

Islamic Political Thought: A Study of the Diverse Interpretations of Medieval Muslim Political Thinkers

Mohd Younus Kumar

Research Scholar, Islamic Studies, Islamic University of Science and Technology, Awantipora, 192122, Jammu and Kashmir, India

***Corresponding author**

Mohd Younus Kumar

Article History

Received: 30.10.2017

Accepted: 06.11.2017

Published: 30.11.2017

DOI:

10.21276/sjhss.2017.2.11.5



Abstract: Islamic political thought has remained the most contentious subject from the 7th century C.E. of Islamic civilisation. The thought witnessed the diverse interpretations throughout the ages. During Medieval Islamic history hereditary succession, decline in spirituality, and alien influences in socio-political thought and cultural affairs of Muslims obliged Muslim political thinkers to come forward in order to present an appropriate political thought of Islam in their respective ages, so that the legacy of Islam would be maintained. The fact is that they had varied opinions on different aspects of Islamic political thought, but they succeeded in determining the comparable political thought of Islam in which they illustrated that the implementation of *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) is highly indispensable in Islam. In this connection the paper is a humble effort to highlight the thought of medieval political thinkers of Islam. The work is based on an analytical study.

Keywords: Farabi, Mawardi, Tusi, Ghazali, Taymiyyah, Hamadani

INTRODUCTION

It is believed that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) [1] was bestowed with the reward that he completes the chain of prophets. He is also believed to be the final messenger of Islam and the *Qur'an* which was revealed on him is declared to be the last divine guidance for the humanity. As Masud al Hasan states, the Prophet (S.A.W) was not merely the religious head; he was the head of the state as well. He did not merely preach a religion, he showed the people the way to live, and make best of their lives on earth. The political significance of the doctrine of finality of the prophet hood of Muhammad (S.A.W) therefore, is that the Prophet was not merely the political leader and head of the state during his lifetime; he would continue to be the political leader and head of the state for all times [2].

Muslim political theorists believe that Prophet (S.A.W) established a form of political authority that reflected the basic components of a government. The state of Madinah included a territory, a community, and a form of authority and sovereignty entrusted with managing the affairs of that community. The Prophet (S.A.W) maintained dual functions and exercised both religious and temporal authority. He performed many of the functions of a government. He acted as a ruler, judge, and military commander and appointed '*Ummal*' (officials) to represent him to the far regions under his control. This model represented a clear intertwining of religious and political authorities [3]. After the demise of Prophet (S.A.W) the pious caliphate period began in which Abu Bakr systematically started the period of pious caliphate in 632 CE [4]. He preferred the title *Khalifah al Rasul Allah* (Caliph of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W) signifying the person who acts for Muhammad (S.A.W) in order to fulfil divine verdicts [5]. When the pious caliphate period came to an end in 661 CE, the

period witnessed a great challenge for Muslims because several kinds of sects within Islam emerged regarding the question of caliphate viz. *Shi'ah*, *Khawarij*, *Murj'iyah*, *Zaidiyah* and *Mu'atazilah* [6].

The *Shi'ah* were the supporters of 'Ali and called themselves the *Shiahs* (party/supporters) of Ali. They gave more importance to the institution of *Imamah*. They mainly believe that:

1. The Imam's office (Shiite term for caliph's office) is not a public office the institution of which may have been left to the choice of the public (*Ummah*). The *Imam* is a pillar of the faith and the foundation stone of Islam. Therefore, it is one of the main duties of the Prophet (S.A.W) to institute somebody as *Imam* instead of leaving the matter to the discretion of the community;
2. The *Imam* is impeccable, i.e., free from all sins, great or small. He is immune from error. Everything that he says or does is inviolate;
3. The Prophet (S.A.W) had conferred the Imamate on Ali and

nominated him as his successor. Thus Ali was the first Imam by ordinance; 4. All the *Shī'ah* sects are also agreed that the Imam's office is the exclusive right of the descendants of Ali [7].

The *Khawārij* (exchangers) are of the opinion that *Khalīfah* (caliph) is dependent upon the free vote of Muslim community and is not restricted within the *Quraysh* (Prophetic tribe) or the Arabs. According to them, the *Khalīfah* is allowed to function till he observes the right path and practice justice and is to be deposed or assassinated when he acts contrary to it [8].

The conflicting principles of the *Shiahs* and the *Khawārij* were responsible for the birth of another sect, called the *Murji'ah*. Between the *Shī'ah* and *Khawārij*, there was a section i.e., *Murji'ah* (one who postpones), which remained neutral either wisely avoiding to indulge in civil war which they deemed a curse or being unable to decide which side fought for the truth. They were not prepared to blaspheme any of the belligerents, and left it to God to decide the affair between them. Their main doctrine regarding the politics was that if one's duty to 'uphold the right and stem the wrong' (*amar bi-al ma'rūf wa nahi an al-munkar*) required one to bear arms, it was a 'trial' to be avoided. It was quite right to check others on wrong conduct, but to speak loud against the tyranny of government was not allowed [9].

According to *Zaidiyya* (named after Zayd, emerged in the 8th century out of Shias), there may be more than one *Imam* at the same time, or none of them in a given period. According to Shiite sects other than *Zaidiyya*, Imamate represents an institution that is continuation of Prophet (S.A.W) in terms of not only corporal authority, but also both corporal and spiritual authorities. According to *Isnā Ash'arī* (twelvers) and *Ismailism*, the word '*Imām*' is synonymous with caliph. However, they employ it in the form of fake *Imam* for first three of *Rashidūn* (rightly guided caliphs), and Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs. According to them, the duty of true *Imam* is continuation of guidance and messenger character of prophets; it is a divine mission in the form of government and administration of humanity in the wake of Prophet (S.A.W). Therefore, there can be only one legitimate, true *Imam*. Such person should be a descendent of Ali and Fatimah (son in law and daughter of Prophet Muhammad respectively), in other words, a grandchild of Muhammad (S.A.W). *Imam* is the rightful caliph of Ali and his successors. Besides, he has the right of worldly sovereignty over Muslim world, as well as the title of highest spiritual guidance in Islam [10].

The *Mu'tazilah* (seceder) another religio-political sect emerged under the leadership of Wasil bin

Ata and Amr bin 'Ubaid in the 8th century C.E at Basrah. Their main doctrines regarding political thought of Islam are as:

1. The appointment of an Imam (or in other words, the institution of the state) was a religious urgency. Some Mu'tazilites (seceders) however, opined that the Imam's office was a superfluous office. No *Imam* was needed if the community followed the right path; 2. The choice of the *Imam*, according to them, rested with the community, and only the community's choice validated his appointment; 3. The community could choose any morally qualified and efficient person as *Imam*. The condition of being a Quraishite, an Arab, or a non-Arab was irrelevant; 4. *Amr bi al Marīf wa-al-Nahi an al-Munkar* (enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong) was among their fundamental principles. It was a duty with them to rise in arms against an unjust government provided they had the power to do so and hoped to raise the successful coup [11].

After the collapse of the Ummayyad caliphate in 754 CE, Abbasids occupied the seat of caliphate under the headship of Abul Abass as Saffah. Later during the caliphate of Abu Jafar al Mansur, they shifted the office of caliphate to Baghdad. They claimed that they were the descendents of Prophet's uncle Hadrat Abass that is why they were known as the name of Abbasids. The political system was also in changing state with the Muslim dynasties. The latter Abbasids divided into several principle dynasties, who ruled according to their own regional and sectional customs. This situation was the great challenge for the Muslim political thinkers of medieval period, who utilised their each and every effort for the presentation of an appropriate and congruent political thought of Islam in order to lessen the diverse interpretations and wanted to harmonise the Muslim *Ummah* (community).

