Khomeini seems to have confused the Quranic doctrine of God’s sovereignty on the entire universe with the politic sovereignty of a nation. This concept contradicts the conclusion of Ibn Taimiyah who offers "moderate" opinion about the nature of Islamic State. This different interpretation of Islamic Polity cannot be separated from the history of Islam in its earlier days. After the death of Muhammad, peace be upon him, Islamic Society was led by Khulafa al-Rashidun (632-661 AD). However, each of them offered different kind of policy to rule the country.

There is no special model of an Islamic Polity. Moral and ethical considerations can be considered as the most possible basics of "Modern Islamic Polity"
When Shaikh Ali Abd. al-Raziq published his controversial book, *al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm* (Islam and the Principlles of Government) in 1925, most of the Ulama outrightly condemned him as the one who was deliberately disseminating the poisonous political theory, completely dictated by Western Orientalists in order to undermine Islam from within. As we know, this Egyptian author, an al-Azhar graduate, not only repudiated the *shari‘i* based theory of the caliphate, but also stated that the prophet had no any political business. For him, the prophetic mission of Muhammad was purely and exclusively religious in its spiritual sense. It is said when the Prophet was involved in socio-political and military affairs, it was not more than historical accident. This is the way Abd. al-Raziq brought out his arguments in order to show his full agreement with the dissolution of the Ottoman caliphate by Kemal Atatürk.

The focus of this essay is to identify some terms of the political concept and idea of Islam which might be relevant to the demand of the Muslim *Ummah* of today. Also we want to analyze the position of state in the perspective of Islamic political ideas and ideals.

**Islam and State**

The term "Islamic State" (al-Daulah al-Islamiyah) is not a classical term. One can not find this term in al-Baqillani’s, al-Mawardi’s, or even in Ibn Khalidun’s. What we have been familiar with in the classical literatures is the terms such as al-Kalifah al-Rashidah, al-Daulah al-Amawiyyah, al-Daulah al-Abbasiyyah, al-Sultanah al-Ustmaniyyah, etc. It is probably Sayyid Rashid Rida in his *al-Khilafah aw al-Imamat al-Uzma* of this century who coined the term *al-Daulah al-Islamiyyah* on the eve of the abolition of the Ottoman Empire in 1924. Rida himself not only used the term *al-Daulah al-Islamiyyah* but also the term *al-Khilafah al-Islamiyyah* or *Hukumat al-Khilafah* interchangeably.

As an intellectual and disciple of Muhammad Abduh, Rida felt responsible for finding an Islamic political term in the time when the Ottoman Empire was in an acute crisis. What he meant by Islamic State and how to bring the *Syari‘ah* into the State -craft network, Rida until his death in 1935 never gave us a clear-cut theoretical arrangement. Consequently, the Muslim leaders and thinkers who came after him also used the term, but no one of them was to systematically define what the picture of an Islamic State looked like. The Muslim *Ummah*, therefore, was left to grope speculatively.

The emergence of Pakistan as an Islamic State in 1947 was enthusiastically expected by many to be the model of an Islamic polity in modern time. This enthusiasm lasted only for around two decades. After this project failed to give a substantious meaning to its very *raison de être* except in name, some serious Muslim scholars and writers came to the fore to find the roots of the failure. Muhammad Asad, then a distinguished Pakistani thinker, in 1961 wrote a book called *the Principles of State and Government in Islam*, published by the University of California Press. Without mentioning some shortcomings found in Asad’s

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2) Enayat, op.cit., pp. 70, 76-77.

political theory, this book was the first serious treatise on the ideas of Islamic State in modern time. The concept of shura (mutual consultation), which had never been institutionalized during the classical period of Islamic history, become one of the fundamental pillars in Asad's theory. Through the process of shura it was expected, the ummah would be able to deal effectively with the political problems by using the ijtihad (independent judgment) methodology.

Another Pakistani writer, Sayyid Abu al-A'la al-Maududi, proposed a rather peculiar Islamic political theory. Take for example the theory of sovereignty in the Islamic political system. For Maududi and disciples, sovereignty in an Islamic State solely belongs to God. God is, therefore, politically sovereign. But, the theory goes to say, this sovereignty is delegated by Him to the representatives of the Ummah in order to implement His imperatives in the political realm for the happiness and welfare of the people. This theory, in my view, is not to solve the problems we are facing, but only to make the Muslims' mind more confused.

Ayatullah Khomeini, the spiritual leader of the Islamic revolution of Iran, followed Maududi's theory of Divine sovereignty. According to him, Islamic government is the government of law. In this form of government, the sovereignty only belongs to God. Here, Khomeini seems to have confused the Qur'anic doctrine of God's sovereignty on the entire universe with the politic sovereignty of a nation. This sort of theory, of course, is not a fair business. By so doing, I am afraid, one has, perhaps unconsciously, dethroned the supreme and ultimate authority of God to the position of temporal political figure.

