Religionization of Politics versus Secularization of Politics: An Islamic Alternative

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Abstract

The relation between religion and politics is a question of extended background having received a variety of responses. The issue of the epistemological foundations of the issue and the logical possibility of the formation of Islamic politics is, however, a quite recent topic which has drawn the attention of a lot of contemporary analysts.

Two main approaches can be distinguished in the field of the Islamic political discourse which believes in the integration of religion and politics. One is the rejection of secular arguments altogether towards deducing the possibility of "Islamic Politics". The other goes beyond the criticism of secularism and talks of the necessity of establishing "Islamic politics".

This article deals with the second approach explaining the epistemological foundations of the Islamic politics and introducing the idea of how to make politics accord with religious law.

Thus, understanding and practice of politics in a religious society is essentially impossible without reference to its initial foundations.

Keywords

Islam, politics, secularism, Sharia (Islamic Law), power, society, government

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Introduction

 "Introduce Islam to the people so well that the younger generation does not get the impression that religion must be separated from politics! This separation has been mentioned and propagated by the colonialists. This is the statement of pessimists. Was it in this manner during the time of the Holy prophet of Islam (SA)?" (Imam Khomeini, n.d., pp.19-21).

As stated categorically by Imam Khumeini, creation and development of the trend of secularization in the Muslim World is closely related to the objectives and interests of the colonialists. Thus, we witness its material and intellectual sponsorship by centers of foreign powers[1]. The result of this transformation is the emergence of a wide spectrum of varied arguments in relation to endorsement of the dimensions and stages of secularization that is transformed today into an original foundation in the liberal democracy model for the management of the life of human being.

The growth of technology and scientific developments because of the increase in the sources of soft and hard power of secular systems has led some thinkers to endorsing the truth and reliability of the basis of non-divine theories in the operational theatre and leaning towards these doctrines. They have tended to believe that the prerequisite for improving and raising the position of the player in the international system is submission to the principle of secularization and its domination over individual, social and political life[2]. That is why we are witnessing the emergence of a new type of religious theoreticians that from the ideological angle are 'Muslim' and in individual practice are obedient to religious commandments. However, at the level of political action, they believe in the delimitation of the presence of religion and adherence to secular models for formation and establishment of government.[3]

The above words imply a lawful endorsement of secularism that exists today in certain societies. On the other hand, because of religious beliefs among its followers, efforts are made so that with the presentation of this stratum of rational and textual arguments, the doctrine of secularization in the sense of a divine commandment is redefined and implemented as a religious action. However, the essence of Islamic ideology basically does not accept such an approach and thought. In other words, the basis and essence of Islam (in the manner that the Shiite school understands on the basis of the Quran, the traditions of the Prophet, the reason and consensus) not only does not allow the delimitation of presence of religion in the arena of politics, but implies its extensive presence in all aspects of human life that stretch from before birth until after death. Based on this premise, politics government as an important part of human existence are the subject of the aforesaid ruling such that without religion, one can not have a proper understanding of "happy political life."

However, the development and domination of secular perspectives – of both the western and eastern type – have resulted in attaching less importance to the significant above mentioned principle. Consequently, the secular way approach has attracted followers and adherents even in the field of Islamic theory and practice to the extent that secularization is considered a necessity belonging to the modern world and which is also endorsed by religion. They believe that the foundation of an efficient political system and management of community life with the objective of attaining happiness lies in acceptance of secularism and its expansion[4]. In order to criticize the above mentioned point of view and explain the authenticity of Islamic politics, the writer has in this article put forward the question of "identity of Islam". To give a categorical and suitable response, he has resorted to analysis of the structure of Islamic perspective for

managing the life of human being on this planet. Based on this approach, the writer puts forward the concept of "religionization" vis-à-vis "secularization". It refers to the acceptance of the presence of religion and adherence to religious norms in all aspects of human life – including both individual and social levels. From this point of view, the happiness of man does not lie in depriving his spheres of activity of the presence of religion. Rather, it rests on the discovery of this presence and in adapting and adjusting human action with religious norms. Therefore, religionization - and not secularization – is regarded as the solution to pulling out Islamic societies from the numerous and complex deadlocks of the modern world.

In order to attain the aforesaid objective and to understand the above mentioned concept, the writer initially propounds two divergent assumptions in relation to religion. Thereafter, on the basis of the results obtained from their analysis, he sketches the picture of desirable religious politics documented on the principles and foundations of Shiite philosophy. Naturally, this model, because of its reference to sources such as the Quran and traditions of the prophet of Islam (SA), can be taken note of by all Islamic states. Moreover, the observance of rational principles in its designing can develop this model into an efficient one for its presentation in the arena of politics globally too.

1. Conceptual Framework: Religious Sphere – Secular Sphere

"Nowadays, the discussion is always about change, transformation and upheaval. Some make efforts to show everything relative and adapt them with their era. According to a human being must make all realities conform to the inclinations, style and taste of this age– however clumsy this taste may be… (but) man is a creature who has not changed basically and the depth of his soul like those of his ancestors is facing a reality that is infinite. He himself is predestined

to search for a meaning in this transient phase of life." (Nasr, 1992, pp.249 and 251).

As rightly pointed out by Seyyid Husein Nasr, secularism and religion must not be assessed merely as implying two simple concepts – even though having a very great importance in human life. Rather, these two, from the viewpoint that they describe two divergent semantic systems for human life, are the founders of two distinct spheres of human living. In other words, they can be considered as the creator of two types of worlds one of which is 'material and worldly' while the other is 'holy'. These two worlds are not only inconsistent with one another, but they possess many fundamental distinguishing points that can be discovered by penetrating through their semantic layers. For this purpose, we shall undertake a semantic post mortem of the "religious life" and "secular life".

1-1. Theology and Religious life

"Perhaps there is no other word but religion that is constantly and openly used in a very explicit and simple manner, but which in fact reveals perspectives that are not only quite different, but they are mutually exclusive." (Jackie, 1995, p.202).

As rightly pointed out by Stanley L. Jackie, the starting point in discussions pertaining to the relationship of religion with other subjects, is clarifying the definition and conception of 'religion'. In other words, the theoretical framework of these types of subjects is firmly based on the presentation of an acceptable structure for religion. For this purpose, it is necessary that two subjects be analyzed in the discussion of religion as follows:

1-1-1. Approaches

The term "religion" possesses a long linguistic history that on the whole, deals with a kind of spiritual obligation among its followers.

