

## Religion and Democracy in Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei's Thoughts

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### Abstract

The idea of religious democracy as emerging from the thinking style of leaders of the Islamic republic, is going to create an ideal relationship between democracy and religion. The present paper will explain the religious democracy in the ideologies of leaders of the Islamic republic of Iran (Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei), within three theoretical, principles and components of religious democracy, and practical realization principles of religious democracy areas. In the thoughts of Imam Khomeini and ayatollah Khamenei there is a firm link between religion and politics, and democracy originates from religion. Since democracy is in the length of God's leadership, and people have chosen religion as their democracy framework, the link between Islam and democracy materializes. The leaders of the Islamic republic believe in human dignity and in the role of public participation of all men and women in realization of democracy. For them, participation in elections and political issues is both, a right, and an obligation. Thus, it can be claimed that elections have a key position in the realization of democracy. In fact, even the protector of the Islamic juristics who in the thought of Shiism and during the absence of Imam Zaman is in charge of religious affairs is elected through the votes of the Constituent Assembly (who are elected by people). Therefore, in the thoughts of leaders of the Islamic republic there is a link between the components and bases of Islam and democracy.

### Keywords

Imam Khomeini, Ayatollah Khamenei, Religion, Democracy, Elections

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### **Introduction**

In the present era, democracy is being welcomed by all nations across the world in its highest level, so that it can be called the age of globalism of democracy or at least, globalism of inclinations toward democracy at different levels. Here, democracy as a technique that is, emphasis on usage of power, elections, separation of powers, relative acceptance of political freedom, responsibility of government, equal right of voting, belief in women's role and their political participation, and relative acceptance of pluralism; forms the indexes of democracy among many societies. Recent changes in some Arabic countries also are definable in restoration of the Islamic identity in the direction of reaching democracy. Such a reality is the reminiscent of the experience of the Islamic revolution in establishing of religious democracy. Although the Western world tried to decrease the influence of the Islamic revolution on those movements by highlighting differences among the Islamic republic and those movements, it cannot be denied that the Islamic republic played a significant role in the direction of restoration of the Islamic identity and freedom from hopelessness atmosphere after the defeat of Arab nations by Israel, and caused many leaders of deep movements across the world to become surprised. For the leaders of the Islamic revolution the concept of religious democracy has Islamic and religious origin and is not elective and forms a single reality. However, regarding the shape of mechanisms of democracy in accepting some principles such as elections, representation of a democratic narration of Councils, giving importance to separation and supervision of powers, as well as change in looking to the political and social role of women, shape similarities between democracy in this discourse, which of course has Islamic content, and democracy are remarkable. At the same time, "religious democracy" is a technique in the direction of people's role in the government which is based on Islamic foundations, because it has a very clear demarcation due to believing in incorporation of Islam and politics. Thus, it can be said that there is the possibility of negotiation and identification of common realms between the idea of democracy of the leaders of the Islamic

republic and some thinking leaders of the Islamic Waking. During the present age, the practical instance of religious democracy belongs to the Islamic republic of Iran whose founder was Imam Khomeini. In fact, he was the first founder of religious democracy, theoretically and practically, and Ayatollah Khamenei attempted to explain it according to Islamic resources and Imam's school and thoughts to complete it. As explained by Ayatollah Khamenei, the religious democracy is something beyond conducting elections, and "realization of real demands" of people. In other words, it has two dimensions: (1) People take part in elections and by their presence share in foundation of the political system and appointment of individuals in their responsibilities, thus participating in the formation of administrative issues, and (2) Some kind of spiritual relationship is created according to which, people consider the executors and the ruling system as the realizers of their demands, ideals, and goals, and thus love them. Here, the factor is people's "faith" that creates such a relationship between the government and the nation. In fact, in such a case, the system is dependent not only on people's votes, but also on the heartily trust and love of them (fayyaz, 1388). In this research, all references to Ayatollah Khamenei's statements have been used merely pointing to their dates with the address of [www.http.Khamenei.ir](http://www.Khamenei.ir) and the software of Hadise Velayat.

