

# THE HOLISTIC STATE OF MAULANA MAUDUDI

SYED AMIR SHAH\*

ABDUL QADIR\*\*

## Abstract

*The Islamic state erected under the principles of Maulana Maududi represents a picture where state hold ultimate power over its citizens in virtually all fields of life. The modern concept of private life of an individual untrammelled by the authority of state to guarantee the rights of the citizens is severely compromised. The limit on state authority and accountability of the rulers by legislative body and the general masses also seem to be absent.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic State, Concept, Political Philosophy, Maulana Maududi, Shariah Law.*

## Introduction

The concept of Islamic State and universal brotherhood occupies a central theme of many great Muslim philosophers spawning from early period of Islamic history to modern times. Maulana Maududi is one such figure of twentieth century whose efforts and intellectual scholarship has made indelible marks on many a mind and has inspired a political movement in the subcontinent for establishing an Islamic State that would ultimately pave the way for a "Global Islamic Empire" (AbulAlaMaududi 2006). Maududi's political philosophy is contained in two of his books, 'Islami Riasat' and 'Khilafat-o-Malookiat' which elaborates the ideological foundation, principles and mechanism of governance in the Islamic State.

The books are comprehensively written and cover range of topics from Islamic ideology, individual's duty towards God, relationship of religion and politics, inevitability of an Islamic State, nature and function of Islamic State, Sovereignty and source of law. However, the scope of this research paper is very much restricted and discusses the issue purely on political grounds rather than based on religious interpretations. The critical and much debated issues like Jihad, Islamic expansionism, relationship with other nations, status of women and minorities are also not discussed in the article. It deals with only one aspect of Islamic State, i.e. the limits of the state authority vis-à-vis a private life of an individual. What aspects of citizen's life that comes under the jurisdiction of state and what are beyond is the subject of this paper.

## Understanding Maudodi's Perspective

The political philosophy of Maulana Maududi, it seems to be, do not offer a new perspective on the issue of state; instead, it stretches the already existing view of Islamic way of life to its logical extreme. His perspective of Islamic governance like Shariah law (Islamic Law), sovereignty of God, limited democracy, inequality of women and minority, jihad etc. is being shared by many great thinkers during his life time and before, however with different shades. (Ibid: 56-57).

The arch stone of Maulana's political philosophy, around which he builds the entire edifice of Islamic state, is the argument that Islam is a complete and comprehensive code of life. It provides guidance in all spheres of human activities, including the political life of human beings. From this fundamental premise, many important corollaries can logically be inferred. First, it sets Islam on a different course from that of western notion of Religion. In Western

tradition, religion is often seen in the light of individual's relationship with the supernatural being, and thus far too limited to encapsulate the philosophy of life in entirety. It falls short of explaining the true meaning of existence and fails to bring true essence of life. However, Islam defies any such type of characterization of religion which is confined to certain rituals only. The scope of Islam does not only entail the individual's relationship with God but also governs the conduct of individuals inter se. All of our definitions of right actions and morality in carrying out the business of mundane life spring from this very code. Thus religion is not only a personal matter between God and individual but also an integral part of man's social existence.

Secondly, Islam addresses man both in his personal capacity as well as part of larger social reality, thus embedded in it are the duties man owes to his family, parents, neighbours, orphans, poor, wayfarers and on the larger scale the basic framework for social, economic and political life are subtly defined. The principles provided by Islam generates a harmonious relationship between different aspects of life, all leading towards one purpose and goal, that is to achieve peace and social justice both in his public and private spheres of life, which is the hallmark of Islamic ideology.

Finally, Islam reserves a highest place when it comes to clash of values of Islam with any other way of life. If one is not following Islamic way of life, he is certainly follower of a path which is not Islamic. Thus, it is tantamount to relegating Islam to a lower status because he is giving preference over Islam to other worldly standards, or in words of Maulana," he is worshipping a false god." (Ibid: 49-51)

### **Limits on State Authority**

State, by its very nature, is founded on force. It has built-in mechanism of forcing its inhabitants into behaving the way that they would not have behaved otherwise. State is not only the source of law but it also makes sure that these laws are properly adhered to, and this certainly cannot be done without the use of coercive authority. After granting this premise, it logically follows that in the Islamic State as propounded by Maulana, the Shariah Law is to be implemented by the authority of state. Since this law is comprehensive and complete in all respects according to Maulana Maududi, it defines relationship between man with his fellow humans as well as with his Creator. Not only that, it also provides guidance to man in both his person and public life. That is to say, all the matters of private morality, religious duties and worship, relations with elders, parents, neighbours, orphans etc. to more complex matters of public life like social, economic, and political and issues of international relations, are included. In fact, "there is no distinction between religious and political life in Islam" (Ibid: 140). This is a very crucial point and one of the great issues of politics because what is at stake is the individual's liberty vis-à-vis unbridled state power. The regulation of public sphere rightly falls under the jurisdiction of state; however it is the former sphere of individual's private life that seems at risk.

