



A comparative study of the theories on poverty causes based on Islam view and the three schools of Liberalism, Socialism, and the Welfare State

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Keywords: Imam Ali (AS), the causes of poverty, liberalism, socialism, welfare state.

ARTICLE INFO

Imam Hossein University
Islamic Humanities
Vol.2 No.4 (2024), pp 130-144

Received des 12 2024

Accepted des 28 2024

Published Jan 19 2025

References: 56

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ABSTRACT

Poverty is a major social and economic disorder resolving of which requires the application of various policies in different areas. One of the prerequisites for the success of these policies is their design based on accurate identification of the causes. The present study, by collecting data in a library format and describing and analyzing their content, has conducted a comparative study of the views of Imam Ali (AS) and the three schools of liberalism, socialism, and the welfare state on the causes of poverty so that while revealing the reason for the differences or similarities in the poverty alleviation policies of these views, help in design and implementation of the most efficient and appropriate poverty alleviation policies. Based on the findings of the present study, the causes of poverty from Imam Ali perspective, is not focused on individual shortcomings, like liberalism, nor on structural shortcomings, like socialism; but rather, like the welfare state, it pays attention to both aspects. However, some of the causes of poverty in the three schools of liberalism, socialism, and the welfare state are acceptable, and some are unacceptable, based on Imam Ali's perspective.

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Problem Statement

The widespread and adverse consequences of poverty in various cultural, social, political, and other areas have prompted scholars of various sciences to strive to design and implement poverty alleviation policies. However, the effectiveness and sustainable success of these policies depend on their formulation based on the accurate identification of the causes of poverty. Otherwise, poverty can only be eliminated or reduced in a partial and temporary manner, and as long as the causes of poverty persist in society, poverty will not be eradicated. For this reason, accurate identification of the causes of poverty has a special place and importance in policymaking. Especially since different policies are designed as a result of the identification of different causes.

Accordingly, the present study aims to conduct a comparative study of the causes of poverty from the perspective of Imam Ali (AS) and the three schools of liberalism, socialism, and the welfare state by library data collection (documents) and describing and analyzing their content. In this way, while revealing the reason for the differences or similarities in the poverty alleviation policies of these perspectives, it will help design and implement the most efficient and appropriate poverty alleviation policies. Policies that seek to eradicate poverty instead of reducing it and relieving the pain caused by it.

Furthermore, the success of the Imam Ali's (AS) government in eradicating poverty doubles the importance of understanding the causes of poverty based on his perspective. Especially since the words and Sireh (practical behaviour) of Imam Ali (AS), as an infallible Imam and a perfect example of pure and authentic Islam, are based on the two criteria of reason and Sharia.

It should be noted that previously, researches have been conducted in the field of explaining the causes of poverty from the perspective of Islam or the perspective of Imam Ali, but in addition to the lack of comprehensiveness and prevention of the reasons stated, the failure to categorize the

causes, and the failure to distinguish between material and spiritual causes in most cases, none of them has been conducted with the aim of comparative examination of these causes from the perspective of Imam Ali and conventional perspectives (See: Baydoon, 2006: 63-74; FarahaniFard, 2008: 39-52; Mohammadi, 2013: 6).

Conceptology

The multifaceted nature of poverty, liberalism, socialism, and the welfare state, as well as the numerous orientations of scholars from different fields towards them, have made it impossible to have a comprehensive, preventative, and universally accepted definition of them. However, in order to clarify the discussion, some of their most commonly used definitions have been mentioned, in accordance with the content of the research.

Poverty: Poverty is classified considering various aspects including material and moral, verbal and negative, absolute and relative, economic, cultural, etc. In this study, material poverty, or in other words, economic poverty is considered for which "inability to supply basic needs" (Ziyari, 1375: 84-85; Ketabchi, 1375: 627-628) and "inability in supplying sufficient basic needs for an honorable and worthy life as an essential prerequisite for achieving perfection" (Asadi, 1369: 107; with a little different in: Zyari, Pishin, 85; Karshenas, 1375: 369) include its important definitions. In addition, according to Imam Ali words and Sireh (practical behaviour), poverty can be defined as "Insufficient and inadequate provision of needs" (Amanipour, Nilsaz and Irvani, 1396: 60).

Liberalism: The term 'liberal' is used to call a government, party, policy or ideology that supports freedom and is against Authoritarianism (Shapiro, 1380: 3). The axis of liberalism is individualism, which affects all its aspects; from the nature of human to the nature of society and human's relationship with it, its social goals and political values, and finally the practical policies

and specific choices it makes (Arblaster, 1988: 31).

