

ՀԱՖԱՐ ԲՅԱԲԻՐԻ ՍԱՐՄԱԶՂԵ  
JAFAR KABIRI SARMAZDEH

## GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN HISTORY

Human being is the only creature who has a conscious relationship with his environment. He develops his natural environment, the animals make slight changes in their living place, but human beings try to know his natural environment, he plans to make changes in it in order to meet his needs and think about his social development. This interaction between human and the natural environment has been existing since the early time of life; this development has seen a rapid growth in the contemporary time. One of the things that human beings have been dealing with for a long time has been different forms of social and governmental orders which have been developing during the course of history. Political thought has a long history; as its history reaches to the history of mankind.<sup>1</sup> The greatest political thinkers have tried to present solutions for the desired government through phenomenology, cosmetology, methodology, and sociology. This attempt started by searching for the best political system in ancient Greece.<sup>2</sup> This unprecedented attempt in the political thought should be looked for in the social and political life of the cities states. In these city states people for the first time participated in the political life. Before this, in the great eastern civilizations which were based on the pro religious political systems, such situations had not appeared. In empires such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, Iran, ancient China, some groups of political elite had the control of the society and great mass of people had no interference in their destiny. In such empires, political decision making was limited to small circles of noblemen. In Greek city states, in spite of the fact that there was no public political participation, the political decision making circles were larger.<sup>3</sup> The development from empire system to city states and from aristocracy to democracy had an important effect on the formation of a new look toward law and lawful government.

In Greece, democracy caused people to come to the conclusion that the regulation have nor originated from a divine source, but they have been made for peoples' welfare; and this had an important impact on the growth of their political thought.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most important phases of human experience was the pass from the mythological world to the world of thoughts. In the ancient world, whether in Greece or other civilizations the myths were representatives of traditions and rituals. In civilizations such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Persia, such ideas of new political thought had been growing. In the ideas originating from such

myths, the king was the axis of political life and thought. In Egypt, the king was the god, in Mesopotamia he was the representative of god and in Persia he was the selected by god and in China he was the son of the sky. In such civilizations which have been called pro-religious, politics was a part of religion. It was believed that the king with such a position links the social order to that of divine source. In fact the king was considered as a medium between the macrocosm of the whole universe and the microcosm of human life. In such civilizations, the law a divine status and it was regarded eternal and originating from the will of God, with unquestionable position. Through accepting such a law, people could enter into an obedience contract. In mythology, there was no difference between the law of nature and human law. In ancient Greece, a group, called Sophists, had important historical role in the transmission of the Aristotle's thought to reasonable thought and aristocratic values to democratic ones. The nobles regarded themselves descending from gods, They suspected the ordinary people's capacity for development. For them learning was a merit. The Sophists tried to link between nature and training and also to find a connection between aristocratic and reasonable training. Democratic system needed democratic training and the Sophists took responsibility in this regard. They announced that the law and order is of contract nature place human law (Nomos) opposing to divine destiny and natural fate.<sup>2</sup>

Gradually, social and cultural factors overcame natural and destiny. Then great philosophers like Socrates (399-469 BC) theorize about the ideal political system. Socrates viewed prosperity as political sovereignty; for him knowledge and specialty were the basis for it. Before the fifth century the basis for the validity of law were myth and religion, but after that such a basis was under criticism. In this way, a theoretical vacuum appeared for the justification of legality of law. Socrates came to fill such a gap. He wanted to search for the basis of law in human spirit. Plato (426-347 B.C.) like Socrates regarded the ideal prosperity in philosophy and training instead of nature. Plato in his most important work "Republic" regarded the high quality of a government as training. He took the government as responsible for the material and spiritual prosperity of people. Such a view still exists in some countries. As an example we can look at Iranian-Islamic political thought there are some similarities with such a idea. Some other countries look at the government as a system for the preservation of social security. They believe that the prosperity of a nation is not a duty of the government; of course the interpretation of the ideas of great scientists like Socrates and Plato is not possible here; but because their views overshadow the world of politics, I try to refer to their ideas in a short notice. Plato believed that a government is complete when the rulers are the philosophers. His idea regarding incomplete governments is that because the philosophers' rule is impossible to find, so there should be law. In the governments in which there exists law, if they are controlled by one person are

called royal, if controlled by a group they are called aristocracy, and if controlled by all is called democracy. On the contrary, in lawless governments if they are controlled by one person, they are called tyranny, by some people called oligarchy, and if it is ruled by all the people, it is called common rule. Now if there exists law, the type of rule by one person, royal, is the best type of government; after that aristocracy is in the second place and democracy in the third. In lawless systems a majority of the people stands in the first place, the rule by some – oligarchy in the second and the rule by one – tyranny – is in the third place. The reflection of Plato's ideas remained for centuries and had some effect on Christian and Islamic culture. Then Aristotle ( 322-384 B.C.) studied the quality of the appearance of city states and asks why city states appeared and he came to the conclusion that they have appeared to enhance the human capacity for prosperity. In his search for prosperity he came to the point that the basis of prosperity is knowledge; and this knowledge is gained through knowing and training. So the ideal of living in the city state is a logical life. Aristotle classified logic into theoretical and applied logic and puts politics in the realm of applied logic. While proposing an ideal form of government in the form of that of Plato, he describes the major part of his job as search for different conditions and the best type of applied government. In this way, he investigates about different political systems of aristocracy, democracy, and their different divisions. At last he came to Polity system which is a kind of composed system and a kind of mediocre publican system. Aristotle like Plato did not democracy very much because democracy had shown some drawbacks like instability, chaos, and the inability in preventing hypocrites from ascending the hierarchy of power. Apart from all these problems, Aristotle and Plato's views refers to a deeper look at the their disapproving of democracy should be searched in this part. In their view like all other views of their past the goal of life has been knowledge not freedom and the difference between knowledge and freedom caused the scientists of the old worlds to ignore freedom at the cost of knowledge. Aristotle , like all the scientists of old times, was in search of knowledge not in freedom which was a major goal of democracy.<sup>1</sup>