This term appears as 'Dae-en" in the Zoroastrian language, "Den" in the Pahlavi tongue, "Religion" in English and "Ad-Din" in Arabic (Alizadeh, 1992, pp.66-72; Hashemi, 1991, pp.65-72). The aforesaid variations suggest the presence of different conceptions of religion, the most significant of which being as follows:

First, the Ethical Approach

In this interpretation, religion is evaluated as a kind of ethical covenant between the individual and the metaphysical establishment which cannot be compared with the rest of covenants. This means that religion will comprise "the duties determined by a divine source." The performance of these duties and the punishment in case of their lack of implementation do not fit in the mold of normal regulations. Rather, it occurs from a divine source and in the form of peculiar mechanisms (Divine promises and punishments). To sum up, religion is evaluated in a specific sphere of human covenants and is distinguished from all usual human models that in the words of Kenneth, is centered around "obligations' (Hume, 1994, p.22).

Second, the Psychological approach

 The demotion of religion to a psychological individual feeling vis-à-vis the metaphysical source is an image taken note of by 'Schlaier Macher' when he states: "Religion consists of a feeling of dependency on the Absolute." (Hume, 1994, p.22).

In this approach the aforesaid limitation of the first approach (i.e. confining religion to duties) does not exist and all the relationships (including ethical, recommended and obligatory) of religion are identified. However, in view of the fact that the nature of religion is demoted to an "individual emotion", the role of divine focus is reduced to the minimum.

Third: Sociological Approach

Special attention to objective and functional phenomena and topics that occur following the domination of positivist attitude in the field of human studies (Popper, 1972), results in the birth of a new approach in theology in which 'religion' refers to a series of beliefs, principles and traditions conforming with conditions of time and place of societies. In defining religion from this point of view Emille Durkheim states thus:

"Religion is a cohesive order of beliefs and actions pertaining to sacred objects: meaning objects that have been separated and sanctified - beliefs and actions that unite all followers towards a monotheistic direction that is known as the temple." (Alizadeh, 1992, pp.84-85).

In this approach, religion is evaluated as a 'social phenomenon' and it is for this reason that it is known as a sociological approach in the field of religious studies. A point of note is the pivotal role of 'conditions of time and place' in the creation and advent of religion that results in religion being recognized as a product of societies.

Fourth: Individualism Approach

The relegation of religion to an individual experience is among the approaches that have been taken note of following the dominance of individualism. In the book "Diversity of Religious Experiences", William James expresses that religion is considered as a strategy for attaining salvation by which it releases the individual from the external bondages and guides him towards 'his true self." (Cf. James, 1994).

"In the same way that now I am asking you to accept it freely, religion for us must mean emotions, actions, experiences of each individual of mankind in his own privacy – to the extent that he views

himself to be related to everything he believes and perceives to be divine." (Hume, 2000, p.23).

Fifth: Divine Approach

In this approach, religion is defined and identified on the pivotal basis of "a sacred affair". As is evident from the previously stated approaches, the presence of a sacred affair in relation to which one can define (whether from the obligation or emotional or functional aspects) religious relationships is considered to be a necessary matter. It is for this reason that in Islam a special emphasis is placed on this pivot and "Allah" is accepted as the creator of the universe possessing exclusive features. In the interpretation of "In the Name of Allah" Imam Khumeini has mentioned thus:" … The entire existence from the final end of the sacred intellect to the ultimate end of the line of the universe of prime matter and nature is the appearance of His Holiness and the object of manifestation of the Absolute Will which is the most important of the Active Attributes (Names). Thus it has been said that "in the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful" is the essence of creation." (Imam Khumeini, 1981, 138).

Understanding religion on the foundation of "sacred affair" that forms the essence of Shiite discourse is considered to be the first sign for criticism and rejection of secularism because from this point of view, basically such topics are considered religious that are in some way related to "sacred affair". However, since secularism attempts to sever the relationship of sacred affair with specific subjects, it is regarded as an anti-religion policy that cannot be accepted by the faithful. In other words, leaving aside in whatever field secularism is put forward and presented (personal or public fields), it is essentially at odds with 'religiousness' (with the aforementioned divine approach). For this reason, the inclination and leaning towards secularism has an irreligious origin. That is why justification of

secularism using religious precepts and teachings necessitates a change in the approach of the faithful towards religion and a reform in his judgment in relation to the essence of religion. Thus at first, an approach that is non-divine is accepted and thereafter secularism is presented on its foundation with its religious trappings (religious in its non-divine reading).[5]

The aggregate of the above mentioned remarks proves that putting forward and endorsement of secularism in the form of a phenomenon that attempts to present a novel image of religion and religiousness, is tied to the question of "nature of religion" and reflection on the essence of a type of religion that the followers of secular doctrines pay attention to. In a macro grouping, one can delineate two main discourses, one creating and developing secularism and the other opposing it. In other words, acceptance of secularism in the field of religion is contingent upon the change in the type of attitude towards religion from "that of a sacred subject to a material phenomenon. That is why although secularism does not make claims to religion, it does not bring about any result other than "contradiction with the identity of religion in essence."

1-1-2. Discourses

If we consider discourse as a collection of propositions, concepts and categories that are in a logical relationship with one another and finally, form a specific intellectual system that gives meaning to the words and actions of its followers (the principle of production of spiritual reality) (Marsh and Stoker 1995, pp.110-140), we can distinguish two main discourses in the discussion of theology within the scope of this writing as follows:

First: worldly discourse

The attempt to eliminate the sacred affair from understanding of religion and its conversion to a human phenomenon that can be reconciled with humanism forms the main axis of the worldly discourse in knowing the religion. It is from this point of view that C.W. Smith in the book "Spiritual Reality and Objective of Religion" has defined it as a human phenomenon that is shaped in the bedrock of mankind's culture. From this viewpoint, religion has an essence and function similar to the rest of the cultural elements of human beings (Hick, 1993, p.23). The prominent qualities of this discourse are as follows:

First quality: Delimitation of Religion:

The field of influence and manifestation of religion increases or decreases in keeping with conditions and demands of time. That which draws one's attention to this discourse is acceptance of the truth of the principle of defining the realm of religion in an external form (in relation to the inner part of religion), (Cf. Surush, 1370).

Second quality: Alteration of Religion

It is in the sense that religion because of the services it renders to the faithful attains meaning and definition. Thus a kind of pragmatism rules over religious relationships that can determine the level of commitment and its limit. In other words, religion is deviated from its main position of "development of human beings" and is demoted to the extent of an instrument designed to serve a human being (Al-Aravi, 2002, pp.87–97).

