

A Comparative Study of the Strategic Principles in Imam Khomeini's Clergy Charter with the Verses of the Holy Quran

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ABSTRACT

Imam Khomeini is a divine leader and a religious and Quranic scholar whose movement has been considered the turning point of realizing the connection between the Holy Quran with various social and political aspects, therefore, discovering and studying the social, political and managerial aspects of his life in light of Quranic principles is an important step to prove the applicability of the Holy Quran in the modern era and its eternity. Among his many works, each of which holds an outstanding perspective, the Clergy Charter is a doctrinal, cultural, political, and social letter addressed to the clergy and seminaries. This article uses a descriptive-analytical method to extract the strategic principles of Imam Khomeini's (ra) Clergy Charter, including the doctrinal and practical principles of the Islamic Revolution, and by applying them to a number of verses in the Quran, it will reveal the deep connection between Imam's (ra) thoughts and actions with the Holy Quran.

Keywords: Quran, Imam Khomeini (ra), Islamic Revolution, Clergy Charter.

1. Introduction

The Islamic Revolution of Iran is intertwined with Imam Khomeini. The revolution is not known anywhere in the world without his name. Although, more than thirty years have passed since his death, recalling his thoughts are still emphasized by religious experts, therefore, this study will take advantage of a library method and analytical approach to compare the strategic foundations of Imam Khomeini's Clergy Charter with Quranic verses.

Scholars of religious sciences have presented many publications on Imam Khomeini's Quranic thoughts in the form of books, dissertations and articles. Some include: (Lakzai, 2011) "*The evolution of Imam Khomeini's political thoughts*" (Lakzai, 2005) "*Imam Khomeini's perspective towards Clergy and politics*"

(Saadatmand, 2007) “*Imam Khomeini's perspective towards clergy and seminaries*” (a group of writers, 2012), and “*Imam Khomeini's Principles of political leadership*” (Ashrafi, 2010). An overview of these cases shows that none have compared the strategic foundations of the Clergy Charter with the verses of the Quran. This article can be considered a completion of the school of principle and Imam's thoughts and manners.

In this article, we first define the two terms “clergy” and “principles”, and after stating a number of Imam Khomeini's Quranic principles, we will compare the strategic principles of the Clergy Charter with the verses of the Holy Quran.

2. Definition of Concepts

2-1. The Concept of “Clergy”

2-1-1. “Clergy” in the Literal sense

Even though the word clergy or “روحانيت” is apparently has an Arabic root, its definition and use has not been found in any of the Arabic lexical sources (Farahidi, 1409 AH; Ibn Manzoor, 1996, Johari, 1407 AH). However, in a Persian lexical resource, it has been referred to as a noun (Amid, 1971, p. 59). This seems incorrect because the gerund is semantically the result of the infinitive and such a meaning does not exist in Arabic. The only use of the word *clergy* in Arabic is by changing the extended *ta* (ت) to the circular (ة) which is written as “روحانية”, and is the feminine adjective for the description of angels and jinn (Johari, 1407 AH, 1, p. 376). But in Persian, there are two meanings for the word clergy. A: lexical meaning; Sanctity, purity, which figuratively means the “collection of clerics and religious scholars of the Shiite clergy”. B: descriptive meaning, and figuratively in the spiritual sense; Clergy (Amid, 1971, p. 59) which is used to refer to clergymen.

2-1-2. Clergy in Concept

Various interpretations have been mentioned in the explanation of the term clergy; sometimes other words such as “*mullah*” and “*Akhund*” have been used interchangeably. *Mullah* was more common in Safavid and Qajar times compared to other words. Among the scholars known as *Mullahs*, we can refer to *Mullah Husseinghli Hamedani*, *Mullah Abdul Rasool Kashani* and *Mullah Ali Kani* (Kempfer, 1981, p. 130). “Clergymen learn science in religious schools and are responsible to transmit what they have learned to others.

