Accountability and Good Governance in a Theocratic System of Government

Hossein Soltan Mohammadi[1]

good governance, accountability, Alawi government, religious government

ABSTRACT

Trust serves as a pivotal element within human interactions, acting as a connecting, empowering, and securing factor in relationships across all levels and dimensions. It's possible to describe trust as a mutual agreement with others, working towards achieving a common objective. The absence of trust within organizational leadership is of paramount importance. A variety of factors play a role in the establishment, preservation, and elevation of trust, which manifests itself in various levels and forms, as detailed in the article.

The model employed to conceptualize trust in the theories of Martyr Motahari is a fourfold communication model. Through the utilization of descriptive research methodology and content analysis, relevant themes related to trust are extracted from the chosen works of Martyr Motahari. These themes are categorized into four distinct realms: trust in God, trust in others, trust in self (trusting oneself), and trust in nature. Utilizing an analytical approach and guided by the gleaned themes, the managerial applications of trust within organizations are enumerated and presented.

---

[1] A Ph.D. student in Jurisprudence and Fundamentals of Law at Mofid University

Introduction

All governments are tirelessly striving to design and implement programs and policies that pave the way for catapulting their nation and people into greater progress and development, ultimately ushering in an era of happiness and well-being. Throughout the annals of human civilization, history is brimming with ambitious endeavors undertaken in this realm, and undoubtedly, many of them have fallen short of achieving their desired outcomes. Nonetheless, the 20th century and, more recently, the 21st century hold a distinctive status of their own in this domain. In today's world, the world has entered a process of significant transformations. These transformations catalyzed by monumental strides in science and technology, have instigated novel approaches across political, societal, economic, cultural, and military spheres, laying them before the eyes of all societies. Any change in social relations, the emergence of diverse international institutions, facilitation in global economy, and cultural interactions, call for a novel perspective on governance. Therefore, it's inescapable that the role that governments and institutions of governance play has undergone transformation as well, so they can set forth a new paradigm by harnessing all scientific, human, material, and spiritual capacities. One of the prominent distinctions of this era compared to bygone times is the emergence of international entities institutions that hold the mandate for global decision-making. Regarding matters related to development and progress, there are various institutions that have been set up, that strive to provide countries with general prescriptions on the same by involving different scientists and experts, as well as

conducting extensive research. One of the latest initiatives and ideas is the "Theory of Good Governance", which the World Bank emphasizes its execution more than others. However, can this theory be accepted and implemented on the basis of the tenets and principles priscribed in religious sources, despite the fact that a different ontological foundation has already been accepted? Considering the fact that our religious texts, including "Nahj al-Balagha", chronicle the experience of an Islamic government under the authentic leadership of Imam Ali, a study of the components of good governance in his government can provide an answer to this question. Therefore, in this writing, the author's endeavor was to delve into the examination of one of the indicators of achieving good governance (accountability) in the government of the Alawites, by drawing upon ideas from the Quran and "Nahj al-Balagha."

of management process (Kordnaieej, 2017: 1-2). The divine and political will of Martyr Soleimani can be considered as a prominent document for strategic thinking in jihadi management. The main question of this research is: what are the dimensions and characteristics of jihadi mangers strategic thinking? Offering the pattern of the elements of strategic thinking in jihadi managers on the basis of Martyr Soleimani's will is the aim of this investigation. Despite the significance of strategic thinking in leading and managing jihadi organizations, a pattern has not been devised to fit this idea yet; and developing such a pattern may be the basis of senior managers' strategic thinking and practice for the organizations and officials of the Islamic system.

Problem Statement

Accountability is a subject that emerged as a key component of good governance when the latter topic was first introduced in recent decades in the international system. Based on the teachings of the Quran, Islam is based on accountability as its foundation. Accountability has two dimensions: individual and societal. On an individual level, God has endowed humans with capabilities and capacities, defining specific goals for them to be accountable for, requiring them to be responsive in the face of these capacities and objectives. This divine questioning leads to the conclusion that from a societal perspective, when people entrust agents with authorities and capabilities and delegate their power to them, these officials are obligated to be accountable (Akhavan Kazemi, 2009, p. 62). In "Nahj al-Balagha", accountability holds a revered and esteemed position. In this regard, the Alawi government's responsiveness to the people's demands and its responsibility towards the demands on the part of the public, are the highlighted facets of Imam Ali's political Sira (his habitaul manner of behaving in dealing with political matters). Therefore, we aim to demonstrate that contrary to what some proponents of "good governance" assume about this idea in the Quran and Imam Ali's Sira, the element of accountability can be observed during his short rule to the highest degree.