Second: Holy Discourse

"We must adhere to the acceptance of manifestations of sanctity in every place and every part of physiological, economic, spiritual and social living." (Eliade, 1993, p.32).

The foundation of the holy discourse is shaped by paying attention to the pivotal role of "holy affair" in religious life and the point that religion finds meaning in relation of the heavens with human being; thus elimination of the metaphysical element or its earthy redefinition results in loss of religion. According to this perspective, we accept that:

Firstly, although religion has vast practical function, it is under no circumstances regarded an instrument. In other words, a human being becomes a spiritual reality within the scope of religion and it is not that religion is to be understood within the framework of human interests (Nasri, 1378, pp.129-139). It is important to understand the meaning of creation and that man is a creature).

Secondly, the area of presence and influence of religion is assessed as being subservient to the will of the Divine Legislator and not of the desire of human being. Thus in the position of understanding religion, the main question is the "expectation of God from human being" (Larijani, 1370, pp.176-198), (Cf. table no.1).
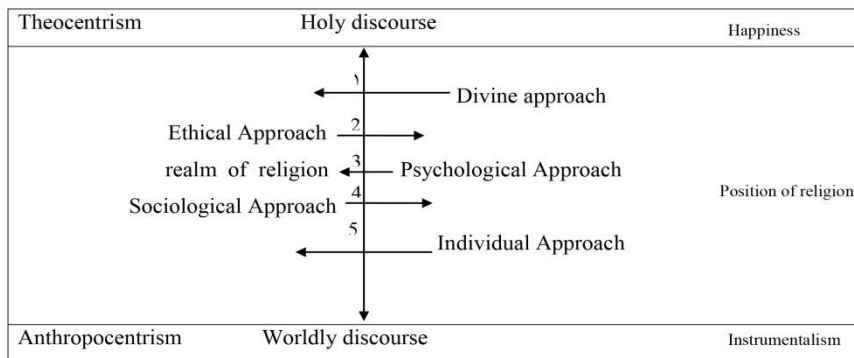
Table no. 1: Theology : Approaches and Discourses

1-1-3. Religious life

With regard to the above-mentioned discourses and approaches, one can deduce two theories of religion, one of which results in the concept of secularization and the other in that of the religionization in the field of religious life. These two theories are as follows:

First Theory: Minimal religion

"Minimal religion" is a general term that can be attributed to a series of points of view concerning theology in which "sacred affair' and its unique place has been acknowledged, but for various reasons, "the area of presence of sacred affair" is delimited. This "delimitation" is justified by various proofs of which the most important are as follows:

1) Substantialism

From the point of view of these analysts, religion, like the other categories, possesses a substance that shapes the philosophy of its existence. Based on this, all religious commandments or recommendations that we receive, find meaning and spiritual reality in relation with that essence and under no circumstance can we put them in place of "the substance of religion". In this way the question of "substance of religion" is transformed into a pivotal question whose answer can clarify the principal realm of the presence of religion (Malekian, 2002, pp.265-430). Giving answers such as spiritualism, improvement of one's afterlife, human development, etc… although each can be critically analyzed, they have one common point, i.e. they agree on the principle of delimiting the realm of religion. Considering that substantialism leads to the distinction of the realm of "the essential presence of religion" from that of "non-essential presence of religion", it has been used extensively in the production of "minimal religious theories". In other words, this theory is capable of

developing from within the holy discourse and this fact has resulted in religious proofs to be permanently presented toward delimitation of religion.

2) Humanism

Emphasis on the intellectual potential of man and his genetic and acquired potentials termed as "rationality" form the logical foundation of this theory. Based on this, the requisite of rational growth of human being and his managerial potential requires that in specific arenas, his role-making is defined and accepted. In other words, the principle of combined presence of God and human being in one and the same capacity is not endorsed and one gets such an impression that "freewill" and "agency" of human being is tied to reduction of the importance or rejection of divine presence.

Humanistic explanations for confirmation of the "theory of minimal religion" have been put forward in two distinct readings each of which lies within its relevant discourse, i.e. the holy or worldly one.

Religious reading of humanism

According to this reading, the image of human being presented in the context of religion is such that necessitates delimitation of the presence of God in favor of the active roles of human being. In other words the legislator has embraced a neutral ground and has himself attempted to logically delimit his presence; thus the status of human being as designated by the Almighty God justifies this delimitation. Based on this premise, the divine will concerning god's viceroy, i.e. human being and raising his physical and intellectual capacities that result in human perfection requires that he endeavor to manage his own affairs.[6] Although this reading has religious basis, considering that the 'neutral ground' covers the area of putting aside religious principles and gives religious endorsement to personal opinion

(leaving aside its results) in an independent form, it is an intensely critical reading (Cf. Eftekhari, 2005).

Non-religious reading of humanism

Based on this reading, considering that religion is for human being, thus it is necessary to be understood at his level and capacity. Thus the intellectual and scientific growth of human being has resulted in a breakthrough of revealing largely concealed aspects of life and in his ability to manage them. Therefore, traditional needs for religion are no longer relevant for human being. In other words, development of human beings has tightened the scope for sacred affair and this is a phenomenon that is known as "decoding" the universe in the light of strengthening instrumental rationality.[7]

3) Naturalism

The reasoning that the modern world is basically different from the bygone world and because of our entry into the era of modernism and post-modernism, we live in a world that is distinct from other worlds having its own specific tools, objectives, methods and teachings has guided some of the thinkers to the point where the claim to 'being up to date" is defined in such terms as it is necessary for us to have a distinct religion for the present age. In other words, religion must be understood within the modern-day requirements and if these requirements result in the delimitation of religion, its acceptance is necessary and inevitable (Surush, 1991, pp.107-167).

The main problem with this explanation is its answer to the question of "principality of religion" and that whether religion is made in relation to the environment or that it has come in order to build and to give form to the environment. It is natural that the active status of religion in this justification approach is diminished.[8]

On the whole, acceptance of the above mentioned justification – whether categorically or implicitly – guides the thinker towards acceptance of the theory of Minimal religion from which a unique reading from secularism – in the sense of defining the secular and devoid of religion arenas for decision-making and practices of human beings – is deduced. In this reading, although religion does exist and is assessed as being valuable and valid, the realm of its presence – in the course of history and in line with the conditions facing human beings – is on the decline. "Secularization" based on this premise is considered to be complementary of religion that is inversely related to "religionization" i.e. acknowledgement of the widespread presence of religion.