Socialism: Socialism can be pursued in three aspects: 1) as an economic system based on collectivism and central planning, which in this sense is an alternative to capitalism, 2) as a tool for the labor movement that represents the benefits of the working class and offers a program through which workers can gain political or economic power, 3) as a political ideology with a set of specific values and perspectives, the most important of which are: community, cooperation, equality, provision of needs and common ownership (Ashouri, 1991: 204).

Welfare state: A state that is responsible for supplying and improving the well-being of all members of society (Petaft and Momeni-Rad, 2015: 188). A system of governance in which the state, despite accepting liberal assumptions, intervenes in the social life and considers itself committed, especially to services related to unemployment, health, education, housing and the supply of basic goods (Score, 2006: 209). The ideology of the welfare state goes back to social democracy, which can be considered a mixture of the two ideological perspectives of social liberalism and democratic socialism. Although these two ideologies are theoretically different from each other, in the real world of economic and social policy-making they have been able to create a kind of center-left consensus on the desirability of capitalist welfare (Fitzpatrick, 2004: 255).

Poverty causes from the Liberal perspective

According to the theorists of classical liberalism, poverty is not caused by structural causes and is not the result of an inevitable disorder, rather, it is a behavioral or pathological phenomenon, because its causes are things that are within the power of the individual to overcome. In other words, what is important in the emergence of poverty and deprivation are the perceptions and behaviors of the poor themselves, which originate from their culture, beliefs, and values (Arblaster, 1988: 394; Fitzpatrick, 2004: 184 and 243;

Shoghi Al-Fanjari, 2002: 142-143). These causes are briefly as follows:

Lack of natural resources: Malthus believed that poverty and destitution are the result of an imbalance between natural resources and population. Because the population increases much faster than food due to the lack of sexual restrictions and birth control. In other words, humanity is moving towards famine (Lajouji, 1988: 21; Dadgar, 2013: 113).

Luck and divine destiny: Burke believed that the needs of the poor were withheld from them by divine providence (Arblaster, 1988: 392; also see: Shoghi Al-Fanjari, 2002: 143). Poor children are born in families whose parents are unable to provide for them and do not leave them an inheritance. Their poverty, which is the result of their parents' disregard for sexual restrictions, is actually a punishment from nature, in which God's laws prevail (Arblaster, 1988: 379-380; also cf. Mehregan and Karametfar, 2014: 16).

Differences in Talents: Bourgeois liberals attributed the gradation of social status and well-being to natural inequality among humans. Wealth is a reward for merit, foresight, and fortitude, and poverty is the punishment for those who lack these virtues (Shapiro, 2001: 37-38; Fitzpatrick, 2006: 39; also see Dadgar, 2007: 277; Dadgar, 2011: 106; Mehregan and Keramat Far, 2014: 16).

Comfort and Unemployment: Many liberal scholars believe that poverty is caused by self-indulgence and unemployment. In their opinion, the poor have chosen not to work and, as a result, poverty (Arblaster, 1988: 394 and 396; Fitzpatrick, 2004: 184; Rafi'e, 2000: 41; also see: Dadgar, 2007: 277; Dadgar, 2011: 106; Mehregan and Keramat Far, 2014: 16; Shoghi Al-Fanjari, 2002: 142).

Extravagance: Another cause of poverty in society is extravagance (Arblaster, 1988: 394; Dadgar, 2007: 277; Dadgar, 2011: 106) because excessive consumption causes the loss of resources and their scarcity.

In addition to the aforementioned individual and behavioral causes, classical liberals also recognize some structural causes of poverty, but limit them to incorrect structures resulting from government performance. Including:

Disruption of the natural order of the economy: Physiocrats were pioneers of economic liberalism. They believed that natural laws govern the production and distribution of wealth. Following natural economic laws brings wealth, while not following them brings poverty. Activities such as buying and selling, production and consumption should be free and should not be hindered by laws imposed by governments (Shapiro, 2001: 21), because most of the problems of poverty and deprivation arise from incorrect government policies (Bari, 2014: 20).

Culture (cycle) of poverty: Social environments full of poverty, laziness, and unemployment breed poor, lazy, and unemployed people because the culture of poverty is passed down from generation to generation. The culture of poverty is also a consequence of the welfare state, which first helps create poverty and then perpetuates poverty by creating a culture of dependency in which people lose the habit of working and a sense of responsibility and self-help. Overly generous social security benefits lead to the emergence of a significant underclass. Social assistance creates a generation of unemployed people because it neither encourages marriage nor independence in the labor market.

From this perspective, the term underclass has nothing to do with absolute poverty, but rather with a (cultural) value system. A culture that belongs to people who expect society and the state to do everything for them, without them having to contribute anything in return. In fact, the poverty of this class is due to their inherited deficiencies, which are intensified by the dependency and lack of independence created by the welfare state (Fitzpatrick, 2004: 185-187; Laban, 2010: 94-95).

