

Analysis of Imam Reza's Political Theses (Peace be Upon His Holiness)

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Received: March 12, 2014

Accepted: June 27, 2014

ABSTRACT

In the period of Imam Reza's pontificate (peace be upon his holiness), efficient ground for acknowledging political theses of Shia Imams was materialized. In Imam Kazim's pontificate (peace be upon his holiness), his honorable father's pontificate, and in his twenty year long pontificate, Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) embarks on decisive measure to promote Islam and Islamic nations. Therefore, recognition of Islamic, pontifical and Quranic ideologies in Imam Reza's political theses (peace be upon his holiness) is of vital importance. This study analyses fundamentals of Imam Reza's political theses (peace be upon his holiness). Research hypothesis of the preset study propounds that Imam Reza's political theses (peace be upon his holiness) is based on explication of pontifical and Velayat, condemnation of unjust governance, purgation of public ideology and beliefs and development of Islamic education.

KEYWORDS: Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness), Pontificate, Al-Ma'mun, Development of Islamic Education, Condemnation of Unjust Governance

1. INTRODUCTION

Mankind utilizes a set of social hierarchies so that society can function as an organization whose mechanisms resemble biological existence of their own bodies. Human body has organs, a main corpus and components which are administered by the brain and spirit, the command center of the body.

Considering the aforementioned facts, it is vital to consider the prestige of pontificate in the organizational and social hierarchies of the society. A pontificate should be placed at the top of the social pyramid, since without allocation of such a pyramidal status to a pontificate, society will face irrevocable repercussions. Therefore, a divine pontificate should be bestowed by the utmost social authority and no one should preempt in acquiring such social jurisdiction. Without lagging in their responsibilities, the populace should not attempt in profane overruling of the pontificate, since such profaneness will only result in obliquity, annihilation and perdition. As Imam Ali (peace be upon his holiness) said: "Heed your Prophet and his holy household and accommodate your daily life wit them and follow their lead [...] Do not overrule them in anything; otherwise you will be mislead from the path and do not fall behind; otherwise you will be annihilated." (Saleh, Sermon 9, 1975, p. 144).

Education of political theses of Shia Imams (peace be upon their holiness), including Imam Reza (peace be upon their holiness) is of utmost importance. The present study analyses fundamentals of Imam Reza's political theses (peace be upon his holiness). Research hypothesis of the preset study propounds that Imam Reza's political theses (peace be upon his holiness) is based on explication of pontifical and Velayat, condemnation of unjust governance, purgation of public ideology and beliefs and development of Islamic education.

2. Seat of Pontificate in the Cosmic Order

Recognition of a prospect from the seat of pontificate in the cosmic order is an issue that should be materialized from the holy remarks of Imams (peace be upon their holiness). Imam Sadiq (peace be upon his holiness) believes that through utilization of such remarks, holiness of household of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon his holiness) can be established. He decrees that all of the holy prophets have attested to the holy seat of pontificate, Velayat and Shia Imams. Quoting from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon his holiness), Abu Albasir mentions: "No prophet attains its prophecy without divine cognition of our holy seat of pontificate." (Hassan Saffar, 1983, pp. 74-76).

Through utilization of sublime lexicons, Shia Imams explicate grandeur of pontificate. For instance, Imam Sadiq (peace be upon his holiness) utilizes three times the phrase "Hojatollah" (God's Proof), six times the phrase "Aminollah" (God's Trusty), five times the phrase "Ololamr" (Supreme Leader), two times the phrase "Vajhollah" (God's Visage) and one time the phrase "Noorollah" (God's Glory). Each

of the aforementioned lexicons is a door and mirroring torch towards cognition of the holy seat of pontificate.

Recognition of pontificate can not be summarized in the aforementioned instances. In an exemplum, quoted from one of the holy Imams, holy household of the Prophet (peace be upon his holiness) is considered to be the place of holy angels' commute, house of divine generosity, God's promised haven, God's great sanctuary and fountain of knowledge (Kulayni, 1945, Vol. 1, p. 194). The same Imam (peace be upon his holiness) in another sermon calls pontificate God's proof and mediator of divine grace (Homan, pp. 204-205).

