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Alawi Discourse with an Emphasis on Modern Meanings of Freedom

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Abstract: This article intends to study and reinterpret the concept of freedom, focusing on the Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) ruling era. The main question of the research is whether it is possible to achieve a concept beyond Western nationalist freedom in the Alawi discourse. This research faces two variables in its analysis. The independent variable is the Alawi government, which needs to be reinterpreted with a historical explanation in drawing practical policy during the Alawi government. The dependent variable is the concept of freedom in a general sense, which has been emphasized in the meaning of freedom according to the Companions of the Contract (Hobbes and Locke). The assumption of the article is a discursive look at the concept of freedom and aims a modern reinterpretation of the practical policy of Imam Ali (PBUH), that is, a policy based on the social contract of obedience and security, to achieve an alternative meaning of freedom for a blissful life. The research findings show that freedom in the Alawi discourse, unlike the modern Western discourse, has an internationalist and universal meaning manifested in the field of action and practice in addition to thought and opinion. The research method is analytical-historical.

Keywords: Freedom, Imam Ali, Social Contract, Security, Political Order.

Introduction

Problem definition: Freedom is an abstract concept. Meanwhile, it is a conventional concept that considers the type of government and its moral theory. The present study tries to assume a discursive approach to the meaning of freedom and, simultaneously, to give a modern reinterpretation of it in Imam Ali's ruling era. Historical and discursive developments show that the dispute over the meaning of freedom has led to the formation of different and conflicting approaches, and by studying and examining each of them, it is not possible to understand a transhistorical, unified, and comprehensive meaning of freedom; therefore, the discussion of meta-theory is excluded here. Consequently, it can be claimed that humanity has lived with the concept of freedom and paid attention to it in historical periods before the Renaissance, with the difference that the idea of freedom in one school has a semantic and status distinction from another school due to historical, cultural, ideological, or philosophical approaches. Also, some schools may consider freedom an inherent and fundamental right of everyone regardless of external circumstances. This view often advocates each individual's inherent worth and dignity and emphasizes the importance of respecting and protecting their freedom. Others may see freedom as contingent on specific conditions or virtues. For example, a school influenced by virtue ethics may associate freedom with personal growth and moral excellence. Here, the dignity attributed to freedom is rooted in the idea that individuals must cultivate particular virtues or characteristics to use their freedom responsibly and ethically. Others see freedom as a conventional matter and interpret it in various ways. The concept of freedom in the Alawi government can also be examined in a reductionist approach at the level of existing schools, and its meaning can be reinterpreted.

Importance: Today, Western civilization dominates the discourse of freedom, shaping it as if there had never been and is no longer any other discourse. The present study aims to reinterpret the meaning of freedom by focusing on Imam Ali`s ruling era and providing the basis for presenting a competing reading of the Western discourse of freedom.

Necessity: The distortion of freedom in contemporary Iranian political literature and the disregard for its semantic diversity in new theories

distort the path to utilizing Islamic political philosophy. In addition, according to this research, freedom in the Islamic tradition has its own specific and ultimate discursive and transcendental meaning. Not paying attention to it will lead to misunderstandings when applying Islamic policies in political society.

Objectives: This research aims to understand the discursive and modern concept of freedom in the Alawi government. To this end, it pursues two sub-objectives. First, it describes the general meaning of freedom, especially the meaning of freedom among the contract parties. Then, it reviews the practical policy of the Alawi government, which is based on the social contract of obedience and security.

Questions and Hypothesis: The present study cannot be considered a hypothesis-testing study but is based on a system of questions. The main question is whether it is possible to achieve a concept beyond Western nationalist freedom in the Alawi discourse. The sub-questions are as follows: What does freedom mean in modern Western discourse, with an emphasis on Hobbes and Locke? How is freedom defined in Islamic discourse? And what are the implications of freedom in Imam Ali's governmental character?

1. Research Background

The present study deals with two basic concepts: freedom and Alawi rule. Accordingly, due to the large number of articles in this field, only a brief review of the scientific articles published in these two fields is provided in the research background.

1.1. Freedom

Different approaches to freedom have been formed depending on the discursive approach. The following examines some definitions of freedom presented in scientific articles.