Poverty Causes from the Socialism Perspective

Socialists consider poverty to be caused by structural causes and consider it as a necessary and inevitable aspect of capitalist society, because, in their opinion, the fate of society is largely determined by forces that are beyond the control of individuals or groups (Fitzpatrick, 2004: 189). In fact, by believing in the materialism of history and the resulting determinism, they do not consider poverty to be a behavioral phenomenon within the framework of individual power and authority, rather, in their opinion, poverty and shortcomings of the working class are the result of corruption and injustice of social institutions (Hunt, 2002: 49).

From the perspective of socialists, private ownership of the production tools or, in other words, the unfair distribution of wealth and opportunities is the main cause of poverty in capitalist society, which results in unfair distribution of income (income without work) and ultimately poverty and severe economic and social inequalities.

Sismondi argues that industrial society gradually divides people into two distinct classes: those who work and those who own property, or, as he himself often says, the poor and the rich. Freedom of competition accelerates this division and separation by eliminating all middle classes and leaving two classes of working and capitalist. In his opinion, the reason for the poverty of workers is that their population is much larger than the demand for labor, and they are forced to accept the first wage offered in order to survive, despite the conflict with their own interests and the interests of their class. It is only the separation of property from labor that forces the poor worker to surrender to such harsh conditions under the pain of starvation (Gide and Rist, 2001: 1/293-296). The result of the separation of ownership from labor is an unfair and unequal distribution of income. In this way, only the income of capitalists increases and the income of workers remains at the same minimum requirement, which causes a mismatch between production and demand (Gide and Rist, 2001: 1/300; also see: Shoghi Al-Fanjari, 2002: 143). Therefore, the deprivation of

workers from ownership and the insecurity of their income is the main cause of poverty and economic disorder (Gide and Rist, 2001: 1/305).

According to Saint Simonian, the cause of poverty and economic crises is that the distribution of the production tools is in the hands of individuals who are separated from each other, unaware of the needs and unaware of the people and tools needed (Gide and Rist, 2001: 1/344-345). Marx also believed "If private ownership exists, even in a limited form, this will inevitably lead to poverty" (Tafazzoli, 2006: 153).

Poverty Causes from the Welfare State Perspective

While accepting the possibility of individual shortcomings and deviations in achieving welfare, such as differences in talents, laziness and unemployment, extravagance, etc., welfare state theorists also acknowledge the shortcomings and failures of the market and the existence of structural disorders in society. In their view, one of the most important causes of poverty is the struggle and conflict between different groups in society over resources such as wealth, status and power (Rafi'e, 1990: 51). Market failures, stagnation and inflation resulting from the government's monetary and financial policies, inappropriate distribution of wealth and income, free trade, industrialization and the changes resulting from it, weakness of human and social capital, shortages of natural resources and the environment, political and social conditions, population growth and migration are also considered to be the most important structural causes of poverty (Zaribaf, 2012: 8-20).

Of course, aware of the market failure in the fair distribution of wealth and income and the importance of the impact of this factor on poverty and economic inequality, they did not deny private ownership of the production tools like the socialists, but rather reformed it.

Poverty Causes from Imam Ali's Perspective

The causes of poverty can be categorized from different aspects, such as the causes that cause

poverty, the causes that perpetuate poverty, and the causes that increase poverty. Accordingly, the unequal distribution of opportunities is the cause, while the formation of vicious cycles of poverty is a perpetuating cause, and inflation is a factor that increases poverty. Based on the origin, we can also talk about economic, cultural, geographical, political, and social causes (Khorshidi, 2000: 10).

In addition, the causes of poverty can be categorized as material and spiritual, natural and unnatural, individual, social and governmental, behavioral and structural, voluntary and compulsory. These categories overlap with each other in such a way that natural causes are considered part of imposed causes, and some material causes are considered natural and some are considered unnatural. Considering the purpose of the present study, to compare the views of Imam Ali (AS) and conventional views, the last classification, i.e. voluntary and mandatory, has been used as the basis for practice.

Voluntary causes (individual and behavioral)

Some of the causes of poverty and economic disorder must be sought in the individuals themselves. In other words, the poverty of some people is caused by their own behaviors, which originate from their values and views, and getting rid of it is within their control and power. The most important of them, from Imam Ali's perspective are:

Laziness, comfort seeking, and unemployment

Comfort seeking and laziness prevent a person from working and endeavor, which are the prerequisites for achieving success, wealth, and freedom from need. As Imam Ali introduces laziness and comfort as the scourge of work and success, and the cause of the loss of profit, the result of which is nothing but poverty and deprivation, as he says:

- "The scourge of work is ease and idleness" (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 463; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 181).

