The Role and Position of Ethics in Politics: In View of Islam and Islamic Scholars

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Abstract: This article examines the view of Islam on the role and position of ethics in politics. It offers lexical definitions of ethics and politics. It briefly explains the relation of religion and ethics before entering into detailed discussions of the four logical relations between ethics and politics, namely, homogeneity, incongruity, inclusivity, and severability. This paper explains what's and why's of the relation between ethics and politics based on the existing theories offered by the scholars of both fields. The theories included are: the separation of ethics and politics, adherence of ethics and politics, duality of ethics, and unity of ethics and politics. These theories are examined in details as a pretext to open the substantiated discussions for the political and ethical principles of Islam. Further discussions include Moslem scholars' views and theories of how ethics and politics relate to each other. By extending ethics into politics as subscribed by Islam, this paper concludes that association and agreement between ethics and politics have always been considered throughout the history. Early political scholars believed that politics had significant direct relation with the virtue and purpose of ethics which ensure bliss in life and afterlife. In spite of inverse interpretations offered by some misguided erudite, Islam subscribes to appropriate politics as the proper and expedient governance of social functions based on ethical principles and values. As ethics is flawed without a strong belief in God and God's revelations, a binding association between politics and ethics can guarantee a balanced material and moral progress, driving societies toward the ultimate accomplishments.

Introduction

Lexicologists define ethics as essence and disposition including good or bad, attractive or unattractive. Ethical science means the understanding of good or bad, dispositions, and art of socialization (Sotoodeh, 2004, p. 76).

Many definitions have been proposed for ethics. The late Motahhari defined ethical conducts as the ones that are mentally valuable for human; however, this value is different from and beyond material values (Motahhari, 1999, p. 14).

In another definition, ethics develops and defines a set of rules that should direct human behavior in social life. Ethics examines the correct and incorrect behaviors and explains the ideals that human should strive for (Alam, 2007, p. 72).

Although this definition was made for individuals, but could be extended to include national governments and political units who may have different ethical or non-ethical behaviors. Ethics at national level is different from ethics at international level. In national ethics, individuals are the source of ethical behavior and their scope of action is limited to the national boundaries. But in international ethics, governments are the source of ethical behavior and their scope of action is global (Sotoodeh, 2004, p. 77).

Word "سياست" is an Arabic word taken from "ساس يسوس" and means politics. This word is defined as government, leadership, command and prohibition and the like. Word ethics have been used a lot in Islamic writings. All twelve Imams (a.s.) are referred to as "ساسة العبـاد". Managing social affairs and imposing policies are among responsibilities of the divine leaders (Noroozi, 2001, p. 21).

Politics does not have a single agreed definition. Selected definitions include: "the art of using resources", "governing people", "fight for power", "mandatory distribution of values", and the like (Alam, 2007, pp. 29-30). One other definition called politics as "decision making for society and its implementation". This definition divides politics into action, actor, and subject of act (Bashirieh, 2006, p. 29).

Islamic scholars defined politics as the management and leadership of society for material and spiritual gains (Noroozi, 2001, p. 22). Abu Hamed Ghazali listed politics in Ehya al-Oloom as one of divine understanding and stated: the most honorable acts are the ones that are basic to human life and politics is the most noble. Politics is supreme because it defines the relationship among people and corrects the life's issues (Mohammad Ibn Mortaza, Mahje al-Bayza', p. 111).

Politics in Islam mean implementing divine laws to satisfy human needs by people and under the leadership of the prophets, their successors, and the saint individuals (Lak Zaiee, 2004, p. 37).

Ethics versus Religion

One interpretation resembles ethics, religion, spirituality, and value as soul and politics and government as body and tools. Religion and divine laws are defined as strategic systems including cognizance, legal, normative, and ethical systems. (Sadra, 2004, p. 18)

According to another interpretation, ethics has a religious base with effects from customs, culture, history, and other social attributes (Kazemi, 1997, p. 13). This view considers ethics as one of the three areas emphasized by religion (i.e. ethics, divine laws, and beliefs) and as one of today's social domains of life and wisdom (Mohammadi, 2000, pp. 7-9).

According to Green, religion and ethics overlap and no one can deny that moral concerns, in general, have been at the core of religious teaching (Green, 1995, pp. 46-47).

Ethics versus Politics

Ethics and politics are related to each others in four forms: homogeneity, incongruity, inclusivity, and severability.

