets of characteristics which are opposite to each other imply that humans are two-dimensional and can possess dual personalities. These two dimensions indicate that humans are in need of education. The *Quran*, while referring to this feature and also to the principle of innate nature, considers it to be the most important and the fundamental basis of anthropology and thereby prescribes the principle of human education. From this perspective, human beings are creatures having wisdom, intelligence, free will and sense of responsibility. In the field of political education humans ought to seek assistance from the three important sources, intellect, experience and revelation, in order to have a responsible and a desirable behaviour. Accordingly, the three important foundations of epistemology, ontology, and anthropology provide the necessary theoretical topics for the necessity and importance of political education. Each of these foundations form a major element in political education that plays a pivotal role in its realisation.

3. Principles of Political Education

Political education is based on the principles which provide for its main orientation. Therefore, the principles of political education are the general lines that govern the process of political education. The most important of which are as follows.

3. 1. The Principle of Monotheism

God is the axis of everything in the divine worldview. Everything that exists in the universe is a manifestation of that entity, it encompasses everything and nothing is outside the sphere of His absolute power. The ultimate goal of divine education is to achieve higher levels of faith, seek proximity to God, uphold divine satisfaction and move towards it, get closer to the origins of perfections and goodness. To put it in one word, the aim is to be "divine" or "Godly". On this basis, the main mission of all divine prophets was to invite people towards monotheism and to worship the only one God and to refrain from polytheism and its different manifestations. The doors of moral virtues and perfection of self and society will only open if people accept true monotheism and deny polytheism. The ultimate perfection and prosperity of humans is to reach the position of worship and servitude of God. In the Holy *Quran*, chapter "Nahl", verse number 36, God, in regard to the basic and fundamental purpose of the

Prophets, states: "Certainly We raised an apostle in every nation [to preach]: 'Worship Allah, and keep away from the Rebels'" (Ibid.).

Inviting people towards God and negating polytheism has been the first message of divine prophets. The *Quran* manifests this reality in a number of its verses. For example, in the chapter named "A'raf", verse number 59, it says: "Certainly We sent Noah to his people. He said: 'O my people, worship Allah! You have no other god besides Him. Indeed I fear for you the punishment of a tremendous day'" (Ibid.).

In fact, the reason why prophets emphasized on the issue of monotheism and instructed their people to negate polytheism is because if, in a society, everyone truly believed and worshipped only God and denied the worship of other deities, external as well as internal, like selfishness, lust, whims, money, position, etc., there would be no injustice and disorder in the society. Therefore, injustices and the disorders prevalent in societies are due to their departure from monotheism and servitude of God. Consequently, the principle of monotheism is one of the most important and fundamental principles of political education. In this approach, human evolution is a journey towards God, which can be achieved only through a monotheistic movement. This movement and activity is based upon the axis of monotheism, the goal of which is to lead humanity towards the course of prosperity in this world as well as the hereafter. In Islamic insight, the sovereignty is only for Allah. Allah, in the chapter named "Yusuf", verse number 40, says: "Judgment rests with Allah only" (Ibid.). Meaning, judgment belongs only to Allah. Therefore, in Islam, systems, organizations etc. are not considered as a goal; rather, they are means of coordination in order to create harmony for humans to be able to fully liberate their humane potentials to move towards monotheism and servitude of God. Therefore, the principle of monotheism with this view is one of fundamental principles of political education.

3. 2. The Principle of Servitude

This principle is based upon epistemology that believes that the purpose of human creation is to know God and to strive towards gaining proximity to Him. God says in the Holy *Quran*, in chapter "Zariyat", verse number 56: "I did not create the jinn and humans except that they may worship Me" (Ibid.). Meaning that the sole purpose of creation is to worship God alone. In the chapter named "al-Qamar", verse number 54 and 55, it says: "Indeed the Godwary will be amid gardens and streams" (Ibid.). That is, the abode of pious people would be paradise, which has flowing streams. These verses give glad tidings to people of piety. It means that pious people are in a great, indescribable paradise with fountains and rivers

in vast plains. The verse then continues saying, in the abode of truthfulness with an omnipotent King (Ibid.).

It is a place and a chamber that is proportional to the truth of their actions and their faith, and in an eternal unblemished blessing without grief and endurance. Promises made to them are truthful and inalienable. They would be in proximity with the possessor, the one who is great and possesses the utmost power, He is Allah.