- "The scourge of success and prosperity is laziness" (Tamimi Amadi, *ibid.*; Laithi Wasiti, *ibid.*).

- "Choosing comfort and ease cuts off the tools of profit and benefit" (Tamimi Amadi, *ibid.*; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 127).

- "When things were paired, laziness and weakness were paired together, and poverty arose from them" (Kulaini, 1429: 9/562; with a slight difference in: Ibn Shu'bah Harani, 1404: 220).

Laziness also causes loss of opportunities (Tamimi Amadi, *ibid.*; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 53 and 185) and as a result, deprivation (Ibn Shu'bah Harrani, 1404: 80). Lazy people either do not start a job or, after starting it, cannot bear it when faced with its difficulties and abandon it. This causes them to lose out on its benefits and advantages and, in a sense, they become trapped in poverty and bankruptcy.

"Whoever is not patient with the suffering caused by his work must endure poverty and bankruptcy" (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 355; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 427).

Lack of proper plan and management

One of the most important factors for success and progress in any matter is careful planning, or in other words, proper strategies that is based on measuring all aspects. Getting rid of poverty and achieving welfare is no exception to this rule. Bad management disrupts a person's life, destroys his assets, and leads him to poverty. Numerous narrations have been narrated from Imam Ali about the effect of planning and management on a person's life, and his poverty and wealth including:

- "The scourge of living is bad management" (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 354; Laythi Wasti, 1997: 182).

- "Bad management is the key to poverty" (Tamimi Amadi, *ibid.*; Laythi Wasti, 1997: 284).

- "With bad management, there would be no wealth" (Tamimi Amadi, *ibid.*; Laythi Wasti, 1997: 544).

- "Bad management, Destroys abundant wealth" (Tamimi Amadi, *ibid.*; Laythi Wasti, 1997: 228).

- "There is no money for the one who has no planning" (Ibn Abi Al-Hadid, 1404: 20/317).

Lack of proper accounting and budgeting

Keeping a strategy and, in a sense, avoiding excesses in living and economy, protects a person from poverty, hence the Imam Ali introduces neglecting it as a cause of poverty:

- "Lack of accounting and not keeping a strategy in living leads to poverty" (Sheikh Saduq, 1983: 505/2; Fattal Neyshaburi, 1996: 455/2; Shairi, n.d.: 124).

Extravagance and Wasting

The most obvious examples of not observing the appropriate strategy in life are extravagance (excessiveness and exceeding the limit) and wasting (spending wastefully and needlessly) as extremes. Based on excess usage, these two lead to the waste of resources and the loss of assets (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 359; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 39). For this reason, they are considered one of the most important causes of poverty and economic disorder. As the Imam Ali says about their relationship with poverty:

- "Spending wastefully is a sign and the beginning of poverty and need." (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 359; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 41)

- "Spending wastefully is a companion that leads to bankruptcy." (Tamimi Amadi, *ibid.*; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 29)

- "He who prides himself on extravagance will be humiliated by bankruptcy and poverty." (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 360; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 464)

- "The cause of poverty and need is extravagance." (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 396; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 282)

- "There is no wealth or satiety through extravagance." (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 359; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 531)

It is necessary to mention that according to Imam Ali, wasting is a kind of extravagance (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 359; Laythi Wasti, 1997: 385). In addition, extravagance and wasting are also related to lack of planning and incorrect strategy, because maintaining a balanced and avoiding excess usage requires proper planning in life. Therefore, Imam Ali introduces the deterioration of strategy as the result of bad planning (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 354; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 432) and the protection of a person from bad planning and extravagance together as a sign of God's benevolence towards him (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 353; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 131). In addition, both cause the loss of abundant assets. The contrast between strategy and extravagance in the narration of "If you are a little accompanied by strategy, it is more lasting than having a lot accompanied by extravagance" (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 354; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 58). In addition, there is another evidence of this, in which the destruction of a large amount of wealth is stated as a consequence of wasting and the preservation of a small amount of wealth is stated as a consequence of strategy.

Stinginess and narrow-mindedness

Stinginess and narrow-mindedness are the excessive aspects of not observing the proper strategy in life, which Imam Ali considers as poverty and the garment of misery:

- "Stinginess is poverty" (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 293; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 19).

- "Stinginess is the garment of misery" (Kulaini, 1429: 15/71; Ibn Shu'bah Harrani, 1404: 90 and 97).

Because the stingy person, out of fear of poverty and in the hope of attaining asset and wealth, reduces his expenses to the point that, in addition to not donating to others, he even refrains from providing for his own needs to the extent of being sufficient and is stingy with himself (Tamimi

Amadi, 1987: 292; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 56). In the Imam Ali's view, stinginess is in fact rushing towards poverty, not escaping from it. Therefore, Imam Ali expresses surprise at this dual behavior of the stingy person who desires wealth but, out of fear of poverty, lives like the poor and deprives himself of the life of the rich.