If we go back for a moment to the political theories or doctrines developed by the Muslim jurist-consults of the classical period, one important idea we can take them is that political institution (or state in modern usage) is indispensable from the Islamic belief system. Ibn Taimiyah, for example, in his al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyyah, strongly emphasized the crucial role and function of Wilayah (political guardianship) in the Muslim community. This theory is, of course, quite contradictory to the secular theory of Abd al-Raziq as cited before: "...wilayah..." wrote Ibn Taimiyah, "is one of the most important religious obligations ( ), without it, religion cannot firmly stand up." Related to this, Ibn Taimiyah stated that the task of enjoining the good and forbidding the bad could not be completed without power and authority. He considered the sultan (political formal leader) as the symbol of power and authority. In Ibn Taimiyah's theory, the word sultan is more common than the word khaliq (caliph). This phenomenon is not strange because since the fall of Baghdad in 1258, the caliphate had disappeared from the scene of history. As a preeminent jurist-consult and thinker, Ibnu Taimiyah was quite realistic in his approach to political theory. In his time was also a realistic social scientist.

But mere political realism is not sufficient to reconstruct a truly Islamic political theory. For the sake of realism, Ibn Taimiyah uncritically quoted a hadith saying "a sultan is the shadow of God on the earth." Then he combined it with another hadith saying "60 years under an unjust ruler (imam jair) is better than one night without a sultan". With this argument in mind, an unjust ruler might also be the shadow of God on the earth. This is an absurd way of thinking, though Ibn Taimiyah did not say that.

8) Ibid.
9) Ibid., 139.
10) Ibid.
11) Ibid.
What I am wondering is that Ibn Taimiyah did not try to read the above-mentioned hadits in the respective of the Qur’an which provides no space for the unjust rulership in Muslim communities.

I myself seriously question the authenticity of the forementioned hadits for two reasons. First, the term sultan in its political connotation might not have appeared yet before the advent of the Turkish Saljuqs to the Muslim historical arena. Second, accepting any unjust rulership is completely incompatible with the Quranic dictum of “enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.” What I am wondering is that Ibn Taimiyah did not try to read the above-mentioned hadits in the respective of the Qur’an which provides no space for the unjust rulership in Muslim communities. Around two centuries before Ibn Taimiyah, Abu al-Hasan al-Mawardi in al-Ahkam sul-taniyyah had also twisted the political hadits for the sake of the survival of the Abbasid empire. This Sya’iir jurist and diplomat had developed the concept of ita’ah (obedience) to the ruler, no matter he was just or wicked. The following hadits: “... listen to them (those in authority) and obey them in every aspect of truth and goodness.

12) See the Qur’an s. Ali 'Imran: 104, 110; al-A'raf: 157; al-Taubah: 71, 112; al-Haji: 41; Luqman: 17. The task of enjoining the doing what is right (good) and forbidding the doing what is wrong (evil) is the task of the prophets and the believers. The Qur’an in several verses repeats again and again the primary importance of this collective task on the part of the ummah muslimah. Whether its existence in this life means anything very much depends on whether it has performed this task or not.

In other words, the ummah muslimah actually and Qur’antically does not exist once the task is left undone. The statement made by the Qur’an that "you enjoin the doing what is right and forbid the doing what is wrong" (see for example in s. Ali 'Imran: 110) means that the Muslims have a religious obligation to establish an ethical-based society on the earth. It might be because of this obligation, the Muslim jurists and theologians in the medieval time often used any political hadith, authentic or doubted, to support their arguments for defending the sultan, iman, or amir almost without reservation. In their opinions: the task of enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong became impossible when the ummah did not show a total obedience to the leader.

When they do good, the reward is still for you, and for them will be punishment was taken by al-Mawardi to be one of the religious bases of his theory of obedience on the part of the ummah.

In fact, undoubtedly, the muslim jurist-consults continued to find prophetic justification for the existence of the wicked rulership in the medieval periods of Islamic history. The statements supporting the concept of obedience are abundant in the hadits literature. Surprisingly, the reverse hadits are also actually not less in number, but the former gained ascendancy in shaping Muslim political realities.

In the light of the analysis as was elaborated above, I come to a conclusion that if we really want to write a truly Islamic political theory in modern perspective, most of the sources we get from the periods of imperial or dynastic Islam have to be discarded. Of course, we have to be very careful in handling this business since the classical period of Islamic history had produced many valuable things in other fields of human intellectual and spiritual activities, but not in political theories. This is one of the reasons why Muhammad Asad, for example, wrote an Islamic political theory by ignoring all the sources produced by the jurist-consults in the medieval period; Asad, in his own words, decided to draw the theoretical outline of an Islamic constitution on the strength of the clear-cut political injunctions forthcoming from the Qur’an and from authentic hadits. But it would be quite acceptable, I think, to add some other sources, that is, from the political practices performed by the al-Khulafa al-Rashidun (Rightly-Guided Caliphs), although we still have to be selective and critical in some important points.