Taking the above verses into consideration leads us to acknowledging the importance of the principle of servitude to God and its necessity in Political education. The result of such education would lead to people not serving anyone except Him. Many political deviations are due to the fact that people tend to neglect and forget the aspect of servitude to God. Even Thomas Hobbes, the British thinker, while classifying various societies in his book *Leviathan* believes that, as long as humans consider themselves to be in debt to their creator, they will always and at all stages of life, especially in sensitive and macro-dominated areas act with self-confidence and without fear. However, if God is neglected or forgotten, society is deviated and if this deviation is not controlled, it will go to such highs that it will sustain irreparable damages. On the basis of this principle, the responsibility of the individual as a servant of Allah increases. These responsibilities are, in a way, the focus of political training. Because, if a person is not responsible to anyone, not even his Lord, they will not consider themselves to be accountable for anything. Therefore, only a responsible and an accountable person can reach the levels of monotheism and its subsequent stages and would consider them to be an obligation upon himself. Imam Khomeini emphasizes the importance and position of political responsibility and considers it to be a duty and a task. He eludes the idea of isolation in social and political affairs and advises the following to his son:

My son, do not abstain from your human responsibility of service to God which can only take place by serving fellow humans. The tricks and the net of the devil in this field are no less devastating than in the field of administrators and their teams (Imam Khomeyni: 1990).

3. 3. The Principle of Centrality of Guardianship

The principle of centrality of guardianship is rooted in Islamic anthropology which states that humans cannot reach levels of monotheism without the centrality of a guardian, meaning that the principle of monotheism and servitude would only be realized when adhered to the principle of centrality

of guardianship. In an explicit instance of the above is the following tradition, the word "there is no god but Allah" is my fort, whosoever enters it will be saved from my punishment (Majlisi 1983). In another similar tradition it says, The guardianship of Imam Ali is my fort, whosoever enters it will be saved from my punishment (Saduq 1984: 136).

The sum of the traditions mentioned above is what Imam Reza mentions, i.e., to add the following words, meaning the word "Tawheed", which is the fort of God, has some conditions and I am one of those conditions. That is, Imam Reza himself is a condition to enter the fort of "Tawheed". One can enter it only after accepting the guardianship of Imams. It is obvious that the guardianship of Imam Reza alone is not intended in this tradition, rather what is intended is the guardianship of the twelve Imams, the sequence of which begins with Imam Ali. Therefore, what is intended of the traditions is that the word "Tawheed" is a fort with the condition that its guardians are the twelve Imams. If it is so, it is strong and can withhold the toughest conditions but if it is void of the guardianship of Imams then the fort is weak (Misbah Yazdi 2009: 9). The word "Wilayat" (guardianship) also means to have close relations, one that requires communication and influence. The condition of influence and affinity is in the sense that it should pave way for apprehension. This apprehension is sometimes cosmic (*takwini*) actual and evolutionary while sometimes it is legislative (*tashri'i*) (Nowroozi 2009: 160). In the legislative decree, the importance and the necessity of a guardian and a supervisor in the community are discussed. Social and political life requires a system that is coherent with a variety of different behaviours. This system stems forth from the policies of a governor and a supervisor through political education. It is worth noting what Carlyle says in his book: "Find the most capable human being in every country; bring him to the highest place and give loyalty to him; then you will have a perfect state for that country" (Carlyle 1986: 226). In the history of Islam, there were those who denied the leadership and rule of society by raising the flag of "the judgement lies solely with Allah" (*Quran* 6: 157). In reply to this, Imam Ali mentioned the words are correct but that which is implied of it is not (Fayz al-Islam Isfahani 1999: 125).

In the sense that, if what is intended is the judgment and the sovereignty in principle if from God, then this is correct. Nevertheless, to say that nobody has the right to rule except God, then this is incorrect. Although dominion in principle is for God alone but guardianship is for righteous people who have been appointed by God Himself. Human beings receive all of their being from God. Therefore, they ought to obey and follow none other than God except when God Himself places a guardian and commands humans to follow them. God has given this authority to prophets and the messenger

who, through miracles, have assured humanity of their appointment. In the *Quran*, people are not only been advised to follow them, rather, they have been instructed to follow them. The *Quran* in the Chapter of "Nisa", verse number 64, says: "We have never sent a messenger save that he should be obeyed by the permission of Allah" (Qarai 2003).

This great mission was transferred from prophets to Holy Imams. In Islamic history, this is known as the event of "Ghadeer Khum". Prophet Muhammad, the last messenger of God, instilled this guardianship in the imamate of Imam Ali and said: "For whosoever I am the guardian, Ali is his guardian" (Majlisi 1983: 145).

During the time of the occultation of the twelfth Imam, the ordinance of guardianship is with a jurisprudent who possess some specific attributes. These attributes have been mentioned and discussed in relevant books and articles. Therefore, the guardianship of the jurisprudent is, in fact, God's plan for the continuation of the movement of prophets and righteous people. Therefore, this principle should be given appropriate consideration, which is in fact the most basic principle of political education in Islamic political thought (Motahhari 1981: 221). In reality, by accepting this principle, a kind of loyalty is bestowed to the political system which plays an important role in the stability of the political system. The principle of loyalty towards the political system is one of the hidden principles of Islamic political education. This loyalty is realized with belief and practical commitment towards the sharia and the Islamic system. In this principle, there is a deep and inseparable bond between the individual and the political system, which is also mentioned, multiple times, in the *Quran*. God in the chapter "Maidah", verse number 55, says: "Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down" (Qarai 2003).

