

Spirituality versus politics

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According to the Quran, spirituality should be everyone's primary concern and politics, or political power, should take second place. This order of priority is made very clear in the Quran. For example, in the chapter entitled Al-Saff (Ranks), the Quran says: "He will give you another blessing which you desire: help from God and imminent victory. Give good tidings [O Muhammad] to believers!" (61:13).

This Quranic verse explicitly mentions that politics, or political power, has only a secondary status in the believer's life. According to Quranic teachings, spirituality is a vast subject, covering almost all the non-political affairs of life. Believers must therefore make every effort to attain spirituality, while relegating politics to a subsidiary role.

According to Quranic teaching, a believer must adopt spirituality as his goal. He should shape his life by adhering to spiritual principles and applying spiritual norms in all aspects of his personal life. Drawing the line between what is spiritual and what is purely political is essential and it should be borne in mind that spirituality is a target that is achievable in every situation, provided you are sincere and determined to achieve spirituality. It needs only one thing, and that is willpower. This goal must be attained regardless of whether conditions are favourable or unfavourable.

But the case of political power is quite different. As compared to spirituality, politics is a bilateral or a multilateral issue. There are always two parties and a number of political rivals. So, if you want to make political gains, you have to overwhelm the other party or rivals. This means that confrontation is inherently a part of politics: without confrontation there is no politics. But confrontation breeds hatred and sometimes leads to violence. Indeed, having a political target is quite against the Quranic spirit.