They often dress in a special attire to introduce themselves to people, and people usually recognize the clergy through their clothing, and even consider anyone who dresses this way a clergy. In the society's definition of a clergyman, clothing is the main element and distinguishing feature (Azghandi, 2018, p. 131). Others define clergyman as a person who learn religion sciences and transfers the knowledge to society. They try to acquire religious knowledge and sciences, as well as transferring their knowledge to others in order to protect the religion they have dedicated themselves to” (Golzadeh Ghafouri, 1981, p. 2). According to Beheshti, “clergymen, in addition to learning the rules of religion and teaching it to others, learn to disregard the worldly gifts and material possessions, and seek to refine their soul and moral. After cultivation, they are obliged to cultivate the people and show them the prosperous way of living life” (Beheshti, 1984, pp. 29, 90).

2-2. The concept of “Principle”

2-2-1. “Principle” in the Literal sense

Principle (مبانی) is the plural of (مبنا) and means structure and mansion, and foundation and basis (Dehkoda, 1993, p. 191); structure means building and its verb is used in the same sense in the Holy Quran (Ragheb Isfahani, 1402 AH, p. 147) such as; (وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا) (Surah Naba, v12), and foundation also means basis, and built (Moin, 2011, p. 174). In the Quran it means building and construction, such as; (لَا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ)

“The building which they erected will never ease to fuel hypocrisy in their hearts until their hearts are torn apart. And Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise”.

(Al-Tawba, v110).

It is noteworthy that, apparently, the reference of “*Ibn*” to the child, whose origin is from the root “*Banava*”, is due to the fact that the child is made by his parents. Ragheb states: “The child was called '*Ibn*' because

he was made by the father, and in general, everything that is obtained from something else or arises from his upbringing or care is called '*Ibn*', and since a human child, was a foundation for his father, he is called '*Ibn*' (Ragheb Isfahani, 1402 AH, p.147). Therefore, the feminine form "*Banava*" is used as building and creating and it is contrast to the feminine form of "*Hadam*", meaning destruction, which confirms the meaning. (Firoozabadi, 1415AH, 4, p. 305).

2-2-2. Principle in Concept

It has been mentioned in the definition of Principle that: "Principles are fundamental propositions that prove the legitimacy of a science or scientific subject and also prove the mental background of a person who specializes in that scientific science or subject" (Dehkordi Rouhi-Tajri, 2015: 4, p. 20). Also: "All sciences have principles, and the principles of every science are the beliefs in the form of a set of propositions which form a section of the affirmative principles of that science, where its principles are known and scientific issues are based upon" (Sabzevari, 1413AH: 1, p. 78).

It has been stated regarding the definition of principles of interpretation that: "Interpretation principles are the basis of the interpretation of the Quran. These beliefs affect the principle of possibility and interpretation, or the quality, method, basis and rules of interpretation, and gives them direction" (Shakir, 2016, 1, p. 40). In addition: "The principles of interpretation result in the approach of interpretation and the formation of methods, tendencies, principles and rules of interpretation. For example, the commentator must clarify his position of interpretation before beginning the process, whether he considers it evidential or not. Either answer to this question is based on interpretation, therefore, interpretation is effective" (Modab, 2017, 1, p. 25).

According to these definitions, the meaning of "principles" in the title of the article "A Comparative Study of the Strategic Principles in Imam Khomeini's Clergy Charter with the Verses of the Holy Quran" is one of Imam Khomeini's (ra) fundamental Quranic beliefs that has effected the formation of various aspects of the Clergy Charter. It has also been manifested and hidden in various parts of this historical message.

3. A Number of Imam Khomeini's Quranic Principles

Imam Khomeini's thoughts represented in the Clergy Charter are reflected from the Quran and are based upon the foundations of Quranic teachings. These foundations can be discovered and explained as basic presuppositions of his Quranic statements; thus, one can interpret his most important Quranic principles by carefully studying his works.