In an exemplum, the rappings of "the ones who know" and "those who do not" in the scriptural verse of Holy Quran (Should the ones who know be regarded equal to those who do not, Zomar, Verse No. 9) are referred to Imams and their enemies respectively (Saffar, 1983, pp. 74-76). As observed in Holy Quran's verse, God names Imams as the divine source of life, Islamic fundamentals and as lanterns against sublunary gloom. The irrevocable decree of the Almighty is inscribed in declaration of Imams' sublimity.

When God creates Imams' soul and corporeity in the worlds of the pristine spirits and materiality respectively, he nurtures them under his direct administration. Before their incarnation into humans shapes, Imams are divine auspices in the right hand side of God Almighty. Therefore, they acquire divine wisdom from God's recondite knowledge. Due to its innate holiness, God designates them from the very beginning. Namani (1976, pp. 225-229) believes that Imams should be considered Adam's relics, Noah's seeds, Abraham's heirs, Ismail's abstractions and Mohammad's compendium (peace be upon their holiness). That is why Imams are of focalizing importance for God Almighty and is holy angels.

3. Unjust Governance in Imam Reza's Pontificate (Peace be Upon His Holiness)

In 799, the seventh Shia Imam, Imam Kazim (peace be upon his holiness) is poisoned by Harun al-Rashid's direct order in Baghdad's jail and martyred. After his martyrdom, Imam Reza's spends ten years of his pontificate in al-Rashid's reign.

Although al-Rashid's reign is considered to be one of the suffocating, doctoral and authoritarianism eras, al-Rashid does not encroach on Imam Reza's pontificate and therefore, Imam acquires relative degree of freedom in his political, social and cultural activities. In this era, Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) educates his disciples and compiles most of his interpretations from Islamic educations of Holy Quran. Relaxation of constrictive measures of al-Rashid's surveillance and his fear of public revolt due to Imam Kazim's martyrdom (peace be upon his holiness) curbs authoritative pressures against Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness). During his reign, al-Rashid intends to conceal his involvement in Imam Kazim's martyrdom (peace be upon his holiness), but at the end, his conniving involvement in the atrocity is revealed, resulting in his public opprobrium. One of his al-Rashid's endeavors for his self-exculpation is the fact that al-Rashid orders his uncle Soleiman Ben Abi Jafar to take over Imam Kazim's holy body from his executioner and bury him with utmost respect. In a quotation from al-Rashid, he regrets Imam's martyrdom by saying: "Fie on Sanadi Ben Shahak! He has transgressed to such atrocity without my consent!" (Majlisi, 1991, Vol. 48, p. 227)

Safavan Ben Yahya mention: "After Imam Kazim's martyrdom (peace be upon his holiness) and with commencement of Imam Reza's pontificate (peace be upon his holiness), I told his holiness about the ponderous nature of his duty and expressed my worries for his well-being against al-Rashid's threats. He declares of al-Rashid's inability to dominate his holiness activities." (Homan, Vol. 49, p. 115).

Quoted from Mohammad Ben Sanan (Mohaqqeq and Bitā, pp. 52-59), he mentions: "I told Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) of al-Rashid's imminent threats, declaring my worries for his well-being and his decision for his pontificate commencement after his fathers' martyrdom (peace be upon his holiness). He answered me by referring to the historical feud between Abu Jahl and the Prophet (peace be upon his holiness). Believing in Abu Jahl inability to harm the Prophet, he gives us grit by declaring that like Abu Jahl, al-Rashid is incapable of harming his holiness (Homan, Vol. 46).

Al-Rashid appoints Mohammad Amin as his crowned prince. Pledging public allegiance for his crowned prince, he appoints Abdullah al-Ma'mun (whose mother acquires Persian originality) as his second crowned prince.