Abu Nasr al Farabī

Abu Nasr ibn Muhammad al Farabī (870-950 CE) was a great and prolific Islamic political thinker of his time. He studied *fiqh* (jurisprudence), music, religious sciences, logic and philosophy in Bukhara and Baghdad. He was influenced by the philosophical cum political thoughts of Plato and Aristotle. His main works on political thought includes *Ārā' Ahl al Madīnat al Fādilah* (Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous State), *Siyasah al Madaniyah* (Civil Polity) and *Tahsil al Sa'ādah* (Attainment of Happiness). He was the proponent of an Ideal State/Virtuous City (*Madīnah al Fādilah*), for him an ideal state is one whose citizens help each other to obtain those things by means of which true happiness (*Sa'ādah*) is gained. According to him, this true happiness is the state of the soul, in which it exists free from matter and tends towards pure substances entirely free from corporeality [12]. Al Farabī illustrates this by an analogy between the state

and the human body. The members of the body are designed and arranged in a hierarchy; the highest is the chief (*ra'īs*), this is, the heart; the rank of the lower members is determined by the nearness or remoteness from the heart. Those members nearest to the heart both rule and are ruled, those farthest removed from the head only serve, but all are united in serving the purpose of the heart. It is the same with the state; when all parts of the state serve the purpose of the chief or ruler, we have the ideal state (*Madīnah al Fāḍilah*). But whereas, the members of the body are naturally disposed to fulfil their functions, the citizens of the state are guided by will and choose. According to him, Leadership or rule is possible on two conditions only: fitness by natural disposition, and willpower and habit [13].

He laid out twelve natural qualities for a ruler to finally establish the ideal city. These are as: (1) One of them is that he should have limbs and organs which are free from deficiency and strong, and that they will make him fit for the actions that depend on them; when he intends to perform an action with one of them, he accomplishes it with ease; (2) he should by nature be good at understanding and perceiving everything said to him, and grasp it in his mind according to what the speaker intends and what the thing itself demands; (3) he should be good at retaining what he comes to know and see and hear and apprehend in general, and forget almost nothing; (4) he should be well provided with ready intelligence and very bright; when he sees the slightest indication of a thing, he should grasp it in the way indicated; (5) he should have a fine diction, his tongue enabling him to explain to perfection all that is in the recesses of his mind; (6) he should be fond of learning and acquiring knowledge, be devoted to it and grasp things easily, without finding the effort painful, nor feeling discomfort about the toil which it entails; (7) he should by nature be fond of truth and truthful men, and hate falsehood and liars; (8) he should by nature not crave for food and drink and sexual intercourse, and have a natural aversion to gambling and hatred of the pleasures with these pursuits provided; (9) he should be proud of spirit and fond of honour, his soul being by his nature above everything ugly and base, and rising naturally to the most lofty things; (10) Money, dirham and dinar and the other worldly pursuits should be of little amount in his view; (11) he should by nature be fond of justice and of just people, and hate oppression and injustice and those who practice them, giving himself and others their due, and urging people to act justly and showing pity to those who are oppressed by injustice; he should lend his support to what he considers to be beautiful and noble and just; he should not be reluctant to give in nor should he be stubborn and obstinate if he is asked to do justice; but he should be reluctant to give in if he is asked to do injustice and evil altogether; and (12) he should be strong in setting

his mind firmly upon the thing which, in his view, ought to be done, and daringly and bravely carry it out without fear and weak-mindedness [14].

Al-Farabi recognized that it is difficult to find all these qualities united in one man. He came up with an alternative that is if there were two men who share half of each quality, both of them should be considered sovereigns of the city. If all qualities are found in different men, when all of them are in agreement, they should altogether share the rule [15]. This was the reason that Al Farabi was given the title *Mualim al Thani* (second teacher) because Aristotle had given the same idea when he classified the governments. His whole political theory revolves round the statement that happiness is subservient to politics (virtuous polity). Al-Farabi's aim was to analyze, philosophically, the crisis which had enveloped the Caliphate system and impaired the political identity of Muslims, moreover, al-Farabi could not challenge and criticize the structure and authoritative logic of political power, instead, he kept and relied on the same structure, which was founded on monarchy, to develop a philosophical outline of the government of sages. Most researchers, who have sought contextual reasons for the emergence of al-Farabi's thought, find the crisis of Caliphate one of the most important causes for it [16].