3-1. Eternity

One of Imam's most important beliefs about the Quran is that it has been an eternal book throughout history and has never and never will diminish ever since its revelation in the beginning of the Islamic era. Imam Khomeini (ra) describes the Quran's immortality as follows: "We must be aware that the reason this eternal book has been sent to guide humans in all colors and race, until the day of judgement, is to keep the vital issues alive, both spiritually and in civilization, and to understand that this book is not specific to one era and region, and not to think that Abraham, Moses and Muhammad (pbuh) were specific to a particular point of time" (Imam Khomeini, 2010: 20, p. 93).

3-2. Comprehensiveness

There are explicit interpretations in the works of Imam Khomeini that the Holy Quran is not only a book of devoted worship but also includes various political, social, economic etc. dimensions. He states: "The Quran and Sunnah include all regulations and rules required for human beings' happiness and salvation". The book *Kafi* consists of a chapter entitled "*All human requirements are stated in the Book and Sunnah*". The Quran is the (تبيين كل شيء), or explanation of everything. It illuminates all things" (Imam Khomeini, 1994, p. 29).

Also, regarding the comprehensiveness of the Quran, he mentions in his book *Sharh Chehel Hadith*: "The Shari'a of Islam is based upon three positions: one is the divine knowledge and the description and purification of the truth and resurrection, and the knowledge of angels and the description and purification of the prophets, which is the main principle of the Shari'a, and the other is about virtuous character and self-correction. The third position is about the individual and social, political, civil and other actions. Every rational-minded person finds that he is not a party and there is no human being, law and Shari'a that can be

praised and perfect in all aspects in this world and the hereafter, and this is the greatest proof of the Quran's legitimacy" (Imam Khomeini, 2013, p. 201).

3-3. Unitedness

Unitedness of the Quran is another principle mentioned by Imam Khomeini (ra) which is based on the foundations of Quranic teachings. According to Imam Khomeini, if one approaches the Quran's unity, all problems of the Muslim world will be solved: "Muslims have many problems today; their great problem is that the Holy Quran has been set aside and replaced. The Holy Quran states: (وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا) (Al-Imran, v103). If Muslims were to practice this same verse, all social, political and economic problems will solve without the interference of another" (Imam Khomeini, 2012, 13, p.275).

3-4. Anti-Arrogance

Another Quranic principle of the Imam is Anti-arrogance. Imam has mentioned that the reason Islamic communities are subdued is because of ignoring divine teachings such as Quran's anti-arrogance. He says: "If Islamic communities and Muslim nations relied on Islam and enforced Quran's teachings of liberation, instead of relying on the Eastern and Western communities, they would not have been held captive by the Zionist aggressors and intimidated by the American government, or subjugated and deceived by the Soviet's evil games. Ignoring the Holy Quran has resulted in this miserable situation and subjected the fate of Muslim nations and Islamic countries to a policy that compromises colonialism" (Imam Khomeini, 2010, 2, p. 438).

3-5. Imam's Biography and His Method of Management

One can observe the practical dimension and Quranic principles in Imam Khomeini's behavioral biographies, since it is based on the foundations of Quranic teachings.

4. Strategic Principles of the Clergy Charter and its Accordance with the Divine Verses

4-1. The doctrinal principles of the Islamic Revolution in the Clergy Charter

4-1-1. Belief in Agency to Perform One's Duty, not Emphasis on the Results

Imam Khomeini (ra) has stated in the Clergy Charter: "We do not regret our actions in the war, not even a second of it. Have we forgotten that we fought out of duty and the result was subordinated? Our nation acted on their duty until the last moment they felt the power and duty to fight. Blessed are those who did not hesitate until the very last. When they saw the expediency of the survival of the revolution in accepting the resolution, they fulfilled their duty once again. So, should they be worried? We are all responsible for our duties, not the results. If all the prophets and infallibles (pbuh) were obliged to achieve results in their time, they never should have gone beyond their ability to act and speak of general and long-term goals that were never fulfilled in their lifetime" (Imam Khomeini, 2010, 21, p. 279).