### **The Meaning of Religious Democracy**

The word *democracy* in Farsi means the political participation and competition of a number of systematic groups and interests in order to obtain the political power and administration based on policies and barriers of each of these groups (Bashirieh, 1382: 375). Of course, highlighting of the role of political groups in this definition is, to some extent, different from the classic definition of democracy. In ancient Greek, thinking schools including Aristotle, governments were defined as monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, and democracy. Democracy of course is not merely a form of government, but, it is a life style in the modern world. The essence of this life style can be seen in the originality of equality of human, originality of law, originality of

people's government and emphasis on natural, civil, and political rights of humans. The originality of equality means that individuals, groups, and classes of people do not have any superiority to each other from governing point of view (Bashirieh, 1382: 243). The democratic position suggests that political decisions should be made collectively, and Collective decisions should be at least indirectly a function of choices of individuals made from among competent groups (Loben, 1380: 24). Today, democracy is important not only as a form of government, but also it is so important that its study has become known as practical politics and foundational science, and there is an identity relationship between the science of democratic system and the science of political democracy (Bashirieh, 1382 :15), and even, beyond this remarkable role of this research scope in the science of politics, " Today, the theoretical subject of transition to democracy and its social grounds is the most important subject in sociology" (Bashirieh, 1387: 13). Meanwhile," Transition to democracy with the minimal present meaning contains all meanings and processes addressed in the past within the concept and literature of political development. Therefore, the concept of political development in its different dimensions can be summarized in the concept of transition to democracy". Such a specific position for democracy promotes it to three important major realms of epistemology of politics, from foundational and practical bases to the scope of political sociology and political development. Of course, there is no doubt that parallel to this promotion of role, to the same extent, pluralization and diversity of ideas can emerge within the realm of democracy, either in the realm of technique or value, and regardless of fixed principles of democracy, diversity in its forms and impression also should be accepted as a scientific truth within the realm of politics. Thus, what is known as democracy in some modern countries should not be accepted as important scientific principles in advance and the presupposition that they are scientific. At least it can be claimed that in international level a remarkable development has not happened in countries which in today's literature are considered as developed nations and act powerfully at international level, contrary to the globalization of important

features of democracy. Although the existence of this gap and conflict cannot, by itself, falsify the validity of many indexes of democracy; it cannot be concluded either that the indexes of democracy and “the science of political development and practical politics” is limited to a few countries with liberal democratic tendency or generally to secular democracies, and speak about prohibition of democracy in religious societies in advance. In external form dimension, democracy should not be found only in the presence of institutions such as elections, presence of elites, development of indexes and human rights and determination of political power by people; rather, there are some internal mechanisms in religious democracy system that have remained immune from those gaps and conflicts remarkably in the practical stage of democracy and follow some dimensions beyond political development in religious societies. The presence of this nature in the attitudes toward politics and power in religious democracy along with observance of spiritual rules appears more saliently, that is, by accepting religion as the soul and framework of democracy, attitudes toward power will change and will be defined in the length of power and rulership origin that is Allah. From this perspective, resources and instruments of power, do not have merely traditional and this- worldly so that they can be reduced to personality, ownership and organization, rather power becomes meaningful in the length of God’s rulership and not its width. Implementation of power also, except for some religious limitations and observations, is based on religious moralities and this causes the abuse of power and political corruption which in non-religious political systems decrease to a social abnormality, to be promoted as a great sin. This case shows that capacities of religious democracy in their ideal form, and not necessarily in their realized forms and external manifestation are sufficient to create an ideal relationship with democracy, although, in this condition, some features of democracy in its traditional and non-religious form also will certainly come across some limitations, but they are not in a form that we can talk of preventing from religious democracy.

## **Theoretical Bases of Religious Democracy**

In order to study religious democracy in Imam Khomeini's thoughts, first, his theoretical bases of religious democracy will be represented:

### **1. Theoretical Bases of Religious Democracy in Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei's Viewpoint**

In this part of relationship between religion and politics with democracy, sovereignty, legitimacy, human dignity and freedom in thoughts of leaders of the Islamic republic will be represented:

#### **1-1. The Relationship of Religion with Politics and Religious Democracy**

##### **1-1-1. The Relationship of Religion with Politics**

For the leaders of the Islamic republic "Islam is a religion that has represented specific laws for all dimension of individual and social life" (Imam Khomeini, Vol. 5: 389), and "Separation of religion from politics is a great sin in this age" (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1368/04/14)<sup>1</sup>

##### **1-1-2. The Relationship between Religion and Democracy**

In Ayatollah Khamenei's viewpoint "In the political school of Imam, democracy arises from the content of religion" (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1383: 90). Imam, considers Islamic democracy as more complete than that of the West: "The democracy that we want to make, does not exist in West. The Islamic democracy is more complete than Western democracy" (Imam Khomeini, Vol. 4: 314).