Significance of Research and Methodology of Research

"Good governance" is an amalgamation of criteria and measures like transparency, accountability, responsiveness, participation, rule of law, and flexibility. These aforementioned measures at the same time are criteria by which good governance is realized in the sense that its outward manifestations can be observed within the structure and essence of these same principles. Given that this doctrine is derived from Western forums and assemblies, there is much controversy to ascertain whether it can be applied in Islamic societies. In other words, the crux of this article lies in explaining modern concepts of social-human sciences, such as accountability and good governance in religious texts. Thus, this logic stands as a pivotal stride toward indigenizing human sciences through looking modern concepts up in religious texts.

Whereas this discussion is a fundamental and theoretical research, accessing its data is based on studying and examining scholarly sources, both in print and electronic format, available in libraries. This method, while being built upon library resources, will also have a descriptive and analytical aspect.

Objectives

The present article seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1.Familiarizing researchers and scholars in Islamic sciences and academia with the concept of "good governance" and the principle of accountability in light of the Islamic sources.

2.Reducing the rate of offences in order to increase the risk of corruption and abuse of power within governmental organizations, through a better understanding of this crucial principle.

3.Gaining public trust and preventing baseless suspicions by institutionalizing "accountability".

4.Establishing performance measurement criteria for a government that, on the one

hand, complies with religious standards and, on the other hand, does not violate the desired and effective indicators of a government.

5.Empowering those in positions of authority to safeguard the rights of the nation by providing them with a valuable blueprint.

Main Question

Are the policies of governance in Imam Ali's time aligned with the principles and criteria of good governance as outlined in international documents?

Various definitions have been presented for good governance, in which, the spirit that governs them is almost the same in every case except the term "governance". Each of the definitions provided for this concept has focused on an aspect , or the other, and based on them, has attempted to define this concept. In fact, good governance can be defined based on its characteristics or the process itself. In this context, the state of good governance is defined based on its characteristics, whereas in the second approach, good governance is defined based on the process of governance implementation. It should be noted that the concept of good governance was first employed in a document by the World Bank titled " Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth" in 1989. In this document, this concept is linked to various structural transformation policies that had been the focus and concern of the World Bank for many years. Policies such as reducing government intervention in economic decisions, downsizing the public sector, transparency and efficiency enhancement in government bureaucracy, free markets, eliminating unnecessary subsidies, and aligning this process with the

global economy (Naghibi Manfared, 1389, p. 111).

In addition, this bank has defined good governance elsewhere as providing efficient public services, a trustworthy system, and a responsive administrative system (Qadami and others, 1391, p. 31, p. 47).

Mary Robinson, former High Commissioner for Human Rights, views governance as a process through which governmental institutions address public issues, manage their interests, and ensure the realization of human rights. Good governance, according to this definition, carries out these activities correctly, without errors, and with a focus on the rule of law (Ibid, p. 112).

Accountablity

The relationship between the institution of power and other institutions, like the interactions among various institutions, is inherently interactive, and the effects and influences that other organizations have on each other, be it conscious or subconscious will affect the institution of power as well. Looking at the institution of power from any angle, regardless of whether we consider the institution of power as a representative of society and chosen by it to manage affairs, or chosen by a most revered elite authority who excels the society in importance, in any case, there exists a fundamental and quasi-causal relationship between the institution of power itself and the society. In other words, just as without society and its people, government has no meaning, so also without a stable, wise, and knowledgeable government, the nation will be in disarray and on the path to destruction. Seeing from the lens of religion as well as the Islamic teachings underscore both aspects. On the one hand, the competence of governance in society is

solely based on a ruler's being just, knowledgeable, and wise, characterized in detail with other specific qualities, and on the other hand, no government can take shape without the consent and will of people, and even if it does under such circumstances, it is considered coercive and illegitimate. Accountability, as one of the fundamental components of good governance, means that it is people's will and wish that imposes this crucial principle on the rulers. If rulers are trustees of the society and people and carriers of their trust, they must always be accountable to them because they have nothing of their own. Everything they possess, including authority, privileges, wealth, and power, is entrusted to them by the main owner, namely the society, to be spent to ensure the proper management of their affairs. And there is no doubt that these assets are not the personal property of the rulers, and they are only temporarily in their possession as a trust. Consequently, they are the guarantors and responsible for the proper use of these assets. According to the 'Oxford Dictionary''s definition, accountability is described as follows: "Being responsible for decisions and actions in such a way that others, when they question you, expect an explanation for those actions and decisions" (Azher and Jalali, 2016, p. 30).