- "The stingy person rushes towards poverty" (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 293).

- "He who spends miserly out of fear of poverty has rushed towards poverty" (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 293; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 430).

- "I am amazed at the stingy who rushes towards poverty that he flees from and loses the wealth that he desires, so he lives in this world like the poor and in the Hereafter he is accounted like the rich" (Hikmat 126; with a difference in: Fatah Neyshaburi, 1996: 2/384-385).

In fact, the stingy falls into the valley of Distillation (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 293 and 359; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 528) which is the actual poverty. Distillation, which is an excessive behavior in contrast to extravagance and wastefulness as extreme behaviors, means the severity of calculation and strictness. Therefore, Imam Ali warns that budgeting is necessary but should not lead to distillation (Hikmat 33; Fatah Neyshaburi, 1996: 2/384; Tabarsi, 1965: 232). Of course, unlike the wasting person who loses the ability to meet his needs by losing his asset, the stingy person has the ability to meet his needs, but due to narrow-mindedness, is unwilling to meet them to the extent of sufficiency. Therefore, he lives like the poor, and since such poverty is not eliminated by providing more facilities and asset, Imam Ali introduces the narrow-minded person as the poorest of people.

- "The poorest of people is the one who is hard of himself in spite of wealth and abundance (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 369; Laythi Wasti, 1997: 125).

It should be noted that the individual and behavioral reasons mentioned are general and there are many specific examples for them, including gambling and addiction, which are

examples of not having a proper calculation and plan in life. Therefore, in the first step to get rid of poverty and achieve wealth, a person must work and strive and have a comprehensive and accurate plan in which, with proper calculation, he avoids extravagance and wasting as an extreme aspect and stinginess and narrow-mindedness as an excessive aspect, as well as avoiding anything that disrupts his planning and calculation.

Of course, some matters, despite their apparent conflict and contradiction with careful planning and calculation, are so important and desirable that the poverty resulting from them is not only not condemned but is also considered desirable and pleasing to God. Such poverty, which is the result of maintaining divine limits and paying attention to more important matters, has been referred to as purposeful poverty (Furati, 2013: 18).

Among these desirable and recommended acts of the Sharia, forgiveness can be mentioned, which stems from high moral and religious values such as faith, sacrifice, sympathy, etc. The history of Islam, the teachings and Sireh (practical behaviour) of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) have abundant evidence in this regard, some of which are also mentioned in the Holy Quran. In describing the sacrifice of the Ansar, who put the emigrants ahead of themselves despite their severe need, God says: "And those who were established in the home and in the faith before them, love those who emigrated to them and find not in their hearts any need for what was given to them and give them preference over themselves, even though they were in need. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul, it is those who will be the successful" (Hashr: 9). And about sacrifice of Imam Ali, Zahra (PBUH), Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein, God revealed verses from Surah Al-Insan (See. Tabarsi, 1993: 611/10; Wahedi, 1411: 470; Baghvi, 1420: 5/191) that praise them with the highest terms and promise them the best blessings.

Forced Causes

Some of the causes of poverty are not directly within the control of the individual, and although some of them may be indirectly influenced by the individual's own behavior, they are somehow imposed on him. These forced causes can be divided into two categories: natural causes and structural causes.

Natural Causes

Sometimes poverty is caused by natural events and disasters including earthquakes, floods, droughts and famines, pests, fires, the death of the head of the household and the inability to work due to disability, illness, infancy, old age or other factors. The impact of these causes on poverty and economic instability is so obvious that their lack of direct mention in the narrations does not raise any doubts about them. Of course, there is evidence in the words and Sireh (practical behaviour) of Imam Ali that indicates his attention to these natural causes. As Imam Ali instructs Malik Ashtar in the treaty that if taxpayers were caught up in such matters, he should give them relief so that their situation could improve:

"If the taxpayers complain about the heavy burden of taxes, the arrival of pests to their agricultural crops, the drying up of springs, the cessation of rain and dew or the transformation of the land due to flood or drought, give them a discount to the extent that you hope will improve their situation" (Letter 53; with a slight difference in: Ibn Shu'bah Harrani, 1404: 138).

The Imam Ali's numerous recommendations regarding attention to widows, orphans and the elderly are another evidence of this. For example:

"Have mercy on widows and orphans and help the weak" (Ibn Shu'bah Harrani, 1404: 152; Karajki, 1353: 63).