Abu al Hasan al Mawardi

Abu al Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al Mawardi (974-1058 CE) was born in Basrah, one of the intellectual centres of the Muslim world. He was appointed as *Qādi al Qudāt* (chief justice) of Baghdad by Caliph Al Qadir of Abbasid dynasty. He was not only a distinguished judge but also the author of *Kitāb al Hāwī al Iqna'*, *Siyasat al Mulk*, *Qawanin al Wizārah*, *Adab al Dunya wa al Dīn* and *Ahkām al Sultaniyah*. Al Mawardi's main political thought is embodied in his *Ahkām al Sultaniyah* (The Laws of Islamic Governance). He was the exponent of the ideal theory of the *Khilāfah* (caliphate). He emphasised the indivisible, universal and divine character of the *Ummah* (community) through the maintenance of the institution of *Khilāfah* (caliphate) which according to him was canonical rather than merely rational necessity and that there could not be more than one *Khalīfah* at the same time, and also that the establishment of the *Khilāfah* in all ages was mandatory on the basis of the *Ijmā'* (consensus of opinion) [17].

The main postulates of the political thought of Al Mawardi are as follows:

1. The institution of the Imamate/*Khilāfah* is a necessary requirement of the *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) and not of the reason. The appointment of Imam by the consensus of the Muslim community is obligatory.

2. The Imamate is instituted by means of election. The Electoral College shall consist of persons with special qualifications. Also the candidate for Imamate must fulfil certain conditions. This elective principle of the Imamate is obviously opposed to the Shiite claim of bequeathed or divine nomination.

3. The caliph must be from *Quraysh* (Prophetic tribe).

4. The Imam was appointed in one of the two ways: (a) He may be elected by the Electoral College; (b) he may be nominated by the ruling Imam. The Imam can nominate any suitable person as his successor, provided he does not happen to be his father or son. The concurrence of the *ahl al-hall w-al-'aqd* (those who bind and loose) is not necessary; but if he nominates his son, the concurrence must be obtained. Also, he can nominate any other relation without requiring the concurrence.

5. The election of a less qualified person in the presence of a more qualified person is perfectly legal, provided the former fulfils all the conditions of the Imamate.

6. The existence of two Imams contemporaneously is illegal [18].

Wizarate (ministry) is of two types: ministry of delegation and ministry of execution. The ministry of delegation is where the *Imam* (head of the state) appoints a minister to whom he delegates authority for the organisation of affairs in accordance with his judgement such that he effects them properly by his own efforts [19]. As for the *Wizarate* (ministry) of execution, its rule is weaker and its conditions are fewer as its authority is restricted to the judgement and direction of the *Imam*. His authority is restricted to two things: the first, to transmit things to the *Khalīfah* (caliph) and the second, to transmit things from the *Khalīfah* to others [20].

Imam is required to perform following duties and functions: The foremost duty of the *Imam* under *Sharī'ah* is to safeguard and defend the established principles of religion. The *Imam* is required to dispense justice and dispose of all litigation in accordance with the *Sharī'ah*. He must protect the weak against the strong. He is required to maintain the law and order in the country in order to allow the people to spend a peaceful life. He is required to enforce the criminal code of the *Qurān* in order that people do not outrage the prohibitions of God and the fundamental rights of men are not violated. He is required to defend frontiers from the foreign invasion to guarantee the security of life and property of both Muslims and non-Muslims living in the Islamic state. To organise wars against those who opposed Islam or refuse to enter the protection of the Islamic state. He is supposed to collect the taxes like *Khīrāj* (land tax) and *Zakāh* (obligatory charity) according to the law of *Sharī'ah* without resorting to extortion by pressure. To fix the allowance

and stipends of those people who worked in the *Bayt al-māl* (house of treasury). He is required to appoint, honest and sincere men to important offices of the state and the treasury. He must keep himself aware of the affairs of his dominions in order to direct the national policy and protect the interest of the people. When the *Imām* (head of the state) has carried out all these duties efficiently, the people must offer him two things, i.e., obedience and help. Al- Mawardi lays main stress on the administrative responsibilities of the caliph. He was of the view that the caliphate is not merely a religious institution, but it is a great social organisation to help promote the corporate life of men [21].