The concept of freedom has not been used in the same sense when comparing the definitions of Muslim and Western thinkers and the history of Western thought. We can mention the article "John Stuart Mill and the Only Principle Limiting Freedom." The authors in this article believe that the "harm principle," in Mill's view, was the only principle limiting the state's authority. Still, the distinction between the private and public spheres has not been clearly defined

(Javadi and Hosseini Soraki, 2017). Another article, "The Coexistence of Freedom and the Rule of Law in Hayek's Thought," discusses freedom as one of the three sides of the triangle of law, property, and freedom in Hayek's thought. Hayek defines freedom as negative freedom, meaning the absence of any external coercion or arbitrary will of others (Tohidfam, 2012). Sartre defines freedom as eliminating nothingness in man (Qomi and Ketabi, 2016). The multitude of definitions provided by Western thinkers leads the author to conclude that freedom is not used in just one sense, and by taking a discursive approach to this concept, a definition appropriate to one's discourse can be provided. The present study, by explaining the idea of freedom and presenting examples of it in the Alawi government, addresses the formulation of freedom in the Alawi government. Each of the studies conducted has discussed the concept of freedom from its perspective; however, the innovation of this study is the discursive formulation of freedom in the Alawi government, which has not been addressed separately so far.

1.2. The Alawi Government

Many articles have been written focusing on the government life of Imam Ali [(PBUH)], including articles such as "Religious Democracy in the Political Life and Government of Imam Ali (peace be upon him)" (Bakhshaish Ardestani and Dashti, 2013), "Multi-layered Legitimacy: A Reflection on the Foundations of the Legitimacy of the Political System in the Life and Words of Imam Ali (peace be upon him)" (Hosseinizadeh, 2014), "The Continuity of Justice and Moderation in Islamic Political Ethics with Emphasis on the Alawi Life" (Seyed Bagheri and Mokhtarband, 2019), "The Concept of Justice and the Requirements for Its Implementation Based on the Alawi Life" (Mir Khalili, 2019), "A Reflection on the Role of "Good Governance" for Realizing a Desired Life in the Imam Ali`s Sirah [(PBUH)]" (Akbari et al., 2016). However, in addition to the concepts examined in the present study, its innovation and originality lie in the discursive approach to the issue of freedom in the governance Sirah of Imam Ali [(PBUH)], which generally distinguishes it from the other articles mentioned.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations

2.1. Freedom

Dehkhoda defines freedom in the dictionary as follows: "Freedom, choice, the opposite of servitude, subservience, slavery, captivity, and compulsion, the power to act and refrain from acting, the power to choose" (Dehkhoda, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 7). Berlin believes that "freedom" has been so controversial that more than 200 definitions have been formed for it (Berlin, 2001, p.236). In the Islamic approach, freedom can also be divided into two categories: spiritual and social freedom. Spiritual freedom is defined as the liberation of man from the constraints of the ego, and social freedom is defined as the liberation from external domination. Social freedom can be considered the absence of external obstacles, and spiritual freedom is the absence of internal barriers in human growth and development. (Motaheri, 2006, Vol. 23, p.437). Freedom in this study means social freedom because addressing spiritual freedom requires another space. Therefore, this general definition of freedom, which is considered to be "the absence of external obstacles to achieving a goal," is used as the criterion in this study. This definition has also been accepted by most scholars in this field.

2.2. Sirah

Sirah is an Arabic word derived from the root "sair" meaning "to move, walk, move during the day and night." Sirah refers to a specific type of movement and, in a better sense, to a particular kind of behavior (Ibn Faris, 1411, vol. 3, p. 120 and Raghib Isfahani, 1388, p. 247). Sirah, in the sense of the term, means the style, type, manner of behavior, and sketch of a person's life. Any method and style of action and behavior accompanied by continuity and repetition, after a while, becomes a rule and law called Sirah. Sirah is different from Sair. Sair deals with the historical narration of an event, but Sirah seeks to obtain fixed principles that are implemented over time(Motahhari, 2008, p. 46).

2.3. The Meaning of Freedom in the Discourse of Hobbes and Locke

Freedom can have different meanings across various schools of thought. As noted, liberalism defines freedom as limiting government intervention in citizens' privacy. This research aims to modernize the Alawi government and the concept of freedom, achieved through the dual interaction of obedience and security. To understand this duality and the contemporary notion of freedom in the West, the perspectives of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke are analyzed.