The Principles of Good Governance

Although in some texts, "Good Governance" has been defined as "Good Government", these two concepts cannot be deemed synonymous. This is because all societal institutions are not incorporated into the executive branch, and other institutions also have their share in the governance of a country. There is a consensus among thinkers that the existence of a good government is a necessary condition for good governance.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has outlined important principles of good governance and the factors that contribute to the strengthening of these principles. Governments can take effective steps in the process of sustainable development by respecting these principles and implementing them . These principles include:

1.Participation

The level of people's participation in the affairs of the society is considered one of the key foundations of good governance. Participation can be done directly or indirectly (through legal entities). Of course, it cannot be expected that in the decision-making system of a country, all existing opinions will be taken into consideration, but the concept of participation here refers to the freedom of expression and the diversity of views and the organization of a civil society (Meidary, 1385, Vol. 22, pp. 287-261).

2.Rule of Law

Good governance requires a fair framework of laws that includes full protection of the rights of individuals (especially minorities) in the society and is properly implemented. It should be noted that the fair implementation of laws requires the existence of an independent judicial system and an incorruptible executive arm (police) for this system (Ibid).

3.Transparency

Transparency means the free flow of information and the ability to easily access it for everyone. Also, transparency can be seen as the knowledge of society members about how decisions are made and implemented. In such a situation, the mass media will easily be able to analyze and criticize the policies

adopted in the decision-making and executive system of the country (Ibid).

4.Accountable

Accountability of institutions, organizations and institutions within the legal framework and specific time to their members and clients is one of the factors that lead to establishing the foundations of good governance in a society (Ibid).

5.Formation of General Agreement

As stated, paving the way for the emergence of different opinions in different political, social and economic fields is one of the principles of good governance. A good ruler should guide different opinions in the form of general national consensus in a direction that has the greatest convergence with the goals of the whole society. Playing this vital role requires a precise understanding of the long-term needs of society in the direction of sustainable development (Ibid).

6.Equal rights (justice)

Sustainable welfare and tranquility in society will be achievable through the recognition of equal rights for all individuals. In society, it is imperative to ensure that individuals will benefit from the community's interests in proportion to their contributions. In other words, in good governance, all individuals should have equal opportunities (Ibid).

7.Effectiveness and efficiency

Good governance is referred to as an effective tool for regulating the activities of institutions, particularly in the efficient utilization of natural resources and environmental conservation. Efficiency and effectiveness in the realm of governance have gained increasing importance over time (Ibid).

8.Responsibility

Accountability can be considered one of the key components of good governance. Along with governmental institutions and institutions, private organizations and civil institutions active in the society must also be accountable for their policies and actions. It should be mentioned that the principles of good governance are connected in a chain and the implementation of each of them requires the implementation of other principles. For example, it cannot be expected that responsibility and accountability without transparency and the rule of law will have much executive aspect in the society.

Accountability Considered from the Perspective of Divine Revelation

Due to the fact that in the history of human culture, we do not have a more influential, pervasive, and revolutionary figure than the Noble Prophet, nor a more culture-shaping, life-transforming book than the Quran (Mumtahan, 1389, Vol. 1, p. 2), the most prominent feature of the school of life-enrichment and humanization in Islam, compared to other schools and religions, is the interconnectedness of its teachings. In the religion of Islam, dual concepts like ethics and politics, mysticism and heroism, and the world with the hereafter are intertwined with each other, a fact that illustrates the comprehensive nature of this faith in guiding humanity. According to the Quran, the universe's creation, and consequently, human life, are governed by a precise system of accountability and record-keeping. The entirety of this celestial book is brimming with verses that underscore human accountability, questioning, and reckoning. Humans are held accountable for the sacred

trust that, as emphasized by verse 72 of Surah Al-Ahzab, they have been entrusted with. In this verse, accountability, and in response to it, responsibility, hold such importance in many interpretations refer to it as divine trust. The reason why this huge trust has been bestowed upon humanity is that humans were judged to possess the capability and potential to accept divine guardianship, and to walk on the path of perfection and servitude to Allah and toward the Eternal Creator (Makarem Shirazi, 1987, Vol. 17, p. 409). We did indeed offer the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it; he was indeed unjust and foolish." (Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:72)

" أَلَّا تَزِرُ وازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرى وَ أَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسانِ إِلَّا ما سَعى " وَ أَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرى" (Surah An-Najm, 53:38-40), meaning "...That no laden one shall bear another's load (of sin), and that man hath only that for which he maketh effort, and that his effort will be seen."