Second Theory: Maximal Religion

The essence of 'maximal religion' is shaped by the general assumption that religious principles and bases govern all actions, words and beliefs of the faithful and thus one cannot find any action, word or thought that is not loaded with religious norms. Of course, the readings presented by this theory are not one and the same in terms of value. Thus we know of thinkers who- while accepting the theory of maximal religion in principle- are critical or opposed to some of the explanatory readings of the theory. The most important readings available from this theory are as follows:

Powerful intellect

The concept of the intellect is considered to be a traditional subject in the history of philosophy and intellectual development of human beings so that we can find numerous and varied assumptions from this concept each of which have been influential in their own way in shaping political thought and action. We can seldom find a theory that

has been the focus of attention such as the point of view of Max Weber on the subject of the functions of the intellect.

"Julian Fround" while summarizing on the point of view of Max Weber introduces rationality as a situation based on "the world being devoid of charm" that seems to reveal the essence of "instrumental rationality" experienced in the West.

"Elimination of charm" as propounded by Weber, has come under strong criticism because of its excessive reliance on pillars such as critical examination or calculation (Freund, 1983, p.31), by a large number of thinkers –the most prominent of whom, Jurgen Habermas. This is because instrumental rationality was formal and had transformed itself into an iron cage that rendered it incapable of understanding the developing nature of human relationships. (Cf. Eftekhari, 1994, part 2)

Criticisms such as those that the followers of critical schools have leveled against the theory of Max Weber and the manner of application of the intellect (Cf. Weber, 1992, pp.33-38), have ultimately guided the thinkers of various doctrines to offer novel concepts in this field including 'powerful intellect'. The writer puts forward this interpretation of the intellect relying on previous discussions and on the basis of the propositions below:

Proposition1: Intellect and religious teachings are interdependent.[9]

Proposition 2: Intellect is the foremost divine creation and thus it takes precedence over physical creatures and is superior to them.[10]

Proposition 3: Intellect is considered to be the principal instrument in deduction of divine commandments in every era and period.[11]

Proposition 4: Intellect is the source of understanding and learning from experience.[12]

Proposition 5: Intellect is the source of guidance of human being.[13]

Proposition 6: The intellect is a creator of knowledge through which the affairs are organized.[14]

Proposition 7: Intellect is the source of preservation and immunity of human being.[15]

It is in this sevenfold combination that the 'powerful intellect' takes shape in accordance with which, a positive relationship is established between 'religion and intellect' at three levels as below:

First, it is at the natural level in which both of them are seen as being an inspiration of one another keeping with the demand of nature.

Second, it is at the level of application as a result of which intellect is evaluated as a useful and reliable instrument for understanding religion and serving its objectives.

Third, it is at the level of objectives as a result of which, the sound intellect is evaluated to the extent of being in line with the lofty objectives of religion. In summary, the 'powerful intellect' has been described in terms of presentation of an image of the intellect that is endorsed and reinforced by the divine lawmaker and it is distinguished from the 'weak intellect' that in the mold of the readings of Weber or Haber Moss, is removed from the religious principles and origins. According to this approach:

Firstly, the transcendent wisdom and divine favor bestowed on human being is taken for granted. Secondly the complexity and difficulty of material life as an external and objective fact is presumed unquestionable. Thirdly the relative impotence of human being in management of the complex material life and consequently, his pressing need to gain the favor of a superior power is accepted.

Fourthly, the deficiency in the potency of human being at all individual and social levels is confirmed.

Therefore, it is necessary that the potency of human being within the will of the divine lawmaker be defined and identified. In this way,

the powerful intellect – or that same intellect that is endorsed by divine lawmaker and has gained power because of receiving guidance – attains relevance. This intellect considers the presence of religion for recognizing and reaching happiness to be absolutely necessary holding that any kind of disregard for religion – at various individual and social levels – implies forfeiting a reliable and potent source of guidance and support of human beings. In other words, "return to religion" based on rational principles is necessary and that without the potency of the intellect in recognizing issues and their management being reduced or deviated.

1) Weak Human

The justification for the widespread presence of religion in the realm of individual and social life in this theory occurs on the basis of the incapability of human beings in understanding issues of life and consequently, their pressing need for a superior source in all dimensions of living. This theory that had gained total acceptance in the Middles Ages experience of the West, leaning on pillars such as the widespread weakness of human being, the formal relationship of God with an exclusive group of people (official organization of the Church), the undisputed religious authority of the Church fathers and finally, raising all necessary issues in the context of religion, attempted to adjust and manage individual and social relations according to the views of religion that would be stated formally by the pastors of the Church. (Cf. Gilson, 1987, pp.396-422). As inferred from theoretical and practical analysis of this reading, in the approach of the Middle Ages, the human being and his capabilities have no place at all and he is assumed inherently incapable. It is for this reason that the intellect and its lofty position – as mentioned in the previous reading – has been totally ignored and transformed into a modest and restricted gift according to the fathers of the Church. The result is that

in the reading of the Middle Ages also the complexity of social and individual life has been recognized with the difference that the capability of human being has been strongly dismissed and replaced simply by a single source called religion whose focal point is the formal organization of the Church. In this perspective, weak human beings have no alternative other than submission to the interference of Christianity in all spheres of their lives in a passive manner and obedience to it. (Cf. Gilson, 1987, pp.281-311).

As can be noted, the reading of the Middle Ages differs in terms of essence from the earlier reading of the widespread presence of religion. Thus, at the level of objectives, methods and models, we can distinguish one from another. In this way, the widespread presence of religion according to Middle Ages reading has an imposed aspect and a negative identity whereas the reading of rationality that was mentioned earlier has a positive essence basically understood with the interacting role of "intellect-religion." Thus in the first approach, man is on no account marginalized and continuing to be active, he endeavors in religionization of his life with the aim of organizing it in the best way.

2-1. secular life

In terms of the origin of the word secularism, it is rooted in the Latin word "saeculum" or "secularum" meaning century which is also interpreted to mean "the present time". Based on this premise, the closest terminological meaning to it is "focus on the present era and age" that is normally referred to as "this world" as opposed to "the eternal world". Although this expression has experienced numerous ups and downs in the course of ages, one can claim that it has maintained its fundamental essence - meaning a special focus on 'this world'. That is why, a wide spectrum of equivalent terms such as irreligionism, anti-religionism, anti-religiousness, non-religionization,

making worldly, becoming worldly, inclination to the world, and getting customary have been proposed for it (Shujai Zand, 1380, pp.202-217).

