

Dr. Mohammad-Bagher Khorramshad¹

Religious Democracy: The Democracy of the Righteous

What is religious democracy? This may be the first question to come to one's mind upon hearing or seeing the phrase "Religious Democracy". The article at hand tries to find a suitable answer to the fundamental and basic question, to which various answers can be presented. The article at hand provides one of the answers.

To offer final answer to the said "main" question, it is necessary to find answers to a series of peripheral questions. The questions might be: Do by "Religious Democracy" we mean "democracy" in all religions generally or in Islam exclusively? Can one basically speak of democracies or there is only one democracy at all? Why religious democracy? Is religious democracy an artificial and nongenuine phrase or the phrase has been made out of putting together the two words of "religious" and "democracy" with difficulty? Alternatively, it is not basically possible to do that. Irrespective of all the definitions presented

¹ Scientific board member of Allama Tabatabaei University (Tehran)

on religion and democracy thus far in a bid to provide two independent concepts, juxtaposition of the two will result in formation of a new phrase that has an independent and new concept. That's a genuine concept with a new and special content.

Since "religious democracy" was raised for the first time by the ruling Islamists in Iran, so, their goals has been in fact Islamic or religious-Islamic democracy not merely democracy in any religion and in all religions. Subsequently, whatever will come here might not hold true with religious democracy in other religions. For example, it might not hold true with the religious-Christian democracy or religious-Jewish democracy. So, what this article means by democracy is the religious-Islamic democracy.

A reference to contemporary political literature would show that the word "Mardomsalari - (people-oriented)" in Persian language, that is the equivalent of the English word "democracy", would bring about new words if juxtaposed with other words such as liberal, social or... The phrases created as a result would have special meanings. The phrase such as "social democracy"², which is a branch of socialism as certain groups of people so claim, believes in improvement rather than revolution in case of accepting the effect of the principle of democracy in social changes.³

Or take the phrase "liberal democracy"⁴, which is said to refer to a sort of "democracy of representation". That's exactly what one of the wellknown Islamologists of the US, Bernard Lewis, has raised and dealt with in dealing with compatibility/incompatibility of democracy with Islam.⁵ Consequently, it seems that different political and intellectual

² Robertson, 1985; PP.302-303

³ Ashoori, 1999; PP.208-09

⁴ Robertson, PP.186-187

⁵ Lewis, 1993; PP.89-94

schools of thought have focused on a special kind of democracy and embedded it into their own school of thought. The said phrases are the result of embedding of democracy in different schools of thought or the result of dealing with democracy in the said schools of thought.

That Iranian Islamists have, instead of using the phrase “religious democracy” or “Islamic democracy”, preferred to use another coined phrase in the Persian language: “Religious Mardomsalari” The phrase is worth analyzing and justifying from different aspects. The independence seeking and indigenized characteristics of the group have made them use genuine and domestic lexicons and phrases rather than the Latin and foreign ones. Alternatively, they consider and define their own democracy in a way that is different to some extent with the democracy prevalent in the west. As a result, they have preferred to put the phrase on show since the beginning with the change in title and reference.⁶

At any rate, translation of religious democracy into western languages will end up with nothing but “Theo Democracy.”

Two major groups consider the phrase “religious democracy” as non-genuine, uncommon, inconsistent and unlikely. The people are among opponents of religious democracy in theory. The first group favors the kind of democracy which cannot juxtapose religion. The definition and approach of the group on democracy do not go with the definition and approach they present on religion, concluding that religion and democracy cannot be assembled. The other group comprises the pious who think religion and democracy cannot be put together and they are not of the same nature. On the other hand, the group of pious people or

⁶ Qumi, 2003: PP.13-14

the religiously committed individuals believe religious democracy is an imposed, forged and non-realizable concept.⁷

The ones supporting religious democracy in theory too fall into two groups: The first group is the one believing that religious democracy is part of the political view of Islam in terms of government. They hold that democracy in the political ideology of Islam is a genuine element, being an integral part of the ideology of Islamic government.

The second group comprises those who think democracy is mostly a method of government; they do not oppose political injunctions of Islam and take it as a successful and positive method to attract, digest, mix and adapt with essence of Islamic government's ideology. In the view point, Islamic government is a cause which can be materialized in different ways. Among the methods is the democratic method whose effectiveness and advantage has already been proved and touched upon. So, it can be used in the political ideology of Islam and one can speak of religious democracy through its imbedding.⁸

Those opposing religious democracy in theory have some presuppositions that based on them and through their juxtaposition the phrase religious democracy would suffer contradiction or paradox from inside. Among the presuppositions are:

- a) Democracy is a school of thought with its due theoretical foundations, which are not consistent with the theoretical fundamentals of the idea of government in Islam.
- b) Basically, government is private-oriented in Islam and the government's mood of private-orientation is such an ideology that

⁷ See Aftab Magazine, no. 21-24 (December 2002 to March 2003)

⁸ Tajik; 2003: P.19

does not go with public sovereignty which is a principle of democracy.

- c) The origin and source of government in Islam is divine legitimacy, while in the democratic system the source and origin is people.

Consequently, legitimacy of the government comes from people and no one or nothing else. Consequently, the said presuppositions on democracy or religious democracy are not only suffering paradox theoretically but are also facing contradictory and defusing behaviors in practice, provoking its twin, i.e. religious democracy or fundamentalism.⁹

Now let's see what democracy is. What is democracy in kind? What is/are the definition(s) of religion? Which definition on democracy is consistent or inconsistent with which definition on religion? What is the definition on religious democracy and its components? Why and how can religious democracy be called the democracy of the righteous? And finally what do we mean by the democracy of the righteous?

Democracy

Lexically speaking, democracy consists two parts: 'demos' meaning 'people' and 'Kratia' meaning 'sovereignty' in the Greek language.¹⁰ It instantly means "sovereignty of people." Technically dealing with the word, it should be said, "Democracy has throughout history been transformed into a word with broadest rather than most restricted

⁹ Tavassoli; 2003: P.12

¹⁰ Ashoori; 1985: P.87

meaning. And thus far, “no comprehensive definition has been provided on democracy.”¹¹

Regarding the extent and large volume of definitions provided on democracy, some of the definitions are of two types, focusing on experience. There are yet other definitions reflecting the cause and aspirations, principles and values and in other word, the definitions foresee the outcome of the phenomenon.¹²

Certain other people divide the definitions into two major classes of utopist and realistic.¹³ On the other hand, the existing definitions on democracy can fall into two categories of minimalist and maximalist. The recent typology is the concern of the article at hand.