This quote, taken from the Clergy Charter, is the manifestation of the fifth Quranic basis of Imam Khomeini's (ar) principles, which can be understood from his biography, life and method of management. He believes that people, individually and cumulatively, are responsible for accomplishing their duties that God Almighty has entrusted upon them, and are not responsible for the consequences. Therefore, before the formation of the Islamic Revolution when power was in the hands of the West and their puppets [Shah], or after the formation of the Islamic Revolution, which countered with the influence of the holy clergy and liberals, it can be understood that Imam Khomeini was commissioned to perform his duties and ignored the result.

4-1-1-1. Surah Taghabun, verse 12

Verse 12 of Surah Taghabun¹, refers to the word "Annama", meaning that the Prophet's only duty is to convey the divine message to the people. The result of this invitation is beyond his concerns. Since the Prophet (pbuh) knows that all affairs in the universe revolve around God's power, and God has pointed out that (وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ), he should do his duty with confidence.

The Islamic Republic, which continues the path of the prophets, is in charge of all areas in the military, culture, politics and economic warfare of society and does not have an independent view towards consequentialism. Imam Khomeini's (ar) statement in the Clergy Charter refers to the explanation of the

¹ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

verse in discussion. Belief in performing one's duty and responsibility is derived from the Infallibles' (AS) character and lifestyle. Imam Ali (as) points to responsibilities when he resists people's insistence of accepting the caliphate:

لولا حضور الحاضر و قيام الحجة بوجود الناصر و ما اخذ الله على العلماء ان لا يقاروا على كظه ظالم و لا سغب مظلوم لالتقيت حبلها)
(على غاربها و لسقيت آخرها بكاس اولها)
(Seyed Razi, 2000, p. 88).

Many people have given priority to their responsibilities with the help of the Imams through history, such as Imam Khomeini (ra) whose duties can be clearly seen during his life and personality.

In *Tafsir Nemoneh*, Ayatollah Makarem has stated: "Obedience to God is related to the principles of divine laws and legislation, and obedience to the Prophet (pbuh) is related to interpretations and executive issues, thus, one is the root and the other is the branch". He continues: "If you turn away and do not obey, he is not responsible to force you, the Prophet's duty is only invitation and communication" (Makarem Shirazi, 1992, 24, p. 200).

4-1-2. Belief in Islam's and the Jurisprudence's Response to all Societal Needs

Imam Khomeini (ra) has mentioned in the Clergy Charter: "We must pursue the practical jurisprudence of Islam, regardless of the deceitful West, the aggressive East, and the diplomacy governing the world. As long as jurisprudence is hidden in the books and hearts of scholars, nothing will happen. Until the clergy is inactive in issues and problems, the term *ijtihad* will not be enough to govern society. It is possible that common ways of managing affairs will change in the future, and human societies will require new Islamic issues to solve their problems.

Great Islamic scholars must think about this issue today ...The fear is that jurisprudence and *ijtihad* will have an objective and practical aspect and create the power of confrontation among Muslims ... I have mentioned before that all the conspiracies against us, from the imposed war to the economic siege, etc., was so we do not say Islam is responsible for the society or we must get permission for our actions" (Imam Khomeini, 2010, 21, p. 279).

This quote, taken from the Clergy Charter, is a manifestation of Quran's comprehensiveness which is the Imam's second Quranic principle. His principles include all important issues about individuals and society, politics, economics, military, culture and social dimensions. Belief in the comprehensiveness of Islam and jurisprudence in responding to all human needs, has originated from Imam Khomeini's principles.

4-1-2-1. Surah Nahl, verse 89

The Holy Quran introduces itself as the exponent and guide of the universe in verse 89 of Surah An-Nahl², which indicates the comprehensiveness of Islam to guide and respond to all human needs. Therefore, the resources to answer people's questions are the book of God, narrations, intellect, and consensus. With the knowledge and awareness of social problems in all aspects and recognizing the capacity of verses and hadiths, along with *ijtihad* and jurisprudence, and in order to meet the needs and requirements of society, Imam Khomeini (ra) formed the Islamic Revolution. He explains this in the Clergy Charter with regard to the explanation of the verse under discussion.