1-2-1. Levels

With regard to the analyses presented by thinkers such as 'Carl Wabler', Hamilton, Wilem, Brian Wilson and Ronald Robertson, one can identify at least three distinct levels for secularization as follows:

First, the secularization of religion at the individual level that indicates the rationality of the individual and defines the place and role of religion in the attitudes and behaviors of the individual.

Second, the secularization of religion at the social level that – according to interpretation of Jameson – brings about the death of religion in the social life and in the best of circumstances, results in distinguishing the religious sphere from the secular one.

Third, the secularization of religion at the level of intra-religious considerations which transforms it into a personal or private category quite irrelevant to external considerations (Shujai Zand, 2001, p.220).

In this way, it becomes clear that secularization of the essence of religion influences its relationships simultaneously with the 'rest of the actors' and finally, 'the place of religion inside the society' resulting in the delimitation and ultimately in the alteration of religion. Experience of the world of Christianity is in this respect quite revealing and one can consider the stages of the process and perfection of secularization of religion as the following: demotion of religion to faith, modernizing religion, transformation of the essence of religion, multiplicity of the essence of religion and finally, humanization of religion by depriving religion of its sacred affair, thus reducing its value to the minimum in the life of human being (Shuai Zand, 2001, p.220).

1-2-2. Principles

Like the rest of the experienced phenomena and processes in the course of the history of human society, secularism also has been established on the principles and pillars of which the most important and consistent with the western civilization consist of the following (Nasri, 1999, pp.351-355):

1. Relying on the weak intellect in which the intellect and rationality are regarded as alternatives for religious meditation and guidance.

2. Separatism of religious institutions from socio-political ones depending on their essence since in their opinion it is impossible for the two types of institutions to come together.

3. Stressing the dichotomous nature of religious and democratic rules that ends in the acceptance of the two distinct models of management in religious and political fields.

4. The desecration of holy phenomena in order to make it possible to supervise them. Because of the centricity of weak intellect, secularism basically regards acts of supervision to be incompatible with religious requirements and convictions.

5. The substitution of natural rights for of intrinsic and divine rights so that conscience replaces God in individual and social dealings and interactions.

Based on this premise, secularism attempts to sketch a novel conception of the world in which the trend and direction of the activities and efforts of the actors is concentrated on marginalizing the sacred affair and replacing it with material-human elements. It is natural that in this process only those religions survive that are man-made or redefined within the framework of understandable principles and fundamentals acceptable to human beings. Otherwise, because of

the contradiction with the intellect and harming human identity as well as social life, they shall be rejected.

1-2-3. Religious Secularism

As stated before, endorsement of secularism with religious proofs is among the ideas that have been applied for spreading secularism in the Muslim World– because of the essential differences that it has with the world of Christianity. Based on this point of view, religion is identified as a justification for secularism because mechanisms have been forecast and endorsed inside the core of religion that allow the entry of conventions and customs into the core of religious commandments – according to the proponents of secularism – including: accepting the validity of consensus, validity of intellect, validity of expediency etc….

Each of the above mentioned explanations can reveal the role and importance of conventions in the religious approach. However, as it shall be mentioned later in the section pertaining to widespread presence of religion in human life, this role is not so big as to enable it to interpret religion. In other words, conventions will be understood in the context of religion and not the reverse. In this respect, the above mentioned justifications shall not ultimately endorse something by the name of conventionalism based on the religion of Islam.

Consequently, secular life is essentially, is different from religious life and it seems that all the efforts made to bring together these two models of life are in some way based on the centricity of 'redefinition' or 'reconstruction of religion' toward conformity with the teachings of the secular model. In this respect it cannot – because of the erosion of religion – be desirable to the followers of religion. In other words, the essence, objectives, means and ways put forward by Islam for the management of human life – both at the individual and social levels – prevent acceptance of the principles and fundamentals of secularism

both in theory and practice. The experience of other religions also reveals that this objective is not achieved unless initially, the delimitation and thereafter, alteration of religion is accepted. However, these two are not essentially acceptable to Islam. Based on this premise, what follows is a deduction of the inner core of religion that suggests the widespread presence of religion by means of validating the intellect and position of human being in social and individual life bringing about the religionization of life – and not secularism - in its wake.

1) Theory of the widespread presence of religion and religionization of life.

The most important questions that have been raised in relation to the theory of widespread presence of religion in human life concern the status and nature of human being and the spatio-temporal demands that normally motivate the followers of the "minimalist religion" point of view to endorse and approve secularism. This is whereas understanding the type and essence of the presence can be effective in the more precise interpretation of the theory of "widespread presence" and likewise, in answering the raised questions. For this purpose, in this part we state first the intra-religious documentary evidence of the theory of widespread presence of religion from the point of view of Islam and thereafter, we shall undertake an analysis of the nature and type of "presence of religion". Finally, we will present a comprehensive reading of this theory on the basis of the three elements of "widespread presence of religion", "voluntary human action" and "changeable conditions of time and place."

2-1. Documentary evidence

In contrast with the other religions, Islam incorporates religious teachings that testify to its "widespread presence" in human life. The

most important of this evidence from the intra-religious point of view is as follows:

2-1-1. The nature of happiness

Securing happiness is among the considerations of the major human schools and all the divine religions. However, the express declaration of Islam that happiness in this religious discourse is general and comprises both the material and spiritual aspects of human life, expands the area of operation and function of religion. In other words, if religion would only claim the prosperity of either the material world or the afterlife of human beings, it would naturally have a determined and specified area of activity. However, the joining of the two concepts under the heading of "happiness" and emphasizing their bilateral nature (but perfectly related with one another and possessing inherent interaction) in Islam, do not leave practically any vacuum in human life but filled with religion (Cf. Murad, 1992).

In conclusion, the demands of the existential philosophy of the religion of Islam prevent its recognition of minimalism.

2-1-2. Nature of Objectives of the Divine Lawmaker

Whereas the issue of happiness indicates the desired objective of human beings and demands the maximal religion, reflection on the essence of the objectives stated by the divine lawmaker proves that basically, the type of demands of God from Muslims is such that it has an impact on all aspects and angles of their lives. It is from this viewpoint that Imam Khumeini considers separation of religion from the rest of the dimensions of human life and especially politics to be something impossible stating as follows:

According to the holy verses, the commandments of Islam are not restricted to any specific time and space remaining until eternity and binding forever. Therefore, because it is necessary to implement the

Islamic regulations after the Holy prophet of Islam (SA) and until eternity, it is also indispensable to establish a government and install an executive and administrative body." (Imam Khumeini, n.d., p.26).