A) The meaning of freedom in the discourse of Thomas Hobbes

In designing his political system, Hobbes presents a distinct moral theory and differentiates the path of the state from those outlined by Plato and Aristotle. Hobbes initially acknowledges moral and political concepts and seeks to build his Leviathan on the foundation of the social contract. Although Hobbes cannot be considered the originator of social contract theory, he nevertheless aims to propose a solution relevant to his time and society, considering his era's political and social conditions. The turmoil of the period drives Hobbes toward the idea of absolute security. He intends to place governance in the hands of a ruler to escape the conflict of all against all. Citizens are also required to relinquish part of their freedom to the government and receive security in return; however, it appears that Hobbes has strayed from moderation. He believed that once individuals had surrendered their freedom to the state, they could no longer reclaim it. In this context, Hobbes grants all rights to the state and denies citizens the right to revolt. In Hobbes's philosophy, the state does not merely participate in the contract; instead, it acts as the ruler of the contract and exists outside of it. The state establishes and interprets the laws and ultimately judges and adjudicates. Hobbes posits that human nature is akin to that of a wolf and that without public power and a system of enforcement, humans cannot be prevented from infringing upon the lives and properties of their fellow citizens. Therefore, there is no escape from the state's absolute power (Hobbes, 2001, p.166). The state wields all authority because no executive guarantee can be assured for the law without a sword. With these explanations, it becomes evident that freedom in Hobbes's discourse is defined as absolute security, which is the responsibility of Leviathan to provide.

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B) The meaning of freedom in John Locke's discourse

Like Hobbes and other previous philosophers, John Locke seeks to respond to the problems of his society; therefore, he abandons the path of imitating Plato, Aristotle, and Hobbes and presents a new plan. Locke believes that the troubles of England are not caused by political chaos; instead, they are due to the laws of property. He presents a different interpretation of property using the Bible and his political experiences and learnings. Like Hobbes, Locke does not consider man an evil animal; instead, he considers him a calculating being and believes that God created man as the absolute owner of the earth. Locke's man is free within the scope of his property.

In the state of nature, a person's freedom to access their property was constantly vulnerable to the encroachments of others, and for this reason, he was willing to accept the contract to protect what he had. The law is like a fence around the lives and property of individuals, and humans are no longer Unrestrained; instead, they are free within the framework of the law (Shariat, 2017, p.68). Locke believes that according to the contract, the government can have more powers in exceptional circumstances for a limited period to re-establish order in society. Still, the unique powers of the government should not be permanent. Granting special powers to the government permanently is against the natural and religious principle that man completely surrenders himself to the government and deprives himself of the right to determine his destiny. Although revolution is not praiseworthy, if people feel that the government is acting against the contract and the public interest and is not protecting their lives and property, they are allowed to rebel against it and establish a new government. With this explanation, it can be said that the philosophy of the state's existence in Locke's discourse is the financial and personal security of citizens, and freedom is considered absolute ownership (Shariat, 2017: 69).

2.4. The meaning of freedom in Islam

The necessity of realizing freedom in Islam is obedience to the commands of the Imam appointed by God because removing external obstacles is impossible for one person alone and requires an Obedient

society to remove the barriers and achieve freedom. On the other hand, the Imam of the society must stand up for justice and liberty if such a society is formed and establish security. This indicates that in the political thought of Islam, just like the thought of the people of the contract in the West, there is a two-way relationship between obedience and security.