Among the most recent minimalist definitions on democracy, reference should be made to that provided by John Stuart Mill, the 19th century English political philosopher. He considers three conditions being essential for democracy: The public right to vote, free elections and clandestine voting. In his opinion, the basic advantage of democracy is that it removes political corruption. In his opinion, “the more mature democracy is the government which is on the one hand based on the votes and views of the majority and their representatives and on the other hand, benefiting from the qualification and views of the “minority elite” in any legislation procedures and management of affaires.”¹⁴ Joseph Schumpeter is among other minimalist who has presented a definition on democracy in the first half of the 20th century. Defining democracy, he says, “The democratic method of organized arrangements to enforce a series of political decisions in which people reach power and position through the decisions made through competitive elections and votes of

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Hermet, et al 1994:75

¹³ Bashirieh; 2001: P.19

¹⁴ Ibid, P.67

people.”¹⁵ Batamore, meanwhile, defines democracy as a type of government that “allows the elite to run their own affairs and arrange a well-organized competition to gain power.”¹⁶ Carl Cohen, taking a similar approach, takes democracy as a collective government in which members of the society can be/are directly or indirectly involved in making the decisions related to them.” A number of the instructors of politics in South California University have jointly claimed, “Democracy is a type of government in which people or majority of them have the final power at hand and make decisions on main subjects of national politics. In this form of government, maximum personal freedom is consistent with security and social order and welfare. The most extensive and possible opportunities too are available for all to the extent that people get equal (in tune with their natural talents) as much as possible. The most complete type of training personality of mankind and maximum participation of citizens in government affairs are all among specifications of democracy.”¹⁷ Huntington says in the book “The Third Wave of Democracy at the End of the 20th Century”, “The study at hand considers the type of political system in the 20th century as democratic that whose power holders in charge of making decisions for the system are elected by free people, who have the right to vote and can vote correctly, taking part in phased elections honorably, in a competitive way and freely. Such a definition on democracy has two dimensions: Competition and Participation.”¹⁸ The UNESCO too, quoting David Beetham and Kevin Boyle in the book “What is democracy?”, provides a definition on democracy: Democracy belongs to a type of collective decision making and collective decision making contrasts another type of decision making, called personal decision making, in which special groups of people decide alone on behalf of other people. They continue,

¹⁵ Schumpeter, 1974: 269

¹⁶ Hermet et al, 1974: 77

¹⁷ Carlton Klamyr; 2001: P.109

¹⁸ Huntington; 1994: PP.9-10

“Democracy conceptually reveals the aspiration that the decisions affecting society as a whole should be made through views of all society members and also all the members should have equal rights to participate in the decision making. In another word, democracy depends on two major principles of public supervision over collective decision making and having equal rights to make the supervision possible. The more the two principles are influential in the decisions made in a society, the more democratic the society would be.”¹⁹

Hence, what is today referred to as democracy by governments and nations actually is the indirect or representative democracy. It means election of the representatives who would enforce will of majority of people in the legislation assemblies. Among features of such democracies are:

- a. Free elections held every now and then and constantly and whose mature citizens have the right to vote and the candidates and parties - either those favoring or disfavoring government - can take part in the elections campaign freely or the voting should be clandestine and free of any threat.
- b. In such elections, there will be the possibility for an effective election; i.e. the elections should not be limited to candidates of a party and if the majority of voters do not vote to the then government, the ruling will be entrusted to others.
- c. The board of representatives, called parliament, congress, national assembly, parliament and so on, have the right of legislation and the right to vote on taxation and supervision on the budget (through its majority votes) and can openly question government

¹⁹ Beetham and Boyle; 2000: P.17

decisions and criticize or oppose them without its members being threatened, annoyed or arrested.²⁰

Among maximalist definitions on democracy, provided in the 17th and 18th centuries, is the one presented by John Lock. He stresses main elements of democracy, namely human beings' natural freedom and equality, the right to live and ownership of human beings, the conditions and limits set for government by the natural law and public descent, religious laxity, separation of government powers, principality of society before government and the right to rise up against the despotic rulers."²¹

What Lock maintains in the definition is in fact nothing but main foundations of liberal democracy; the definition on liberalism indicates: "The theory or politics want the degrees of freedom against domination or guidance of government or any other institution, which threatens man's freedom. It is a movement which believes people are not the nationals of the despotic government rather the law should support them in their private affairs. As far as public affairs are concerned people should supervise government through the parliament, elected through free elections. It is a philosophy through which no one should damage health, life, freedom and property of others. It is a belief which gives high importance to person and opposes any grouping, including government or masses of people. As far as economic ideologies are concerned, liberalism means resistance against government's control over economic life and especially resistance against restriction of trade through levying taxes on the imports, resistance against any kind of monopoly and unwise and harmful interference of government in generation and distribution of wealth."²²

²⁰ Ashoori; 1999: PP.157-158

²¹ Bashirieh; Ibid; P.55

²² Ashoori; 1985: PP.148-149

As observed, in the maximalist definition of democracy, democracy is actually taken synonymous to liberalism; certain people have taken democracy as one of the principles of liberalism, while considering other aspects as individualism, rationalism, utilitarianism, and liberty for it.²³

There are, however, certain groups of people, who believe the idea of internal link between liberalism and democracy is highly misleading. This is because classic liberalism is usually different with liberal democracy, especially considering the fact that after ambitions of the contribution democracy in the French 1789 revolution, and liberals, especially in France, laid the least trust in full democracy.” At any rate, it can be said that always an aspect of liberalist tradition exists which calls for expansion of the right to vote as the fundamental right of the owner citizens.”²⁴

Among liberals, Stuart Mill, whose definition of democracy was included among the definitions provided by minimalists on democracy, was the most optimistic liberal theorists on democracy. However, the dimension of the classic liberals’ pessimism in democracy continued until the 20th century and suspicion in the role and need to democracy still exists in the classic liberalism.” This is because some of their problem with democracy is that democracy has always necessarily caused adoption of the liberal policies.”²⁵ Among the liberals, reference should be made to Thomas Jefferson and Hayek. Jefferson reasoned in the 18th century that liberalism needs supplementation precautions in dealing with democracy. Hayek too in the 20th century considered democracy and freedom having different goals, which might or might not correspond with each other.