Accordingly, he has pointed to the financial, defensive, civil and criminal commandments etc… and in the end comes to the conclusion that: "The commandments of religion contain a variety of laws and regulations that comprise a general social system." (Imam Khumeini, n.d., p.28). In other words, the objective of the divine legislator cannot be realized without taking the "maximal theory."

2-1-3. Divine existence

Investigation of the image presented of the "Creator" in the religion of Islam and its comparison with images presented by other religions reveal the fact that "the God of the Muslims" due to attributes such as grace, authority, power, knowledge, activeness etc… is basically present in all particles of existence and one cannot find a phenomenon or subject that is in some way devoid of the presence of Divine Will. That is why the world of existence is considered in a sense as a place of manifestation of "God".[16] Therefore, the socio-political life in the sense of a part of the total life of mankind, is evaluated as an instance of the application of this general rule. As a result, we witness the widespread presence of religion in it.[17]

2-1-4. Human Creation

The last explanation that can be offered to support the theory of the widespread presence of religion is that of the nature of human being as the superior divine creature. This implies that deficiency of the thought and action of human being, his dual essence, the blame-worthy characteristics such as greed, avarice etc… all lead us to conclude that human being is naturally deficient. So this widespread flaw explains the widespread divine presence to assist human beings

in attaining their lofty ideals defined and determined on the basis of their humanity and covenant with the Almighty God. In other words, the fate of human beings lies in realization of these objectives which can never be achieved without Divine assistance.[18]

2.2. Structure

The proofs that have been presented reveal the need for the widespread presence of religion in the life of the faithful human being, a need that can be understood with regard to the nature of the religion of Islam and the place and responsibility of the faithful individual. In order to describe this need in practice, by adopting the structural approach we present an analysis of the type of relationship between man and God in the doctrines of Islam. Emphasizing the status of human being as the appointed viceroy of Allah on earth and recognizing the intellectual capabilities and the principle of freewill the structure of relationship presented, explains and attests to the theory of maximal religion indeed. In order to explain this objective more clearly, we shall apply the analytical model of Izutsu[19] that rests on the basis of three pillars as follows (Izutsu, 1993):

2-2-1. Ontological Relationship

Ontological relationship focuses on determining the dealings between God and man in the stage of creation. Based on this we witness the shaping of a relationship in which one party is defined in an independent manner while the other defined in a dependent way. In this context, God is sketched in the position of Creator and independent of the world of creation while the other party is considered to be absolutely dependent - and in the position of a creature.

"That is God your Lord, there is no God but He, the Creator of every thing."[20]

2-2-2. Ethical Relationship

"In this perspective … God acts towards human beings in an ethical way … and it is expected of human beings, in return, to react in an ethical manner." (Izutsu, 1993, p.298).

Taking this approach into consideration, the ethical relationship of God with mankind can be recognized from two aspects. The first aspect that refers to the action of the Almighty Omnipotent reveals itself in the form of mercy and wrath. The second aspect that reflects the behavior of human beings is defined in the form of gratitude and ingratitude. In a mutual interaction, if divine is accompanied with human gratitude, it is expanded whereas if it is faced with ingratitude, it shall result in Divine wrath. This is an inclusive interpretation embracing most of the actions and behaviors of man under the heading of 'gratitude-ingratitude' and imparting a religious identity to them. In this manner, the path to their secular vision is blocked.

2-2-3. Verbal relationship

The third and most comprehensive type of relationship is the verbal form – which normally involves both spoken and unspoken models – based on which God enters into a bilateral relationship with man. Foremost is the spoken verbal relationship that from the Divine part appears in the form of revelation of the verses of the Quran while from the human being part appears in the form of "supplication". Second is the unspoken verbal relationship that from the Divine part manifests itself in the form of creation of the whole universe for taking lessons and reflecting upon by human being, whereas on the part of human being, it is interpreted in the form of 'prayer'. Izutsu identifies these different states as follows:

"Revelation in Islam means that God speaks … this is the most important and most basic reality without which … religion would not

have been able to reveal itself on earth. (On the other hand) as understood from the Quran, … everything that we give the name of natural sign to – such as rain, wind, building, the heavens etc… - they must not simply be regarded as only natural signs, Rather, we should regard them as signs or symbols that reveal the intervention of God in the work of mankind." (Izutsu, 1993, pp.193 & 196).

With regard to the three above mentioned types of relationship, now one can point to the network of relationships between God and human being in which there is no room devoid of religious norms (Cf. table 2).
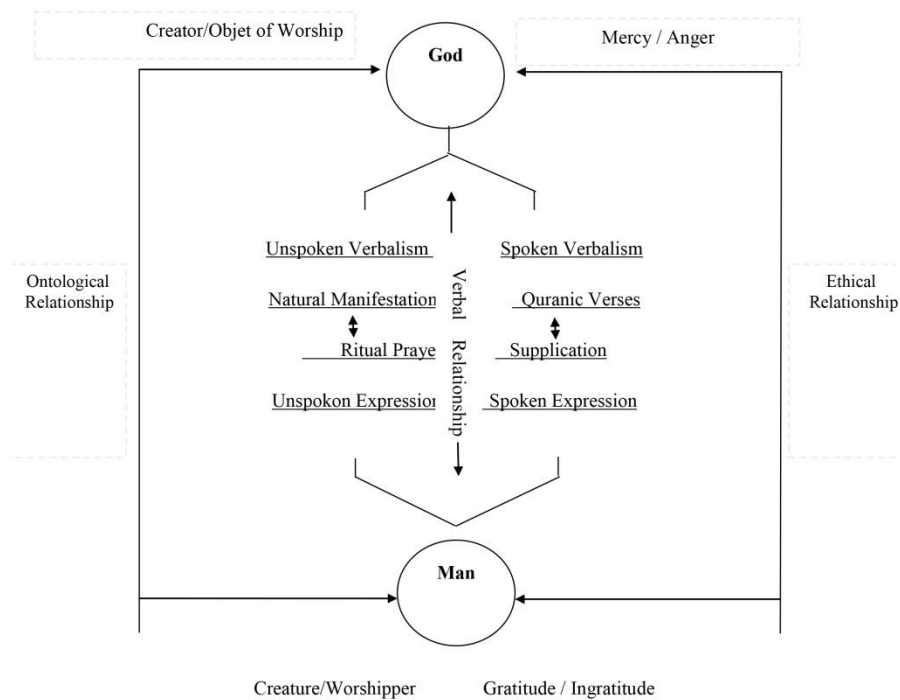
Table no.2 Structure of the threefold relationship of God – man in Islam

2-3. Indices

The need for the "widespread presence of religion" based on above mentioned arguments has been confirmed and explained in the context of the outlined structure of relationships. However, realization of this need in the practical field requires presentation of an interpretation that furnishes the possibility of bringing together human rationality and religious necessities in a combined form.