So, every individual is a bearer of his own burden, and no individual is supposed to add to his own burden the burden of another, and if a person understands what responsibility means and how each individual will stand helpless before their Lord on the Day of Judgment, short of any excuse or power, they will realize how futile and absurd it is to put the burden of one's own responsibility on the shoulder of others and accordingly expect them to do the carrying.

In this verse, God introduces us to the profound truth that each person carries the weight of their own responsibilities, and on the Day of Judgment, everyone is accountable for their actions (Makarem Shirazi, 1987, Vol. 18, p. 224). Below, we'll explore some examples from the Quran

where God emphasizes individual responsibility and accountability in various contexts and situations.

"[O man], follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge. Lo! the hearing and

the sight and the heart - of each of these it will be asked. (Al-Isra, 17:36)"

"Thinketh man that he is to be left aimless? (Al-Qiyama, 75:36)"

"...and keep the covenant. Lo! of the covenant it will be asked. (Al-Isra, 17:34)"

"Their reckoning draweth nigh for mankind, while they turn away in heedlessness. (Al-Anbiya, 21:1)"

"Then verily We shall question those unto whom [Our message] hath been sent,

and verily We shall question the messengers. (Al-Araf, 7:6)"

"Them, by thy Lord, We shall question, every one, of what they used to do. (AL-Hijr, 15: 92-93)"

The above-mentioned verses can be interpreted to say that both leaders and people are accountable before God. Religious leaders bear responsibility for what God has entrusted to them, as do the people in relation to both God and their leaders. In the Quran, the Almighty has designated specific responsibilities for the Prophet as the greatest leader and for the Muslim community, requiring them to fulfill their roles. The Prophet is responsible for conveying divine messages and rulings, while the Muslim community is responsible for understanding and accepting the divine call. The duty of Prophet Mohammad as the Seal of the Prophets is to convey the message openly, and it is the duty of the believers to obey

(Haydari Isfahani, 1389, Vol. 2, p. 1). In this context, God, the Most High, states in verse 54 of Surah An-Nur:

"Say: Obey Allah and obey the messenger. But if ye turn away, then [it is] for him [to do] only that wherewith he hath been charged, and for you [to do] only that wherewith ye have been charged. If ye obey him, ye will go aright. But the messenger hath no other charge than to convey [the message] plainly." (AN-NOOR, 24:54).

This verse explains the responsibility and roles that leadership plays as well as the responsibility that lies with the community, stating that they should obey what God has commanded, and otherwise, they must be (held as) accountable.

Mutual Relationship between People and Officials Concerning the Principle of Responsiveness

One of the obligations is the principle of accountability where every official is held accountable towards people. This relationship is mutual where the people and the government are involved in a two-way relationship, in which both people have their responsibilities towards the government, and the government has its duties towards them.

Officials must be held accountable to the people for their actions and performance, and the people, in turn, are obligated to obey, comply, and support the government. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said:

People, I have rights over you, and you have rights over me. it is incumbent upon me to spare you nothing to do you good, and to fulfill the right that you have over the Bayt al-Māl (Public Treasury), to educate you so that you may not remain ignorant, and to teach you manners so that you may know how to live a learned life. However, your right over me is to remain faithful to your covenant with me, and to show me goodwill by being benevolent to me both openly and in secret, such that whenever I call you, you respond, and when I command you, you just obey." (Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 34)

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) holds the government accountable to people for to its actions to the people, except in sensitive and strategic matters, such as warfare, where it is the right of the rulers to keep war news, strategies, and tactics confidential in order to prevent the enemy from taking advantage of such information, should they become aware of it. That's why Imam Ali said:

Know that your right over me is that I never hide anything from you except the secrets of warfare, which I have no choice but to conceal. I will not engage in any action without consulting you save in matters related to Sharia (Islamic law), and I will not delay in delivering your rights. I will hesitate the slightest until I fulfill them, and I consider all of you equal in your rights. Having acted in this manner, I assure you it is upon God to bestow His provisions, and upon you to grant your obedience to me. When I summon you, do not tarry, and do not turn away from what is just. In times of hardship, persevere. If you are not steadfast in this manner, no one shall be more ignoble and wicked in my eyes than you, and I shall exact punishment upon transgressors, granting no amnesty. Therefore, take these commands from your leaders and obey their directives as God ordains your affairs in this manner. (IBID. Letter No. 50)

