Book Review

Dr. Muḥammad-Javad Eskandarlū, *Qur'ān wa ulūm-i siyāsī wa ijtimā ʿī az nigāh-i Mustashriqān* (*dar sanjih-ye naqd-i shubuhāt*) [The Quran and Political and Social Sciences from the Perspective of Orientalists (in the context of critiquing doubts)], 1ˢᵗ ed., Qum: Dār al-Mubalighīn, 1399 Sh/ 2020. 144 pp. [in Persian]

The role of religion in government is a highly debated topic in Islam. The leadership of the Prophet and infallible Imams is a defining feature of their divine authority. During the period of occultation (*Ghaybat*), this responsibility is entrusted to qualified jurists. The ideal manifestation of religious government is anticipated with the arrival of Imam Mahdi, which aligns with human nature and fosters spiritual growth and development in various domains.

The Quran offers guidance beyond worship and personal rulings, as its verses include social and political guidelines that shape the Islamic way of life for monotheists. Upon arriving in Madina, the Prophet's priority was to establish an Islamic government, which he accomplished through his divine connection and wisdom. The book under review provides a critical analysis of Orientalist research on the social and political aspects of the Quran.

The initial section of the book delves into the political themes of the Quran, as approached by Orientalists. Various topics are explored, including the political and social implications of the Quran's message, discourse on the Quran's political issues, the extent of Islamic jurisprudence and governance (*fiqhī-ḥukūmatī*) rulings, the clarification of those invested with authority (*ulu al-amr*), and the divine origin of jurists' guardianship (*wilāyat-i faqīh*). Additionally, this section addresses certain doubts (*shubuhāt*) posited by Orientalists.

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(p: 167-173)

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The author examines the entry "Politics and the Quran" by Paul L. Heck in the Brill *Encyclopedia of the Quran*. This article discusses the use of the Quran to justify or contest rule, and three areas are considered:

1. Quasi-political themes in the Quran: in which Heck by reference to certain Quranic verses highlights the role of politics in the deliverance of the Prophet's message and the authority awarded to the Prophet by an oath of allegiance (Q 48:10, 18). Then, he refers to the expansion of the domain of Islam by Abū Bakr and ʿUmar and asserts that conquest led to the formation of a state ruled by a caliph and local governors. He refers to the formulation of advice literature related to the connection of rule and religion and those who wrote this type of literature. Heck refers to two views: one the Quranic message is not political but moral, and the other that the Quranic verses attest to the formation of Islamic rule ensuring religion a central place in formulations of political prosperity. He states that this new nation is composed of people who believe, command right, and forbid wrong, and are committed to both prayer and the payment of alms. He poses questions such as whether the rule of God as announced by the Quran includes politics or is primarily limited to ritual (*ʿibādāt*) and social affairs. He believes that at least one group in early Islam, the *Khārijīs*, made no separation between the political and the ritual, and by referring to certain Quranic verses concludes that Quranic reference to the rule or reign of God has nothing to do with political decision-making but implies rather the unity of communal purpose.

2. The politicization of the Quran in early Islam: The politicization of the Quran, from its beginning, centered upon the possibility of its interpretation and thus subordination to human judgment. Heck mentions different instances in which the rightly-guided caliphs referred to the Quran for the legitimacy of their rules or acts. He refers to the battle of Ṣiffīn and the Khārigī's division from Imam Ali after observing the copies of the Quran raised on spears by the soldiers of Muʿāwiya as a token of their desire for divine arbitration. He elaborates on the precepts and actions

of the Khārigī and their view toward human rule. He, then, refers to ʿAbbāsid and Umayyad rules. On the whole, all the above-mentioned groups took benefit from the Quran as the authority to defend their rule from the dawn of Islam up to now.

3. The possibility of human rule alongside the Quran: in this part, Heck talks about submission to the rule of God or the human ruler. He refers to certain Sunnī scholars' views on the role of reason and human judgment for the sake of the public good. Then, he refers to different views concerning political authority and its relation to the Quran and human intellect in different Islamic states by different groups and their leaders.

The writer of the book under review examines and responds to eight doubts raised by this article:

1. The necessity of submission to those invested with authority (*Ulu al-Amr*): referring to verse 59 of *Sūrat al-Nisā*, he mentions different interpretations about *Ulu al-Amr* and explains the Shii exegetes view who unanimously hold that ulu al-amr in this verse, refers to the Infallibles (*Maʿsūmīn*).

2. The power and authority of the Prophet were dependent on the consent of the people: the writer refers to the difference between people's consent and the "pledge of allegiance" (*bayʿat*); furthermore, he refers to the divine appointment of the Prophet and the infallible Imams and their lack of need for *bayʿa*. In addition, the writer mentions the obligation of obedience to them, both for those who have pledged allegiance and for those who have not, and mentions verse 59 of *Sūrat al-Nisā* as evidence of his claim. He, then, refers to Imam Ali's view on *bayʿa* and four theories on the Prophet's type of government and analyses them.

3. The message of the Quran was not political: the writer opines that the Quran deals with all aspects of human life including the political

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(p: 167-173)

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aspects and mentions verse 25 of *Sūrat al-Ḥadīd* from which it can be inferred that political order requires divine justice and coercive force.

4. The Quran and Hadith do not contain a clear outline of a political system: the writer states that the structure of government is related to the secondary and changing rulings of Islam which vary according to the conditions of time and place. The qualified Islamic jurists are appointed by the Infallibles as the authority in religious matters and government, and they are responsible for establishing government. According to the writer, the most important features of the guardianship of the jurist system (*niẓām-i wilāyat-i faqīh*) include internal coherence, internal and psychological executive assurance, the Islamic leader's possession of the highest levels of piety and competence, and observance of the spiritual and real interests of people.