 1- The relation between ethics and politics is absolute in general or specific form, i.e., ethics is an absolute whole and politics is part of it. According to this view, ethics covers both personal and social domains. Politics is related to the social ethics. Politics is social management based on social ethics. (Shari'at Madar Jazayeri and Shari'at, 2004, p. 90)
 2- Ethics and politics are severable in general and specific ways. It means some actions are ethical and not political or some actions are political and not ethical. Political ethics and ethical politics include that part of ethics which is social and political and/or that part of politics which is ethical. (Sadra, 2004, p. 16)
 3- Ethics and politics are equal, therefore, they are homogeneous.
 4- Ethics and politics have no relation and they are separate. Therefore, they are incongruent.

Ethics-Politics Relation

The ethics-politics relation has many connotations.
 1. Politics is within the general domain of human life and has to follow the ethical and practical objectives of individuals. Politics may not enter in private domain of people (individual privacy) and may not make decisions and plan for private lives of individuals in the same way as public domain. Government should, rather, provide the ground for the improvement of personal ethics and facilitate its development and actualization. The government should define tasks for the achievement of these objectives.
 2. Politics are tools, methodologies, follow up procedures, enforced policies, and public objectives. Politics define the relation between political objectives and the means of achieving them. The application of ethics is included in politics and its means. Politics is never free of ethical values.
 3. Politics requires ethical commitments from political practitioners and politicians (Kachooyan, 2003, pp. 14-16). People think that politicians should be selected from the best people. These selected politicians should work for the benefits of people. Politicians should consider ethics in whatever they do (Davari Ardakan, 2004, p. 8). Politicians should acquire the necessary ethical conditions before entering political scene according to those who believe politics should begin and end with ethics. Therefore, only those individuals who can prove their ethical competence may be permitted to enter politics. Meanwhile, ethics is the ultimate objective of politics. Consequently, the objective of any political system should be the development and promotion of ethical virtues in individuals and society. (Shari'at Madar Jazayeri and Shari'at Madar, 2004, p. 90)
 4. Relation means making an effect and taking an effect. Thus, ethics influences political norms and behaviors (Parsa Nia, 2003, p. 7). The influence is reciprocal and politics affects ethics in the same way it Is influenced by it.

The second and third relations always stand out in a discussion of ethics-politics relation. However, all four implications may be valid as the relation. Whenever ethics is related to politics, political system takes the responsibility to facilitate the growth and development of personal and social ethics. In such system, political practitioners should be good-tempered and committed to moral values. They use valuable and ethical tools and means to follow up political objectives. Politics, in general, take effect from ethical values and comply with them.

Ethics-Politics Theorems
1. Separation of Ethics and Politics

The subject and objectives of politics changed after Renaissance and the formation of Machiavellian school of thinking. The new political thinking put the utmost emphasis on the political *tools*. The only subject of importance in politics was *power* and not virtue, goodness, justice, and ethics. Leo Straus

believed that political philosophy was derailed by principles offered by Machiavelli (who was devil's teacher). He advocated power as the only subject of interest in politics (Amini, 2003, p. 141).

Playing politics and political play replaced government through the applications of Machiavelli principals. Many years later, Ronald Reagan called this game play the *Show Business* (Ibid). Machiavelli offered his famous motto: "objective justifies means". He believed that the objective of politics should be the survival of sovereign. The sovereign should sometimes play as lion, sometime as fox, and sometime as both to save his power. Machiavelli believed that there are two ways to confront others: legally or forcefully. The first way is humanistic and the second animalistic. Since, the first way is not effective; therefore, there is no other option than the second one. Sovereign has to learn to play as both lion and fox in the second approach (Machiavelli, 1995, pp. 129-130). According to Machiavelli, the distance between the "real life" and the "ideal life" is so much that it is impossible to bridge them (Mahmoodi, 2001, p. 95).

Machiavelli respected the ethics based on essential goodness, but felt its social application clearly contradicted the perspective he offered about human and its essence. Hence, Machiavelli ethics is profit seeking and instrumental built upon seeking benefit and preventing losses.

In this view of ethics and politics, positivists agree with Machiavelli. They believe in "scientific method" as the only way for understanding. They argue against social sciences including politics science because of being void of value; and, "any science that is void of value" can free the hands of politicians to do as they please (Amini, 2003, p. 142).

The main point of this theory is to differentiate between ethical rules and political requirements. Any political undertaking should be based on the underlying benefits and wisdom. This approach, also called "realistic politics", is based on the belief that complying with ethics defeats the political purpose. The reason is that ethics look for truth and righteousness while politics require some degree of overlooking ethics because no political act is possible without "dirty hands" (Eslami, 2003, p. 368).