The passage emphasizes that rulers are responsible to the people and should be accountable for their actions. Likewise, it

stresses that people have a duty to obey and support the government. The manner of responsiveness is crucial. At times, responses can be provided to the people indirectly through ministers, advisors, and intermediaries, while at other times, rulers may directly engage with the people. In addition to being present, responsiveness must be timely, appropriate, accurate, and in line with reality. The passage also warns that the passage of time can diminish the impact of responsiveness and render it meaningless, much like a stable door that has been shut after the horse has bolted and it is too late, or a milk that has neen spilled and crying is of no use.

In this manner, Ali (peace be upon him), mindful of the importance of early responsiveness, states:

Then there are certain duties which only you will have to perform and which none of your officers can carry out. Among them are replies to the letters of your commissioners and governors and are beyond the jurisdiction or preview of your secretaries. If you find that your officers are not attending as much to the complaints of the public as they should, then you should personally attend to them. You must finish a day's work on that day only because each day will bring its own special work for you. (IBID. Letter No. 53)

Confessing the Mistakes and Subsequently Responding to Citizens

Governments, due to their extensive activities and complex administrative apparatus, sometimes find it difficult to control their affairs. It is possible that some officers in charge will misuse their positions by taking advantage of opportunities and privileges granted by the government, or an officer will commit a mistake in the process,

which is quite natural. However, the essential skill of a leader involves courageously admitting the mistakes committed by those in charge, after he found out that there have been errors and shortcomings in government. He will have to apologise to people, while explaining the reasons behind these shortcomings and convincing them that there had been no intention or malice involved. By so doing, they can win public trust and confidence in the government's performance, thus dispelling misunderstandings and suspicions against government officials." (Nikoo Borsh Rad, 2007, p. 132). Based on this principle, Imam Ali states:

"Whensoever the subjects deem you have wronged them, make them aware of your excuse, and with due enlightenment, dispel their ill thoughts. In so doing, when you display a self-made character, and treat them with respect, you are rendering an apology through which you can achieve your main cause, namely perseverance in the path of justice." (Nahj al-Balagha, Letter 53)

TheMagnified Grandeur of Accountability in the Mirror of Alawi Government

Responsibility and accountability are two interrelated concepts. Being Responsible entails being accountable. One of the distinguishing features of the Islamic political system is that it revolves around the principles of 'trust and responsibility,' not 'rights and privileges.' The famous saying of Imam Ali to Ash'ath ibn Qais, the governor of Azerbaijan, bears witness to this truth. In a letter addressed to him, Imam Ali stated:

Verily, the post of governorship hath not been bestowed upon thee for mere sustenance of bread and water, but rather it is a trust upon thy shoulders. Thou must obey thy Imam and commander, for thou hast no right to exercise

despotism over thy subjects and act in matters of importance without receiving any orders. In thy hands lie riches from the treasures of the Almighty and the Beloved, and thou art the treasurer thereof, to entrust them unto me... (IBID, Letter No. 5).

Based on this point of view, statesmen are the custodians and guardians of this trust and the rights of the people. In this school of thought, social and political positions are not seen as opportunities to gain worldly benefits; rather, they are considered as duties, responsibilities, and divine tests (Varaei, 2004, Ch.34, p.6). It is evident that one of the essential components of responsibility is being accountable for the commitments and responsibilities entrusted to a person. Responsibility minus accountability is devoid of meaningless and significance. This honorary distinction is a source of pride for Muslims, as their religious leaders, even when in the zenith of power, identified themselves as responsible individuals and acquainted the people with their social and political rights. They taught the people how how statesmen could be supervised and controlled. Here, we will discuss the aspects of accountability in the Alawi government from two dimensions: accountability to God and accountability to the people, with a greater emphasis on the latter aspect.