Nizam al-Mulūk Tusī

Abu 'Ali al-Hasan bin 'Ali bin Ishaq al-Tusī, generally known by his honorific title Nizam al-Mulūk Tusī (1018-1092 CE), was a scholar, statesman, and celebrated Persian *Wazīr* (Minister) of the Saljuq kingdom during the reign of Alp Arslan and Malik Shah [22]. Tusī was the driving force behind the Saljuk regime at the height of its power. He helped to shape Saljuk policies in every field and was the architect of much that was distinctive about the regime. The period became known as al-Dawla al-Nizamiyya (the destined reign of Nizam); his family held office under the Saljuks for two generations after him [23]. He was also the rector of the *Nizāmiya* seminary and the author of two important political manuals entitled *Siyasat Nāmāh* and *Dastūr al wuzarā'*, which are the chief sources of his political ideas; mainly his theory of kingship. Regarding the appointment of the king, he said in every age God selects one from amongst mankind and adorns him with princely skills, and entrusts him with the affairs of the world and the comfort of the subjects. The essential function which the king has to fulfil in human society is to bring order out of chaos and to maintain peace and justice [24].

He believes in the principle of passive and unconditional obedience on the part of the people, and leaves them without any moral right to resist the royal authority. In spite of representing the king as directly responsible for the welfare of the whole country, he does not regard him as accountable to the people for his political conduct. On the question of the king's responsibility in the public affairs, he seems to take again the position of a supporter of the divine right of kings and holds them responsible not before the people but before the God [25].

What Nizam al Mulūk is attempting to set out is indeed the concept of an absolute Monarch. At this point he comes much nearer to the Persian idea of kingship and to the Shiite doctrine of *Imāmāh*, both founded on the divine right of the Head of the State, than to the constitutional theory of the Sunni Arab

jurists, which was based on democratic principles. An absolute monarch claiming direct authorization from God to manage the affairs of the society was an idea quite foreign to Arab thinkers. The *Khalīfah* had always been regarded by them, at least in theory, as an elected functionary to whom powers were delegated, not directly from God but by the electors. They therefore held that the *Khalīfah* was subject to certain legal restrictions. This democratic idea of Caliphate is in striking contrast with the Persian notion of absolute monarchy revived in Nizam al Mulūk's political theory. It would not be wrong to suppose that this concept of a divinely appointed ruler came to him mainly from the political system of ancient Persia [26].

Imam Ghazali

Abu Hāmid Muhammad bin Muammad popularly known as Imam Ghazalī was born in 1058 CE at Tabarān in Khurasān and died in 1111 CE. He has been acclaimed as *Hujjat al Islām* (Convincing Proof of Islam), *Zain al Din* (Ornament of Faith) and *Mujaddid* (Renewer of Religion). He had an Excellency in certain fields of knowledge like Philosophy, Tasawwuf, Theology, Logic, Jurisprudence and Political Thought of Islam. He had in his credit several works on Islam the noteworthy among them are: *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* (The Deliverer from Error), *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), *Kimiya-i Sa'ādat* (The Alchemy of Happiness), *Nasihāt al-Muluk* (The Counsel for Kings). Regarding the importance of ruler, he said that without a ruler to whom the people should habitually be obedient, there would be continuous turmoil, a never ending clanging of the swords, a recurring state of famine and cattle diseases, and an end to all industries and handicraft [27].