A question arises from the separation of ethics and politics. Some may wonder whether ethics is original or not. Some may even give a negative answer (Sadra, 2004, p. 16). But it seems that both ethics and politics are basic principles (Eslami, 2002, p. 190). Yet, some political scholars believe applying ethical learning to politics may be dangerous. Machiavelli subscribed to this line of thinking. He believed ethics was required for individual's life but considered adhering to ethics was dangerous for

sovereign. He strongly advised sovereign against dangers of continence. Machiavelli wrote "showing and being tenderhearted, faithful, people-oriented, religious, and sincere is supreme; but one should have such a character that could easily be altered when the opposite is required" (Machiavelli, 1995, p. 131). Machiavelli did not oppose ethics neither did he deny the pertinence of good essence and its nobility. He preferred sovereigns who observed ethics. But, life experiences had taught Machiavelli that only sovereigns were successful that dropped the good deeds and resorted to deception.

Ethics and politics do not mix in the line of thinking proposed by Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Spinoza (Davari Ardakani, 2004, p. 11). Hobbes believed that humans are like wolves in their natural state. It is the fear of cruelty that creates the tendency to seek or demand group help. There is no other way that human could save his life and freedom (Hobbes, 2005, p. 140).

Hobbes believed when humans are outside civil state (natural state) and without public power in a constant state of fear, it is a state where everyone is against everyone. In such state, anyone should use force or duplicity to gain dominance and mastery, so that there is no other power strong enough to endanger him. This is required for self-preservation and is generally permitted. (Hobbes, 2005, pp. 157-158)

In Hobbes view, the formation of a government becomes necessary with the objective to save humans from tribulation of a naturally existing state of conflict void of a power to keep them in constant fear and dread. The only way to establish a public body that can save humans from onslaught of aliens and harm of each other is to put the power in the hands of a single individual or group. This individual or group is *Leviathan* to whom humans are indebted for their peace, security, and tranquility. The power is vested in the government either through natural dominance or contractual agreement.

Discussion

This theorem is convincing with many evidences to support it. Anyone can offer its own evidence. It is not difficult to criticize this theorem for several reasons.

1. The most unethical governments still expect their citizens to be ethical and follow the rules and regulations. Machiavelli did not believe in ethical conduct for the government. But he believed that pretending to follow ethics was required for governing people. Those who adhere to this view endanger themselves to level of extinction, because, it is impossible to deceive people for ever. A government that constantly resorts to deceit and duplicity cannot

expect its citizens to be truthful (Eslami, 2003, p. 373; Eslami, 2002, p. 184).

2. The ethical system of the governing body affects its political righteousness, authority and influence. Therefore, they have to careful of the application of ethical values to politics (Mohammadi, 2000, p. 154). Confidence crisis that currently is prevalent in Western countries finds meaning when there is separation of ethics and politics. Western scholars confess that the continued decadence of ethical values will eventually destroy Western civilization.

Francis Fukuyama, Japanese-American scholar, in his book "Trust" discusses the ethical crisis and lack of trust in American citizens toward the government and politics as the biggest problem and crisis in United States. He says that ethics is an asset for any country; however, it is rapidly losing ground in United States. People have lost confidence in their politicians' virtues, competence, and righteousness. (Kazemi, 2000, pp. 312-313)

Jurgen Habermas, the energetic capitalism scholar and critic, is another person who believes that legitimacy crisis is one factor that will lead to the decadence of Western civilization. He believes that capitalistic government collects taxes from wealthy to provide services to low income groups to attract their loyalty and support. This approach makes people accustom to superficial values and ethics. People in turn, start to believe that the "pseudo-values" are real and genuine. This is all to cover up the legitimacy and confidence crisis (Ibid, pp. 315-316).

Sociologists consider ethics as an invisible blood that continuously circulates through society and its entities. According to this view, no entity, business, or domain can legitimately survive without ethics (Kazemi, 1997, p. 13).

Václav Havel, Czech intellectual, politician, and dissident who became the first president after communism downfall, believed that without ethical values that could be shared, supported, and pledged by everyone, neither rules nor democratic government, not even market economy could function properly. He considered that the only way to progress was adherence to an old and well-known ethical directive: "Live with truth." (Ibid, p. 22)

Governments lose their influence and functioning in time of ethical crisis which, in turn, produce legitimacy and confidence crises. When governmental system finds its existence in danger undertakes drastic measures to earn back people's confidence. Government may resort to force acceptance of its values by making them legal and mandatory enforced by use of force. History has shown that the application of force is in itself non-ethical and against values when used to earn back

people's confidence, rebuild legitimacy, and restore ethical values. The result of such undertaking would be negative reactions and feedback.

Adherence of Ethics to Politics

This theorem is also called domineering ethics. It is the outcome of Marxist-Leninist doctrine of ethics and politics. From Marxism point of view, history is nothing other than a scene for class conflicts. Class conflicts end when we reach the last phase of history, i.e. demise capitalism. A proletariat class will be developed, then, through a socialist revolution leading the society to a communist system, which will create a classless society.