14) Asad, op.cit., p.IX
During the period of *Khulafa al-Rashidun* (632-661 A.D.), the state organization was only an instrument of *al-din* (religion it was not an extension of it, and was more or less democratic. According to Manzooruddin Ahmed in his excellent work on modern Islamic political theory, the *Khilafah al-Rashidah* constituted the golden age of the Islamic government and, therefore, it was idealized by the Muslim jurists and theologians. In the perspective of past history, this classical caliphate was actually a historical breakthrough. No nation at that time institutionalized its political system on the basis of the principles of egalitarianism as existed during the period of the classical caliphate. This period was primarily characterized by: (1) the secular powers were subordinated to the *shari'ah* (Islamic law); (2) the structure of the government was highly centralized; (3) the personality of the caliph was the main focus of all powers; (4) *shura* (mutual-consultation) was a popular mode of decision-making in all community affairs. After this brief period, the practices of *shura* ceased to function as a mechanism of socio-political decision-making. This unfortunate event lasted for long time. Only at the end of the 19th century, Namik Kemal, an Ottoman writer, raised again the spirit of *shura* in Muslim politics. Afterward in the twentieth century, his step was followed by other Muslim writers and thinkers such as Muhammad Iqbal (Pakistan), Mohammad Hashim (Indonesia), and Dr. Buhariuddin Helmy (Malaysia). Ironically, there were very few, if any, among the Arab writers and thinkers who advocated the principles of *shura*-democracy with full courage. This is also an unfortunate phenomenon! We will see below a little bid more on the *shura* in its relations with the democratic decision-making.

**The Possible Format of an Islamic Polity of Today**

A state, in the Islamic perspective, receives its mandate from the *ummah* (Muslim community). This means the political theory of Divine sovereignty, as was discussed earlier, should be rejected. Since the Islamic state gets its mandate from the people, it is inevitably democratic. The Quranic concept of *shura* no doubt implies the important elements of democratic procedures in decision-making, social and political. What are the objectives of state according to the contemporary Muslim scholars? Fazlur Rahman, for instance, gave the answer that the objectives are to safeguard the safety and integrity of state, to maintain law and order and to develop the country so that every individual in it may be able to realize his full potentialities and contribute to the well-being of the whole. In other words, the Quranic dictum "rahmatan lil-‘alamin" (God’s grace towards all mankind) should become reality in the Islamic state. In the process to achieve this noble end, one can not separate politics from morality. In Islam, these two entities are in fact inseparable.

Accordingly, once politics and ethics be separated, life will become secularized, and politicians will exploit and justify all the means in order to get the end. If one supports al-Raziq’s political elements in the prophetic mission, the possibility of the rise of many Machiavelli’s in Muslim countries will be quite great. I think, by reviving the *shura*-democratic political system based on the principles of ethics, there is a hope that the Muslims today will be able to liberate themselves from the ills of secular political doctrine. Otherwise, what we will see, I am afraid, is the emergence of pseudo-Islamic states in which despotism, authoritarianism, mismanagement, tyranny, conflicts, corruption, become common phenomena. All are in the garb of Islam.

To sum up, based on what we have discussed, I can say that democracy, republicanism imbued with the Islamic morality and ethics, will be the ideal alternative system of state and government in Islam. Other systems are only to revive political traumas of the past, during the period of imperial Islam. We have been deterred from this sort of historical experience. In order to appreciate democracy in

15) Ahmed, *op. cit.,* p.119
16) Ibid.
17) Rahman, *op. cit.,* p.261
18) Ibid., pp 261-262.
19) See the Qur'an s. al-Ameena: 107.
the Islamic perspective, however, one has to get rid of the handcuffs of traditionalism and medieval mentality.

**Conclusion**

By subordinating political power and activities to moral ends and ideals, we are now in a position to conclude our discussion. For Islam, the function of state constitutes an important and indispensable instrument to realize its moral ideals and imperatives. These ideals can only be brought down to the earth effectively by the collective effort of the *ummah* as a religio-political entity. The realization of socio-economic justice in human life is one of the manifestations of Islamic political objectives. Every member of the *ummah* in the process of decision-making is treated equal, symbolizing the Islamic spirit of brotherhood and egalitarianism. This is the concrete form of the *shura*-democratic political system. The long-run goal to be achieved is the establishment of a moral-based human society in which people are provided ample opportunities to transcend themselves in the hope to come nearer to the Absolute Reality. The Islamic society is certainly an egalitarian society! *Allah a'lam.*