

The Unmatched Role of the People in the Islamic System

Question:

On what basis do you claim that the people have a role in governance and in the Islamic system?



To traverse the path toward the construction of an Islamic civilization, adherence to the conduct and teachings of Amir al-Mu'minin, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) is an undeniable necessity. In the Alid school of thought, one of the fundamental pillars of religious governance is the presence and active participation of the people.

This principle—one that plays a decisive role both in the formation and the continuation of the Islamic system—has been profoundly and comprehensively explained in the thought and statements of Grand Ayatollah Khamenei.

The Position of the People in Alid Thought According to the Leader of the Revolution

Ayatollah Khamenei refers to the well-known historical statement of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him):

"Were it not for the presence of those present and the establishment of proof through the existence of supporters... I would have cast the rope of the caliphate upon its own shoulders."

Based on this statement, he emphasizes two fundamental truths:

The Role of the People: According

to him, it is the presence and support of the people that makes it obligatory for a committed leader to assume the responsibility of governance. He stresses that even a great figure such as Imam Ali (peace be upon him), in the absence of the people's support, did not consider himself obliged to accept leadership.

The Right of the People: This presence is not merely a political possibility; rather, it represents a right of the people to determine their own destiny.

The Leader of the Revolution further deepens this understanding by referring to another statement of Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

"No one, even if his position is great and his virtue in religion is high, is above receiving help in fulfilling the responsibilities that God has placed upon him."

According to Ayatollah Khamenei, no individual—even at the highest level of faith and knowledge—can be independent of the support and cooperation of the people, and this need extends to all levels of society.

He also interprets this truth in light of the Qur'anic verse:

"It is He who supported you with

His help and with the believers." He emphasizes that it is precisely the believers who sustain the Islamic system and prepare the ground for the realization of its great ideals.

From the perspective of Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, people-centered governance in the Islamic system is not merely a political slogan; rather, it is rooted in firm religious foundations. He believes that religious democracy has a profound philosophical basis that emerges directly from Islam itself.

As he states: "People-centered governance in the Islamic system has Islamic roots. When we speak of an Islamic system, it is impossible for the people to be ignored. The foundation of the people's right to participate in choosing their destiny lies in Islam itself."

This deeply rooted perspective manifested in the modern era through the establishment of the Islamic Republic by Imam Khomeini (may he rest in peace). According to Ayatollah Khamenei, Imam Khomeini, as a true follower of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), firmly believed in the fundamental role of the people in the Islamic system and

taught them that their presence in the arena of society can be "miracle-creating."

In explaining Imam Khomeini's political doctrine, Ayatollah Khamenei identifies four principal arenas in which the people play a central role:

1. The decisive role of the people's vote
2. The responsibility of officials toward the people
3. The utilization of the people's thought and action
4. The continuous enlightenment and awareness of the people

Ultimately, according to Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, achieving Islamic objectives—from the establishment of an Islamic system to the realization of a new Islamic civilization—is impossible without the presence, attention, and active participation of the people.

In his view, this has become a fundamental principle. The concept of "the people" is a foundational Islamic principle without which not only can lofty goals not be achieved, but the very vitality and dynamism of the Islamic system would also be placed at risk.