##### **1-2. Sovereignty and Legitimacy**

In the Islamic government "Sovereignty belongs to God and the law is only God's recommendations" (Imam Khomeini, 1385: 44-45), "Thus the only ruler is Allah because he is aware of all benefits and harms" (Ayatollah Khamenei, Bita)<sup>2</sup>.

“In the case of legislature also, Allah has the right of making laws because he is the Creator of everything” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1374: 38)<sup>3</sup>.

Legitimacy in the thoughts of leaders of the Islamic republic is based on two Godly and humanly columns. Since legislature is specified to God (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1374: 38)<sup>4</sup>, therefore, in this perspective, only that government is legitimate which is Godly and administers religious rules. Thus the statesmen also should have specific characteristics such as commitment to Godly rules, piety, justice, and competence. The second column of legitimacy is people. Therefore, if the government and its agents come to work without being chosen by people, it does not have legitimacy. Thus those agents should be selected from among the best individuals (Me'mar, 1387: 106), because man is a free creature. In fact, people's votes, in the length of God's will, and within the framework of Godly laws bring legitimacy (Mohajer nia and Khazra, 1391).

### **1-3. Anthropological Bases and Religious Democracy**

Human dignity and freedom are among anthropological bases of religious democracy in thoughts of Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei.

#### **1-3-1. Human Dignity**

In Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei's thinking, man's domination, in the length of God's will is free and respected: “The result of dignity and respect is that in governance of human fate and a society, people's votes should have a remarkable role”. (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1385/03/14).

#### **1-3-2. Freedom**

For Imam Khomeini, the principle of freedom originates from the principle of monotheism, (Haji Ahmadi, 1385: 38). Freedom is an inherent issue and “It is a right, but a right superior to other rights; such as right of living” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1377/12/6)<sup>5</sup>, freedom of parties, freedom of the press

(Alipour Gorji, 1379: 217), freedom of expression and ideas (Imam Khamenei, V1, 5: 468), are among instances of freedom from the viewpoints of the leaders of the Islamic republic. The limits of freedom is the law, religion, people's<sup>6</sup> benefits and non-penetration of enemies or conspiracy against the Islamic system (Alipour Gorji, 1390: 229-230).

## **2. The Components of Religious Democracy System in Thoughts of Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei**

The components of religious democracy from the viewpoints of leaders of the Islamic republic can be represented as follows:

### **2-1. People's Participation<sup>7</sup>**

In the Islamic system people's presence in the stage and their participation is very important with many positive influences, such as increase in the degree of purity of power and solidity of the systems, strength, and security (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1392/3/8), dignity of the country, international prestige, happiness of friends, and frustration of enemies (Ayatollah Khamenei 1392/03/06), Provision of grounds for God's mercy (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1391/03/14), indicative of commitment of Iranian nation to religious democracy (Ayatollah Khomeini 1386/10/12). The leaders of the Islamic republic emphasize on the role of people in foundations of the political system (Milani, 1380) and its protection (Imam Khomeini, 1379: 165), including by presence in demonstrations, elections, celebrations of the Islamic revolution (Ayatollah Khamenei 1391/11/23) and in the battle field and jihad (Ayatollah Khamenei 1391/09/01).