Areas of Accountability for Islamic Leaders

In religious teachings, the accountability of the ruler in an Islamic government is in two main areas:

1.Accountability to the Creator

One of the notable points that can be regarded as an advantage in the Islamic political system is that statesmen, first and foremost,

bear responsibility in the presence of the Creator. If the blessing of "power" is granted to them, it becomes incumbent upon them to execute the God's decrees, reform society, and ensure the true rights of the people. All individuals are responsible in the presence of the Lord, but those who are blessed with greater power, including statesmen, bear greater responsibilities. Such a sentiment within man who one day he shall answer for his actions and conduct in the divine court of justice, compels discipline in him and restrains him from trespassing upon the rights of the Creator and His servants. (IBID)

Throughout his entire period of government, Imam Ali was constantly mindful of being accountable to the Divine. He remembered "the Day of Reckoning" and knew that God is "Swift in Reckoning" and "the swiftest of reckoners". He believed that no one could be acquitted in the divine court of law except through God's mercy. The incident involving his brother Aqil, who demanded more than his rightful share, and Imam Ali handed him a piece of iron that he had heated until it was glowing red, reminded him of the Day of Judgment and the day of accountability. Imam Ali's commitment and sense of responsibility before the Creator were so strong that he vowed not to commit even the slightest injustice, even concerning his closest family members (Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 224).

2. Accountability to the Nation

From a sociological perspective point of view, the second type of responsiveness is what we are interested in. In previous sections, we observed that the Islamic government is a government supported by the people, where the people and statesmen enjoy mutual rights, and the characteristics of a

lawful government are applicable to it. Thus, there will be no need to argue for the qualities, namely "responsiveness," "accountability," and "transparency," that are natural requirements for such a government, in a government that is based on the principles of Islamic teachings in the acquisition and exercise of power. Nevertheless, mentioning some evidence will help clarify this discussion (Meidari, 2004, p. 498).

Imam Ali (AS), in a letter he wrote to Malik Ashtar makes a very important recommendation to him, the example of which can be found in the norms that have been raised by the proponents of the theory of good governance. That sentence is as follows

"If people should suppose that thou hast strayed from the path of righteousness and committed an apparent injustice against them, openly converse with them, present the evidence of thy integrity to them, and by manifesting it among the people, deliver them from unjust suspicion". (Nahj al-Balagha, Letter 53)

This signifies that the presence and accountability of statesmen to the people and public opinions must be entirely open, transparent, and general without any hindrance. On this basis, Imam Ali admonishes his armed forces in a message: "Be aware! Your right over me is that, except for military secrets, I keep nothing hidden from you, and in matters that arise, I undertake nothing without your consultation, except for divine command". (Same source, Sermon 50)

And in a letter Imam Ali sent to his agent in Basra "Abdullah ibn Abbas", he writes, "May God

you, Abu al-Abbas. In whatever is transpiring through your hands and tongue, whether it be good or bad, exercise moderation, for you and I share responsibility for the task you are personally carrying out". (IBID, Letter No. 18).

Imam Ali believed that the administration of justice must also be accompanied by accountability in governance. He held the belief that an unaccountable government cannot effectively uphold justice because the fundamental rights of freedom of speech, questioning, and criticism of the government are among the most basic rights of the people. Violating these rights is incompatible with justice. Therefore, he urged the people to feel free in questioning not only all branches of the government but also him himself. He advised them not to practice flattery and compromise in criticizing the government's pillars. This is to ensure they do not mistakenly assume that he would become upset if they questioned his actions, reminded him of his duties, or demanded the execution of justice. (Araei, BiTa, No. 6, p. 43).

The Accountability Styles in Alawi Governance Sira Direct Relationship with People

Inspired by the examples that the Prophet had provided in his time, Imam Ali maintained close and direct communication with the people throughout his life. He always remained accessible to everyone, allowing them to share their issues and problems directly with him. He also instructed his officials to do the same, and emphasized how important it was not to be absent from people's view. He urged them to work hard to provide resources and facilities needed to ensure the people's easy access to him. In this

context, in a portion of his letter to "Malik al-Ashtar", he writes:

"Allocate a portion of your time to those who need you, so you can personally attend to their affairs. Sit with them in public gatherings, be humble before the Creator who made you, and keep your soldiers, companions, and guards away from their path so that their spokesperson can converse with you without hesitation... so be wise as to tolerate their bold and harsh speech and take self-importance away from your self"... (Nahj al-Balagha, Letter No. 53)

In regards to establishing a direct relationship and providing facilities, Imam Ali emphasized once again in a letter to his agents that they should never remain absent from the people's view, and that they should make facilities and resources available to the people. As an example, in his directive to Qutham ibn Abbas, the governor of Mecca, Imam Ali stated:

"At morn and eve, take seat amongst the people in a public assembly. Bestow answers to those with religious queries, and instruct the uninformed. Converse with scholars. Let nothing speak but your tongue, and have no doorman but your own visage. Deprive no one of your presence for their needs".