The Holy Quran always calls upon the servants to obey God because He was involved in his upbringing in addition to creating man. The attribute of the Lordship of God indicates that man needs God at all times for his existence. The Holy Quran says in this regard: "So let them serve the Lord of this House, who feeds them against hunger and gives them security against fear" (Holy Quran, Surah Al-Quraysh (106), verses 3 and 4). According to the verses mentioned, God calls upon humans to obey Him because He is the One who feeds man in times of hunger and provides him with security in times of fear. In addition to the countless blessings He has bestowed upon man, God also mentions two prominent external blessings that cannot be denied. Therefore, such a Lord, who arranges their affairs in the best possible way, should be worshipped and obeyed (Tabatabai, 2008, Vol. 20, p. 629). The Velayat of the prophets and the pure Imams (peace be upon them) is also a complete mirror of the attributes of God. Just as the Holy Quran considers God, who manages the affairs of His servants in the best way and protects them from fear and hunger, worthy of obedience and servitude, so the messengers of God also have such a position on earth; therefore, the Holy Quran has commanded obedience to them. God says: "O you who believe! obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you" (Holy Quran, Surah Al-Nisa (4), verse 59). The government life of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) also shows that, regardless of the issue of divine legitimacy, the government must ensure the security and livelihood of the people because such matters are considered the existential philosophy of the government. The Imam says: "There is no solution for the people except the existence of a ruler and a leader, whether he is good or bad. (A rulership) under which the believer performs his deeds and the disbeliever enjoys his worldly life, God prolongs life, spoils are gathered, jihad is fought with enemies, roads are made safe, and the right of the weak is taken from the strong until the good ruler

is relieved from the troubles of the world and the world's people are relieved from the wicked" (Imam Ali, 1997, p. 83). The words of the Amir-al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) show that just as the government has to ensure the security and livelihood of the people under its rule, the people must obey the ruler because a society cannot be governed without a ruler. The people also have to follow the government so that the government can fight against enemies with the help of the people and establish security in society. Disobedience to the ruler's orders will lead to chaos in the society and disruption in the livelihood of Muslims. The Holy Quran also recommends obedience to those in authority. Therefore, in Islam, just as it considers the government responsible for ensuring the security and livelihood of the people, it also calls on the people to obey the government. If both parties fulfill their obligations, the people and the government can remove obstacles and achieve freedom with life and financial security. Therefore, the analysis model can be drawn as follows:
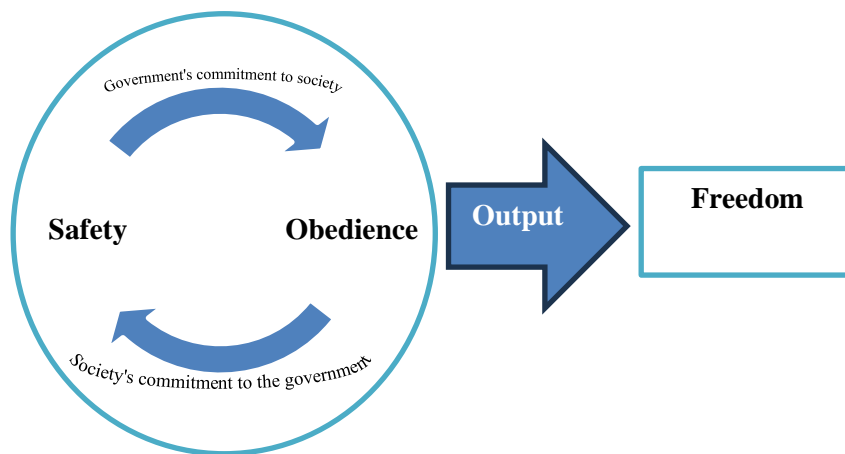
3. Research Method

This research was conducted using data collection based on a library study. This research method is analytical-historical, and studies examine and analyze historical evidence from the reign of Imam Ali (PBUH) in the modern formulation of Alawi discourse. The analytical-

historical method is a research approach that focuses on understanding events, behaviors, and ideas through a combination of analytical and historical perspectives. This method includes several key components:

1. Historical context: Researchers collect and analyze historical data to understand the background and evolution of specific phenomena, events, or ideas. This includes understanding the periods, social conditions, and cultural contexts in which these phenomena occurred.

2. Analytical framework: This method uses analytical tools and frameworks to interpret the collected historical data. These may include critical analysis, thematic analysis, or various theoretical models that help explain and understand the relationships between different elements in the historical context.

3. Interdisciplinary approach: The historical-analytical method often draws on multiple disciplines, such as history, sociology, anthropology, and political science. This interdisciplinary perspective allows for a more comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena.

4. Critical examination: Researchers critically examine sources, including primary and secondary documents, artifacts, and critical texts, to assess their reliability, bias, and relevance. This careful examination is essential to constructing a solid historical narrative or argument.