In 808, it is reported to al-Rashid that public uprising and insurrections are intensified in Khorasan cities and although his army commanders shows no merci and leniency in their attitudes, the uproar of public revolution is becoming tougher and more challenging to tackle with.

After consulting with his ministers and secretaries, al-Rashid decides to travel to Khorasan so that Khorasan's uprisings and insurrections can be stifled with comprehensive crackdown of his governmental forces. Installing his son, Mohammad Amin in Baghdad, he travels to Khorasan with al-Ma'mun, whose is the current governor of the state.

In the midst of stifling most of the insurrections, al-Rashid becomes sick and can not return to Baghdad. Ultimately, he dies in 809 in Tous, leaving two crowned princes in competition for gaining power (Mohaqqeq and Bitā, pp. 58-59).

After al-Rashid's death in Tous, people of Baghdad pledge allegiance with Mohammad Amin. After he seats at throne just for 18 days, Mohammad Amin decides to denude al-Ma'mun from the position of second crowned princes so that the position can be endowed to his son Moosa. Except Ali Ben Isa

Mahan, his ministers and consultants do not deem this action politically congruous. Ultimately, Amin finalizes his decision for denuding his brother al-Ma'mun. At the same time, in reaction to such a decision, al-Ma'mun renounces Mohammad Amin's governance and after a series of brutal battles and skirmishes between the two parties, Mohammad Amin is killed in 814 (Ebn al-Athir, 1967, p. 87). After his brother's death, al-Ma'mun becomes the caliph of the Islamic nations.

During the skirmishes between al-Ma'mun and Mohammad Amin, there is no official record of conformation between forces of Abbasi government and Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness), since the governmental system is heavily involved in dealing for al-Rashid's death, domestic challenges and differences of al-Ma'mun and Mohammad Amin on the issue of governance and Moosa's appointment as the crowned prince. Not being under pressure, Alawis and especially Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) gains a relative degree of freedom in his political and cultural activities during 809-814 (Mohaqqeq and Bitá, p. 60).

In contrast with Mohammad Amin's tranquil life and blissful childhood in his mother's arms Zubaydah, Al-Ma'mun's life is filled with ambitious activities and restlessness and as a result, is void of tranquility and peace. Zubaydah fills his son's life with amusements, comfort and luxurious self-indulgence. Not believing that he acquires a pure Arabic origin like of his brother, he always fears the future and anticipates that Abbasi's will not hold their allegiance with his government forever. Therefore, finding no firm social and political position, he starts plotting for securing his power. He is always aware of the fact that he does not acquire the privileges his brother had. After mastering a series of challenging sciences and skills, he outreaches his Abbasi counterparts.

Some believes that there is no one among Abbasis who could outreaches al-Ma'mun in science and intelligence. Ebn Nadim mentions: "Al-Ma'mun is the most skilled caliphs in religious jurisprudence and philosophy." (Ebn Nadim and Bitá, p. 174). Even Imam Ali (peace be upon his holiness) mentions that the seventh in Bani Abbas's reign will be the most intelligent.

Even Al-Rashid is aware of al-Ma'mun's supremacy over his brother, mentioning that he will alter his decision of putting al-Ma'mun as the second crowned prince so that governance can be utilized in the hands of a person who acquires much more amiable behavior and with his political ideologies and sense of restlessness can lead the empire. This person is no one but Abdullah al-Ma'mun. However, regardless of al-Ma'mun's congruous lifestyle and political ideologies and his trustworthiness for the role of governance of the Islamic empire, Bani Abbas dynasty endows its support to Mohammad Amin, a debauched, profligate, lustful invalid who is constantly involved with soubrettes and women (Morteza al-Hosseini, 1986, p. 100).

4. Legitimacy of Governance in Imam Reza's Political Theses (Peace Be Upon His Holiness)

Numerous exempla explicates that a life which is governed by a person but a pontificate, is the life of ignorance. Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) has a remarkable role in distinguishing the role of divine governance through pontificate by bringing contemporary and historical instances. In this part of the study, a number of Imam's divine remarks (peace be upon his holiness) will be represented:

God inscribed the Quranic verse "Today I have completed your religion" in the Prophet's last year (peace be upon his holiness). Therefore, the issue of pontificate is the ultimate complement of Islam (Majlisi, 1991, Vol. 25, p. 120).