²³ Wincent; 1999: PP.54-73

²⁴ Ibid; P.72

²⁵ Ibid

The limited supportive democracy might support freedom but there are some dangers existing.²⁶

In view of Blandel, liberalism and democracy are two separate concepts and there is not necessarily any affinity. In his opinion, liberalism and democracy are two separate analytical concepts which juxtaposed with each other in the west due to developments in the 19th century Europe. But if a political system, while giving people the opportunity to participate, does not allow considerable competition, it might be taken as democratic while not being liberal.”²⁷

However, in contrast, certain people believe that in “the liberalism prospect, no democracy other than the democracy being based on the liberalism principles does exist.”²⁸ In the approach, “democracy is taken as a government formula, which summarizes exigencies of the liberalistic ideology, completing and implementing it.”²⁹ That is the same maximalist definition on democracy; the definition takes democracy synonymous with liberalism or liberal democracy. Though according to George Burdeau, “the claim is based on casual observation based on which liberalism’s preference over democracy is evident.” But, the same historical and occasional approach to democracy’s development worldwide shows that on a point in history, the rulers believed in self-sufficiency of liberal democracy to solve all problems; thus they decided to heal social strives necessarily through the political-oriented democracy. We do know what the result of such a healing was. Having seen the defeat of liberal democracy, victims of such strives started to have other approach on democracy. They pinned their hope on social

²⁶ Ibid; P.73

²⁷ Blandel; 1999: P.57

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

democracy and therefore liberal democracy was a phase out of a series of phases to attain a genuine freedom.”³⁰

Hence, it is observed how the definition on democracy is fluctuating between the two points of minimalism and maximalism. Among the definitions, the most prevalent and customary of which is the minimalist definition, which provide several indices for existence or absence or materialization and non-materialization of it in societies. Indices such as the one coming in the Huntington’s definition (competition and participation) or indices such as the UNESCO book indices, are as follows: “The equal right of all to contribute to the decision making for public affairs in society, people’s having decisive role in political decisions, the right of all for supervision over collective decisions, and eventually having equal rights to enforce the supervision.

In fact, democracy is the type of government which is in contrast to personal governments. According to Huntington, “In other government systems, people gain power and stand as leader based on such criteria as birth, luck and fortune, wealth, force and aggression, inter-election, wisdom, appointment or passing of tests. In the democracy, being based on the working procedure, the principle of election is based on election of leaders by the public through free competitive elections.”³¹ So, in democracy the sovereignty of people would replace sovereignty of despotism, dictatorship and totalitarianism and that through the ruling person. The means, vehicle and method of establishment of public sovereignty is systematic, constant and regular participation of them in power and having them win a share in power through elections and supervision over the conduct and decisions of those elected or the rulers. This is because in different political and social democracies, the commonality is public participation through the representative method

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Huntington; Ibid: P.8

and reference to public votes. This is because only that way, people in a small or big society can rule over themselves.”³²

What is nowadays seen of democracy or rule of people objectively, is not the direct public sovereignty but sovereignty through representation. In another word, if Abraham Lincoln’s well-known interpretation of the definition of democracy, i.e. “people’s government by people and for people” was first of all taken that through direct democracy all people would decide all affairs through participation in elections, what is observed today and is clear manifestation of democracy and is the only way for its materialization, is indirect democracy or the representative democracy. In another word, the most genuine form of democracy, i.e. direct democracy, is in action impossible and due to the same reason, that’s for years that human beings have sufficed to indirect type of democracy or the election or representative democracy.

The question is: Can a system, being based on elections, meet all the early expectations of democracy and be really democratic? Among old political theorists, Rousseau has had a negative answer to such a question. His reasoning in negation of the point has been in the parliamentary systems, people are provided with freedom once in few years and only at the time of elections. Afterwards, people make recourse to the affiliation stance and obeying laws which is not better than slavery.³³ Of course, in contrast to the leftist response, the rightists have the justification that the parliamentary system is the best system to have been designed up to so far to maintain control over government under conditions when population of the country reach millions and people have no chance to spend all their time on constantly dealing with political issues. The idea holds that in such a system, people can through election of the head of government (president or prime minister) and election of

³² Sahhafian; 1997: P.5

³³ David Beetham and Boyle; 2000: P.24

members of the legislation power, can supervise the government because parliament, using its power to pass or reject laws and through method of taxation, is capable of constant supervision over government's conduct by the public. Of course, the public supervision would be meaningful once elections are free and fair and government is a transparent government and parliament is practically having enough power to control and have careful supervision over government performance.³⁴

Thus, democracy is known, in its early lexical form and has some restrictions from the theoretical and practical standpoints. The first restricting point with democracy is its getting limited to representation and being based on elections. The second restricting point is within election itself. Also, elections do not cover all spheres of general domain of man's life even when it wants to elect representatives. It considers limits for those elected and those electing. The restrictions are practically visible in the election and factional systems. The restrictions include the method of vote counting to age limits of those electing and those getting elected, their literacy rate, their membership and non-membership in a party, way to finance election expenses, the effect of mass propaganda and new imperialism over selection of those electing. Especially, what observed, more than limits of those electing, is the restrictions of those elected. In practice, all do not have the possibility to run candidates for elections. So getting all the restrictions into consideration, the extent of democracy's action gets further limited. What remains in fact is the one inside whose borders democracy is materialized and can be observed.

It seems that early democracy cannot evade limits and boundaries. In another word, the necessary, absolute and early link between democracy and freedom is in practice damaged; especially, it is observed when discussing freedom of those electing and those elected. Recalling the fact

³⁴ Ibid; P.25

that there might be some people having more chance to turn candidate and representative with better and higher social, financial, political and so on chances, seems to be enough to understand such an important subject.

Now, in line with the argument, there is a question: “Regarding the role of objective and experimental realities in definition of democracy, what can be the goal of democracy in religious democracy? Before answering the question, it seems necessary to provide an answer to the question, provide a clear-cut and transparent definition of religion, which can enlighten the religious section of the religious democracy.

Religion

Regarding the present realities and literature, the approach towards religion and its definition can fall into two major categories within definitions provided by maximalists and minimalists.³⁵

Those having minimalist definition of religion, take it as a belief and merely personal, which return to relation between man and God. It is the relation in which belief in the world hereafter, award, and chastisement³⁶, provokes special private morals and behavior. In the definition, religion is a personal tradition and practice that within the framework and through acting on it, any man adjusts his relation with source of existence (God). In the definition, religion is the plan of worshiping.³⁷ And also, it is mysterious and shocking relationship.³⁸ In this definition, religion has no social mission and nature. When that’s the case, absolutely, once cannot and should not have any political expectation of religion because in that case, unwise expectation is made of religion. In the definition, the most

³⁵ Scruton, 1982: 399

³⁶ Amid; 1984: P.994

³⁷ Soroush; 1999: P.124

³⁸ Ibid; P.126

important lesson of religion, which is considered its essence, is the lesson of worshipping.³⁹ Religion, based on the approach, is a cause which teaches us we are not God. The one, who considers himself as God, has special kind of behavior; his policy is the policy of worshipers and not the policy of Gods; his government is the government of worshipers and not government of Gods; his morals is the moral of worshipers and not morals of Gods.”⁴⁰

Such an approach on religion and such a definition would lead to a trend in the contemporary world that is called secularism.⁴¹ The process, which would take years, has happened and is observed specifically in the West, considers a fully non-materialistic, general and physical position and function for religion based on a special definition provided on religion. (The minimalist definition of democracy) Consequently, whatever is related to the materialistic, general and physical life of man is considered separate from religion and no role is considered for religion, its concepts, goals and mission. As a result, such an approach on religion is put outside general zone of man’s life, getting limited to a fully mental and personal atmosphere.⁴² Among the most important general or materialistic zones of man’s life, from which religion has been put away, is political realm and extent of man’s life. Hence, in such an approach no function and role is foreseen for religion in politics since the beginning. Even entry of religion into the realm is taken contrary to expectation of religion and as a result, it is distinguished as corruptive and harmful.