Based on this theorem, ethics follows and takes values from politics and revolutionary acts without any condition. But, there is no reciprocal effect – politics and revolutionary acts do not require ethical justification. In this theorem, no revolutionary act is against ethics and it is exactly the same as ethics and virtues. Revolutionary acts do not recognize the originality of ethics. It rather believes that ethics is made as a consequence of proletarian class conflicts (Eslami, 2002, pp. 188-189).

Other Marxist philosophers and theoretician including Italian Antonio Gramsci and Russian Leon Trotsky believed in such domineering implication of ethics. Trotsky who was Lenin's revolutionary collaborator and challenger to authoritarian system of Russia believed that there was no difference between individual ethics and party interests in a Marxist revolution. Lenin in a discussion about ethics had said: "Our ethics is the outcome of proletarian class conflicts. There is no other ethics that may have been acquired from outside of our society. Such ethics is nothing but scam." (Ibid, p. 189; Eslami, 2003, p. 377)

The frame of thinking proposed by German intellectual, Friedrich Nietzsche, can be examined under this theory. He was under influence of Darwin and believed in the survival of the fittest. He questioned the validity of ethics, completely. He criticized European Christian civilization with his line of thinking. In his opinion, goodness, affection, rightness, pity, kindness, and the like virtues which were promoted by various religions would not produce anything other than weakness, humiliation, and laziness. He believed that "good" was all those things that create a sense of power in human, such as yearning for power and the power itself. And, "bad" was one outcome of human weakness. In view of Nietzsche, "right is dominant" and human will that is directed to power is the source of all virtues. Efficiency and effectiveness have priority over virtues and war is better than peace at any price.

"War is necessary. Only nihilists and optimists are still waiting for human generation to put aside

war. Until then, we have nothing to rely on except the ruthless power battle fields give to suffering nations: the impersonal deep hates, the cold-blooded murders with total indifference, the organized eagerness in destroying enemy, and the inattentive proud of heavy casualty" (Rousseau, 2006, pp. 346-347).

The first principle of humanness, in his view, dictated the destruction of the weak and unworthy people, because there is no wickedness other than being merciful to weak and unworthy individuals (Kazemi, 1997, p. 131).

Discussions

This view of ethics and politics merely recognizes the benefits of proletarian class and its representative party. They commit to crimes that, in their view, are ethical if benefits of proletarian class and its representative party justify. Political systems in the world have rules and principles that they follow. Human rights require that peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and the like to be above the interest of a certain group or political party. Sound policies depend on the establishment of certain principles to govern the political decision making. The right to live plus legal and political rights of citizens are to be above politicians will (Amini, 2003, p. 142).

When a government does not adhere to ethical and human values it may face many problems including legitimacy and confidence crises. These crises gradually undermine the political system and may lead to its demise. A proletarian dictatorship replaced Russian Tsar Dynasty. The revolutionary leaders in the name of revolution and for the interest of people committed such crimes that were non-existent before. Most of these crimes took place during the bloody political purgs.

Daniel Shiro and Michael Polanyi believed that lack of ethics destroyed the roots of revolution and lead to demise of Soviet system. Daniel Shiro believed the downfall of socialist system was due to "complete ethical and spiritual decay." Michael Polanyi concluded that "a system built on absolute reversal of ethics was inherently unstable" (Eslami, 2003, p. 381).

Nietzsche thinking is against human rights principles such as liberty, equality, right of living, and the like. So, his thinking is not acceptable. Western society imprisons criminals for life till death. Political systems that observe human rights do not take away the right to live from anyone including the criminals.

Dual Ethics Theorem

This theory states that ethics should be evaluated at two levels: individual and social. What is considered ethical at personal level may not necessarily be ethical at social level. Therefore, personal ethics is evaluated based on absolute ethical criteria, while social ethics is looked upon based on the national interest. In dual ethics system, individuals are bound to one ethical system and society is bound to another.

Proponents of dual ethics system say that individual ethics is affectionate but social ethics is objective-oriented and pragmatic. Most of Western countries adhere to this type of ethics, especially those who follow Protestant branch of Christianity and are followers of Martin Luther, German lecturer.

Dual ethic theorem considers that individual ethics and social ethics are mutually exclusive. Human always faces two ethical systems at micro and macro levels. These two systems are not convertible to each other and no suitable combination can be made by mixing them. Civil and political societies are working toward achieving defined objectives. These objectives are national ideals and interests that their achievement may justify ignoring individual rights. Going to war can be an ethical tool and justified leverage for achieving national objectives. "Just war" has roots in this view. Martin Luther, Max Weber, Bertrand Russell, Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhrn, and Hans J. Morgenthau were advocates of dual ethics (Eslami, 2002, p. 196).