Ancient Greece great thinkers like Plato and Aristotle presented their political philosophy in regard with the most basic issues relating to the city states with a high emphasis on the civil prosperity. Beginning with the Alexander's conquests and the end of life in city states, a new kind of life started which caused many different changes in the political and social aspects of life. In the new age, unlike the age of city states, the individual was not separate from the community nor was there any separation between individualistic morality and political ethics. The importance and emphasis was on personal prosperity. This new age was known as the age of pro- Greek age which continued from the death of Alexander to the annexion of Egypt to the Roman Empire. This period started from the third decade of the fourth century B.C. to three decade before the Jesus

Christ's Birth. This is the period which is known as transmission from the ancient Greece to the Christian world. In the pro- Greek age Stoic and Epicurean school developed which paid much attention to the personal prosperity. Epicurean philosophic tendency was toward ethics and the stoic school included the philosophy of ethics and the theory of stoic world country. This theory is of important teachings of stoic school which regards it as a medium religion between classic Greek philosophy and Christ. In this way stoic thought played the role of a transmission from the classic Greek philosophy to the Christian religion. Pro- Greek age which started with enlightenment ended to religious thought and even mysticism. Then, the great Roman Empire which was an unquestionable heir to the ancient Greece could not keep cultural and scientific phenomena of ancient Greece because of its specific characteristics. The type of ruling in the Roman Empire was so that there was no allowance for the growth of scientific, political, or philosophic. In the Roman Empire. Policy was a pre-determined issue which had a tyrannical characteristic in which scientific persona had no opportunity to grow.

After the collapse of Western Roman Empire, Christianity gained independence beside Germans and through issuing verdicts asked its followers to obey its political power. Because any power on earth could be a representation of the divine power and in the Middle Ages. The church was at the center of all powers and feudalism as a basic economic power made people obey its rules. In the religious systems of the Middle Ages there was no opportunity for any thought growth, because of the total dominance of the church over the community. The first thinker who wrote about the establishment of the basis of philosophy was Saint Augustine (354-430 A.D.) He believed that the duty of government is the preservation of the this worldly property of its subjects and the church had to preserve the spiritual property of the people and of course this heavenly power had dominance over the government. Later Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A.D.) rejected the holiness of Christian religion and made it this worldly. At last the renewal thought and renaissance overcame church thought and the humanists could extract the ideas of religious thought out of social and economic pattern of people's lives. In this way the age of church dominance came to an end and the preliminary introduction for the emergence of renaissance appeared. In Renaissance, humanist scientists with a investigating look surveyed ancient Greece and Rome regardless of the Middle Ages as the result of which the liberation of thought appeared. The new sciences did not search for life merely within human being, but they were after change and completion of the social and political systems. Thinkers like Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbs, and John Lock proposed considerable ideas regarding the improvement of the social and political organizations. Then in the eighteenth century Enlightenment in Europe and liberation movement and democratic overcame tyrannical and regimes of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The ideas of

Montesquieu, David Hume and Jeremy Bentham were proposed and new discussions regarding better ideal governments by Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, and Marx were proposed and theorizations regarding Government still continues.

## NOTES

- 1- Strauss, Leo. What is Political Philosophy? Translated by Farhang Rejaee. Tehran. Scientific and Cultural Publication 1994.
- 2- Mc Lain, Lain. Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics. New York. O.U.P. 1996
- 3- Poladi, Kamal. History of Political Thought In West, from Socrates to Machiavelli. Tehran: Markaz Publication 2003
- 4- Muska, kaetano. The history of political thought Translated by Hocin Shabind Zadeh Tehran: Morvarid 1998.
- 5- Poladi, Kamal. History of Political Thought In West, from Socrates to Machiavelli. Tehran: Markaz Publication 2003
- 6- Strauss, Leo. What is Political Philosophy? Translated by Farhang Rejaee. Tehran. Scientific and Cultural Publication 1994 pp 40
- 7- Poladi, Kamal. History of Political Thought In West, from Socrates to Machiavelli. Tehran: Markaz Publication 2003 Pp. 91-92.
- 8- Bigdeli, Ali. History of Political Thought In West, from Talis to Marx. Vohi Ladan Publications. Pp.54

## Իշխանությունը և դեմոկրատիան

Հողվածում անդրադարձ է կատարվում առաջին պետությունների և դրանց ստեղծման փիլիսոփայությանը, այնուհետև դիտարկվում է մարդու դերին հին Հունաստանում և Հռոմում իշխանության և դեմոկրատիայի ստեղծման մեջ, ինչպես նաև իշխանության փոփոխությունները և զարգացումները պատմության ընթացքում: Հողվածում քննարկվում են ինչպես մեծ գիտնականների (ինչպիսիք են Սոկրատեսը, Պլատոնը և Արիստոտելը), այնպես էլ ժամանակակից գիտնականների տեսակետները տվյալ հարցի վերաբերյալ: