

# Democracy and Consultation: Between Truth and Falsehood

(Translated)

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Praise be to Allah (swt) Who has made clear to us the features of Deen, and has bestowed upon us the clear Book, and has prescribed for us Shariah rulings, and has detailed for us what is Halal (permissible) and Haram (forbidden), which He has made a ruling governance over the world by which the interests of creation are established, and by which the foundations of truth are established, and He has entrusted to the rulers what they must have best determined and best managed.

All praise is due to Him for what He has decreed and ordained, and the best of prayers and most complete peace be upon His Messenger (saw) who proclaimed His command. So, to begin:

There has been much talk about democracy and calls for it. Hardly a political leader or thinker appears in the media without praising it, as if it were a magical cure-all.

A subtle misconception has crept into the minds of many Muslims, portraying the Islamic system of governance as a system of consultation (shura), and that democracy is simply consultation! They then conclude that governance in Islam is democratic.

This statement is a leap over the truth, since consultation is not a system of government or a system of life, but rather a method for seeking the correct opinion.

## What is Shura (consultation) in Islam?

The members of the Shura Council are the people of tying and untying authority, who have distinguished themselves in the Muslim community and gained their trust to represent the people in opinion and be advisors to the Khaleefah (Caliph). The member of the Shura Council is elected, not appointed. This idea was taken from the Prophet's (saw) allocation of twelve leaders (nuqabaa') from the Ansar and Muhajireen.

The true meaning of consultation (shura) is that it does not apply to legislation, because legislation comes from Allah (swt), not from people. Instead, shura applies to permissible matters in which Allah (swt) has allowed choice. Consultation is a concept stemming from the Islamic aqeedah, not a separate system of government. A system of government defines the foundations of the state, its form, characteristics, institutions, and the laws that are applied within it. A consultative council (majlis ush-shura) is merely one of the institutions of government.

## Democracy: Concept and Origins

In contrast, democracy is not a method within a broader system, but rather the system itself, as is evident in all democratic constitutions worldwide. It is a Western term meaning "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." The people are the absolute masters and sovereign power, legislating for themselves and managing their own affairs according to their will. Democracy arose in Europe when monarchs claimed to be God's representatives on Earth, ruling humanity with His authority. The people revolted against this claim and established a system that derived its authority from the separation of religion and life. It is, therefore, a purely human system, unrelated to divine revelation or Deen, granting humans the right to legislate independently of Allah (swt), and denying that legislation belongs solely to Allah (swt).

Therefore, it is incorrect to say that democracy is merely an "administrative mechanism" like traffic regulations, as it is based on a doctrine and on an intellectual vision that fundamentally contradicts Islam. Thus, it is incorrect to link democracy with consultation (shura) alone because we are not comparing a man-made system of life with a consultative approach in a complete divine system of governance, which is Islam.

## Democracy is Taghut (Non-Islamic Legislative Authority)

Islam has decreed that any judgment sought from other than Allah (swt) is a judgment sought from Taghuts, and that the rule of Taghuts is the rule of ignorance. Therefore, any legislation that contradicts the Shariah rulings of Allah (swt) in His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saw) is the rule of humans over humans, the enslavement of one human being by another, and a rejection of the divine legislative right of Allah (swt). Whoever makes himself a

legislator alongside Allah (swt), whether a ruler, representative, or legislative body has usurped the role of Lordship in legislation. For this reason, legislative assemblies that legislate without the permission of Allah (swt) are bastions of taghuts that must be abstained from, for they have made themselves legislators to be obeyed in matters of permissibility and prohibition, and obedience in legislation is an act of worship that must be directed to none other than Allah (swt).

### **Sovereignty in Islam**

In Islam, sovereignty belongs to Islamic Shariah Law, not to the people. Shariah is the sole source of the constitution and laws. It is incorrect to say, "Islam is one of the sources of legislation" or "the primary source," because this contradicts Allah's (swt) command to make the Noble Quran and Prophetic Sunnah, and what they guide us to as the sole source of legislation. As for authority, it belongs to the Ummah, which grants it to the Khlaeefah when they pledge Bayah allegiance to him to implement Shariah Law. He is their representative in implementation, not in legislation, and is accountable for any shortcomings in managing the affairs of the people according to what Allah (swt) has revealed.

### **Rules of Nomination and Elections**

The Islamic Shariah ruling on running for, or voting, in the parliamentary councils of current states is evident from their very nature: these councils legislate man-made systems and laws that contradict Islam. Legislation for man is forbidden in Islam because it is the exclusive right of Allah (swt) alone, and it cannot be exercised through voting or delegation, even if man-made law conforms to a Sharia ruling. The crucial factor is not the formal conformity, but the source; if it is not divinely revealed, then it is not Shariah. Therefore, it is forbidden for a Muslim to participate in these democratic bodies, whether by running for office, voting, or casting a vote for legislators who do not legislate in accordance with the Shariah of Allah (swt).

### **Within the Meaning of Accounting (Muhaasabah)**

Holding rulers accountable is a Shariah obligation, stemming from the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil. However, if this accountability is based on a man-made constitution, it becomes a form of submission to Taghut. Modern constitutions equate divine Shariah Law with human law, even excluding the rule of Allah (swt) and granting legislative power to the people, which contradicts the very foundation of Tawhid (monotheism).

### **Warning Against the Ploy of Referendum**

In democratic systems, a popular referendum on the constitution or on legislation passed by parliamentary bodies is a political ploy intended to legitimize falsehood and distract the Ummah from its Shariah obligation. In Islam, however, referendums on legislation have no place in the land of Islam because legislation is not a right of the people, but rather a prerogative of Allah (swt). Therefore, it is not permissible to hold a referendum on accepting or rejecting the Shariah Law of Allah (swt).

### **Concluding Remarks**

Elections under an Islamic state are conducted according to Islamic law, not secular constitutions because its system of governance is the Khilafah (Caliphate). Participating in secular parliaments is tantamount to authorizing something forbidden, participating in illegitimate legislation, and misleading the Ummah from its true path to revival. What is required of Muslims is to restore the authority of Islamic Shariah Law to its rightful place, not to beautify systems of kufr (disbelief) with the false trappings of "reform."

O Allah (swt), guide this Ummah to the right path, be pleased with it, answer its Dua, establish Your Deen among them, and make it a rightly-guided and guiding Ummah. O Allah (swt), unite the Ummah under one leader, grant it victory over the vile kafir enemies, and make it worthy of bearing witness to humanity. O Allah (swt), provide us with a strong and protective support, and support us with the most steadfast and pure of the believers, O Most Merciful of the merciful. O Allah (swt), fulfill Your Promise, hasten Your nasr (victory), spread Your mercy, and grant us success in obeying You in secret and in public.

Peace and blessings be upon the unlettered Prophet (saw), the truthful and trustworthy, and upon his family (ra) and all his Companions (ra).