### **2-2. Women's Participation**

In the discourse of Islam, dignity, value, and elegance of women have a specific position (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1392/02/21). It is contrary to the Western discourse that denies women's freedom (Imam Khomeini, 1379: 227). Ayatollah Khamenei believes about the social participation of women

that if they don't take part in social movements of a nation, these movements won't achieve their final goals (Ayatollah Khamenei 1391/04/21). Imam Khomeini suggests: "Women, like men, enjoy the right of voting and being voted" (Imam Khomeini, 1379: 39), Just as women in the Islamic republic and its victory, in the front, and behind the front, elections, and different demonstrations such as Bahman 22, Ghods day, and Day 9 had influential presence. "Of course, they should pay attention to two principles beside their social activities: First, their social activity should not overshadow their duty as a wife, housewife, and mother, and second, is the issue of religiously insiders and strangers. The work of women out of their houses should be done with observation of this principle (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1392/02/31). Imam Khomeini considers women's involvement in political affairs of the society as a fundamental right. Some centers of his thoughts about the political role of women are as follows (reference: Imam's Sahifeh Vol. 5, 8, 9, 18, 19):

a) Co-operation with men in social and political activities, "Just as men should involve in political affairs to protect their society, women also should take part in those activities".

b) Involvement in major issues of the country, "Islamic rules" are all for the benefit of men and women".

c) Involvement in politics is a Godly duty of Moslem women. Politics is not a heritage belonging only to the government or to the parliament or certain individuals. Politics is what is happening to our everyday life. Therefore all people, including women have the right to be involved in politics; in fact it is their duty".

d) Giving necessary service to the country.

e) Participation in elections. "You should all be present in all stages to the extent that Islam allows, for example in the elections that is an important task in Today's Iran. What is necessary for me to mention is the participation of the brave women across the country in the referendum (Islamic Republic); women who played their role beside men and sometimes before them in the

victory of the Islamic revolution, should be aware that with their active participation, they can guarantee the increasing achievements of our nation. Participation in these activities is the duty of every one”.

f) Playing active role in the responsibilities related to the Islamic movement. From the Islamic viewpoint, women have a fundamental role in the construction of the Islamic society. In fact, Islam appreciates women to the extent that they can restore their essential position in the society and come out of the stage of being a useless member and accept responsibilities in the foundation of the Islamic government”. “In the Islamic system, women as men have active participation in all aspects of social and political affairs. No one should think of them as “objects”; they are human beings, just as men are. Women take part in the construction of tomorrow’s Islamic society. They have the right to vote and to be voted. In the victory of the Islamic revolution, their role was not less than that of men. We will give all kinds of rights to them.”

g) Political presence and supervision; “All women and men should take part in political problems and supervise them. They should supervise the parliament and the government’s work”. Imam Khomeini considered the intervention of women in political affairs as inseparable from public participation. He says:” Just as men should intervene in social and political issues to protect their society, women also should work beside them” (Sahifeh Nour, Vol. 18: 264), and in this direction, participation in elections of the Islamic republic, presidency, and the parliament are considered as important obligations for every individual of the nation, especially for women. Imam suggests on this point: “As men take part in elections, women also should do so; because there is no difference between them and others... “Ladies should have a very active role”. (ibid). “I advise all men and women to be present in elections and give their votes, (ibid, Vol. 15). “Women in the Islamic republic of Iran should have the right to intervene in their own fate; they should vote” (Sahifeh Nour, Vol. 18: 264). Comparing the role of women in Islamic countries with the Western countries, Imam Khomeini

replies to their unreal claim about women and says: “Women have the right to vote. This is superior to the West. We give higher value to women. They have the right to vote and to be voted”. (Sahifeh Nour, Vol. 18: 264).

### **2-3. Elections**

Imam Khomeini considers the allegiance of the early Islamic era as “Friendship of Moslems and formation of government according to the votes of majority of Moslems” (Ardakani Abedi, 1381). Ayatollah Khamenei also refers to elections as the allegiance (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1370: 376). He suggests about the importance and position of elections: “Elections are the investment of the Iranian nation” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1388/01/01). For him “Elections are the symbol of religious democracy” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1390/06/09). In the thoughts of the thinkers of the Islamic republic, there seems a specific emphasis on maximal and intentional presence, and thus “Participation in elections is a religious obligation” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1390/06/09). Also the atmosphere of elections should be “secure, away from any disuniting and indulgence, (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1390/06/09), along with respect to people’s votes, and nonintervention of strangers” (Imam Khomeini, Vol. 4: 266). Thus it can be claimed that the importance of elections for the leaders of the Islamic republic is so high that it forms the central columns of the Islamic discourse. This can directly and indirectly seem in the appointment of planning officers. The best evidence for this claim is that whenever it is spoken about religious democracy, the most important instance of realization of that fact in Islamic Iran is elections: “One of the indicators of the greatness of our system is elections; it is for this reason that they - enemies - deny such a clear evident, because they know that it is among indicators of our victory” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1986/10/19). Of course, it can be claimed that religious democracy is not limited to elections and doesn’t flow only within the foundational dimension of the system and political institutions of religious democracy system. However, in the analytical dimension also, there is some kind of spiritual relationship between the political system and people, so that people see the