The maximalist definition of religion, especially the definition on Islam which is the subject of the study at hand, considers times broader definition for religion and Islam. Based on that type of definition, “Islam

³⁹ Ibid; P.371

⁴⁰ Ibid; P.373

⁴¹ Hermet et al; 1994: 259

⁴² Ibid

sets a clear path; it is a way of life and a course to perfection; the tradition is a belief and has a plan: That's an idea which identifies the world of existence and specifies man's condition in this extensive field, expressing the main goal behind his creation and outlining the plan all vital organizations and establishments originate from and rely on the idea. It brings Islamic ideology as an existing reality in man's life; the examples are: moral organization, namely roots of morals and fundamental bases as well as the forces in society which support it, political organizations and form of government and its specifications, social system and whatever is influential in its maintenance and survival, the economic and philosophical systems of its establishment, international law and global solidarity."⁴³

Based on the definition and approach on Islam, Islam proposes a comprehensive and extensive interpretation which is the baseline of human beings' living system, guiding people to monotheism from ignorance through its complete plan, which is based on monotheism. As it puts right doing on its agenda in order for purification of man's heart and soul, considers its rules and regulations as the restricted plan so as to upgrade his standard of living."⁴⁴

Hassan al-Bana says, "Since Islam comprises all living aspects both in this world and the world hereafter, so it can be called the school of worshiping, patriotism, civilization, religion, government, ethics, action, Quran and sword."⁴⁵

Asked from Ikhvan-ul-Moslemin (Islamic Brotherhood) to comment on Islam and politics, he said, "If Islam is not the religion of politics, social affairs, economy, law and culture, so what is it? Is it only bowing,

⁴³ Seyed Ghotb, 1980; P.17

⁴⁴ Ibid, P.38

⁴⁵ Moussa al-Hosseini, 1998, P.114

prostration, and prayers? They ask: Isn't it a surprise that communism should have a government through which to rule and invite others to it as other systems and nations too can have governments for which they campaign but Islam should not have an Islamic government to do something for Islam and defend it? By Islam, it is meant a religion having all advantages of other schools of thought, while being free of any of their shortcomings; by Islam it is meant a religion presenting a global system to the world people and offers principles solutions to their spiritual and materialistic pains and even considers it as Muslims' duty to relieve needs of others. By Islam we mean the religion that considers people accountable before each other and has compiled the most progressive systems for community of human beings well before manifestation of the said schools of thought. The Islam we have cited is the one which says in its Quran: "We have put the group of people among you to invite others to the good and prohibit them from the vice, guiding you to the way which would lead you to prosperity."⁴⁶

Here the relationship between Islam - as a religion - and politics is so obvious that even the opponents have admitted to such a relationship between religion and politics and have dedicated an independent discussion, entitled "Islam and politics", to it, speaking of whys and hows.⁴⁷

Hamid Enayat, too, has in many ways presented justifications on the issue, saying why Muslims have always had special tendency towards politics, directly stemming from the heart and bottom of Islam.⁴⁸ To justify the relationship between politics and religion in Islamic culture, he firstly deals with the point that "if politics in nature is the art of living and working with others, so four out of five pillars of Islam (prayers,

⁴⁶ Ibid, P.115

⁴⁷ Hermet, 1994; 138-139

⁴⁸ Enayat, 1993; P.17

fasting, charity, Hajj, testimony, revealing oneness of God and prophethood of Hazrat Mohammad (PBUH) are suitable for elevation of the spirit of cooperation and group cohesion among its followers.” In another justification, he says, “If based on another viewpoint, the spirit of politics is taken as constant efforts to gain power, it can hardly be possible to provide more political viewpoint on Islam. Islam which has always identified human nature consistent with his physical and spiritual needs, has never been happy with outlining and expressing his aspirations. Rather, it has constantly been in efforts to provide means to address the causes and power is a basic tool to achieve the goal. Quran asks the faithful follow lofty lessons or good tradition of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH):

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

“Indeed the messenger of Allah is an outstanding exemplar for those who have hope in Allah grace and in the last day and who keep on saying Allah’s remembrance.”⁴⁹

Since the prophet has been mainly successful to found a government based on Islamic injunctions, Muslims too have the duty to take lessons from him in that concern.”⁵⁰ According to Enayat, there is yet more simple reason for Islam’s solidarity with politics as arts of government: Enforcement of a number of collective duties or compulsory duties of Muslims, which are more important than inviting to good and prohibiting from the vice, and defense of Islam is only possible in light of the government, which might not be committed to Islam entirely but is at least interested in and favors its goals.” To sum up his justification, Enayat says hence, any Muslim living under rule of a committed or Islam-supportive regime, should actively contribute to its survival and on

⁴⁹ Quran: Al-Ahzab (Parties): verse 21

⁵⁰ Ibid

the contrary, any Muslim lives under the yoke of a regime being hostile to Islam should fight to down it whenever the time is ripe.” And Enayat finally provides yet different definition on Islam, considering Islam being political. Somewhere he says, “Eventually, if the problem lies in basis of Islam when there is argument who should rule and why we should obey the rules, no vigilant Muslim can study his history - even simply and superficially - with his co-beliefs without having any need to question about the questions and arguing them. The need to such an approach and behavior gets stronger when Muslims are dominated by foreigners as many of them were so in the past four centuries, i.e. they were under rule of foreign or foreign-affiliated government.”⁵¹

Hence, based on the definition of religion, especially that of Islam, proved by maximalism point of view, Islam cannot be a social, cultural, economic, civilized and political religion. Political Islam has been born, lived and survived up to so far. Expecting Islam not to be political would be unreal and not vice versa. Here when speaking the quality of government in Islam, especially when looking for the best choice and method of government in the contemporary world, the theory of religious democracy is raised inside the political ideology of contemporary Islam.

Religious Democracy

Now, based on what was said about religion and democracy, it can be said what is religious democracy or how it can be.