Pontificate is indeed as the mature pedigree and prolix tributary of Islam (Kulayni, 1945, Vol. 1, p. 198).

Pontificate is the monitoring factor in facilitation of religious decrees, Islamic nations, sublunary affairs and authority of the righteous (Kulayni, 1945, Vol. 1, p. 198).

Kulayni's *Kitab al-Kafi* explicates dimensions, indices and circumstances of pontificate by bringing numerous exempla and religious sayings. In this book, Imam Reza's (peace be upon his holiness) sayings acquire a remarkable seat in explication of the role of pontificate in society. In a saying, Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) said: "God's proof can not be fully complemented without the recognition of the divine pontificate." (Kulayni, 1945, Vol. 1, p. 198).

Hossein Ben Khalid quotes Imam Reza's remark on one of the Quranic verses (Indeed, we have endowed heavens, mountains and the earth with pontificate so that they can be endured) as follows:

This verse explicates that pontificate is concomitant to Velayat, whose authority can not be claimed by any anybody. If claimed by the unrighteous, heresy will prevail (Sadooq, 1982, p. 110).

In Imam Reza's pilgrimage pamphlet (peace be upon his holiness), there exist a number of epithets that depicts the correlation between pontificate, monotheism, prophecy and the seat of pontificate in the comic order. Some of these epithets are represented in this part of the study: "Valiyollah" (God's Governor), "Hojatollah" (God's Proof), "Noorollah" (God's Glory), "Amudollah" (God's Perpendicular), Adam's Relic, "Sofvatollah" (God's Elite), Noah's Seed, Abraham's, Moses' and Jesus' Heir- The

Friend and The Holy Spirit of God Almighty-, Imam Ali's Heir, Ismail's Abstraction, Mohammad's Compendium, "Zabihollah" (God's Enunciator), "Rassulollah" (God's Messenger) Heir of Fatimah, Heir of Zein al-Abedin, Heir of Hossein and Hassan- The Two Heavenly Vanguard-, Heir of Mohammad Ben Ali Baghir and the Heir of Jafar Ben Mohammad, Imam Sadiq (Ibn Babawayh, 1984, Vol. 1, p. 21).

4.1. The Necessity of Obedience from Pontificate

Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) emphasizes on the necessity of obedience from pontificate and the holy household of the Prophet (peace be upon his holiness), declaring it a scriptural mandate. Tabari mentions: "As I and a coterie of Bani Hashins, including Ishaq Ben Moosa, were in the service of Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) in Khorasan, he told Ishaq: "The Sunni minority have reported to me that you claimed them to be your lave. By swearing to my ancestor, the Prophet (peace be upon his holiness), he and my holy ancestral fathers do not believe in ethnic discrimination. I only declare that in obeying pontificate decrees, the populace should be amenable and it is their scriptural mandate so that their path in the sublunary, heavenly and religious arenas can be divinely accommodated. I order the ones who are present in this session to dispense this divine decree to those who are absent (Kulayni, 1945, Vol. 10, p. 265). Even in Ma'mun's governance, Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) declares his pontificate explicitly and without any scriptural reservation.

4.2. Characteristics of a Pontificate

Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) explicates a number of characteristics for a pontificate that are inclusive of totality of the human race, disseminating the seeds of generosity, divine guidance and congeniality. A pontificate is of divine light and glory. He is the savior of the society that acquires healing power of limpid water in the time of drought. The pontificate is the reason for the human race to return to the path from doubts and annihilation. He is the raining cloud in the arid lands. A pontificate is the divine pasturage filled with ebullient springs. He is God's Trustworthy on the earth. A pontificate is the purifier of sinners by giving them refuge in his divine generosity (Sadooq, 1984, Vol. 1 p. 180).

