



Iran Data Portal

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On the Role of the Leader

In a YouTube video, Mohsen Kadivar addresses the role of the supreme leader.

Nobody has guardianship over us. We are not handicapped and needing a guardian. The meaning of a supreme leader is that exactly that. In their own religious texts they write that religious jurisprudence is like the guardianship of a father over his infant child, and is like the guardianship over the mentally deranged who are not capable of making their own decisions. They believe that in the public sphere, people are crippled, delirious, and unable to make their own decisions. There must be someone to decide for them so that they are not tricked by the devil. They say, "We can determine your interests better than you." We, the people, determined that we want Mousavi as our president; they said, "To hell with you, your interest is in Ahmadinejad." We say we disapprove; they say, "To hell with your disapproval. We will answer your disapproval with bullets."

The game that has begun in Iran is that exactly: to determine who, in the end,

has the final say in the public sphere. The people say: WE do, and the leader says: I do. This is the ultimate contradiction between the rule of the people and the rule of the clerics.

Velayateh Faqih (the guardianship of the Islamic jurists) means that everyone must obey the words of the guardian, and the rule of the people means that everyone, including the clerics, must obey the will of the majority.

In the first decade of the revolution, this problem did not occur, because the majority of the population did not have a significant difference with the religious leaders. But now it has presented itself. The contradiction that has long existed in the constitution has shown itself. We must choose between these two options. No one has been chosen by God. The religious must solve this problem among themselves [that the supreme leader is in fact not chosen by God]. Today, some of the greatest clerics are against this government. Some of the greatest religious scholars are critics of this government. In what language must the great mass of the Shia clerics come out and say that this government is illegitimate? He who does not act with justice, prudence, and with the vote of the majority is ruling illegitimately. This is direct religious teaching for those who are after religious conviction. If we are to argue using the most basic foundations of human rights, they too have all been violated.

All of this leads us to face a ruling system that is using brutal force against its defenseless people. When all these people say is that “we want to act according to our own laws, and nothing more.”

[Moving on to the show trials]

In the Islamic Republic, efforts towards establishing democracy are a crime. All the reformists in custody are now guilty of one common crime: a group effort to establish democracy in Iran. How can we have a parliament but no parties? How can we have political parties but not have organizational efforts to use legal, peaceful methods to win elections? They have called this action “velvet Revolution.” If I join a political party and put my efforts into winning elections, they say, “Didn’t we tell you? They are using soft methods to take away our

authority.”

I declare loud and clear: “Yes, we are trying to take your authority by legal, peaceful means. These are the people of Iran who want to win back their authority.”

...

If, for instance, I meet with one of the greatest living philosophers, Jürgen Habermas, they, the illiterate, ignorant thugs ruling over our country today will respond: “Didn’t we tell you? You were trying to topple the regime in your talks.” I have met with many philosophers and will do so in the future. How can you stop our academic and scientific dialogue? Go and read the prosecutor’s statements. It is filled with sentences like “meeting with Rorty, meetings with so and so, meeting with Habermas. They have come to change Iran.”

Exactly.

We are trying to use rational, legal and peaceful means to right the rampant corruption you have inflicted on the country. And more than Rorty or Habermas, I personally refer to the Koran and Nahjolbalagheh [a book of the teachings of Imam Ali]— unless you are going to ban these texts as well. Just like today, Allah o Akbar [God is Great] is among the accusations hurled at our friends in prison, reading the Nahjolbalagheh might soon meet the same fate.

By GOLAB P.

Video from August 1, 2009 at ICCNC (Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California). For the full speech, visit:

<http://www.facebook.com/l/; www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTHtbEo2WAs>