Based on the minimalist and maximalist definitions on democracy and those on religion, four positions can be forecast on democracy from theoretical standpoint:

⁵¹ Ibid, P.18

1. Religious democracy comprising both categories of religion and democracies on the basis of the minimalist definition
2. Religious democracy covering both concepts of religion and democracy based on the maximalist definition
3. Religious democracy based on the maximalist definition of democracy and of minimalist definition of religion
4. Religious democracy based on the minimalist definition of democracy and maximalist definition of religion.
5. The composition, covering the minimalist definition of religion and minimalist definition of democracy, would not have any room for religious democracy because minimalist definition of religion does not basically provide any general and social ground for religion based on which one can expect religion to be political, redefining a view on government in it. Of course, the minimalist definition on religion can be presented with a religious approach or from religious point of view or with a democratic approach. At any rate, the result believed in secularism, which does not foresee any position for religion in public affairs: either with an intra-religious and Islam-oriented approach or extra-religious and democratic view. At any rate, the two cannot be juxtaposed through the approach.
6. Through the composition, which provides a maximalist definition of religion as well as maximalist definition of democracy, it would not be possible to materialize religious democracy as well. This is because, in the maximalist definition of democracy, what is basis of action and theory is liberalism and religion, either in its minimalist definition or the maximalist definition, would not be compatible with liberalism. The point of departure of religion is God and man's compatibility with divine orders or at least in-advance contribution of divine rules and orders in

man's life, including the public and at least private life; whereas in liberalism any intervention and imposition from outside man's self and God in the name of humanism and individualism and in the name of God and on part of God would not be acceptable and tolerable. Consequently, religion and liberalism go alongside each other, never cutting each other.

7. In the third composition, i.e. when maximalist definition of democracy and minimalist definition of religion is concerned, no evidence in connection with religious democracy can be found. This is because liberalism in nature is not consistent with religion, either in its minimalist definition or maximalist definition. At any rate, religion is a tradition based on former plan and the definition a pious man would accept before anything else. The point of departure means negation of the point of departure of liberalism in which man does not accept any limit from outside. Of course, there might be some claims that when man accepts religion based on its personal interests, he has in fact accepted the limit within framework of liberalism and its foundations. In that case, even turning a blind eye to many questions and problems, the accepted religion would be a religion with minimal definition. However, this would be a problem with the religion: religion cannot be mixed with many other foundations of liberalism even in its minimalist definition. As a result, the paradox of religion in the minimalist definition and democracy in its maximalist definition would never be solvable.

8. Hence, it seems that only under one condition religious democracy can be materialized, that is the composition made of juxtaposition of the maximalist definition of religion and the minimalist definition of democracy. Under such a condition since a general, social and political ground is defined for religion, religion's entry to politics and presentation of a view and method for it would be allowed and sometimes necessary. And also, since a minimalist definition of democracy is concerned, so, on the basis of the democracy a method of ruling would be taken into

consideration. It can be imagined that such a method is re-defined, embedded, indigenized and accepted within framework of the religious theories on politics and government.

- a. Hence, religious democracy is a religion being based on a maximalist definition of religion and a minimalist definition of democracy. As seen, the two are the most prevalent, most customary and even most objective definition thus far presented on religion - at least Islam - and democracy in the contemporary world. There are a few persons to be found claiming that he can introduce Islam as a minimalist religion, limited to personal life of a Muslim human being. Perhaps theoretically, one can speak of a religion that is minimal in nature, thus reasoning that such a religion is more helpful for human beings; but when speaking about Islam, we do not touch on abstract phenomena. Islam is a religion, dating as back as more than 1400 years with all its specifications with a long historical record. Scientifically speaking of the reality is commenting on it objectively. Looking to Islam would reveal that it is a social and political religion. Muslim man has personal as well as social and political duties. In the course of history of Islam, Muslim man has lived so and taken into consideration the same way.
- b. The definition provided on democracy, that is realistic in nature, belongs to minimalist definition of democracy. It arises from the average of its materialization and its function throughout several hundred years of history of mankind, especially the western man. Based on the definition, democracy or rule of people is made possible practically through free and fair elections and based on which representatives of people have the power and oversee its practice on behalf of people and through special mechanism. In growth of the mechanism, besides rule of the public through

house of representatives and supervision over the executive power by this way (through the legislation power), the head of the executive power too is elected by the public either directly (public voting) or indirectly (getting elected by Majlis). Either representatives or head of the executive power are elected for a specific period of time. The mechanism of Majlis supervision over the Executive Branch is provided by the law and the method of the two's engagement too is specified by the law so much so that in the constitution of majority of countries, head of the Executive Branch has the right to dissolve house of representatives of the nation so that they would be elected through another election and under other conditions other representatives would be elected. The right to vote is public but the people aged less than a limit or not having a country's nationality, even residing in the country, or not being healthy or wise enough and the like would not have the right to vote. All too can be elected. But here too such conditions as age, education, residence for a specific period in a region, having the qualification to gain genuine nationality of a country, are among other restricting conditions in an election. Party system and election system of the country are among other restricting and obligatory mechanisms as well as binding conditions for elections.

- c. Based on the above notes, what can be expected of the model in connection with religious democracy should naturally go with the minimalist definition of democracy. Evidently, no liberalistic expectation of democracy can be on the consideration with respect to religious democracy; it would neither be able to materialize. Under such a condition, religious democracy due to the importance it gives to democracy is in many ways

considerably similar to other kinds of democracy, including liberal democracy or social democracy and so on. The only difference is that it tries to allay concerns over people's real sovereignty and not their artificial sovereignty in a more justified and convincing way. It was an anxiety being a point of constant conflict between western capitalist liberalism led by the US and east's socialist Marxism led by the former Soviet Union. One of them used to define real democracy in an open capitalist system, while the other believed the definition on democracy in a capitalist system is nothing but deception and lie because in their view, what is actually found in capitalist liberalism was sovereignty of capital and wealth and not sovereignty of nation and people. This is because the one had the condition to be elected that could deceive the public through wealth as there were many qualified people never been able to be candidates let alone getting elected just because of not having any wealth. Or, political ploys used to affect the constituency and drastically lower the power of choice of people as those electing and the potential candidates as those getting elected. In contrast, the left considers its democracy more real because people vote and get candidate under conditions when due to being in equal economic condition as a result of cancellation of private ownership put in equal condition. As a result, what comes at the end is a real democracy. The rival ideology, however, considers the election non-democratic, rather elections under fully closed and unilateral condition in which people practically vote to candidates of the communist party and not the varied and different parties that considered it as the requisite of whose democracy.

- d. At any rate, religious democracy too as a model which despite accepting private ownership insists on social justice and despite

giving priority to social justice and religious aspiration is not relying on mono-party system. It tries to attain a formula in practice in which people's real sovereignty would be more materialized and not sovereignty of capital or sovereignty of party or oligarchic sovereignty of special parties. Perhaps one of the reasons for certain political instabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran's religious democracy is the result of such an approach.

- e. At any rate, what can be found in religious democracy and should be expected to be so, is the average of democracy which has also come in the minimalists' definition of democracy and not the aspiration features of it which has never and nowhere been materialized.

