

Guidelines for LEADERSHIP

Adopted at the third Executive Council meeting (Term 2024-2027)
in Dar Es Salaam on 1st February, 2026.



All our institutions (Jamaats, Regional Federations and The World Federation) are religious organizations established for promoting the Shia Ithna Asheri faith among its members and taking care of their spiritual upliftment and social wellbeing.

The primary objective of these organizations is to meet the religious needs of its members and can be explained by verse 3:104 where the Almighty says: *There has to be a nation among you summoning to the good, bidding what is right, and forbidding what is wrong. It is they who are the felicitous. (3:104)*

As such our constitutions stipulate¹ that all activities of our organizations must conform to the Ja'fari school of thought as explained by the marja' followed by the community. The community is also expecting this as ascertained in community surveys² findings that 76%-84% of community members and the electorate worldwide now expect their leaders to focus on the community's religious and spiritual education.

Whilst it is true that the positions held by the office-bearers of our organizations are not Shari' positions in which 'adalat' (upright character) would be necessary³, and that they are primarily Urfi⁴ (administrative) positions. However, by keeping the raison d'être of our institutions in mind, it is a given that our leaders should, at the least, not openly violate the basic teachings of our faith, especially the major sins which would place them in the category of *fāsiq*, a person whose testimony is not acceptable.

The fact that certain actions done in private life have a bearing on one's official position can also be seen within the Eastern cultures as well as the legal systems of some Western countries which clearly stipulates that if an officer of a charity organization declares *personal bankruptcy*, then he is disqualified from holding the office – even though it was a personal matter! Similarly, if an officer of a Shia Ithna Asheri religious organization openly commits a major sin on a personal capacity or openly supports such an activity by someone else, he or she does not deserve to hold that position anymore. This is tantamount to *spiritual bankruptcy* and potentially raises serious questions regarding holding such a position.

Look at the recent examples of the sexual harassment issues in the USA, Canada and UK: various high-ranking officials in public and private sectors had to resign for actions committed in their private lives (and mostly unrelated to their profession and expertise). This clearly shows that even in secular democracies, when a person occupies a seat of authority or leadership, he or she is expected to be a role model for others; and if they openly go against the core values of the organisation they represent, then they are no more qualified for that position.

It is in this same spirit the Grand Ayatullah Sistani has responded to the issue at hand by writing that “Even though condition of 'adalat' is not necessary for them but it is imperative that **at the least they should accept the essential laws of the sacred shari'ah and be practically committed to them, and they should refrain from openly opposing the shari'ah in their speech and action.**” (see text below from Najaf in Appendix of this paper)

1 Constitution REF

2 Project North Star document p29

3 See appendix ruling of His Eminence Syed Sistani on this matter

4 See appendix Q&A Marhum Syed Saeed Akhter Rizvi

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the spirit of recommendation from His Eminence (see Appendix), this house resolves that those seeking to take up leadership (Office Bearer) roles within Khoja Shi'a Ithna 'Asheri institutions - be they Jamaats, Regional Federations, or The World Federation - endeavour to always maintain Taqwa (God Consciousness), both publicly & privately, avoid major sins, enjoin the good and forbid the evil.

It is further resolved that those seeking to stand for the highest leadership position [President / Chairman] pledge to take the following voluntary oath at the start of their term of office:

START OF OATH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

I seek the help of Allah SWT, the All-Merciful the Ever-Merciful

I, [full name]

as the elected President of the [name of institution] the term [period of office]

hereby declare an oath to Allah, the Almighty, that as per the mandate given to me by the honorable eligible voters in the community that:

1. I shall abide by the provisions of the Constitution in performing my allocated duties
2. I will perform my designated duties to the best of my ability with honesty & integrity
3. I will not allow any personal likes or dislikes to interfere in my official duties
4. I will defend the dignity, freedom & rights of the members as required by the Constitution
5. I will perform my duties without fear from or favor to anyone
6. I accept the indisputable laws of the shariah, am committed to them in practice, and will do my best to abstain from openly going against the shariah in speech and action
7. And for my conduct, I will be responsible to Almighty Allah (SWT), the Holy Prophet (SAW) & the Holy Progeny, the Immaculate Ma'soomen (as).

May Allah (swt) help me to perform my duties (Ameen).

END OF OATH

APPENDIX

QUESTION & ANSWER FROM NAJAF ON CODE OF LEADERSHIP – 9TH FEB 2018

His Eminence Syed Ali Husein Al Sistani

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

With greetings and prayers and wishes for health and well-being for His Excellency, we convey this blessed notice. The Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Organizations have local and regional communities in different cities around the world, and these communities are directly or through their regional organization connected to the global institution (World Federation). All these local, regional, and global institutions elect their board of directors from the general population every few years.

Essentially, these institutions have a religious status to advance religious education and guidance and to serve their members in social and welfare matters, among others. Since these organizations are religious institutions, and according to the statutes of these associations, officials are obliged to carry out all community activities in accordance with Ja'fari jurisprudence.

These institutions are responsible for managing the endowments of the community, and some of these institutions also collect religious funds and spend them according to the permission of the contemporary religious authority.

Considering the above, although the positions of president, secretary, financial officer, and other management members of these communities and regional and global organizations are conventional and administrative positions, is it possible to make the condition of justice mandatory for them?

If the condition of justice is not mandatory for the holders of these positions, what title would you recommend to include a sense of adherence to Sharia in the statutes?

Greetings, salutations, and prayers from all believers.

The World Federation of KSMC

ANSWER

In the name of The Exalted.

With the conveyance of salam and dua for everyone's tawfiqat to be increased:

People who have undertaken the responsibilities mentioned above must be suitable for carrying out those responsibilities in terms of their religiousness, morals, and knowledge. Therefore, although 'being just' is not an essential requirement for them, it is necessary, as a minimum, that they accept the indisputable laws of the shariah, be committed to them in practice, and abstain from openly going against the shariah in speech and action.

And Allah is The Granter of Tawfiq (al-Muwaffiq).

SEALED : Ali al-Husayni al-Sistani , 25th Jumada al-Ula 1439 [11th February 2018]

FARSI VERSION OF ORIGINAL RULING FROM NAJAF ON CODE OF LEADERSHIP



THE
WORLD
FEDERATION
OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHERI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Registered Charity in UK No. 282303

خدمت گرامی حضرت آية الله العظمى السيد على الحسينى السيستانی (دام ظلّه)
نجف اشرف - عراق, 9th Feb 2018

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته با عرض سلام و با دعا و آرزوی سلامتی و عافیت برای حضرت مستطاب باستحضار مبارك میرسانیم تشکیلات خوجه شیعه اثنا عشری در شهرهای مختلف جهان جماعتی محلی و منطقه ای دارند و این جماعتها مستقیماً یا بوسیله سازمان منطقه ئی خود با موسسه جهانی (ولد فیدریشن) مرتبط اند. تمام این موسسات محلی و منطقه ئی و جهانی هر چند سالی هیئت مدیریه خود را از جمعیت عمومی انتخاب می کنند.

اساساً این موسسات حیثیت دینی دارند برای پیش برد تعلیم و ارشاد دینی و خدمت به اعضاء در امور اجتماعی و رفاهی و غیره. چون این تشکیلات موسسات دینی می باشند، و مطابق اساسنامه های این جمعیتها، مسئولین موظف هستند که تمام فعالیتهای جماعت را مطابق فقه جعفری انجام دهند.

این موسسات مسئولیت اداره موقوفات جماعت دارند و همچنین بعضی از این موسسات وجوهات شرعیه را جمع، و مطابق اجازه مرجع زمان، مصرف هم می کنند.

با در نظر گرفتن مطالب فوق، با این که مناصب رئیس و سکریتر و مسئول مالی و سائر اعضاء مدیریتی این جماعتها و سازمانهای منطقه ای و جهانی، مناصب عرفی و اداری اند، آیا می شود شرط عدالت را برای آنها الزامی کرد؟

اگر شرط عدالت برای صاحبان این مناصب الزامی نباشد، چه عنوانی را توصیه می کنید تا احساس تقید بشرع در اساسنامه ها گنجانده شود؟

سبحه تعالی

با سلام، تحیات و دعاها از تمام مؤمنین

فدریسون جهان جماعت های خوجه شیعه اثنا عشری
با ابلاغ سلام و دعا جهت مزید توفیقات همگان
باید استحضار داشت که عهده دار مسئولیت های فوق الذکر می باشید
نظریه دینی و اخلاقی و داناتی مآسسته احکام آن مسئولیتها را
نیابراین هر چند که صفت (عدالت) برای آنان ضروری نیست
ولی لازم است در حداقل مسلمات احکام شریعت مقدسه را
پذیرفته و محلاً به آنها ملتزم بوده و از تظاهر به خلاف شرع در
گفتار و رفتار پرهیز داشته باشند. والله الموفق
علی بن
۱۴/۲۵
۱۴۳۹ هـ



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (VOL-7)

by Marhum Allamah Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi

QUESTION

Can we vote for a leader or a person in any position to represent the community if we are certain of his shortfall in religious behaviour? Can this community have leaders who are not religious or who have no warmth for religious beliefs?

ANSWER

"Leadership of Jamaat" is not a position laid down by shari'ah; it is an 'urfi institution, i.e. based on conventional or customary system and practice. As such a Jamaat or community, in most of the cases, gets the leaders it deserves; and the leaders' moral excellence or decadence serves as a mirror of the moral standard of the electors. It is they who elect the leaders and it is for them to think beforehand what type of representatives or leaders they want to choose. However, if that position of leadership entails mutawalliship of waqf properties, then the relevant rules of shari'ah will apply, which I append below:

If the waqif (who has made the waqf) has stipulated that the mutawalli should be 'adil, then a non-'adil cannot become mutawalli; and if he was 'adil when he was chosen as mutawalli, but lost his 'adalah afterwards, he will at once lose his mutawalliship, ipso facto.

But if there is no such laid down condition (as is usually the case in the waqfs of the Jamaats in Africa and other countries), then it is not necessary that he should be 'adil.

What is essential is that he should be honest and trustworthy. If such a mutawalli mismanages or usurps waqf property, the electors should remove him from that position, and if that is not possible, then the mujtahid after some intermediary steps has the ultimate authority to dismiss him.⁵

WEB LINKS

[Code of Leadership](#)



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