administrators and the ruling system as the realizers of their wishes, ideals and goals, and love them faithfully (Ettelaat newspaper, 1379/05/26). It is only in such a position that a deep relationship can be created between a government and its people, in which the government depends not only on people's votes, but also on their love and trust. These two salient characteristics together create our religious democracy in such a way that it can be seen as a sufficient criterion to distinguish religious democracy from Western democracy (Fayyaz, 1385: 3). The two-sidedness of religious democracy is explained by Ayatollah Khamenei in this way, "Our religious democracy has two sides: First is people's role in the government through elections, and the second is the attention paid by administrators to people's lives so carefully and kindly (Jomhuri Islami newspaper, 1379 Azar). Here, beside elections, the dimension of efficiency of religious democracy is the evidence of religious democracy and its dynamism. In fact, elections realize religious democracy in foundational dimension while efficiency realizes it in dynamism dimension.

#### **2-4. Counsels**

The concept of councils is very important for the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Ayatollah Khamenei suggests: "Religious democracy arises from the content of our religion". "They consult to each other about issues" (Holy Koran, Showra: 38) (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1383: 28). That is why there is a specific part about councils in our constitutional law and councils are working in several forms including the legislature, urban and rural councils, supreme council of provinces, supreme cultural council, supreme national security council, and... Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei consider the legislature as the most important factor. Imam Khomeini was deeply determined to change the parliament to an "independent and popular organization" so that it works freely, away from pressures and formality (Abedi Ardakani, 1381).

#### **2-5. Legality**

For Imam Khomeini legality is the most important principle, and believes that all people should adjust themselves to the law (Imam Khomeini, Vol. 14: 415). Ayatollah Khamenei suggests, “The law is like a rail. If we go out of it, we will certainly be hurt” (1392/06/06). Among instances of emphasis on religious democracy and legality from his viewpoint is his attention to the constitutional law. The formulation of the constitutional law was among Imam’s concerns and its importance is visible everywhere in Ayatollah Khamenei’s perspective (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1392/02/16). The signs of religious democracy can be seen in the constitutional law within the following articles: Public sovereignty in the length of God’s sovereignty (including reference to elections) (articles 2, 4, 100, and 114), rights and freedom of people (articles 20, 22, 23, and 24), and prohibition from dictatorship and equality of the leader and other individuals (articles 107 and 109).

#### **2-6. Monitoring of Power**

Imam Khomeini suggests, “All nations are obligated to monitor affairs. If I put my feet out of honesty, they should inform me and prevent me from it”. (Imam Khomeini, Vol. 7: 339)<sup>9</sup>. Ayatollah Khamenei believes, “Nobody is immune of monitoring even the leader should be monitored (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1379/12/22)<sup>10</sup>. The importance of supervision on leaders and criticizing them originates from two important principles of “advising to good deeds and prohibiting from evil deeds”. Those two principles are bases for both, formation of the system, and the way to administer and manage it (Amid Zanjani, 1380). For Ayatollah Khamenei, these two principles are “Protectors of good and pure life” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1368: 413). In addition to Imam’s emphasis of those principles (Amid Zanjani, 1380), Ayatollah Khamenei also speaks about dependence of creating good relation between people and rulers in the direction of following those principles (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1373: 5).

#### **2-7. Separation of Powers**

Imam Khomeini accepted separation of powers as human experience, Each [of powers] should try to do its tasks as well as possible and not to intervene the limit of others, so that the independence of all powers can be protected... otherwise, the country also will be corrupted” (Imam’s political philosophy, 1377: 101)”. Ayatollah Khamenei also emphasizes on separation of powers (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1389/05/27). Separation of powers has been mentioned by article 57 of the constitutional law.

## **2-8. Parties**

About the ideology of the Islamic republic’s leaders on parties, it should be said that Imam Khomeini considers them as not good not bad,” The benchmark is the idea of the party, and if it is something else, then it is Satan’s party” (Salimi, 1379: 155). Imam saw the activities of some groups as useful, among which are “the community of teachers of Qom’s theological school” (Imam Khomeini; Vol. 21: 287), “the assembly of campaigning clergy”, and “the community of campaigning clergy” (Salimi, 1379: 160), and the Islamic Republic party (Imam Khomeini, 1385: 653). In fact, because of damages imposed to the system in the early years of revolution, Imam Khomeini suggested some frameworks for parties and their performance (Akhavan Kazemi, 1390: 165). Ayatollah Khomeini was on of founders the Islamic Republic party before the revolution, and he was among active members of that party after the revolution. He believes the most highly ranked figures of the Islamic community- the holy Prophet and Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) formed parties (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1358/11/02)<sup>12</sup>. The ideal party for Ayatollah Khamenei is “Some kind of canal building for the purpose of intellectual training; either in it’s political, or religious, ideological form, they do not pursue power (Ayatollah Khomeini, 1390/07/24). Imam Khomeini considered Hizbollah and Mostaz’afin as the ideal parties, because any party with non-Godly goals is Satanic, (akhavan kazemi, 1390:167). Undesirable party is the party that doesn’t pursue obtaining power, and if a group wants to make such a party no one will prevent (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1390/07/24). “Formation of parties can act as

the factor to increase unity in the society, because unity needs honesty and acumen, and these two can influence from the side of an organized group rather than by some dispersed people” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1358/3/15).

### **2-9. Rights of minorities**

About the equal rights of minorities. Imam Khomeini says, “They are equal with other individuals in Iran in everything according to the laws; in the Islamic government they should have a free, easy and happy life” (Iman Khomeini, Vol. 11: 290). Among the rights of minorities from the perspective of Islamic leaders are immunity of minorities (Imam Khomeini, Vol. 5: 251), and religious freedom (Imam Khomeini, Vol 4: 441). Ayatollah Khamenei states about ideology freedom of minorities, “In the Islamic republic, all ideologies are free. “We will behave toward them like our Moslem brothers” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1375: 29). Imam Khomeini emphasized on behaving according to the law along with equity (Imran Khomeini, Vol. 5: 401). Also political activities such as representativeness in the parliament is free for them”. (Imam Khomeini, Vel. 5: 141).

### **3. Necessities and Principles of Practical Realization of Religious Democracy and Ayatollah Khamenei’s Viewpoints**

Here, some necessities and principles will be represented that the leaders of the Islamic republic advise to be paid attention in order to realize religious democracy:

#### **3-1. The Protector of the Islamic Juristics**

In the perspective of leaders of the Islamic republic, during the era of Absence, the legitimate government belongs to the protector of the Islamic juristics. “The protector of the Islamic juristics is among self-evident truths of Islam” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1380: 109), and “its supposition levels to its affirmation” (Imam Khomeini, 1385:9). “Of Course, there are intellectual and narrational reasons to prove it<sup>13</sup>. A leader, during the age of Absence,

except for general conditions such as intellect and acumen, should have two competencies, namely, awareness of the law, and justice. Here, awareness of the law refers to the knowledge of the law beside familiarity with Islamic commands, and justice means that the Islamic leader should have ideological and moral perfection. All individuals having responsibilities should be familiar to Islamic commands appropriate to their jobs. But the leader should have scientific superiority (Imam Khomeini, 1385: 47-50). Ayatollah Khamenei also considers knowledge, piety and acumen as principal criteria for the protectorship of the Islamic Juristics. These qualifications should be approved and appointed by people so that a person can act as the protector of the Islamic juristics (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1383: 31-32). There is no difference between the authorities of the protector of the Islamic juristics and those of the holy Prophet during the age of Absence, although they are not at the same level of spiritual eminence (Imam Khomeini, 1385:50-51). About the role and position of the protector of the Islamic juristics it must be said that, he has neither a symbolic role nor an administrative duty, rather, “he is responsible to monitor the overall movement of the systems toward the idealistic goals” that is the most important duty of the protector of the Islamic juristics (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1383: 31).