As a matter of fact, a wide spectrum of the followers of secularism by propounding a radical interpretation of the presence of religion in the practical life of human being have attempted to level criticism at this idea and endorse delimitation of religion in favor of greater involvement and active role of human beings. From their point of view, the index of presence of religion is the issuance of "do's and don'ts" rules that the faithful are obligated to follow. Thus, every presence will result in the erosion of the free will of human being; and based on that, secularism is regarded as an anthropocentric move – supporting the capability and dignity of man.

In this manner, it becomes evident that the principal issue in the contrast of 'secularization' and 'religionization' is the attitude of the thinkers of the two groups towards "indices of presence". With regard to the aforesaid importance and necessity, the writer offers two principal indices for measuring the "presence of religion" that prove to be useful in attesting to the widespread presence of religion while sticking to the principle of free will of human beings.

2-3-1. Regulation or Judgment (Hukm) Index

Among the obvious criteria that the majority of researchers of religion have drawn our attention to is the regulation presence of religion. This means that religious issues are those for which a judgment within religion can be found. In this connotation, '*Hukm*'[21] has a specific and

exclusive meaning that embraces "obligatory affairs" (meaning that which the faithful must perform and in case of non-performance they deserve punishment or that which they must not perform and in case of performance, they are punished) and intermediary circumstances between these two (meaning recommended, disliked and permissible).

2-3-2. Principle Index

By principle is meant the rules that assist the jurisprudent in drawing conclusions from a religious verdicts and that restrains him from giving personal opinions or making analogous deductions. Reliance of Principle on primary religious sources results in the process of drawing inference on various subjects to possess the required soundness that is of consideration to the divine legislator. It is for this reason that Imam Reza (AS) had stated that:

"It is upon us to teach you the principles; and it is upon you to delve into the branches (and thus derive regulations)." (Hurr Amili, 1401, p.72)

In the Islamic discourse, jurisprudential principles and practical fundamentals possess so high applied and analytical value that the history of development of Islamic discourse has a very close connection with the history of development of jurisprudential principles and practical principles. That is why researchers categorize Shiite jurisprudence into three main periods namely, before "the principles"[22], at the period of "principles" and the "period after the principles" (Muhaqqiq Damad, 1380, pp.12-19). That which draws one's attention to this subject within the scope of this discussion is that the understanding of religion and its perfection are directly related with these principles and the manner of their application:

"In the derivation of Islamic laws, there are instances when one enjoying the qualified religious authority does not see sufficient reasons in the holy book, the tradition, the consensus and the intellect.

In such a situation, the qualified religious authority determines the judgment on the issue according to the demands of time and place with the assistance of practical principles. In this manner, practical principles make up for the vacuum arising from lack of or silence of the existing reasons in sources of jurisprudence." (Muhaqqiq Damad, 1380, pp.30-31).

In other words, principles hold a compensatory position and are regarded complementary to jurisprudential sources. In these conditions the fact in question and the judgment have not been mentioned explicitly as in earlier instances. However, the approved policy of the divine legislator has been stated and it is necessary for the faithful individual to analyze, decide and act according to the requirements of that policy.

2-4. Typology

Based on the two indices of principles and regulations, now we can achieve a reading for the widespread presence of religion in human life in which the objectives of the divine legislator, the nature of religion, special characteristics of the Creator, and the place and capabilities of human beings have been taken into consideration simultaneously. This reading rests on recognition of three types of presence of religion that conform with the conditions and capabilities of human beings and are in accordance with the objectives of the divine legislator.

2-4-1. Determined Presence

It covers the area in which policy, the fact in question, and regulation have been simultaneously specified by the Divine Legislator and thus no kind of authority has been given for its implementation to the faithful. In other words, this type of presence of religion is conditional on embracing the religion by the individual; and after adopting it,

implementation or non-implementation of some of the affairs as regulations becomes obligatory for him (Cf. Helli, Al-Qardawi, 1989)

2-4-2. Alternative Presence

This covers the field in which the policy and fact are specified. However, judgment in the form of designation has not been mentioned. In these instances, the faithful individual can-within the framework of "guidelines" defined by religion that comprise various choices for the individual – and in proportion with his facilities and conditions of time and place – take one of the choices and implement it. The important point is that the choices have been defined by the divine legislator and thus although no particular choice is of consideration; "various choices" have been proposed. Therefore the selection of each choice is in harmony with the "religious inclination of the individual." (As-Sadr, 1982; 1978)

Principled presence:

This is the most common of the types of presence of religion in regulation of human life that attains significance after definition of the macro framework governing the analysis of the words and actions of the faithful. In other words, the divine legislator specifies certain religious guidelines and the faithful must necessarily move within their framework. In this situation, no special fact or judgment is of consideration and the faithful should take decisions using all their capabilities. That which in this situation proves the religious norms is their negative rather than their affirmative aspect. Thus the decisions taken and behaviors arising from them must not be in conflict with religious norms. (lack of conflict is of consideration, not proving conformity), (Cf. Naraqi, 1996; Imam Khumeini, 1990, pp.23-35).

Conclusion

One can evaluate secularism as a product of the operation of two distinct processes – but complementing one another – in the sphere of historical-intellectual development of human societies. The performance of the radical pastors of the Church in the Middle Ages paved the way for propounding the idea that presence of religion in the socio-political arenas results in the appearance of undesirable consequences. Thus in continuation of this process we are witnessing the shaping of a kind of rationality that focuses on result and instrumentalism. With the help of teachings of the age of enlightenment, it attempted to eliminate charms from human life and make the cognitive origins of materialism rule. The advent and growth of that which is known by the name of western civilization resulted in similar ideas to be mentioned and presented in the field of Islamic civilization by some of the thinkers.