Max Weber proposed ethics of responsibility and ethics of belief based on dual ethics principal. He believed that the important objective in ethics of responsibility (read political ethics) is to serve the national and individual interests. He assumed political men had certain requirements that forced them to commit to acts that may seem unethical but in reality they have no other option. Weber spelled out the difference between a political man and an ethical man. A political man puts public interest and idealistic desires over his spiritual virtues and salvation. An ethical man merely follows his beliefs without paying attention to their consequences (Ranjbar, 2002, pp.19-21).

In Weber's line of thinking, ethics of belief is the same as the inner drive that makes individual to act based on their belief without attention to their outcome. He put ethics of belief as one of intricacies of Christian religion (Kazemi, 1997, pp. 150-1). Individual (belief) ethics is different than political (responsibility) ethics. The former is absolute and idealistic while the latter is objective and realistic. Politics, in Weber's line of thinking, comply with ethics but a specific set of it.

Discussions

This theorem presents the existing reality. Yet, it cannot resolve social problems. The reason is that it is giving free hand to government to commit any crime in the name of the national interest. This line of thinking can produce crisis including confidence and

legitimacy crises. Confidence and legitimacy are required for proper functioning of a system. Otherwise, the system will face ethical decay which weakens the bases of system leading to eventual destruction. No social system can ask its members to subscribe to dual ethical system and expect them to be honest and tolerate government dishonesty without saying anything. Juliana Pontara proposed the four divisions of ethics and politics. She believed that this theorem is ambiguous with no clear boundaries.

The three theories discussed so far share one point in common that is politics is unethical. We discussed the problems associated with these three theories.

Unity of ethics and politics

This theorem considers ethics as personal politics and politics as social ethics. Ethics and politics are two branches of applied wisdom. They are strongly related and strive to provide for human felicity. Political philosophy cannot discover the ultimate political values and develop an ideal model of government without the assistance from ethical principles. Political philosophy states what an ideal government should be. Ethics presents the criteria for being good and ideal (Sajjadi, 2004, p. 29). It would be difficult in this line of thinking to draw a line between ethics and politics to divide them into two independent and separate fields.

An individual in personal life is the same individual in the social life. Therefore, whatever is unethical for individuals is also unethical for government. Political leaders and practitioners should follow ethical principles and values. They are responsible for and are obliged to build the foundation for socialization and observation of others' rights in order to develop the ethical and spiritual properties of members. These will lead to ethical rules.

According to this theorem, cultures are sustainable, civilizations are productive, and humans are virtuous, actualized, and prominent only with ethics and proper policies. The downfall of a society is the result of ethical decadence. The history shows many examples for proving this claim.

Both ethics and politics strive for human prosperity and salvation. Ethical politics has two dimensions:

A) *Government and Political Approach.*
B) *Ideal Government and Policies*

Political approach and ideal politics should be ethical according to unity of ethics and politics theorem. Political approach may include ethics of politicians and political practitioners, the proper way to gain and maintain political power, observing citizens' rights, and exercise of justice. The outcome of adhering to individual ethics, ethical politics, and social ethics is the perfection and elation of individuals and society (Ranjbar, 2002, p. 15).

Plato and Aristotle emphasized on ethical politics. Ethics and politics are intermingled in the teaching of these two philosophers. As an example, we mention one Aristotle's statements in Book VII of Politics. He stated that: "the extent of felicity for any one is equal to the benefit he draws from his own virtue and wisdom together with his virtuous and wise actions. God stated that felicity and bliss are not because of material assets you possess. They are because of your essence and your essential properties. Neither individual nor country may do well unless they have virtue and wisdom. Courage, justice and wisdom in a country have the same meaning and are manifestation of individual's courage, justice and wisdom. What we know for sure is that the best life for individual and country is the one with virtue and enough facility to make virtuous actions possible (Aristotle, 2005, pp. 373-375).

Aristotle principles for an ideal political system are based on ethics and values. These principles assume individual felicity is the same as social felicity. A felicitous life is a basic concept in Aristotelian ethics and politics. They are achievable only through following virtues that are within ethical domain (Tabtabiee, 2006, p. 103). Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* thesis has a section on the strong association between ethics and politics. He considered ethics as a prerequisite for politics. He assumed the individual virtue to be the same as city virtue. The individual self is also the same as group self. The implementation of virtue in city and citizen's well-being is more attractive and superior than individual virtue and goodness. This is prerequisite to politics.