Structural Causes

Sometimes poverty and economic disorder are caused by incorrect structures in various areas of society, especially the areas of law and justice, politics and economics. The most important

structural causes, according to the words of Imam Ali, are:

Non-payment of financial rights by the rich

In some cases, poverty is caused by the lack of cooperation among members of society, which stems from incorrect cultural, ideological, moral and social structures. The lack of a spirit of cooperation in society disrupts the redistribution of income and wealth, and as a result, causes the creation and continuation of poverty and economic disorder.

God, in His wisdom and expediency, has placed the provision of food for the needy as a right in the wealth of the rich and has made it obligatory for them to pay it. As the Holy Quran says: "And those in whose wealth there is a known right for the beggar and the deprived" (Al-Ma'arij: 24-25), and "And in their wealth there is a [certain] right for the beggar and the deprived" (Al-Dharyat: 19).

In the Ghodsi Hadith, the rich are introduced as God's representatives who must give God's wealth to the needy who are under God's care, and if they refuse and are stingy, their punishment will be hell:

"The wealth belongs to me, and the poor are under my care, and the rich are my representatives. So whoever refuses to give my wealth to those who are under my care, I will put him in hell and I will not care about him" (Sha'iri, n. d.: 80).

For this reason, it is stated in the words of Imam Ali that God Almighty has made it obligatory to provide for the poor from the wealth of the rich. Therefore, the hunger of the poor is caused by the rich refusing to pay their dues, and they will be held accountable for it: "Indeed, Allah, Almighty, has imposed on the rich the food of the poor, and no poor person has ever been hungry except because of what a rich person (refused) has been given, and Allah, Almighty, will ask them about that" (Hikmat 328; Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 371; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 153; with a difference in:

Fattal Nishaburi, 1996: 2/454) (For a detailed recording of the narration, see: Pahlawan, 2012).

In another narration, Imam Ali considers the failure to meet the other needs of the poor, in addition to food, to be due to the same reason. The financial rights that God has determined according to the needs of the poor, and if paid in full by the rich, can eliminate absolute poverty by meeting the lowest level of basic needs, including food and clothing, will eliminate absolute poverty.

"God has made it obligatory upon the rich to give in their wealth to the extent that it covers the poor. So if the poor are deprived or fall into hardship or remain naked, it is because the rich refuse (to pay their dues), and God will question them about this on the Day of Judgment and punish them for it with a painful punishment" (Ibn Hayyun, 2006: 245/1).

In addition, according to Imam Ali, the wealth and blessings that God gives to some of His servants are for the benefit of people. Paying financial dues, including giving these divine blessings and donation, causes them to last and increase wealth, and refraining from donating causes them to decrease and lose wealth.

"God has servants whom He assigns them with blessings so that they benefit [other] servants, so He keeps those blessings in their hands as long as they donate them, and if they refuse to donate them, He takes those blessings from them and transfers them to others" (Wisdom 425).

Therefore, one of the most important causes of poverty and hunger is the refusal of the rich to pay the obligatory and recommended financial rights that God has determined in the assets He has given them to meet the needs of the poor.

Inappropriate management

Another cause of poverty and economic disorder is improper management, which reflects incorrect administrative and political structures. When there is no meritocracy in the selection of officials and officials do not have sufficient knowledge

and expertise in their field of work, proper management will not exist and resources will be wasted, resulting in poverty and economic disorder. Of course, given that people participate in the selection of their officials, poverty resulting from improper management can be indirectly attributed to the beliefs and behavior of individuals. As Imam Ali warns the people who ignored his rights, turned away from him, and pledged allegiance to someone else, that the government and management of the incompetent and unskilled people they elected will lead them to poverty and economic disorder. Imam Ali in his Talutiyyeh sermon says:

“O nation that was deceived and deceived. By God who split the grain and created the living being, if you had received knowledge from its mine, pure and without doubt and imperfection, and sought goodness from its place, and walked the middle of the path and walked the path of truth, the paths would have become clear for you and the signs of guidance would have become clear to you and the radiance and light of Islam would have enveloped you. In that case, you would have eaten in comfort and ease, and no one among you would have been needy or poor, and no Muslim or ally would have been oppressed. But you walked the paths of darkness and misguidance, so your world, despite its vastness, became narrow and dark for you, and the doors of knowledge were closed to you. You followed the misguided, so they led you astray, and you abandoned the Imams, so they abandoned you. As a result, from then on, you ruled according to your own desires. Soon you will reap what you have sown and you will find the disorder that you yourself have caused” (Kulaini, 1429: 15/95-97).

If the officials do not have the necessary and sufficient knowledge and expertise, they cannot have a proper plan and strategy and proper auditing for managing affairs, then they lead the society towards destruction and general poverty, and the state towards ruin. Therefore, Imam Ali introduces bad and inappropriate planning as a cause of destruction and a sign of turning away from blessings:

- “Bad planning is the cause of destruction” (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 354; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 284).