While concurring with the Ismailis that the Muslim polity must be governed by a divinely appointed leader (*imam*), Ghazali maintained that this leader must be elected rather than designated by his predecessor- the practice followed by the Ismailis. Ghazali argued that the election need not have a wide basis (a broad consensus of religious scholars) and could be accomplished through the oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*) of a single individual if that individual possessed uncontested military supremacy and could provide a power base for the elected leader. Such an elected leader was, for Ghazali, the Abbasid caliph Mustazhir, who was supported by the military power of the Seljuq sultan. In effect, Ghazali legitimized the political status quo, in which the Seljuq sultans pledged allegiance to and effectively appointed the caliph, thereby validating their own authority. He represented this symbiotic system of government as a warrant of peace, unity, and stability for the Muslim polity [28].

Ghazali's political thought of Islam revolves round the concept of caliphate. He was a staunch supporter of the caliphate system. He contends that without the existence of the caliphate, no judgement of a *Qadi*, no contract, no testament would be valid. In other words the power of *Qadis* and government officials is derived from the Caliph. In theory, Islamic government is perfectly centralised. Thus, the absence of caliphate would turn every normal human relationship into sin, and lead to disorder and strife. Regarding the qualifications of the Caliph Al Ghazali's is same as that of Al Mawardi, but he adds that he must be an Abbasid [29].

He enumerates ten rules of the conduct of government chiefly in the matter of justice, which the rulers should bear in mind, like: (i) In every case he should mentally put himself in the position of the contending parties; (ii) He should fulfil the desire of those who have come to him for justice; (iii) Justice is possible only when the ruler does not indulge in luxurious food and clothing; (iv) The ruler should practice leniency, not harshness in his dealings; (v) He should try that his subjects should be content with the rule of law; (vi) He should not attempt any conciliation at the expense of the law; (vii) He should supervise the affairs of the people in the same way as if he were to supervise his own household affairs and should deal with the powerful and the infirm in the identical manner; (viii) He should try to meet the learned as often as he can and should encourage them to have their say; (ix) He should see that his servants, magistrates and officers, perform their duties diligently and well; (x) He should not be overpowered by any false sense of pride [30].

Ibn Taymiyyah

Taqi ud Din Ahmad ibn Abd al Halim ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328 CE) was the noted philosopher, *Muhadith* (traditionist), Jurist, and Islamic thinker, who wrote almost on every aspect of Islam. As a prolific writer, Ibn Taymiyya authored, several works that have become seminal references in their fields: in theology, *Dar-al Ta'arrud* (Rejecting contradictions between reason and tradition); in polemics, against Christians, *al-Jawab al-Sahih* (The correct response); in philosophy, *al-Radd 'ala al-Mantiqiyyin* (The refutation of the logicians); in economics, *al-Hisba fi al-Islam* (The Hisba in Islam) [31]. He wrote extensively on the political thought of Islam as well. The writings of Ibn Taymiyyah, which discussed the political aspects of Islam are: *Minhāj al Sunnah an Nabawiyyah fi Naqd-i Kalām al Shī'ah wa al Qadarīyah* and *Al Siyāsah al Shari'ah* (Government of the Religious Law). He dispensed with the idea of the *Khilāfah* and maintained the necessity of enforcing the *Shari'ah*. For him any specific form of *Khilāfah* was not relevant so long as