5. Synthesis of findings: This method combines historical data with analytical insights to draw conclusions or inform contemporary issues. This combination allows researchers to identify patterns, causal relationships, and implications for current and future developments.

6. Understanding change and continuity: Researchers can discover how specific traits or dynamics have changed or persisted over time by analyzing historical data. This helps them understand broader trends and the factors that drive social change.

In summary, the historical-analytical method is an effective tool for examining complex social realities. Its careful combination of historical insight and analytical reasoning provides a richer understanding of how past events have shaped present conditions and future possibilities.

4. The implications of obedience and freedom in the Alawi government

Amir-al-Mu'minin Ali (peace be upon him) says about human freedom: "O people! Indeed, Adam is neither born a slave nor a maidservant, and all people are free" (Kulayni, 1430, vol. 15, p.175). Accordingly, no human being has the right to enslave another, as freedom is an inherent right of all humans. By accepting this statement, no government has the authority to enslave the people it governs. However, if the government fulfills its duties and obligations towards the people, then the people must also obey the government. In this context, Amir-al-Mu'minin Ali (peace be upon him) states: O people, I have rights over you, and you have rights over me. Your rights over me are that I do not withhold your good wishes, fairly distribute the treasury among you, teach you so you are not illiterate and ignorant, and educate you in the ways and customs of life. My rights over you are that you remain loyal to your oath of allegiance and wish me well in both public and private. You respond whenever I call you and obey whenever I command you. (Imam Ali, 1997, p. 79). The Imam's statements in Sermon 34 of Nahjul-Balagha address the responsibility of the government to act as a trustee for the people and to manage the treasury appropriately; consequently, the government holds primary responsibility for the safety of the people and must prevent any harm from coming to them. Conversely, the people are also expected to follow the ruler's orders and uphold their oath of allegiance. Support for this assertion becomes evident when examining the political, economic, and social aspects of the Amir-al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) government's Sirah.

4.1. Implications of Freedom in the Political-Military Sirah of Imam Ali(PBUH)

The Alawi rule began at a point in history when Muslims were in the midst of various crises. The wrong traditions of the third Caliph in abusing the treasury, endangering the people's lives, and suppressing opponents had led to violating the government's obligations to the people and the emergence of unbridled disorder in society. The Caliph's appointees ruled unjustly and tortured and exiled their

political opponents. Some of the Caliph's close associates had special privileges before the law and escaped punishment. At the beginning of his rule, Amir-al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) reorganized his organization to reform affairs, protect the rights of the people, and return to the rule of law because no ruler alone can reform government affairs. The removal of corrupt governors and the appointment of trustworthy governors were among the first actions of the Amir-al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) after attaining the caliphate. This caused opposition from some so-called elites. Among the adversaries were Talha and Zubair, who, after the Imam became the caliph, expected to be appointed to the Emirate of Basra and Kufa, and they also mentioned this issue with Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH). However, the Imam did not accept their aspirations because he perceived their desire for power. He recognized that if these two individuals gained authority, they would exploit the weak and liberate the strong (Ibn Qutaybah, 1410, vol. 1, p. 71). Therefore, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) initially sought to fulfill the government's commitments to the people and thus gain people's trust in the government, so people like Talha and Zubair, who were seeking to encroach on people's lives and property, should not have taken responsibility in the government. In this way, we can also understand the Imam's decision to remove Muawiyah from the governorship of Syria.

After the assassination of Uthman, the people could freely refuse to recognize the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) and not pledge allegiance to him. They had the option to choose a different fate for themselves. Meanwhile, after pledging allegiance, some broke their commitment without rational or religious justification, acting against the public interest and security. This conflicts with political freedom and is unacceptable because freedom should not lead to chaos in society. Still, according to the model of analysis, it is the interaction of obedience and security that fosters liberty within a society.

After assuming the caliphate, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) eased certain political restrictions. For example, he permitted some prominent men of Medina, like Abdullah ibn Umar, to abstain from pledging allegiance to him, and he never acted against the public's interest or security. Had Muawiyah relinquished the Emirate of Syria and not confronted the caliph, he could have declined to pledge

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allegiance to Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) and lived as an ordinary person in the Islamic world.