- “He whose planning and strategy are bad, destruction and destruction precede him” (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 354).

- “Four things are signs of turning away [from blessings]: bad planning, bad wasting, little learning of lessons, and much deception” (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 354; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 552).

In fact, proper planning and accounting for the prevention of poverty and economic disorder come from competent and efficient management. As Imam Ali says:

“Proper planning and avoiding waste are from correct politics and management” (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 331; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 229).

Infidelity and financial corruption of officials

Another cause of poverty and economic disorder is infidelity and financial corruption, which arise from the lack of commitment of officials and reflect incorrect ideological, judicial and political structures. According to the words and Sireh (practical behaviour) of Imam Ali, public assets are not the wealth of officials and are only entrusted to them to spend in permissible ways in the interests of society and based on specific rules and laws. As Imam Ali says:

“By Allah, this wealth is neither my hard work nor my inheritance from my father, but it is a trust that I have taken care of, so I will return it to its owners” (Ibn Hayyun, 2006: 2/310; with a difference in: Ibn Shahrashob, 2000: 110/2).

But some officials betray this trust and become infected with financial corruption, which leads to general poverty. Betrayal and financial corruption by officials originate from various causes and occur in various forms. Some officials consider the public treasury as their personal property and spend and give it away as they wish, without considering any rules or laws. The existence of

this view in some officials is evident from the letters of Imam Ali (a.s.) to traitorous governors such as Qudamah ibn Ajlan (Balathari, 1974: 160), Mundhir ibn Jarud (ibid., 163) and others (Letter 41; Zamakhshari, 1410: 3/375). Imam Ali introduces such a gift as oppression and betrayal:

“The donating of the public property of Muslims by rulers is oppression and corruption” (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 343).

A clear example of such behavior is the third caliph's method of spending and donating the public treasury, which led to widespread poverty and severe economic inequality. There are many examples in history and biography books about Uthman's method of spending the public treasury arbitrarily. In response to the people's objections, he considered himself the Caliph, with authority over how to spend the treasury, and said: "If I cannot exercise authority over the surplus of public property, then what is the meaning of my being an Imam (Caliph)?" (Tabari, 1403: 3/377). Some rulers also fall into treachery and financial corruption due to their spirit of exorbitant wealth accumulation, lack of confidence in the future of the government, and failure to learn from the fate of others. Uncertainty about the future of the government causes the rulers to think that they must fill their pockets as soon as possible in the available opportunity, and since they do not learn from the fate of others, they do this. In this regard Imam Ali says:

“Indeed, the destruction of the earth is due to the poverty of its owners, and their poverty is due to the rulers’ turning to accumulating wealth and their suspicion of the permanence of their government and their lack of benefit from previous fate of others” (Letter 53; with a slight difference in: Ibn Shu’bah al-Harrani, 1404: 138).

Exclusiveness and monopolization

Sometimes poverty is caused by exclusiveness, monopolization and tyranny of officials and people around them, which indicates incorrect judicial, political and economic structures and is considered one of the most important examples of

unfair distribution of wealth and income. Imam Ali warns Malik Ashtar about this in his letter to him and says:

“The ruler has relatives and close people around who have a tyrannical nature (seeking superiority and self-selection) and plunder and are not fair in trade and commerce” (Letter 53; Sayyed Razi, 1406: 123; with a slight difference in: Ibn Shu’bah Harrani, 1404: 144-145).

A clear example of exclusiveness and its impact on the living of the people can be seen during the period of the third caliph. According to the books of history and biography, the exclusiveness of Uthman and his relatives (the Umayyads and the Marwanids) was one of the reasons for the people's rebellion against him that led to his murder (Tusi, 1414: 727-728; Amili, 1430: 19/68). As Imam Ali himself says in describing the incident:

"Until the third one arose, his flanks were swollen with gluttony, and he filled and emptied his stomach. His paternal relatives, like a camel that greedily eats spring grass, began to eat and take the treasury until his threads became cotton and his deeds led to his murder and his gluttony destroyed him" (Letter 3; with a slight difference in: Sheikh Saduq, 2006: 151/1).

It should be noted that exclusiveness is a type of financial corruption; however, since financial corruption is general and includes numerous examples, such as unaccountable giving to others, whether they are relatives or not, includes the stealing of the authority for one's own benefit. This will be addressed in two separate sections.

Heavy Taxes

Heavy taxes are another cause of poverty that is related to incorrect legal and economic structures. If taxes are not fair and equitable, they cause oppression of taxpayers and the destruction of lands. As Imam Ali says to Malik al-Ashtar:

"Your efforts in cultivating the lands should be more than your efforts in collecting tribute, because tribute is not obtained except by

cultivating the land, and whoever demands tribute without cultivating it will destroy cities and people, and his government will not last except for a short time. So if taxpayers complain about the burden of taxes, give them a discount to the extent that you hope will improve their situation" (Letter 53; with a slight difference in: Ibn Shu'bah al-Harrani, 1404: 137-138).

