

# The Relation Between Politics and Religion in the Light of the Logic of Power


## Abstract

The theory regarding the relation between politics and religion in “The Logic of Power” (*Mantiq al-Sultah*) is part of a larger theory about the phenomenon of power as a right to command and power as a constraining force. Therefore its focus is on political power on the one hand and religious power on the other, within a broader set of views concerning the sources of power in human existence and the concept of political power including its services and limits.

The research path that led me to this theory is long and complex. It started with my analytical and dialectical study of the thought of Ibn Khaldun, and developed further along three axes: first my critical study of the Lebanese confessionalist system, secondly, my examination of the European political modernity, both in theory and in practice, and thirdly, my analysis of the main patterns of thought, especially those of philosophy and doctrine (religious and ideological), in order to distinguish the former from the latter.

If power is a legitimate relation of command among people, then the first question is about the source of such a power. This source can be one of the following three: nature, contract or delegation. Political power as a state power is drawn from nature, while political power as a governing power is drawn from delegation. Religious power finds its human condition in faith and finds its systematic structures in the institution, the founding text, the prophet and God.

Thus, the natural and healthy relation between political power and religious power is that of independence. Each one of these powers has its own nature, function and limit. There is no necessary need for religion in politics, and no necessary need for politics in religion. The domain that guarantees mutual respect and influence between the two is that of human rights, based on freedom, reason and equality.



But this kind of independence between political power and religious power requires an advanced progress in political culture as well as religious culture, with which, the dialectical relation between the two, due to a number of different reasons, can lead to forms of distance, conflict and denial and also to forms of alliance and union. The philosophical defense of this independence requires the rigorous critique of all forms of religious and atheist states.

In the Arab world, the philosophy of power faces two major obstacles: despotism based on domination and fundamentalism based on religion, Jewish and Islamic. Thus it needs to focus its critique on the foundations and mechanisms of despotism and fundamentalism, in view of supporting a progressive culture of power, which is another face of a culture of freedom.

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