Explication of indices of a pontificate by Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) is utilized in an era when theological doubts are festering populace's religious beliefs. Involved in the earthly conundrums, skirmishes of Bani Abbasi dynasty and al-Rashid's, Mohammad Amin's and al-Ma'mun's political games, the populace starts questioning legitimacy of Islamic theology in general. It is Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) who plays the role of the divine pontificate in a deviated populace. It is worth mentioning that the Imam (peace be upon his holiness) continues his pontificate duties in exile alongside with the imposed role of crowned prince of al-Ma'mun's.

4.3. The Necessity of Pontificate's Official and Authoritative Installation

Shia believes that pontificate official installation in governmental and authoritative systems is a scriptural mandate that should not be abandoned under any circumstance, since a pontificate is the religious grace that perpetuates divine grace on the earth. If God Almighty appoints a pontificate for a society, he should be revered with utmost respect. As God Almighty appoints Abraham as a pontificate by declaring:

Indeed God Almighty appointed Abraham, His Friend, a pontificate first and then endows him with prophecy. By bestowing a secondary significance to prophecy, he calls Abraham the pontificate of his populace (Ibn Babawayh, 1984, Vol. 1, p. 21).

Pontificate installation is administered directly by God Almighty and therefore, can not be imbued with dictatorial rapports. Even in Ma'mun's governance, Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) declares his pontificate explicitly and without any scriptural reservation. Hassan Jaham quotes: "One day, I was in presence of Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness), alongside with learned scientists and theoreticians in al-Ma'mun's palace. One of the learned scientists asked Imam (peace be upon his holiness) about chrematistics of a pontificate. Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) answered by declaring that a pontificate should acquire learned cognition of theological, ideological and political concepts (Majlisi, 1991, Vol. 10, p. 134).

5. Conclusion

The era of Imam Reza's pontificate (peace be upon his holiness) acquire relative freedom for cultural and theological activities and argumentations. The eighth Shia Imam (peace be upon his holiness) defends, educates and promotes Islamic education, which includes explication of pontificate, his virtues and Velayat, the holy seat of Fatima, Imam Hossein and Imam Hassan (peace be upon their holiness) and the religious role of Shia in general. Through public enlightenment, Imam (peace be upon his holiness) extricates the issue of pontificate from isolation and darkness so that the followers of the holy household of the Prophet (peace be upon his holiness) can be organized in tackling with the dictatorial regime of the time. It can be claimed that after Ashura's revolution in the era of Alawi dynasty, the general census towards the issue of pontificate is attracted and retained by Imam Reza's

cultural and political activities (peace be upon his holiness). Furthermore, his efforts facilitate international development of Shia Islam. Not only are Imam's ideologies redemptive in an era of public deviation and profaneness, but also his holy shrine and his "Astan Quds Razavi" becomes a torching sun for Islamic enlightenment and a pivot for "Pure Islam".

Even in Ma'mun's governance, Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) declares his pontificate explicitly and without any scriptural reservation. Imam Reza (peace be upon his holiness) emphasizes on the necessity of obedience from pontificate and the holy household of the Prophet (peace be upon his holiness), declaring it a scriptural mandate.

Imam Reza political theses (peace be upon his holiness) acquire divine fundamentals so that the human race can prevail through utilization of his theses. By comparing Imam Reza's theses (peace be upon his holiness) to that of Machiavelli, it becomes evident that the latter justifies any means (e.g. plotting, hypocrisy, etc.) for attaining its objective. The policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran proceed in the path of attaining such divine objectives and as a result, political and cultural ideologies of the holy household of the Prophet (peace be upon his holiness) are always considered an ebullient resources for politicians of our country. Through acquisition of such theses and divine ideologies, The Islamic Republic of Iran obviates any shortcomings in domestic and international arenas. It is hoped that by the grace of God Almighty, Imam Reza's political theses can be acquired and implemented deeply in the fundamentals of the Islamic governance of our country.

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