In the West, the issue has been settled once for all, or at least in principle. The contemporary democracies of the West are, for major part, modelled around a naturalistic philosophy of John Locke (1689), and utilitarian concept of liberty by John S. Mills, J. S (1909). In Lock's concept, every citizen has some inalienable rights that are bestowed on him by nature not by state. Thus it is not for state to define rights or take it away; instead, states are constituted only to protect these natural rights of its citizens. Together with Mills assertion that liberty is the supreme moral value, western democracies have drawn a fine line

that distinguishes individual's life into two parts i.e. public and private life. States thus constituted can only exercise its coercive authority in the public domain while it has no legitimate authority to intrude into the private domain of its citizens. Thus a subtle line is drawn which puts restrictions on state authority and inhibits it to deal with matters of faith, family, property, occupation etc.

However, in the proposed state of Maulana Maududi, this line that limits the scope of state authority is blurred almost to nonexistence. There is no such demarcation of individual's role, one subject to state intervention and the other immune to it. Rather than, there is only one sphere and that is subject to state's authority. Thus this scheme gives unlimited access to state to intervene in the lives of its citizens in all possible manners. Since Islamic law provides guidance in all spheres of human activity, entrusting it to state to be implemented, will technically put the actual rulers in all powerful positions. Ideologies do not exist in vacuum and neither they are translated into reality by their own, it requires men and proper mechanism to do so. Regardless of which ideology states adhere to, it is the actual men who take decisions and frame laws for governance. If this kind of state is erected, the rulers will legitimately exercise unchecked and absolute power in virtually all walks of life. And there seems to be no safeguards against the excesses perpetrated by the state.

### **Supremacy of Clergy**

The political setup according to Maulana Maududi is best described as "theo-democracy". It is a system of governance which incorporates the features of both theocracy and democracy. Democracy in the sense that the governance is to be carried out by the elected members of the citizen body, however, the elected body does not enjoy supreme power. The ultimate source of power and authority emanates from God Almighty, and thus the sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to Him alone. God has already ascribed for us a code of conduct for us in form of Shariah, which will serve as a supreme law of the land. The legislation would be done in conformity to this supreme law. Thus each piece of legislation should pass a scrutiny test. However, question arises that, who would perform this task of scrutiny? Certainly not legislative assembly because it is composed of elected members, not experts of Islamic law and jurisprudence. It requires a non-representative body composed of experts of Islamic Law that would perform the task of scrutiny. It is more like a political setup existing in present day Iran, where an unelected body of experts, called Guardianship Council (Part 8 Article 107-112, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran) reigns supreme over the legislative body. Thus the scheme put forwarded by Maulana Maududi is far from being 'Theo-democracy', but a pure form of theocracy for all practical purposes.

Furthermore, by the virtue of their superior knowledge and expertise in Islamic jurisprudence, these 'legislative' members cannot be judged by ordinary citizens, as the latter by default lack such expertise. Thus equipped with all legislative powers, these members cannot be held accountable. It puts them into a commanding position. Although, they have religious and moral duty to be good and just, but there is no mechanism to put an effective check on them if they tended to violate laws for their narrow purposes and hold them answerable. Furthermore, the composition of this body is also a critical issue. As there is more than one religious interpretation available among the varied sects, it is more troublesome as compared to guardianship council of Iran, where there is homogeneity of opinion. Even if decisions are reached upon on democratic principles, it will perpetually put

minority at mercy of the majority sect. it is important to note here that the actual political process requires 'give and take' and decisions always carry an element of compromise between the contending parties, however, these elements can hardly find any room when it comes to matter of faith.