Even on the battlefield, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) did not Prioritize to kill the enemy but to guide them back to the right path and their commitments. He generously postponed the war date and tried to regain their obedience by enlightening and talking to the opposition leaders without fighting or bloodshed. For example, during the Battle of Siffin, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) wrote to Muawiyah several times and responded to his letters (Manghari, 1991, p. 88). The length of the correspondence between Imam Ali (PBUH) and Muawiyah indicates that the Imam was not in a hurry to eliminate his enemies and considered war a last resort. In every conflict, neither the Imam nor his troops initiated the fighting, yet they did not renounce their right to defend their lives, property, and freedom. Imam Ali (PBUH) also aimed to conclude battles with the fewest enemy casualties. This is why, during the Battle of Jamal, they targeted the rebellion's leader (Mufid, 1367: 210) to end the war sooner. In the Battle of Siffin, they invited Muawiyah to a hand-to-hand battle (Manqari, 1991, p. 375) because if the leaders of the opposition were killed, it would be provided for the return and obedience of the other armies, and there would be no need to fight anymore. Even after gaining control over his enemies, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) respected their condition and advised his soldiers to "Do not kill anyone who turns his back on the battle; do not kill any wounded person; do not break down any doors; do not attack any women; and do not mutilate any dead bodies" (Mufid, 1988, pp. 204-205). This demonstrates that a ruler in war should not kill the enemy army indiscriminately and should, as much as possible, encourage them to follow his orders without conflict. The commitment to upholding agreements is also evident in the economic life of the Alawis, with several examples discussed below.

4.2. Implications of Freedom in the Economic Sirah of the Ali(PBUH)

The opening sermon of the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) indicated a significant economic reform. Previous caliphs, by adopting misguided economic policies, steered Muslims away from the fair distribution of wealth and a sound financial structure. These policies peaked during the reign of the third caliph, resulting in class divisions

and public unrest. Amir al-Mu'minin Ali's (PBUH) policies, which focused on safeguarding the treasury and returning unjustly acquired properties, faced opposition from certain elites and led to the first civil war, the Battle of the Camel. In response to these elite opponents, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) stated: "I cannot waste the divine right, whether it is in your hands or the hands of others" (Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 1965, Vol. 7, p. 39).

The division of the treasury was considered one of the critical aspects of wealth distribution in the Islamic government, which was under the caliph's authority. Discrimination in the distribution of the treasury was common during the rule of the third caliph. Following divine laws and what he had promised the people, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) allocated the portion of the treasury reserved for all Muslims equally among the populace, making no distinctions between black and white, Arab and non-Arab, Muhajireh and Ansar, Quraysh and non-Quraysh, or Sahabi and non-Sahabi. This demonstrates that the treasury is not merely a matter of ethnicity or race; instead, everyone under the rule of Islam benefits from it. Individuals such as Talha, Zubair, Abdullah bin Umar, Saeed bin Al-Aa, and Marwan bin Al-Hakam, who had previously held a significant share of the treasury, did not participate in its distribution in protest against this economic policy. After the objections raised by the companions and elders of the Quraysh, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) took to the pulpit and, by reciting verse 13 of Surah al-Hujurat, reminded them of the Prophetic traditions, stating in response that the treasury belongs to God, and everyone's share has been determined by Him (Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 1965, vol. 7 p. 40). This historical statement illustrates that although the government fulfilled its economic commitments, some societal elites failed to meet their obligations to the government and protested against the ruler.

Increasing the general welfare and prosperity of the country was also among the measures of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH), achieved through the fair distribution of wealth among the people. The economic policy of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) transformed Kufa into a city where even the most vulnerable members of society could enjoy wheat bread, have a roof over their heads, and access drinking water (Ibn Shahrashub, 1956, Vol. 1, p. 368). Historical reports indicate that

the class gap was narrowed in the Alawi economy, and the legality and organization of the economic sector allowed those with fewer resources to secure a minimum livelihood. Unlike the Uthman government, the Alawi government met its obligations by ensuring financial security and fair wealth distribution while expecting obedience from society. This aspect is also evident in the social sphere of the Alawi government, which will be discussed further below.