Consequently, alike other democracy, in the religious democracy, too, the question is not mainly this: If people did not vote to sovereignty of religion or religious system, what would be then? That is a cliché question, which may concern any theory on government, especially the so-called advocates of democracy and even the governments not having such a claim. The response to the question is clear.

Since government is not something abstract and in practice includes two major parties, the group ruling over others and the ones (people) who are ruled by others. Without consent of those being ruled, no government, including the religious governments, would be able to be established or survive. The response given to the question by those believing in any sort of governments is in practice similar. That is the main question to which many answers are given based on different theories. The main question of the study at hand too can be:

What is the position of people in religious democracy once such a system is established and accepted by the public? In another word, once such a

system is established on the will and demand of people in society, how the position of people in governments and running of social and country's affairs could and should be? Here, democracies, including religious democracy, have given different answers.

The religious democracy, whose clear example is seen in the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution, says: "In the Islamic Republic of Iran country's affairs should be managed through elections and public votes: presidential, Majlis, council and so on elections. Also, the affairs can be run through referendum held on many occasions, specified in other articles of the law."⁵²

The religious democracy theory, which is based on Holy Quran's injunction which says "Who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation" and "...and for running their affairs they employ mutual consultations..."⁵³ and «... وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ...»⁵⁴ and consult with them in affairs...⁵⁴ we have notions on councils, including Islamic Consultative Assembly, provincial and city council, local, district, village and so on councils, serving as pillars of decision making and management of country's affaires."⁵⁵ In the theory, inviting to good and prohibiting from the vice is a public duty and people are accountable before each other as government is accountable before the public and the public before government.⁵⁶ So, people and government share equal rights and duties with respect to each other and as government has the legal authority to sovereign, people have the legal and religious authority to rule. Such a right for the public stems from the ideological and religious foundations and beliefs of religious democracy because based on the theory absolute sovereignty over the world and man belongs to

⁵² Article six of the Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution

⁵³ Quran; Ash-Shura (Consultation), verse 38

⁵⁴ Quran; Ale Imran (Family of Imran): verse 159

⁵⁵ Article seven of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution

⁵⁶ Article eight of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution

God and it has made man rule over his social destiny. No one can deprive man of its divine right or put it at service of interests of special person or group and nation puts the right in practice in ways that would come in the incoming principles.”⁵⁷

So, in religious democracy people supervise government through electing head of the government (president) and electing members of the legislation power.⁵⁸ Parliament’s power in Iran’s religious democracy is to the extent that no one has the right to dissolve it and fundamental and vital decisions which have something to do with people’s life are made by the institutions selected by the people themselves, like councils, Islamic Consultative Assembly, Experts Assembly and President himself.⁵⁹

Democracy of the Righteous

But, the main difference between religious democracy and other types of democracies is content of the sort of political system, as are manifested in the goals defined for the government. The goals are the ones coming in this article, entitled the Government of the Righteous or Democracy of the Righteous.

In the religious democracy theory, the goal of government is guaranteeing man’s growth to lead him towards divine system (And to Allah is the return of all⁶⁰ - (وَالَى اللّٰهُ الْمَصِيرُ). To meet the goal, government should act in a way to help manifestation of talents so that man’s heavenly aspects are displayed.

⁵⁷ Article 56 of the Islamic Republic Constitution

⁵⁸ Refer to What is Democracy? UNESCO Publications; P.25

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Quran: An-Nur (The Light), verse 42

(تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ - Behave fair virtues (commendable moral qualities) as Allah behaves all). In the religious democracy model materialization of the lofty goal would not be possible unless through active and extensive contribution of all social elements to social developments.

Attaining such a lofty goal and its materialization would not be possible unless through active and all-out contribution of all social strata into social affairs. What provides the ground for such a contribution in all the political and vital decision making procedures for all social strata so that in the course of man's perfection any person becomes accountable for his progress and leadership is the constitution? It is the law which guarantees negation of any intellectual and social despotism and economic monopoly, striving to put an end to despotism and entrust public destiny to them.”

In the religious democratic system, firstly, “the righteous are in charge of running and management of country's affairs. This is because holy Quran has forecast a bright future for mankind.

«... أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ»

“...My righteous believers shall eventually inherit the earth.”⁶¹

Secondly, the legislator who is in charge of defining social management disciplines acts in line with Quran and tradition. “And to do the affair carefully,” it is necessary for fair, pious and committed (fair jurisprudents) to have careful and precise supervision over the issue.⁶²

Hence, religious democracy is a type of political system that contrasts any kind of despotic systems, guaranteeing ceding of public affairs to

⁶¹ Quran: Al-Anbiyaa (Messengers); verse 105

⁶² Prelude of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution-Method of government in Islam

themselves and being committed to provide the ground for people's active and extensive contribution in all the political and vital decision makings in their society. Elections and the choice of the public would ultimately decide person(s) to whom power would be entrusted.

The quality or macro boundaries of the political contribution to one's fate, in another word the democracy in the Islamic government, openly reveal several Quranic verses on government. The verses are the ones that if put together draw the framework and content of the religious-Islamic democracy system and ways of materialization of the type of political system.

The verse 128 of Quranic chapter Araf says:

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

“Mussa said to his people: “Invoke to Allah for help and be patient. Verily, the earth belongs to Allah and He gives it as a heritage to whomsoever He wills of His worshippers; and the blessed end belongs to the pious.”⁶³

The verse says earth belongs to God and its property. It further reveals that God will put the property at the disposal of any one of whose worshippers He likes and of course the outcome rests with the faithful.

The verse five of Chapter Qassas too introduces inheritors of earth in another way; somewhere it says:

وَتُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ

“But we willed to bestow our favor on the oppressed; and make them the governors and make them the heirs of the oppressors.”⁶⁴

⁶³ Quran: Al-A'raf (the lofty barrier between the inhabitants of paradise and of the hell); verse 128

Here Quran says in the future, earth will go to the oppressed as it was the case at the time of Pharaoh. Based on the verse, God's will is for the oppressed getting inheritors of earth. Most obviously, by God's will we mean absoluteness and favorableness of the will.

In the verse 55 of chapter Nur, God gives another promise in that connection:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

Allah has promised to those of you mankind who believe and do good that he will appoint them the rulers in the world as he appointed those before them; and will establish in authority their religion which He is pleased with it; and He will replace security for their fears; [and Allah states:] They should worship me only and should not consider any partner for Me; so those who disbelieve after this, they are indeed transgressors.”⁶⁵

The verse touches on God's promise that the faithful and the righteous will be his successor on earth. Islam will spread on earth and the faithful will be in complete security. Here, future of the earth and the successor, intended by God, is a befitting government, introduced as the government and rule of the righteous. The important affair has been emphasized in verse 105 of al-Anbia chapter of Quran. Somewhere Quran says:

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزُّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

⁶⁴ Quran: Al-Qassaas (the Narratives), verse 5

⁶⁵ Quran: An-Nur (the light), verse 55

“And we wrote in the psalms which came after Taurat; My righteous believers shall eventually inherit the earth.”⁶⁶

Here too Quran explicitly introduces the promise for government of the righteous on earth as a promise given both early in creation and at the end, as there will be no doubt in it.