This direct communion ensures both the manager's acquisition of precise knowledge of affairs and the populace's sense of kinship and closeness to their leaders (AbbasZadeh, 2010, p. 307).

Severing ties and communication with people can lead to worldly and afterlife suffering, and no fire is as destructive of the system as the separation between rulers and the people, which is not a system purifier.

2. Reporting to People

In his first battle against his opponents and conspirators, the Imam faced off against a group known as the "Nakithin", led by "Aisha", "Talha", and "Zubair". This battle ultimately resulted in the Imam's victory and the defeat of the Nakithin, with Talha and Zubair meeting their demise. After the conclusion of the battle, the Imam wrote letters to the people of Medina and Kufa in a general manner. He also composed private letters, including one to his sister, "Umm Hani", in which he provided them with a detailed account of the war's events, starting from the onset of the Nakithin's treachery up until their defeat. Additionally, he informed them of his own actions following the regaining of control over Basra and made them aware of his decision to move towards Kufa. (Rafiei, 2004, Ch. 1, p. 79).

3. Establishing a Base for Responding to Questions and Addressing Complaints

According to Ibn Abi al-Hadid's account, the Commander of the Faithful had designated a special place at the heart of his government for interacting with the people, raising questions, and addressing their complaints, which he named "Beit al-Qasas." People would come to this place to voice their requests, pose questions, and submit their complaints by placing their letters in a designated box (Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 1994 AH, Vol. 17, p. 51).

4. Taking the Helpful Constructive Criticisms and Recommendations into Account

Constructive criticism and reform-minded approaches to the behavior and methods of rulers play a crucial role in the vitality and integrity of governance, preventing it from deviating into tyranny and despotism. For this reason, Amir al-Mu'minin (Imam Ali),

nurtured in the school of the Quran and in the bosom of the Prophet of God, emphasized the importance of such practices within his own government, stating that:

Never think that speaking the truth you've offered me will weigh heavily on me or make me unhappy, and don't think that I'm trying to show off, for the person who finds hearing the truth burdensome and cannot bear to be confronted with justice will have an even harder time acting upon it. Do not refrain from speaking the truth or seeking counsel, for, I recognize that I, too, can make mistakes, and I am not immune to making mistakes unless God preserves me. (Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon No. 216).

Recognizing the constructive role of criticism in preventing the lapses and deviations of the authorities in charge of affairs as well as in rectifying governmental matters and advancing the government toward noble goals, recommended to his agents that they should support individuals among the people who are most outspoken in speaking the truth and who, in aiding and accompanying others in accordance with what God desires for His chosen ones, excel over others, whether or not they agree with them. them. In this regard, he instructed his agents: "The best people in your eyes should be those who present your faults to you and support you in self-improvement". (IBID. Letter No.53). Off course it should be noted that criticism, as viewed by Imam ALi, is considered constructive when it does not lead to opposition, rebellion, or disobedience against just and fair rulers. Otherwise, baseless and malicious criticism will result in nothing but the corruption of society, the impairment of administrators' abilities to carry out proper governance, and hindrance to the growth of the community.

Imam Ali believed that criticism, apart from its role in reforming the ruler and the government, serves as a means for the political, social, and religious growth of the people. It encourages a stronger sense of responsibility among the people and their active participation in public affairs. This, in itself, entails numerous advantages and aligns with the objectives of good governance. Therefore, the call for criticism and the evaluation of the government's performance by conscientious citizens is not always aimed solely at meeting the ruler's needs. Instead, it may have other purposes in mind (Musavi Kashmari, 2000, Ch. 17, p. 313).

In many cases, questions may arise in people's minds, and ambiguities may surface that need to be addressed by the authorities. This is because the failure to resolve such ambiguities can gradually erode public trust and solidarity with the government. Criticism, in this regard, serves to bring to light what the people hold in their hearts regarding the government, and it allows the authorities to communicate their challenges, constraints, and reasons to the public. This, too, is one of the significant benefits of criticism.