4.3. The Implications of Freedom in the Social Sirah of Imam Ali (PBUH)

The starting point for reforming and addressing societal deviations should be found in social issues, as the ultimate goal of God's prophets and saints was to humanize society. This underscores the significance of social problems. Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) assumed the caliphate 25 years after the death of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), during which various distortions and innovations ensnared the Islamic government and Muslims. Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) believed that reviving the Prophet's life and traditions was essential to combat deviations, and he dedicated himself to this mission throughout his reign. Although the short duration of his rule limited the impact of reforms, some erroneous traditions were abolished during this brief period, and the Prophet's life was revitalized among Muslims.

To revive the Sunnah of the Prophet, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) educated and trained the people and instructed his agents to do the same. One example is his advice to Qutham ibn Abbas regarding issuing fatwas and teaching. (Imam Ali, 1988, p. 352). Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr also responded to the religious questions of the people in Egypt and sought the ruling on issues he did not understand from Amir al-Mu'minin (PBUH) (Al-Hur al-Amili, 1412, vol. 18, p. 361). The prerequisite for observing religious rulings is awareness of them. The educational system of the Alawi government aimed to provide these prerequisites, inform the community about religious rulings and eliminate the dust of ignorance, distortion, and innovation from the face of Islamic society.

Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH) was a proponent of slave freedom before and after his caliphate. History narrates that a man was brought to the Imam who had sold a free person into slavery. The Imam

ordered that the seller's hand be severed (Kulaini, 1988, Vol. 7, p. 229). Historical accounts reveal that the Alawi government ensures individuals' freedom. If a person's freedom is violated, severe punishment awaits those who commit such wrongs.

Racial discrimination and the perceived superiority of Arabs over other races is another limiting factor of social freedom that became widespread in Islamic society during the time of the second caliph. This false tradition, which contradicts the inherent dignity of human beings, was institutionalized in Islamic culture. Amir al-Mu'minin Ali [PBUH] rejected the idea of Arab superiority over non-Arabs or other races in any form. It is narrated that Amir al-Mu'minin while picking up a piece of wood from the ground and placing it between his fingers, said: "I recited the entire Quran, and I found no superiority for the children of Ishmael over the children of Isaac to the extent of this wood" (Yaqubi, 1992, vol. 2, p.82).

The growth of people takes place in the context of interaction with the government, one aspect of which is freedom of expression. During the Alawi government, unlike under the Uthman regime, critics faced no punishment; instead, public reports were addressed, and criticisms were responded to. Freedom of expression fosters greater public participation in government affairs and informs the ruler and officials about the government's strengths and weaknesses. A historical example of widespread reports is Sawda Hamadaniyyah's criticism of one of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali's [PBUH] agents, ultimately leading to the dismissal of that agent (Qummi, 2001, Vol. 4, p. 329).

In the social sphere, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali [PBUH] valued public satisfaction more than the elite. In the Malik Ashtar Treaty, the Imam states: "The things you cherish most should be the most moderate in justice; the most comprehensive in justice; and the most extensive in gaining the people's satisfaction, for the anger of the general public undermines the satisfaction of the elite (close ones), but the anger of the elite can be neutralized by the satisfaction of all" (Imam Ali, 1997, pp. 342-325). This statement indicates that the Alawi government aims to fulfill commitments that benefit the general public without prioritizing the satisfaction of any particular class or group within society.

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Conclusion

Freedom is rooted in obedience and security. Just as obedience and security are vital in Hobbesian and Lockean discourses, they are also regarded as two fundamental concepts in Alawi discourse, with the distinction that Alawi discourse places a greater emphasis on the common good. In contrast, Hobbesian and Lockean discourses manifest freedom in a nationalistic manner, achieving freedom only for the ruling oligarchs. The Alawi government is not elitist but utilizes the elite to enhance the common good. When intervening, the Alawi government feels obligated to prioritize public interest above elite satisfaction. In contemporary terms, freedom in Alawi discourse carries an internationalist dimension, encompassing all humanity.

In contrast, Hobbesian and Lockean freedom has a nationalist dimension that benefits Anglo-Saxon citizens. Therefore, freedom in Alawi discourse serves a transcendental purpose compared to Western secular discourse. Although Alawi discourse originated in a premodern historical context, it harnesses principles that allow reproduction in the modern era.

Refrences

The Holy Quran

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