In political views of Farabi, Ibn Sina, Miskawayh Razi, Abu al-Hassan Ameri, Khaje Khawaja Nasir al-Din Tūsī, and others, felicity and ethical goodness are the key concepts which define the ideal government (Sajjadi, 2004, p. 29). Seyyed Javad Tabatabiee wrote that Farabi subscribed to the ideas of Plato and Aristotle. Farabi defined politics as the means for achieving felicity. He also noted the association between politics and ethics. He put ethics as a part of civil science. (Tabatabaiee, 2004, p. 173)

Discussion

The dominant approach in politics has been to ignore ethics. The most unethical human domain is usually politics. The key objectives of unethical politics are acquiring, maintaining, and increasing power. Any tools many be used to achieve these three objectives. The main feature of unethical politics is dictatorship which destroys all ethical principles between rulers and people.

Making politics ethical at national and domestic levels is essential. Ethical politics defines and regulates the relation between individuals, society, and government. Achieving this ideal state has been difficult at international level. A society full of lies, deceits, theft, injustice, extortion, lawbreaking, and the like is not a suitable place to live. These wicked acts destroy and destabilize security and mutual trust which are required for human life (Soroosh, 2001, p. 41).

This theorem is easy to prove, but, it cannot be criticized like the previous ones. This view is safe from the legitimacy crisis resulting from unethical politics.

Amir al-Mo'menin Ali (a. s.) was the most notable and most effective promoter of unity of ethics and politics in speech and in action. He was a strong believer in ethical politics and never went beyond the boundaries of ethics. He accepted a face defeat in honor of his position on the issue. Hazrat Ali (a. s.) declared "swear to God that Mo'avieh is not more intelligent in politics than I am. He is shrewd and criminal. If deception was acceptable, I would have been the most astute person in politics. But deception is sin, and any sin is a type of blasphemy and denial." (Seyyed Razi, 2001, speech no. 200)

The preferred theorem in this article is the unity of ethics and politics. We try to explain the views of Islam by presenting the foundations and features of ethical politics as subscribed by Islam. This article proves the validity of this theorem by providing examples. Views of Moslem scholars are also presented in this article.

Islam and ethical politics

Islam is one of Divine monotheistic religions. The main objective for appointment of Prophets was to promote monotheism. This fact makes the discussion about the relation between ethics and politics a unique one. Prophet Mohammad (S) proclaimed that the purpose of his mission was to perfect ethics. Ethics in Islam relies on Almighty God and religion. Ethics has close relationship with both. Islam is a political-social religion, therefore, Islamic ethics is also political-social. Therefore, politics, power, and government are all tools for maintaining ethical principles through Amre be Ma'ruf wa Nahy an al Munkar (Command the good and forbid the evil). From Islamic point of view, society and politics are the practicing ground for ethics. Society and politics are committed to complying with ethics. Politics is at the service of ethics and ethics is for human growth. Islam includes both ethics and politics. Islamic ethical principles and political strategies for implementation of these principles are oriented toward the development of the ground for the growth of human authority (Eyvazi, 2004, pp. 124-127).

How can a religion that is for guidance and felicity of human use unethical tools that are against human virtue? This idea represents the Imam Ali's approach in dealing with those who sought special privileges or those who opposed values. Imam Ali outlined his policies in response to the suggestions made by a group of his companions and supporters to compromise with those individuals who were seeking special privileges such as Moavieh, Talhe, and Zobair. Imam al-Mottaghin, Hazrat Ali (a. s.) in response to those who requested to ignore individuals' pasts and close his eyes to their illegitimate assets stated that: "rights are clear and unchanging. Passage of time does not affect people's right. I have no mandate to ignore the past. I will do whatever duty has been bestowed upon me by God." (Nasiri, 2006, p. 205).

The decisive position that Imam Ali took in his government and his efforts in full implementation of justice caused dissatisfaction among and raised opposition by many former governors and some of his supporters. He never gave in to pressures for adapting criteria that were against values and ethics. Hazrat Ali's inaction and avoidance of conflict against Thaghifeh council; his refusal to act according to the approach and tradition of Sheykheyn proposed by the six-member council set up to select Khalife after Omar; and his handling of the Talhe and Zobair incident could be justified and understood only by the unity of politics and ethics theorem.

The collection of Imam Ali's speeches and letters make up an important source of ethics and politics. Seyyed Razi made this collection into a great book in fourth century titled Nahj al-Balaghe. Imam Ali's very famous letter to Malek Ashtar Nakhaiee was an ethical charter for political governors. This letter has been accepted by Human Rights Commission of United Nation.