So, based on Quran analyses and promises, the future of earth and mankind belongs to Islam, the righteous, the faithful and the pious. The government and succession favored by Quran is the government and succession of the righteous, who will eventually and finally dominate on earth.

Consequently, in religious democracy system, besides the ideological and logical conditions man sets for the elected ones based on his own interests, there are yet more necessary conditions for the issue, namely competency of the elected. Based on the Quranic rule, basically the ones who are not the righteous would not be eligible to run candidates for the government post. This holds true for those who might not be qualified in terms of age, education, nationality or party membership, to run candidacy for the government post.

So, in religious democracy, those elected would besides having other conditions which are the requisite for candidacy for the election in all democratic systems in tune with conditions of any society, the condition for righteousness too is among the fundamental and basic conditions of those due to be elected. Of course, the mechanism for identification of the righteous and competency of individuals is too important and vital, as the goal will be made possible through careful plan and policies because any neglect would raise the danger of violating democracy. Evidently, finding such a mechanism is possible and completely accessible. At any

⁶⁶ Quran: Al-Anbiyaa (Messengers); verse 105

rate, in all democracies, including the democracy of the righteous, the free and fairness of elections should be observed and guaranteed. So, the mechanism to distinguish righteousness of the elected individuals should be absolutely a fair one so that no body's right would be violated; otherwise, the political system claiming to have a righteous government would be deviated from the right path; so no right person, collection and system can be considered unjust. Hence, in the democracy of the righteous too alike other democracies is right of the public and the qualifications envisioned for those elected would be exactly the qualifications envisaged for most democracies. Such qualifications as age, wisdom, nationality and residence are the noteworthy conditions envisaged in the religious democracy system and can be the democracy of the righteous. So, contrary to certain democracies, in which voting and participation in elections is legally mandatory, all citizens are based on the law duty bound to take part in elections and vote. There is no such legal mandate religious democracy; rather it is a religious duty. In another word, in religious democracy, those electing would in the name of Islam and its laws, such as enjoining to good and prohibiting from the vice, are religiously duty bound to take part in elections and vote.

The duty is an internal duty and a religious assignment not merely a legal assignment and a citizenship duty; though its approval would rule out the negation. But the principle of competency in the democracy of the righteous is something subjected to those elected. This means that the non-righteous individuals would not have the merit and right to run candidates to be elected. Such a qualification is unprecedented in its kind but the type of democracies is not well accustomed to it. For instance, in countries whose election system is somehow in a listing form.⁶⁷ People have the right to vote to candidates put in a list presented by any party in the constituencies. This means that those elected cannot run elections and

⁶⁷ Blitz and Masikut; 2000: PP.11-12

get candidates unless through support of a specific party. In another word, that's the party that decides who has the competency to run candidate in an election and who is not qualified for the job. In the democracy of the righteous too an authority (the authority can be parties too or at least part of the duty is delegated to parties) would decide who is the right and qualified to run candidate or is not right and is not qualified to run candidacy. The different on the type, quality and means of deciding qualifications is something of secondary importance compared to the need for qualification of those elected. The point which should be made clear here is: Is righteousness of the rulers in the democracy of the righteous, which runs through a kind of self-control or internal-control method and supervision over rulers and stresses controlling the rulers from the standpoint of faith, piety and righteousness of the rulers, enough or external control mechanisms, such as legal, social, and political control as well as supervision and judgment of public opinion, too should be given the importance in such a democratic system? The response is: The democracy of the righteous alike other types of democracies would be free to allow the need for control and supervision over the rulers through legal, social, factional and political tools. In another word, it welcomes all structural, rational, logical, legal and religious supervision mechanisms for supervision over the rulers but besides all the external control mechanisms it believes in existence of an internal control mechanism that is times stronger and more efficient. Once both the mechanisms exist in a political system, the system is times healthier, more efficient and better than the systems being based on a merely external control mechanism or the systems being based on trust without external control. In fact, the religious-Islamic democratic systems or the democracy of the righteous, laying the condition of righteousness for those getting elected and the rulers, stresses and emphasizes external controls and general supervision, thus raising

coefficient of trust in such types of political systems compared to other democracies.

In democracy of the righteous those getting elected would have to observe even after election a framework in action, especially when ratifying the kind of laws falling within framework of Shari'ah of Islam and injunctions of the religion. In another word, those getting elected cannot adopt the laws which would be contrary to Islam's Shari'ah and fall beyond realm of Islam. Of course the condition exists generally in all types of democracies. In all democracies, those elected would have to observe laws and restrict themselves to the laws within framework of their communities' culture and folklore. For example, in the US congress never such issues as possible Norouz (As Iranian year calendar 13 public Holidays) vacation or public holiday on the day of Ashoora is on debate and passed.

Why? This is because the point has no room in Americans' culture and folklore. Or, it would be highly unlikely to think Christmas would be announced public holiday in Saudi Arabia. This is because all legislators are naturally limited and confined by culture of their own society. Major portion of all communities' culture stems from religion of the communities. For instance, with removal of Islam from culture of Muslim communities, it would be unclear if something called culture would ever exist. In such communities, culture and public culture are highly mixed with Islam and its principles, injunctions, beliefs, traditions and rituals.

Consequently, in the democracy of the righteous or in the religious-Islamic democracies, those elected are committed and have the duty to pass the laws which would not be in contradiction with Shari'ah of Islam. And, such an important goal, as explained earlier, while having a religious, ideological and theoretical condition, has a sociological,

philanthropic and psychological condition that should be observed in all democracies in practice. For instance, in France, those elected in the name of French revolution and laic principles would have to protect non-religions blocks or not to let religion interfere in ratification of laws and all public affairs of the French citizens. The same issue holds true with the democracy of the righteous or religious democracy. For instance, in Iran's religious democracy too, those elected would have to act within framework of religion in the name of Islamic Revolution and in the name of religion (Islam). They cannot turn a blind eye to religious injunctions, orders and cautions in general affairs of Muslims' life when adopting laws.

Conclusion

Based on the above factions, it can be concluded:

1. According to Austin Reni, "Neither science nor logic can prove that a special concept of democracy (including the concept offered here) is only the right concept. In another word, it is a concept that would be illogical or immoral if all people reject it and they should be loyal to it. The right sense of democracy, such as the meaning of any other word, depends on the degree of understanding and accepting in general."⁶⁸

Majority of the definitions raised on democracy do not consider it synonymous and in association with liberalism. Democracy can go along liberalism or any other political school of thought, bringing about a type of democracy. As a result, democracy is more like a method in government.