In this new reading, secularism has appeared with two distinct faces. Firstly, we are witnessing imitative models that are in line with the experience of Christianity and naturally could not have been acceptable and favorable to the religious societies and religionist thinkers. Thus in this process, a kind of secularism with religious justification and logic comes into view. That by relying on categories such as preservation of the substance of religion, adherence to the inherent and primary objectives of religion, analysis of religious experiences and understanding the secular politics of religion in the practical field etc. This form of secularism attempts to combine religiousness with secularization.

The rational and textual principles of these readings are tampered with and open to criticism. However, in practice we are witnessing the spread and expansion of them to the extent such that nowadays secularization is presented as a religious mechanism, not anti-religious

by some faithful thinkers and is in the way of attracting followers. Nevertheless, according to the author, the essence and substance of religion is basically in conflict with any type of reading of secularization (whether in the mold of delimitation of religion or elimination of religion from the socio-political arena).

Analysis of the fundamental principles of Islam and the nature of the religion presented by the divine legislator proves that Islam has originated basically on the basis of the widespread presence in the life of human being. This feature is revealed in the objectives, aspirations and methods of the divine legislator as well as in the statements made by the infallible Imams (AS). In other words, the religion of Islam in contrast with other (existing) religions is actively involved in all levels of human life - including individual and social ones–. This involvement can be inferred based on intellectual reasoning (the powerful and not the weak intellect) and textual considerations. The author proposes "religionization" versus "secularization" as a practical mechanism towards elimination of the "theoretical – practical" deadlock in Islamic communities. Granting authority to religion, without it being in conflict or opposition with the status and free will of human being, this mechanism shall assist him in understanding, analyzing and solving problems. In conclusion, secularization not only does not solve the problems of Islamic societies, but it adds to the existing problems and will make their solution more difficult.

Notes

1. For a study of secularism as a power project Cf. Glasner, 1977; and Moyser, 1991.
2. Concerning the effectiveness of the theoretical inferences and the practical results of western civilization Cf. Surush, 1997, pp.175-227; Surush, 1987, pp.274-327.
3. For a study of examples of religious evidence towards the secular model Cf. the following works: Arraziq, 2003; Jafari Harandi, 2000.

4. This idea has been interpreted in various ways and ultimately concludes in "elimination of religion" from the sphere of politics. Delimitation of religion and its elimination are in fact considered to be two main phases in this sphere. For familiarity with these approaches Cf. the books by Goldmann, 1973; Arkun, 1996 and Hajjarian, 2000.

5. This issue has been discussed in greater detail in the work mentioned below. I have shown there how various approaches to religion in keeping with secularist objectives have been formed; and consequently, varied and numerous readings have been put forward about the core of the religion that are not necessarily divine and are occasionally humanistic. Thus they find meaning and sense by serving the wishes and purposes of human beings (Cf. Eftekhari and Kamali 1998).

6. For familiarity with the anthropological approach and its significance in religious studies, Cf. Nasri, 1992 and Nasri 1993. For study of the secular point of view arising from this aspect Cf. Filali-Ansari, 2001. For a case study based on this reasoning Cf. Dixon, 1971.

7. For familiarity with the theoretical foundations of this approach Cf. Turner, 2000. For the purpose of case study in this regard refer to the book by Lerner, 1985.

8. That is why analysts who view secularism from this perspective, welcome the acceptance and presentation of numerous types of piety, based on which they make it possible to get the answer to this problem. Cf. Abd al-Karim Surush, "Livelihood oriented piety" and "Knowledge oriented piety" and "Experiment oriented piety" in: Surush, 1991, pp.15-243.

9. All dictates of reason are those of religion; and all dictates of religion are those of reason.

10. The foremost creation of Allah is the intellect.

11. On the concept of intellect it is said, "The power of reasoning means derivation and deduction of regulations by referring the branches to the roots."

12. The Almighty Allah has said: "And indeed We have left a clear sign of it for a people who understand." (the Quran, Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 35).

13. This idea is meant in all instances in the Holy Quran wherein the phrase "…and only the men of wisdom reflect upon…" occurs.

14. This idea is meant in all instances in the Glorious Quran, wherein God has referred to the absence of wisdom as a source of going astray and deviation.

15. Amma al-aqlu fa man ittaqa Allaha aqlun.

16. The Almighty Allah has stated: Whatsoever direction you turn, there is the Face of God.

17. The theological and rational origins of this discussion can be read in: Mutahhari, 1981. For a study of a mystical perception of this issue Cf. Khumeini, 1980. For a study of socio-political perception of this approach Cf. Khumeini, 1990.

18. According to the author, as introduced in the holy Quran, the perfect human being is not imaginable without divine omnipresence in various spheres of his life. The flaw of the image of perfect human being presented by the rest of the schools also lies in the fact that its requirements and preliminaries have not been provided and devised.

19. Professor Izutsu taught philosophy at McGill university in Canada and was an outstanding professor at "Kio" university in Tokyo. His main field of study is semantics and he is regarded as one of the most distinguished teachers in this field. He –who is fully conversant with Arabic- has compiled and published the first Japanese translation of the Glorious Quran. Professor Izutsu is familiar with the sources of Islamic philosophy and has authored numerous books in this field. In the book "God and Man in the Quran" he has presented a communicative model between God and man by referring to the divine Quranic verses which we herein have made use of with slight adaptations.

20. The Almighty Allah has stated: "(Behold ye!) that is God your Lord; there is no God but He, the Creator of all things… (Glorious Quran, Surah al-An'am, verse 102).

21. Hukm-'judgment'- (singular of Ahkam, v.: hakama), judging, refereeing… command of God –through requirement or choice –concerning actions of the legally responsible individuals… Hukm verbally means knowledge and deliberation, wisdom and judgment. In its technical sense, a religious Hukm is a religious decree, or divine legislation that is formulated for the servants and is of two types namely: 1- imperative: a rule that directly affects the legally responsible person and is divided into obligatory, recommended, forbidden, undesirable and permissible 2-positive: any rule that is other than imperative such as validity, invalidity, or conditionality of a thing (Huseini, 2003, pp.188-189).

22. "Al-Qawaid wa'l-Fawaid" is a valuable book authored by Shahid Awwal (the First Martyr) that is considered to be the first comprehensive work in the field of Shiite jurisprudence on "fundamental principles of jurisprudence'. In this work, he has mentioned 303 jurisprudential rules in all.

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