History of Islam shows that the prophet Mohammad (S), and Imam Ali (a. s.) never considered power as original and they considered it only as a tool; the tool that was worth less than a torn shoe in Imam Ali's view if it were to be used on its own. (Seyyed Razi, 2001, Speech no. 33)

Many Islamic teachings from holy Quran and narrations attributed to fourteen Ma'soom prove the two value principles: "homogeneity of ethics and power" and "nobility of internal control of power". The teachings include: justice-orientation, affection, rejection of aggression, refusal to use suppressive power, avoidance of cruelty and corruption, forgiving the guilty, and adherence of the governing body to ethics. They all prove the unity of ethics and power. The unity of ethics and politics is an unbreakable

association between Moslems' political knowledge and action. This unity is the result of a permanent association between religious and politics (Lak Zaiee, 2002, p. 105).

An Islamic government does not merely pay attention to ideals, values, and objectives of domestic and foreign policies. It has changed its inclination to realism based on time and place circumstances. Professor Haghighat wrote under the title *Realism Principle in Shiite sect*: "Sunni jurisprudence turned to principles of realism and expedient centuries before Shiite jurisprudence. Religious values (jurisprudence and non- jurisprudence) may have faced many changes because of the current realities. Religious objectives do not materlize in vacuum. Specific circumstances of time and place a given country may alter them." (Haghighat, 1997, p. 507). He concluded later that: "religious values should always be implemented based on social realities. The collection of religious values and the present realities creates a balance between ideals and the current requirements of time and place." (Ibid, p. 509). These statements can represent personal opinions as well as the expression of current realities. There are many views and opinions on the subject but their coverage is beyond the scope of this paper. Each one of them can become the subject of a separate research because:

1. Ethics and politics in Islam are defined and clarified based on monotheism and an objective-oriented universe;
2. Ethical principles drive and limit politics;
3. Power is not necessarily corruptive in Islam. It can be used to and is required for the implementation of ethical principles. This is achievable by striking a balance between instincts and free governance of mind;
4. Ethics needs politics for its implementation and politics needs ethics for its legitimacy (Eyvazi, 2004, pp. 127-128).

Islamic Principles for Ethical Politics
Islamic principles for ethical politics have various elements and attributes as follows:

1. Justice-Orientation and Rejecting Cruelty
The most fundamental ethical teaching of Islam for the development and imposition of power are: a) fairness, b) negation of cruelty to others, and 3) non-acceptance of cruelty by inhuman powers. A justice-oriented government uses justice as criteria for the development and imposition of its power. Its actions are oriented toward fair development and imposition of power. It rejects and confronts brutal use of power.

The objectives for formation of government and setting up governing system include: a) implement social order, b) promote justice, c) provide legal equality, d) distribute public facilities fairly, e)

participate public in responsibilities equally, and f) provide reward and punishment where appropriate (Montazeri, 2006, p. 585).

Social justice has many dimensions including equality and fairness, law abiding, granting rights, plus balanced and fair distribution of resources. Justice is one of the four basic virtues in ethics next to wisdom, bravery, and immaculacy. Some moral philosophers recognized justice as the only virtue (Zakeri, 2005, p. 34). Imam Ali (a. s.) stated on the same belief: "swear to God, if I were to be given seven universes and anything under the skies to disobey God and take away a barely husk from an ant, I would not do so. This dirty world you have made is worth less than a chewed leaf in a grasshopper's mouth" (Seyyed Razi, 2001, Speech no. 224). The Arabic word *Qest* is defined similar to word Justice by lexicologist. This word is emphasized in many Quran verses. Justice or *Qest* were one of the objective for nominating prophets.

Continence and Fear of God
Frequent emphasis on continence by Quran has put it on the highest position of Islamic social ethics. Continence is an important attributes of social ethics for Moslems.

Promotion of continence includes accurate guidance on the subject of using power. Making God's heavenly and earthly blessing dependent on continence explains its direct effect on 1) development and growth of power; 2) opening exits from deadlocks; 3) justified use of power; 4) fair distribution of economic power; 5) prevention of wealth concentration; 6) avoidance of cruelty and suppression; 7) commitment to agreement; 8) negation of supremacy over others; and 9) avoidance of social corruption. These show the importance of continence in ethical use of power and politics in view of Islam (Nabavi, 2000, pp. 386-387).

Nobility of internal control over power and exercising continence are the only solution for prevention of corruption. Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi elaborated that the reason for separation of power proposed by Montesquieu was the prevention of power abuse by those who hold it. Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi believes that this theorem, in spite of its wide acceptance, is unable to reach its objective because the division of power distributes corruption among branches. Thus, if we witness a reduction of corruption in executive branch, it is because part of it was transferred to other branches. The only solution for prevention of corruption is to emphasis on continence elements and attributes plus ethical qualifications of the elected or appointed officials. (Mesbah Yazdi, 2001, v. 2, pp. 127-128)

Some of the basic elements of ethical politics according to Islam are as follows:

1. Orientation toward goodness;
2. Observation of other's rights;
3. Sacrifice and self-devotion;
4. Negation of destroying others;
5. Forgiveness and tolerance;
6. Honesty and truthfulness;
7. Governance of humanistic attitude.