### **3-2. Necessities and Qualifications for Leaders**

In religious democracy, leaders should have specific qualifications. Here, we will discuss them except for knowledge and justice:

#### **3-2-1. Economic Faultlessness and Struggle against Corruption**

In addition to the emphasis that Ayatollah Khamenei puts on the economic faultlessness of individuals in charge because of temptations of governmental positions as the centers of power and wealth (Ayatollah Khamenei; 1392/06/6), Imam Khomeini also says, “In the Islamic republic statesmen cannot accumulate money by abusing of their power, or be privileged in their daily lives (Imam Khomeini, Vol. 4: 266)<sup>14</sup>.

### **3-2-2. Ideological, Ethical, and Functional Soundness**

These are conditions to which Ayatollah Khamenei points as indexes of honesty in the Islamic government, and beside all of them, trust in God, and his promises, familiarity with spirituality and relationship with the holy Koran, and devotion and resorting to Allah (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1392/06/06). Imam Khomeini suggests, “The statesmen should observe the Islamic criteria in the society and at all levels very carefully and even protect them” (Imran Khomeini, Vol. 4: 266)<sup>15</sup>.

### **3-2-3. Wisdom and Rationalism**

Ayatollah Khamenei explains wisdom and rationalism as another qualification of the leaders of the Islamic systems. “Work with expertise, with study, and correctly observing all aspects and effects of an attempt, and even sometimes effects of a comment are among signs of rationalism” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1392/06/06).

### **3-3- Justice**

“Religious democracy was conducted during the age of emergence of Islam, so that there wasn’t any difference between the leader and his people in enjoyment of possibilities and opportunities. In fact, the criterion of being righteous or wrong for governments is justice” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1389/09/10). “Contrary to Some values, justice is the absolute value. From the Islamic perspective, behaving with justice is a Godly obligation, while none of Western schools look at justice as basically and fundamentally as Islam does” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1390/02/27).

### **3-4. Giving Service to People**

Imam Khomeini, emphasizing on the necessity of delivering service to people by governments, warns that in the case of not observing this

principle, it will create corruption (Parvin, 1389). In fact, delivery of service to people is the central goal of the Islamic government and the rationale for its existence is this. For this reason no marginal factor can make barriers on this way (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1392/06/06).

### **3-5. The Pivotal Value**

In the viewpoint of Ayatollah Khamenei since guidance and direction of people is also the duty of the government, it should follow religion and religious and value ideals because if it gets away from those ideals in fact, it gets away from the essence of religious democracy, Imam Khomeini emphasizes on the Islamic commands in addition to democracy (fayyaz, 1388).

### **3-6. Dependence on Endogenous Capacities of Country**

Dependence on endogenous capacities of country doesn't mean to forget capacities of others; rather, it means that, "We shouldn't concentrate on external capacities". The key to solve problems is use of internal powers (Ayatollah Khamenei, 1392/06/06).

### **Conclusion**

The Islamic revolution as a movement against dominating power on the bipolar world of 1970s which was under the influence of liberal and Marxist thinking represented a new discourse and mechanism for management of the country on the basis of religious teachings. The Islamic republic is the only system originating from that revolution conducting its first elections only 50 days after its victory and after it, up to now about 30 elections have been conducted. Religious democracy as the pattern given by the political system originating from the Islamic revolution doesn't claim that it has found its final form, but it is moving in a path, in which, Islam forms the framework

for its democracy. For Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei there is a deep relationship between religion and politics from one side and religious democracy in the other side. Since the sovereignty of people is in the length of God's power, and since people consider religion as a framework for their democracy, the link between Islam and democracy emerges and the leaders of the Islamic republic believe in human dignity and the participation of all people (women and men) in political affairs including the elections to create democracy. For them this participation is both, a right, and an obligation. That is why it can be said that elections have the highest place in the creation of democracy. Both, elective, and consultative authorities chosen by people, have the duty to manage the country. Beside elections, councils, separation of powers, acceptance of the role of parties, control of political power, and acceptance of rights of minorities are other components of the system of democracy in the thoughts of leaders of the Islamic republic, Even it can be claimed that the protector of the Islamic juristics who is in charge of affairs during the age of Absence, is appointed through people's votes, because the Constituent Assembly themselves are elected by people. Thus, in the thinking of the leaders of the Islamic republic, there is a relationship between components and bases of Islam, and democracy.

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