there was an authority to enforce the *Sharī'ah*. He emphasized the concept of *T'āwun* (cooperation) between the ruler (*Imām*) and *Ahl al Shaūkh* (the wielders of power) who were composed of the '*Ulamā*' (Scholars) and *Umarā'* (state functionaries), and dominant classes [32]. Regarding the importance of the government in Islam he said, the administration of the affairs of men is one of the greatest obligations of religion; rather the fact is that religion cannot exist without it [33]. He gives two reasons for regarding the state and leadership as a religious duty. First, he quotes the saying of the Prophet (S.A.W): 'If three persons set out on a journey, they should appoint one of them their leader.' Citing this *Hadīth* (tradition), he argues: 'If a leader is considered necessary on a journey— a temporary association of a few persons - it is an instruction to have it in all kinds of greater associations.' Second, he argues that the duty of commanding good and forbidding evil (*Amr bil Maruf wa Nahi anil Munkar*) cannot be completely discharged without power (*quwwah*) and authority (*imārah*). The same applies to all religious duties, like holy war (*jihād*), justice, establishment of pilgrimage and prayers, helping those who are wronged and meting out punishment in accordance with the legal penalties (*iqāmah al huūd*). Since all these tasks cannot be carried on without government and power, the institution of government and state is necessary from the religious point of view [34]. In Ibn Taimiyah's view, the authority exercised by the state is not absolute. It is a trust (*amānah*) from Allah, and it is to be exercised in accordance with the terms laid down in the *Sharī'ah*. He quotes a *Hadīth* of the Prophet (S.A.W), to support his argument. Abu Dharr, a Companion of the Prophet (S.A.W), reported that he said: 'It (sovereignty) is a trust, and on the Day of Judgment it will be a thing of sorrow and humiliation except for those who were deserving of it and did well' [35]. Ibn Taymiyyah defines the cooperative nature and said that the term *Wilayah* includes all the officers of the state— the *Imam*, ministers, governors, judges, military commanders, revenue secretaries, *Imam* of *Salāh* (prayer), teachers, intelligence men, technicians, tribal agents, and town and village representatives. There is only a difference of degree rather than of nature between the different agents; that is why Ibn Taymiyyah calls the head of the state- *Al Mutawalli al Kabīr* (the chief responsible administrator) [36].

Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadanī

Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadanī, who became popular in Kashmir as *Amir-i-Kabīr* (Great Leader), *Shah-i-Hamadan* (King of Hamadan) and '*Ali Thanī*' ('Alī II), was born at Hamadan (Persia) in 1314 CE and died in 1385 [37]. He was a versatile genius, a great saint and a scholar. He wrote profoundly on Tasawwuf, philosophy, jurisprudence, political thought, ethics etc.,

for twenty-one years Sayyid Ali journeyed from one country to the other and came in contact with contemporary scholars and saints of note. Some historians are of the opinion that he left Persia for Kashmir because of the repression on the Sayyids caused by the tyrannical rule of Timur [38], while as others said that it was the religious zeal of Hamadanī. He visited in Kashmir in 1381 during the reign of Sultan Qutub ud Din (1373-1389) of Shah Mir dynasty. The *Risala-i-Maktubāt* (Letters of Hamadanī) and *Zakhirat al-Mulūk* (Treasure of Kings) is the most important works of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadanī on political thought of Islam. The former is a collection of Hamadanī's letters, in which he addresses to the rulers of the contemporary period for the smooth functioning of the state in accordance with the *Sharī'ah* guidelines, while as the latter is regarded an important work of Islamic political thought of the medieval period. He did not actively take part in the political deliberations of the period but he indirectly guided the rulers by writing the letters. Here, a part of the letter is mentioned in which he addressed to Sultan 'Ala ud Dīn of Kashmir as:

It is essential for a ruler and a king to take due care while exercising his authority and not to take lightly the examination and investigation of the public matters, and not to treat as insignificant the results and effects of God's pleasure or displeasure. He should read minutely and carefully the life history of Islamic rulers and the "Righteous Caliphs" (May God shower His blessings on them) and observe proper etiquette and behaviour as expected of a (Muslim) ruler. The transient pleasures should not become a source of sorrow and punishment in the Hereafter. Besides, he should not restrain his hands from dealing compassionately to the weak and humble; and should not rely on ephemeral wealth. He should always remember the disgrace and punishment of the Day of Judgment; and should consider this short life a boon [39]. He has not given any new theory of politics, state or administration but provides religious guidance to the rulers of his time which aims at the revival of the early caliphate [40]. Hamadanī divides rulers into two distinct groups:

Those who follow and establish the ordained laws of Allah and the *Sunnah* (actions of Prophet) of the Prophet (S.A.W) dispense justice and give their dues to the people. They are the vicegerents or adumbration of Allah on earth. The other group consists of the rulers who negate the ordained laws of God, not following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (S.A.W) and act according to their wish, are the enemies of Allah and His Prophet (S.A.W), and the vicegerents of Satan and *Dajjāl* (Antichrist) on earth [41].