The discussions of these items are not within the scope of this study. For further information please refer to Nabavi, 2000, pp. 387-; Ali Khani, 2003, pp. 49-.

Islamic Scholars' View

1. Imam Khomeini's View

Imam Khomeini believed that when a person is left to himself, he becomes slave and captive of his sensual demands and material needs. Since spirituality is the foundation of everything, most problems can be resolved by development of spirituality. He pointed out the ethical roots of the main problems of today's world. The world will skid into a downfall if these problems are not resolved.

Ayatollah Khomeini divided politics into three classifications:

1. Devil politics: this type runs society based on negative properties such as deceit, lie, and any other permissible means that contribute to achieving objective.
2. Animal politics: this type emphasizes on fulfilling material needs of a society without resorting to deceit or devil actions.
3. Islamic politics: this type is made of two dimensions, namely, spiritual and material. An Islamic government works toward realization of both dimensions of human life. Imam Khomeini believed that politics drive society toward worldly and heavenly interests (Noroozi, 2001, pp. 22-23)

Power becomes dangerous when it falls into hands of people who are corrupt and unrefined. In such a case, the power turns to corruption (Imam Khomeini, 1993, p. 490). He emphasized on the unity of religious ethics and politics and believed that these two are intertwined: "Politics is not a deception; it is a real fact. Policies run the country and not the deception and trickery; these two are all wrong. Islam is all politics and the truth of politics is not deception and duplicity" (Imam Khomeini, 2005, p. 11).

Ayatollah Javadi Amoli's View

Ayatollah Javadi Amoli believes that government does not have a value of its own. Its value is derived from the effect implementation of religion objectives. He has listed two religious objectives for government. One is to provide justice to people. The other one is to provide facilities to people that may help them reach eminence and enlightenment. He believes that the ultimate outcome of pursuing these two objectives would be the utopia created by clinging to religion beliefs and benefiting from them. Ayatollah Javadi Amoli considers that the desirable economic progress, security, and freedom are definite outcome of religious objectives. He declares that people will move toward achievement of Divine wishes in a healthy and balanced society (Javadi Amoli, 2002, pp. 25-27).

Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi's View

Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi believes that social practitioners and managers should have ethical qualifications in order to ward off the influence from personal and party interests. That is the only way to prevent the abuse of power and position. He stated that lack of continence and ethical qualifications weaken the commitment of political leaders to laws and produce widespread corruption among them. That is the reason they put personal interests over public interest (Mesbah Yazdi, 2001, v. 2, pp. 87-88).

Ayatollah Mesbah provides a definition for politics and explains that politics does not include the negative connotations that are normally associated with it including duplicity, trickery, cunning, and deceit (Ibid, v. 1, p. 42).

Conclusion

The association and unity of ethics and politics has been subject of discussion throughout the history. Some of the top and distinguished scholars and philosophers have emphasized on it.

When politics was first established as a science, there were direct relations between politics and virtue, between politics and justice, between politics and felicity, culture, wisdom, and liberty.

Many contemporary scholars have emphasized on development and strengthening of the association between ethics and politics, from theoretical and/or practical points of view. These scholars underline such relation not as a local or national necessity, but as a strategic and critical way to save people and society. This requirement should be implemented and metalized in practice. None can ignore ethics in personal and group lives and continue without adhering to ethical principles. Those who adhere to unethical (personal or group) life endanger themselves to level of extinction.

Ethics without belief in God and revelation is incomplete in Islam. Human virtues and goodness are based on spiritual relation and on God's blessing, beyond personal interests and self-indulgence. The criterion to distinguish an ethical from an unethical act is the closeness one feels to God. This closeness can be achieved by avoiding any works, acts, or thoughts that may provoke God's anger. According to Islam, God is the origin and the ultimate source of ethical virtues. The whole power is vested in God: ✍✿➔◐☋☺⊠ɤ ★✎   □▪□➔①☇◉✍⚓

ﻷ☐🕮 (Baghareh/165). The key concepts of human political-social life including truth, justice, peace, coexistence, continence, spirituality, honesty, righteousness, and the like are meaningful if they are directed toward God. Consequently, politics is a way to implement ethical principles and rules.

In the history of Islam, Imam Ali was the most notable politician who strongly adhered to ethical principles. He believed in the unity of and strong association between ethics and politics. He was against lying, defamation, destruction, and deceit. This paper ends with this hope that one day Imam Ali's ethical politics become the norm in politics. That will be the way for politicians to create a world of kindness and closeness in a push for global justice and preparation for the appearance of 12th Imam, Hazrat Vali-e Asr (a.s.).

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