## **Legitimacy**

One of the central themes in a study of politics is that of legitimacy. It involves the discussion of matters that makes the exercise of state power as legitimate and on what grounds a state loses its right of obedience on part of its citizens. In other words, the power of state must be converted into authority of state. "Confronted with power, the citizen has a choice: whether to support it or oppose. Confronted with authority, it is his duty to obey." (Lipson, Leslie 1965, p. 68). Throughout history legitimacy has been drawn on different grounds ranging from racial superiority, religion, military might, and wisdom. However in modern democratic states, legitimacy is derived from the citizen body. The claim of legitimate exercise of power rests upon the consent of the majority of citizens of a state. In Maulana Maududi's thought, the legitimacy of the rulers is derived in so far as it observes the principles of Islam. It is the sole criteria that renders government legal and worthy of obedience from the masses. The moment it deviates from this principle, it loses the legitimacy. Again, it raises a question that is linked with the previous issue, that who would decide whether or not the actions of the ruler are repugnant to Islamic injunctions. Certainly not masses, because they are incapable of judging due to their lack of relevant knowledge. The best in position of carrying out this task is again the body of experts or for sake of convenience, clergy. Thus on a worldly standards, it is clergy that would decide the legitimacy of the rulers, among many other powers it enjoy.

## **Liberty**

Another important theme of political life is that of liberty. The concept of liberty is interpreted in various ways by different political thinkers and carries with it different connotations. The first systematic attempt to define liberty was made by a British philosopher of seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes challenges the traditional notion of liberty that consists of "doing what one wants to do". According to Hobbes, this concept of liberty was prevailing in a pre-state condition which he calls as "state of nature" and was a root cause of all the miseries because it brought men into mutual conflict. Since there was no law giving and imposing authority and everyone enjoyed absolute liberty, life in the state of nature resulted in "war of all against all", in his famous words, life in state of nature became 'solitary, nasty, poor, brutish and short' (Hobbes, Thomas 1651).

To avoid such situation, state was established with sovereign having supreme law giving authority. For Hobbes, individual liberty consists of all positive actions that are sanctioned and prescribed by the law. Hence, liberty depends on prescriptive law of the state.

However, another contemporary British philosopher John Locke takes a complete opposite view of individual's liberty. According to Locke, law only prohibits certain actions of individuals instead of prescribing how men should behave. Beside these inhibitions imposed by the law, everything else belongs to individuals. Men are free to do anything except to violate the law. This concept is much broader in scope than that of Hobbes'. But the most radical philosophy of liberty is presented by J. S. Mills, for whom individual's liberty is of supreme moral value and ultimate criteria to judge all the actions of the state. The best

society is that maximizes the personal liberty, where men are free to do anything they like with only one condition that it cannot curtail the liberty of another individual.

Defining liberty in the state of Maulana Maududi is indeed a tricky issue because state has political as well as religious duties. Religion by its very nature demands ultimate obedience and surrender from its followers. On other hand, state's claim over the obedience of masses is generally much restricted; therefore it creates a room for individuals to freely operate to a certain degree. However, if religion is incorporated in political life, the claim of the state can extend to command the absolute subservience from the masses. Hence it leaves no space for personal liberty. Furthermore, it also raises question regarding the moral conduct of human beings. In religious and moral philosophy, for any moral action to take place, free choice is a mandatory condition. Without free will, the concept of morality cannot be realized. Therefore, the authority of state if exercised to impose the moral law; it will certainly limit the free choice of a man. Human actions would be more out of necessity than out of free exercise of his will.

## Conclusion

The study of politics revolves around some fundamental questions that are inescapable from political life i.e. scope of state authority, functions of the state, legitimacy, sources and organizations of authority etc. Each issue offers more than one possible solutions. "The history of politics, described in one sentence, consists in trying out alternative solutions for the basic issues in altered combinations." (Lipson, Leslie 1965 P: 15)

Maulana Maududi's political philosophy is a sincere intellectual effort to offer solutions for these basic issues, especially in the context of Muslim world in post-colonial era. However, for many of his critics, Maududi's political views seem to be too radical to be implemented. Extending the domain in which state operates and providing it with an opportunity to intervene in individual's private life is one such instance. The limited powers of legislature with an oversight of non-elected and non-representative body of religious experts tilt the whole balance of power in favour of the latter. Moreover, the right of declaring the actions of the ruler in conformity or for that matter non-conformity with Islamic injunctions also rests with this body. Problems confound because the clergy exercise power by the virtue of their knowledge, there seem to be no room for criticism and dissent leave alone the notion of holding them accountable. Thus the idea of Islamic state as represented in philosophy of Maulana Maududi represents a picture where religious experts wield ultimate power over the whole citizen body in virtually all fields of human activity.

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