In *Tafsir Nemoneh*, Ayatollah Makarem has said: "according to the concept of (لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ), the Quran clearly shows the description of everything, but pointing to its nurturing aspect that help humans and societies develop in all spiritual and material dimensions, it becomes clear that *everything* means things that are necessary to take this path" (Makarem Shirazi, 1992, 11, p. 362).

4-2. Practical Principles of the Islamic Revolution in the Clergy Charter

4-2-1. Resistance and Perseverance

Imam Khomeini (ra) has mentioned: "I address ones in control of the radio, television and newspapers and others that until my final day, I will not allow liberals to take control of our government, I will not allow the hypocrites of Islam destroy these helpless people, I will not obey Eastern nor Western regulations, I will suppress America and the Soviet Union in any interference, and I am fully confident that people will, as in the past, support their government and the Islamic Revolution. They showed their support and preparedness once again in the Bahman 22nd rally. They shook

² وَ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

the enemies of the revolution by how much they are willing to sacrifice” (Imam Khomeini, 2010, 21, p. 279).

This quote, taken from the Clergy Charter, is the manifestation of the Imam’s fifth Quranic principle, which can be understood from his biography, life and method of management. Here, he believes in individual and social resistance against the tyranny of the West, especially the United States, as well as the Liberals and hypocrites.

4-2-1-1. Surah Hud, verse 122

In addition to commanding religious leaders to perseverance and resistance, verse 122 of Surah Hud³ commands those following religious leaders to perseverance and patience when pressured. In fact, resistance for more than forty years after the revolution is due to the fact that they have set Imam Khomeini as the example of perseverance. His words in the Clergy Charter are in alignment with the explanation of the verse in discussion.

Iran’s Supreme Leader talks of perseverance, which is a prominent feature in Imam Khomeini, as follows: “when I look at this characteristic (perseverance) in the Imam and refer to the verses of the Quran, I realize that he interpreted many verses of the Quran with the same feature. Suppose that the Quran says: (َ َ فَالَّذِكَ فَادْرُغْ وَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أَمَرْنَا وَاتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ (Shura, v15), threats, temptations and deceptions did not affect the Imam; not that there were no threats or temptation or deceptions, but it did not affect the Imam and his character...the enemy could not destruct Imam’s system of reliance on religion. What is the meaning of resistance? Resistance means that one chooses a path which he considers is the path of truth and righteousness, and he starts moving along this path, and the obstacles do not stop him from moving forward; this is what resistance means” (Statement of the Supreme Leader on the 30th anniversary of Imam Khomeini’s death on June 4th, 2019).

4-2-2. Seeking Independence and Cutting All Traces of Dependence from Arrogance

In the Clergy Charter, Imam Khomeini (ra) states: “We should not be neglective [towards the enemies], we should move in the direction that, at God’s will, any dependance on the savage world [arrogant world] would come to an end ... at war we learnt that we must rely on ourselves”.

This quote from the Clergy Charter refers to the Quran’s anti-arrogant aspects which is the fourth Quranic principle according to Imam Khomeini. A result of anti-arrogance is gaining independence from the East and West. Imam Khomeini based the revolution on pillars such as: “Independence, Freedom, Islamic Republic”, “Neither Eastern nor Western” ... which indicates the prevention of all dependence on severance.

4-2-2-1. Surah Nisa, verse 141

Verse 141 of Surah Nisa⁴ can be interpreted as follows: “God Almighty’s will in this world and the hereafter makes that, true believers will never be ruled by the enemy, thus, true believers should not be dependent on arrogance”. In fact, with deep political knowledge of the Islamic and non-Islamic world, Imam Khomeini (as) took the step for revolution, with the slogans; “neither East nor West”, “Independence, Freedom, Islamic Republic”. This indicates the country’s independence in all areas; the military, cultural, political, economic, etc.