5. Placing the ruling command above the divine command in a system based on the guardianship of the jurist: the writer asserts that the guardianship of the just jurist in social and common affairs is in harmony with the guardianship of the Prophet and the infallible Imams. As such, the qualified jurist is a deputy of the Infallibles and his guardianship is divine.

6. The limited scope of juridical rulings in Islamic governance has led to the emergence of a government based on human rulings: the author states that religion is fixed but the dynamic nature of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning to derive rulings) and the effect of time and place in the process of *ijtihād*, the position of the convention (*ʿurf*) and the bases of the intellectuals in Fiqh and the permission of issuing governmental verdicts are all among the instances of the flexible nature of Islamic jurisprudence and its compliance with *Sharia* (Divine Law).

7. The mission of the Prophet was solely for propagation and warning, not for establishing an Islamic government: the writer refers to numerous Quranic verses (*Māʾidah*: 8; *Tawbah*: 59; *Nisāʾ*: 58, 74-75, 83; *Baqarah*:

246, 273; *Naml*: 32-33; *Āl ʿImrān*: 28) as the most significant evidence of foundations of politics in the Quran.

8. The culture of jihad and martyrdom has its origins in the thoughts of the Kharijites: the writer states that according to the Quranic verses, hadiths, and Islamic history, the culture of jihad and martyrdom does not originate from the Kharijites' thoughts. He cites three verses from the Quran as evidence of his claim: verse 207 of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, which discusses selling one's soul to seek God's pleasure, and verse 60 of *Sūrat al-Anfāl*, which discusses preparing military power to frighten the enemy, and verse 75 of *Sūrat al-Nisāʾ*, which encourages fighting in the Way of God.

In the second part, titled 'Social Aspects in the Quran from the Viewpoint of the Orientalists,' the writer examines and critiques certain views stated in the two entries. The first entry is "Community and Society in the Quran" by Fredrick Mathewson Denny in the Brill *Encyclopedia of the Quran* which includes the following topics: 1. The ancient Arabian context of Quranic religio-communal ideas and institutions: which emphasises the tribal heritage of pre-Islamic Arabia, its concerns, its significance, and the impact of Islam on this context; 2. Religio-communal terms and ideas in the Quran: which examines the concept of *Umma* in the Quran, its root, meaning, and implications; other terms such as *Ḥanīf* and *Milla* have also been examined; 3. Submitters and believers constitute the Muslim umma: such concepts are generally founded in the most highly developed instances of umma, those in Medinan passages when it refers to the Muslims exclusively; 4. Servants (*ʿibād*) of God; 5. Excursus: Concerning category formation in the Quran: human groupings as described in ethical and spiritual terms are not rigid, unchanging realities in principle; 6. The ideal of a unified umma and the People of the Book; 7. Some negative religio-communal terms: such terms as idolaters (*mushrikūn*), unbelievers (*kāfirūn*), and hypocrites (*munāfiqīn*) are examined; 8. Marriage and family; 8. Society perfected.

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The writer of the book examines and responds to four doubts raised by this article: 1. Pan-Arabic nature of the Quran: the writer responds that according to the Quran: "Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God wary among you" (Quran 49:13). 2. Why Abraham has been called an *umma*? The writer mentions four responses: A) Abraham's character was so great that he alone was considered as a nation; B) *umma* refers to someone who is followed and accepted as a leader by people; C) he was the only monotheist while others were polytheists, and as such he was an umma against the *umma* of the polytheists; D) Abraham was the originator of an *umma*. 3. The multiple marriages of the Prophet and then its prohibition: the writer, according to exegeses, presents three interpretations for verse 52 of *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* and asserts that the Prophet's marriages were in line with his servitude to God and delivering his message, not an attempt to satisfy his desires. 4. There is no consensus that the command of hijab has been issued for all times: verses 31 of *Sūrat al-Nūr* and verse 59 of *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* clearly define the necessity and extent of Islamic hijab. Furthermore, the hijab has been ordered by other religions as well.

The second entry is "Social Sciences and the Quran" by Dale Eickelman in the Brill *Encyclopedia of the Quran* which includes the following topics: 1. Text and society: pre-twentieth century approaches. 2. Context of Quranic revelation: twentieth-century approaches. 3. Framing the question: Quran and society. 4. The Quran and sociolinguistics. 4. Contemporary case studies.

The writer of the book under review by referring to verse 256 of *Sūrat al-Baqarah* and its occasion of revelation explains the role of human will and lack of force in accepting Islam. Then, he refers to Izutsu's assumptions such as the Quranic worldview based on vocabulary, visual network, tracing the origins of Quranic vocabulary and concepts in pre-Islamic culture, the social context of the pre-Islamic system, and the God and human-centered worldview in the Quran. Then, he highlights the

shortcomings of Izutsu's view as follows: 1. Limited attention to Shia sources. 2. Minimal focus on hadith and emphasis on pre-Islamic poetry. 3. Insufficient use of historical events and interpretations. 4. Lack of historical study of Isotzu and its logicality. 5. Absolute consideration of the relationship between culture and language. 6. Lack of criteria in determining keywords. 7. Disregard for the role of revelation in society and the role of the Quran in social relations. 8. Giving exclusive authenticity to the Arabic language.

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