

Merit, Not Heredity

Question:

In the Islamic Republic, is leadership based on heredity or merit?



1. Fundamentally, the idea that leadership in the Islamic Republic could be hereditary is impossible, because heredity exists when the person in power selects and introduces his successor during his own lifetime, and such a thing has never existed in the Islamic Republic. Moreover, according to the law, selecting the Leader is among the duties and responsibilities of the Assembly of Experts, and the Leader has no right whatsoever in the selection of the next Leader. If he enters into this matter or makes any attempt to do so, it would be regarded as the loss of one of the conditions of leadership and would lead to the Leader's removal.

2. In hereditary and monarchical systems, what is central is mere attribution and blood relation, with no attention paid to the merit and qualifications of individuals. But in Velayat-e Faqih, attribution has no importance at all, let alone being

the basis of selection. In hereditary systems, power is transferred from father to son as if it were personal property, without any oversight, merit, or qualification. But in systems based on popular sovereignty, the presence of the children of officials takes place only through the process of verifying qualifications and through the legal structure.

3. If leadership in the Islamic Republic were hereditary, then after the passing of His Eminence Imam Khomeini, someone from his family should have been selected for leadership, whereas the Leader after him had no family relationship with him.

4. In the system of the Islamic Republic, just as blood and family ties are not a license for assuming responsibility, merely having such ties is not an obstacle either. If a child has been raised in the school of his father and has attained

the necessary qualifications, his presence is not an unjust privilege, but rather a capacity for transferring experience and ensuring stability in management, a capacity from which a country should not be deprived. Likewise, among the Four Deputies of Imam al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, his first and second deputies were father and son.

On this basis, with the selection of the son of our martyred Imam as the third Leader of the Islamic Republic, leadership does not become hereditary, because leadership and Velayat-e Faqih are based on merit and on possessing the required conditions and qualifications. What matters in selecting an individual is having the necessary characteristics and qualifications, and mere attribution or blood relation plays no role in the selection of the Wali al-Faqih that would make Velayat-e Faqih hereditary.

If leadership were to be hereditary, then leadership should have gone to the eldest son of our martyred Leader, not to Ayatollah Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei, who is his second son.

We have witnessed examples of the presence of one family in governmental responsibilities and positions in some countries. In the United States, George W. Bush became president of the country after his father. In Canada, Justin Trudeau, years after his father Pierre Trudeau, assumed the post of prime minister. In Japan, Shinzo Abe was the grandson of the country's former prime minister, Nobusuke Kishi. In South Korea, Park Geun-hye, the daughter of the architect of Korea's economic leap, Park Chung-hee, became president. Has anyone accused these countries of becoming hereditary, or is the criterion the legal mechanisms for selecting individuals in these countries?