

The Little Green Book

Volume I Chapter 4

The Rule of the Clergy

If religious experts of wisdom and justice devoted themselves to the Islamic law and to setting up an Islamic law and to setting up an Islamic state, never again would the people go hungry.

It is written that “the clergy rule the sultans.” If the sultans are obedient to Islam, then they should also be obedient to the clergy; they should ask the clergy for laws and regulations and advice on how to apply them. In this way the clergy are the real leaders and power belong to them, officially.

You (the clergy) have the duty to establish an Islamic state. Have confidence in yourselves: you are perfectly capable of assuming that burden. We will do as the colonialists did three or four hundred years ago – they started from nothing and got to this point. We too will start from nothing. Don't let yourselves be intimidated by a handful of your fellow countrymen who have sold out to the West, who are the valets of imperialism. Explain to the people that the clergy are not going to sit in a corner at Qom or An Najaf studying unimportant matters like the rules governing the menstruation of women, and cutting themselves off from politics because “religion and politics should be separate.”

Are those who govern in Muslim countries these days any more capable than we are? Who among them has more aptitude than the average man? Many of them never even went to school... Mr. Reza [Rezah Shah – the Shah's father] was nothing but an uneducated buck private. Historically this has often been the case. Many despots and absolute rulers had neither the aptitude to run a country, nor common sense, nor knowledge nor wisdom. Harun al-Rashid [A renowned 19th century Caliph in Baghdad] or others like him, what did they go through in the way of an education? To administer laws and govern a country, you need a solid educational grounding.

In certain cases deception is necessary for the maintenance of Islam and of religion in general; without it faith could not survive.

If anyone, in the guise of pursuing Islamic justice, interprets the Law in a manner contrary to the divine will, he has committed the sin of innovation. Learned men are bound to condemn him or they will themselves be condemned.

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Given that the clergy occupy a lower position (than the Prophet of the Imam), should they therefore punish an offense less severely? Can we say that the Prophet ought to order a hundred and fifty lashes, Ali a hundred lashes, and the clergy only fifty, in a case when the penalty should be one hundred lashes? No. The chief magistrate possesses executive power that is always in accordance with divine standards, whether he be the Prophet, Ali, or the duly constituted representative.