It is a collective government in which society members are on many cases directly or indirectly involved and can have a role in all the

⁶⁸ Renni; 1995: P.137

decisions related to them.⁶⁹ It is the form of government in which people are the main elements. According to Arbalester, “Any claim that government or regime of society” is in fact democratic in an eventual analysis, should - though seeming unacceptable in whatever extent - contain the implicit concept that this or that government, regime or ruling system under discussion serve the public this or that way or be their representative.

The public’s real demand should be raised through it and people should support it even if the support is necessarily represented in the form of ethics and rules such as elections.⁷⁰

According to Arbalester, satisfaction, agreement or support of “people” have growingly turned into the main source of legitimacy of the governments and regimes that might be power-monger in nature. Religion or “divine rule” - as the Chinese call it - have not been rejected instantly and have even revived in the world of Islam somehow. But even there too a relative democratic and popular phenomenon does exist. Only the religions, provided by support of masses, will gain legitimacy. Islamic laws in Iran or Pakistan and to some extent catholic laws in Ireland are welcomed just because they are basically the religion accepted by the public at large. If no such public base does exist, the laws would be imposed on the public with much difficulty, although it can be imposed on them. Hence, the minimalist definitions on democracy are the most customary and prevalent definitions on the word thus far presented.

2. Though two types - the maximalist and minimalist - of definitions on religion exist both in objective and sometimes abstract concepts, Islam is a religion that is mostly corresponding to the maximalist rather than

⁶⁹ Carl Cohen; Ibid

⁷⁰ Arbalester; 2000: PP.24-25

minimalist definition of religion regarding the nature, identity, chronology, historical experience and content of the religion. Contrary to Islam, Christianity is more consistent with the minimalist definitions. Hence, regarding the fact that concept of religion in Islam is maximalist in nature, the religion is not a merely personal religion and tradition, rather it is a religion being clearly and harshly social and political in nature.

3. From the standpoint of Islam, when speaking on its political foundation and essence, religious democracy is an idea which introduces and preaches the democratic type of government within framework of Islam. Religious democracy presents a model of Islamic system which is mostly consistent with the minimalist definitions of democracy and maximalist definition of religion. In such case and model, no contradiction between religion and democracy is observed and religion is the basis and content of the government in which people play the main role and along the religion they are the main and determining axes of government, especially rulers.

4. One cannot expect religious democracy as a model of political system to be committed to and act on the injunctions, definitions and principles of liberalism in its democracy. Also, one cannot and should not expect the aspiration type of democracy, which has never and no where been able to put words into action, to be materialized through religious democracy as such a thought is unlikely.

The religious democratic system alike all other forms of democracy is subordinate to the regulations and limitations of representative democracy. However, it might present special conditions, especially in connection with those getting elected, before and after their election. The righteousness of those elected is the condition well before their election and ratification of laws and action within framework of religion of Islam

is among conditions after their election. With regards to those electing in the religious democracy or official recognition of the public right to vote there are no other specific condition. While raising the mandate of religious commitment of a Muslim citizen to Islamic principle of enjoining to good and prohibiting from the vice, which makes a Muslim citizen accountable before government, participation in election and voting is a religious duty while being a citizenship right.

5. Regarding what said thus far and referring to Quranic verses, it can be said that the title of democracy of the righteous is a good synonym introduction of religious democracy: A political system in which people and elections decide rulers, laws, decisions, supervision and auditing, on condition that those elected are the righteous since the beginning and in government, they would not fall beyond framework of Islam.

Sources

1. Arblaster, Anthony; (2000), "Democracy", Hassan Mortazavi, Tehran, Ashiyan Publication.
2. Ashoori, Dariush; (1999), "Political Encyclopedia".
3. Ashoori, Dariush; (1985), "Political Dictionary"; Tehran, Morvarid Publication, vol 13.
4. Bashirye, Hossein; (2001), "Democratic Lessons for All", Tehran, Negahe Mo'aser research Institute.
5. Blondle, Jean; (1399), "Comparative Government", Ali Morshedizadeh, Tehran, Center for Islamic Revolution Documents.
6. Blitz, Andrew and , (2000), "Electoral Systems", Ali Akbar Asgari, Reciting thepublic opinions, Edition no. 22, (Summer).
7. Beetham, David and Boyle, Kevin, (2000); "What is Democracy", Shahram NaqsheTabrizi, Tehran, Qoqns Publications, Edition 2.

8. Tajik, Ahmad, ((2003), The Newsletter for the first International Forum of Religious Democracy.
9. Tavassoli, Gholamabbas, ((2003), The Newsletter for the first International Forum of Religious Democracy.
10. Ronny, Stein, (1995), “Government: Knowing political science”, Leyla Sazgar, Tehran, University Publication Center.
11. Soroush, Abdolkarim, (1999), “Fatter than Ideology”, Tehran, Serat cultural Institute (Publications), sixth Edition.
12. Seyyed Qutb, (1990): “Future in the realm of Islam”, Seyyed Ali Khameniei, Tehran, Islamic Culture Publications, Edition 2nd.
13. Sahafian, Abbasali, (1997), “Knowing Democracy”, Tehran, Mohaghegh Publications.
14. Amid, Hassan, (1984), Amid Dictionary, Tehran, Amir Kabir Publications.
15. Enayat, Hamid, (1993), Islamic Thought in contemporary Islam”, Bahaoddin Khoramshahi, Tehran, Kharazmi Publications, Edition 3.
16. Qomi, Mohsen, ((2003), The Newsletter for the first International Forum of Religious Democracy.
17. Carlton, Klamyr and Et al, (2001), “Intruductory to political Science”, Bahram Malakooti, Tehran, Amir Kabir, PublicationsThird Edition.
18. Mosa Al-Hosseini, Eshagh, (1998), “Islamic Brotherhood: The largest contemporary Islamic Movement”, Seyyed Hadi Khosroshahi, Tehran, Etelaat Publications.
19. Vincent, Andrew, (1994), “Modern Political Ideologies”, Morteza Saghebfar, Tehran, Ghoghnoos Publications.

20. Huntington, Samuel, (1994), "The third wave of Democracy in the late Twentieth Century", Ahmad Shahsa, Tehran, Rozaneh Publications, Tehran.
21. Hermet, Guy; Badie, Bertrand; Birnbaun, Pierre; Braud, Philippe, (1994). Dictionnaire de la Science Politique et des institutions politiques. Dalloz, Paris.
22. Lewis, 1993: 89-94.
23. Robertson, 1985: 302-303.
24. Schumpeter, Joseph (1974). Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. 2nd ed. Harper, New Yir.
25. Scruton, Roger (1982). A Dictionary of Political Thought, Macmillan Reference Book, London.