What is understood from this verse is the spiritual connection between the individual and the ruling political system, which comes forth from the principle of loyalty. It is a two-way stream. In the Islamic approach, it is not only the nation that commits its loyalty to the system, but the political system itself and the ruler of Islam are also committed to the nation and to the society. One of the reasons for paying *Zakat* during the bowing by Imam Ali is to show the loyalty of the Imam towards the nation. Another point that stems forth from the above verse is the principle of guardianship. Murtaza Motahhari describes the scope and extent of the concept of "wilayah" (guardianship) by referring to the actual meaning of this word. Raghib Isfahani in his *Mufradat al-Quran* says that the actual meaning of the word "wilayah" is to place something besides the other in such a way that there is no distance between them. Accordingly, and naturally, this word, "wilayah" in the Arabic language, is used to portray closeness and proximity in its

material and also in its spiritual sense. Again, in the same logic it is used for friendship, helping, mastery and other meanings which are related to it, because in all of these there is a kind of proximity and connection (Motahhari 1981: 54). The Holy *Quran* in chapter "Ali Imran", verse number 28, refers to this principle by mentioning: "The faithful should not take the faithless for allies instead of the faithful and whoever does that Allah will have nothing to do with him" (Qarai 2003).

Imam Ali puts a lot of emphasis on loyalty, he says: "O people, loyalty comes alongside truthfulness, we don't know of a more secure and supportive guardian for loyalty than truthfulness" (Fayz al-Islam Isfahani 1999: 65).

Imam Ali, while condemning his compatriots who were lazy and brought lame excuses to avoid jihad against Muawiyah, questioned their loyalty and said: "I call upon you with God's command! And you flee from it. I call upon you with clear wisdom! But you turn away from them. I advise you with far reaching advice but you disperse. I call you for *jihád* against the rebels but before I come to the end of my speech, I see you scattered like the sons of Sabá… Your leader obeys Allah but you disobey him while the leader of the people of Sham disobeys Allah but they obey him" (Ibid: 127).

On the one hand, this principle implies that the ruling political system (Islamic system) is trustworthy and a divine gift, while, on the other hand, it is an assurance towards goals based upon the principle of human dignity. Loyalty to the political system in Islamic thought ensures its consistency and stability while, consistency and stability of the system recognizes and assures human dignity at the individual as well as the social level.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Islamic Political Education is a process based on standards and principles which are prescribed by the religion of Islam. Islam provides the necessary backgrounds for the growth and development of human talents and capabilities. It provides necessary guidance and gives direction towards the preservation and prosperity of this world as well as the hereafter. In this process, a person needs to learn religion and then after studying surrounding circumstances ought to analyse them using religious teachings. In the next stage, the person adopts a faith-based religious position. Epistemology, ontology, anthropology are the three pivotal bases in the process of political education which form the theoretical discussions. Consequently, principles of monotheism, servitude, centrality of guardianship, accountability and loyalty towards the political system are formed. It regulates the duties of citizens towards a society based on religion and religiosity. In the Western thought, however, especially in that of Hobbes's, political education aims at

preserving the existing political status, exercising social and political control by reminding oneself and society of the possible destruction which could be caused by disruption of the on-going political system. Therefore, there ought to be instilled a natural state of fear in the coming generation while attempting to educate those who are devoted, supportive and loyal to the state. Of course, this approach does not necessarily make Hobbes a conservative as Bashirieh explains: "The conception of Hobbes as being a conservative and passive thinker is incorrect and a false idea. Hobbes is the most important state theorist of all ages. The foundations of democratic ideas, such as the social contract and individualism, ought to be found in his thought" (Zareh 2016). In contrast, the Shiite thought of political education aims to achieve goals such as: organization of independent and critical citizens, training of influential people and their participation in political and social issues, creation of a sense of responsibility towards the fate of the ruling political system, and a sense of responsibility towards oneself, people of the community and humanity on a larger scale. In this case, the individual, in addition to being responsible for the changes in society identifies himself to be accountable for his religious teachings as well. This process increases the political capacity of a society to be able to overcome their various challenges. A powerful political system has the ability to use material and immaterial resources available in society to realize its aspirations according to the desired priorities. Such capabilities would logically be formed in the preliminary stages of the system or in the initial stages of practice. This would pave the way for realizing their objective and would also determine the nature of the system. It would enable the system to regulate and control the behaviour of its citizens and aid in the fair distribution of material and spiritual resources.

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