Imam Khomeini (ar) has mentioned in this regard: “According to the Quran, God Almighty has never allowed the rule over Muslims by non- Muslims. This should never happen; no domination, (َ َ لَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ سَبِيلًا), it should not find a way at all. Polytheists and corrupt powers should never find a way to rule over Muslims” (Imam Khomeini, 2010, 4, p. 317). This quote is in alignment with the interpretation of the verse in subject.

In *Tafsir Nemoneh*, Ayatollah Makarem has said: “since the word “*Sabil*” is a masculine and negative word, it generally means that the Polytheists should never overpower believers in any aspect; in the military, politically, culturally, economically, etc. And if we observe their victory over the Muslims in different fields, it is because many Muslims are not true believers and have forgotten the path of faith, their duties, responsibilities and missions” (Makarem Shirazi, 1993, 4, p. 176).

³ فَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أَمَرْنَا وَاتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

⁴ ... وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ سَبِيلًا

4-2-3. *Calling the Oppressed to Stand Against Global Arrogance*

Imam Khomeini (ra) has said in the Clergy Charter: “We received a blessing every day at battle that we used everywhere. We exported our revolution to the world...We showed people around the world and especially the people in this region that we can fight all powers for years. Our war helped Afghanistan, our war was followed by the conquest of Palestine, our war humiliated all corrupt leaders against Islam, our war was followed by the awakening of Pakistan and India. How short-sighted are those who believe all the martyrdom, courage, self-sacrifice, and strength were useless because we have not reached the final goal yet! The voice of Islam in Africa arose from our eight-year war, interest in Islam in America, Europe, Asia and Africa, and the whole world, is because of our eight-year war” (Imam Khomeini, 2010, 21, p. 279).

This quote refers to Quran’s anti-arrogance feature, which is the fourth Quranic principle according to the Imam. One other important consequence is calling the oppressed to stand against global arrogance. When Iran stood up against America and England, they gained political, military, economic, etc. advantages, which awakened people around the world to stand up against global arrogance.

4-2-3-1. *Surah Saba, verse 46*

In verse 46 of Surah Saba⁵, God has only given the Holy Prophet (pbuh) one advice, because it leads to diligence in worldly affairs; cumulative and individual uprising is exclusively for God. This verse emphasizes on non-division and sincerity: Uprising against arrogance should only be for God with no other interference in the intention. Also, it mentions that since cumulative uprising accelerates the results, it precedes individual uprising. Imam Khomeini’s (ar) quote in the Clergy Charter is in alignment with the explanation of the verse under discussion.

In *Tafsir Nemoneh*, Ayatollah Makarem has stated: “This verse shows the basis of all social, moral, political, economic and cultural developments...the interpretation points to something very important; (اعظكم) refers to good intentions and nothing else. The meaning and interpretation of (واحدة), along with (ائما) shows that the root of all individual and social changes and improvement is thought. Until thought is at rest, believers will be attacked by thieves of religion and faith. (قيام) here does not mean standing on two feet, but it means preparedness, and the interpretation of (الله) is that uprising and preparedness must have a divine motive, which is very valuable” (Makarem Shirazi, 1992, 18, p. 138).

Conclusion

In this article, we tried to explain Imam Khomeini’s Clergy Charter in light of the Holy Quran. Accordingly, we dealt with the strategic principles and foundations of the Islamic Revolution in two areas; doctrinal principles and practical principles of the Islamic Revolution in the Clergy Charter. The first principle deals with responsibility and duties and puts less emphasis on results, also Islam and jurisprudence respond to all societal needs. Regarding the second principle, we addressed four issues; resistance and perseverance, independence, severing all dependence on arrogance, and finally calling on the oppressed to stand against global arrogance. The results of this study showed that Imam Khomeini’s statements in the Clergy Charter are all based on Quranic teachings and principles.

⁵ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعْظَمُكُمْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مَشْئِي وَفُرَادَى ...

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