Conclusion

The 1350-year time span from Imam Ali's rule (656-661 AD) to the emergence of the theory of governance in the West in the late 20th century that started with Imam Ali's experience of governance in Medina and Kufa and culminated in the development of governance theory in the West, and the striking parallels in accepted principles at the outset and conclusion of this period constitute a crucial lesson that cannot be overlooked. Comparing the concept of good

governance upheld by the World Bank with the perspective of Imam Ali, one can assert that within the broader framework of 'Nahj al-Balagha' and Islamic sources, a righteous ruler is not merely one who issues decrees and exercises power; rather he is responsibly in charge of the affairs of the people and must respect their entire spectrum of material and spiritual values. The results of this study reveal that what the World Bank emphasizes as good governance has been a focal point of Imam Ali's attention for centuries, with only minor differences in the structural approaches to proposing solutions for achieving good governance. However, the fundamental essence of good governance during both eras remains consistent: effective governance devoid of any form of oppression, discrimination, corruption, injustice, inequality, violation of individual rights, government inefficiency, and etc. Furthermore, Imam Ali's emphasis on piety and servitude is of paramount significance in combating corruption. Additionally, the religious sources of the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet are identified as steadfast and infallible foundations that can offer the most viable solutions in times of adversity.

However, based on the provided documents in this study, it can be clearly understood that in Islamic sources, especially the Quran and Nahj al-Balagha, responsibility and accountability are closely intertwined concepts. Being responsible implies being accountable, and according to the Islamic political system, governance is viewed as a trust and responsibility, not a privilege or a right. Imam Ali, in this regard, stated: "Government is a divine trust for serving the people, not a means for personal gain" (Nahj al-Balagha, Letter 5). Hence, Imam Ali's criteria for assigning tasks to individuals

were based on their sense of responsibility and accountability in the face of those responsibilities. Another notable point is that in the Imam's governance, accountability is not limited to middle-tier management layers but extends to the highest echelon of power in the Islamic government. This distinction is an honor for Muslims, as their religious leaders, at the peak of their authority, identified themselves as responsible individuals who acquainted the people with their social and political rights, teaching them the ways and means to oversee the rulers. This concept of accountability is observable in Imam Ali's reign, particularly when considering the presented documents.

References

1. The Holy Quran
2. Nahj al-Balagha
3. Araei, Vahid, "Good governance as an ideal of monitoring and evaluation", General Inspection Organization, second year, May 6, 2008
4. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Commentary on Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 17, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Elamiya, 1994 A.H., Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Elamiya,
5. Akhwan Kazemi, Bahram Responsiveness and Efficiency", Islamic Government Quarterly, Vol. 4, Year 9, 2003.
6. Azher, Zahra and Jalali Mohammad, the accountability of the government, the position of the pillars and preconditions", comparative legal research, 20th year, vol. 1, spring 2015
7. Heydari Esfahani, Nadera, Obedience to the Seal of the Prophets in the Holy Qur'an,

Fadak Quarterly, Year 1, No. 2, 2009

8. Delshad Tehrani, Mostafa Dolat Aftab, Tehran Darya Publications 2019

9. Rafii RaMazan Ali, a response in the speech and biography of Amir al-Mominin, 7 chapters of Hasun, the first year of his reign from 1383

10. Abbaszadeh Mohsen Sireh, Imam Ali Management, 7 Burja, Publications of the Foundation of Qur'anic Researches, Hozva and University, 2009

11. Gadami, Mustafa and others, reviewed the practice of the municipality in the framework of good urban governance, Urban Management Quarterly, 31 Spring and Summer 2011

12. Makarem Shirazi Nasser and others, Tafsir al-Nashon, vols. 17 and 18, Bijah Publications of Islamic Books

13. Mahdi examiners of Imamate and the view of the Quran and thinkers of Fadak Quarterly, the first year of Shi 1, 2009

14. Mousavi Kashmari Seyyed Mahdi Nafahari and Nizami Deri during Tabari's regime, Islamic Government Quarterly, 5th year, 17 Bayer 2000

15. Midari Ahmad and Khabarkhahan Jaafi, Good Governance, Tehran Development Foundation, Local Research Center

16. Midari Ahmad, an introduction to the theory of good governance, Social Welfare Quarterly, 22/6/2013

17. Niko Baresh Barade Farzaneh Government and social justice during the era of Ali 7 Bijan Vandish, 1386

18. July Mofard Hossam Optimal governance in the light of the globalization of human rights, Tehran Institute of Legal Studies and Research, Shahr Danesh 2008

19. Warai, Seyyed Javad statesman, the answer to God and the people in the Islamic Government Quarterly, No