According to Husaini, he asserted the necessity of a ruler for the following reasons:

To lead and direct people to do and enjoin good and to prevent them from doing evil; To establish the ordained laws of God; To stop innovations in religious rules and the penal code [42]; To fulfil the basic needs of the people, so that they may live a peaceful life and cultivate the virtues [43].

Hamadanī laid certain qualifications which are necessary for the ruler:

He must be Muslim, just, learned, wise, and sagacious and a man of statesmanship [44]; He must be a man of power and determination so that he may execute the *Shari'ah* and ordained laws by force when violated [45]; He must seek reformation of his subjects [46].

Regarding the protection of life and property, Hamadanī asserted that some fundamental rights are shared by both the Muslims and non-Muslims. The main fundamental right which is shared by both is that every citizen has a right to life and property; it is the duty of an Islamic state to safe guard one's life and property within its territory. Forces causing danger to peaceful living are to be dealt with heavy hand. It is the responsibility of a ruler to make the highways clear from the disastrous elements [47].

Hamadanī holds those principles also which were common among the Arabian political thinkers. He said that rulers should prohibit all acts contrary to the *Shari'ah* and promote good deeds. The '*Ulamā*' (Scholars), he continues are required to stop the commitment of vicious acts by delivering sermons. Hamadanī believes that the implementation of the religious law depends upon the government. He also recognises the institutions of *Khilāfah* (Caliphate), *Badshahat* (Monarchy) and *Sultanate* (Kingdom), provided they follow Islam in administering their state. He does not bother about formal identity of the ruler but concerns with how the ruler rules.

CONCLUSION

After the demise of Prophet (S.AW), the pious caliphate period which lasts for almost 29 years, was the complete prototype of the Islamic society of *Madīnah*. The pious caliphate period was the golden age in which the implementation and execution of *Shari'ah* was strictly followed. The Umayyads and Abassids had disseminated an Islamic message to the far flung areas, which remarked the great impact on the contemporary civilisations of the time. Even the law of succession was hereditary, but the job done by the Umayyads and Abassids was remarkable and

noteworthy. The sack of Baghdad in 1258 CE, by Mongols which ended the caliphate of the Abassids, left negative impact on the Muslim solidarity. The collapse of the central power of the Muslims in the medieval period gave birth to the several principle dynasties which began to devise their own respective political ideals. This disintegrated situation leads to the development of the medieval Islamic political thought, in which the thinkers had contributed to the political thought of Islam such novel ideas which became a base for the further generations of Muslim rule. Al Farābī who was influenced by Greek philosophy presented Islamic political system through philosophy and logic. Al Mawardī laid more stress on traditional interpretations of Islamic ideals and became staunch supporter of the theory of *Khilāfah* (caliphate). Al Tūsī was supporting the divine role in the formation of the ruler. Imam Ghazalī was the propounder of caliphate system. Ibn Taymiyyah laid more stress on cooperation between ruler and other state functionaries. He was also of the opinion that the execution or implementation of *Shari'ah* is more important than to discuss which form of government is best. Hamadanī influenced the leadership of the state through his writings and speeches. He was also staunch supporter of the implementation of *Shari'ah* both in theory and practice. He further said that the leaders who dispense justice and implement the *Shari'ah* during their reign are true representatives of Almighty on earth. Therefore, due to the efforts of these Islamic political thinkers of medieval period, the relevance and the importance of Islamic political thought in the modern times gets its inspiration from the very thought of these political thinkers of Islam, because their impact is everlasting and relevant to the demands of the time. Therefore, the need is to revive the thought of these political thinkers of Islam in the light of modern realities which will become the source of inspiration for the Muslim communities who are living in different cultures in the modern world.

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