Hoarding, inflation and stagnation

Among other causes of poverty are hoarding, inflation and stagnation, which indicate incorrect economic structures. Hoarding and inflation harm consumers by increasing prices excessively, and stagnation, by reducing demand and consumption, causes prices to fall and ultimately unemployment, bankruptcy and losses for producers. As Imam Ali says:

"Hoarding is a call to deprivation" (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 361).

"The hoarder is deprived of his [specific] blessing" (Tamimi Amadi, 1987: 361; Laithi Wasiti, 1997: 26).

In addition, in his letter to Malik Ashtar, Imam Ali introduces hoarding as a cause of public harm, and excessive and unfair increase and decrease in prices as a cause of oppression and loss to the buyer and seller:

"Indeed, in many merchants and industrialists, there is severe narrow-mindedness and unsavory stinginess, and they seek to hoard profits and dominate trade, which is to the detriment of the general public and a disgrace to the rulers. Buying and selling should be done easily and with due observance of the standards of justice and prices that do not cause loss to either the seller or the buyer" (Letter 53; with differences in: Ibn Shu'bah Harrani, 1404: 140-141; Ibn Hayyun, 1385: 366/1).

What has been stated so far is one of the most important imposed causes of poverty and economic disorder, but not all causes are limited to these cases. Some other imposed causes of poverty include: 1) The lack of opportunities for

work and economic activity for individuals, which is caused by incorrect economic structures, 2) The oppression and encroachment of individuals on each other's rights and interests, such as theft, fraud, damage to other people's property, etc., which originate from incorrect cultural, judicial, political, social, and economic structures, 3) War and sanctions, which are manifestations of political, social, and economic disorders.

Although the effect of these causes on poverty is not explicitly stated in Imam Ali's words, theoretical and practical reason confirms it, and there is evidence of Imam Ali's attention to it in his words and Sireh (practical behavior).

Comparison of the causes of poverty in four perspectives

* According to the view of Imam Ali, God has created natural resources in the amount needed by humans, and although the scarcity and abundance of sustenance is a test based on divine wisdom and destiny, this is not a license for fatalism and abandoning the poor to their own devices, because according to the command of God as the true owner of the entire universe, the sustenance of this group must be provided from the assets of the wealthy and public wealth. In addition, differences in talents can only be a reason for accepting natural inequality, not accepting poverty or extreme and oppressive inequality.

In addition, in the real world, the economic system does not always move automatically based on order, but its irregularities are sometimes endogenous and sometimes exogenous. Therefore, government intervention is necessary to correct some endogenous market irregularities, especially if the government addresses this issue based on reason and law. The cycle of poverty is a perpetuating cause, not a creator of poverty. Therefore, by eliminating the causes of poverty, we can also help develop an appropriate culture.

On the other hand, private ownership of the production tools, which is approved and accepted

by reason and the Sharia, is not in itself the cause of poverty and inequality, so that it would be necessary to abolish it in order to eliminate poverty. Rather, placing it within a framework of legal and moral restrictions is sufficient to eliminate the resulting disorders. In addition, the conflict between different groups in society over the sources of wealth, status and power can be resolved based on the moral and legal limits set by God and cannot be considered the main cause of poverty in an Islamic society.

In the contrary, causes such as extravagance, laziness and unemployment, improper distribution of wealth and income, chaotic political and social conditions, stagnation and inflation, are also acceptable from Imam Ali's (a.s.) perspective, but not as exclusive causes.

In other words, sometimes people fall into poverty due to personal reasons such as laziness, extravagance, etc., and the solution to that is work, effort, planning, calculation, and avoiding extravagance and wasting by the individual himself, and education, culture building, and developing suitable conditions and platforms for work and effort by society and the government. Sometimes, despite paying attention and adhering to these matters, people fall into poverty and hardship due to divine wisdom and expediency. In such a case, society and the government must come to the aid of the person to eliminate this poverty. Sometimes, poverty is caused by society and the government not performing their duties and other imposed causes (natural and structural), in which case, poverty alleviation policies should be aimed at eliminating them.

Conclusions

In the view of classical liberals, the most important causes of poverty are related to individual behavior, so poverty alleviation policies should seek to encourage the spirit of work, effort, and self-reliance in individuals. Socialists, believing in materialism and the resulting determinism, consider the most important cause of poverty to be private ownership of the production tools. As a result,

their poverty alleviation policies seek to eliminate private ownership and establish state and public ownership in its place. In the view of the welfare state, the causes of poverty can be caused by both individual behavior and incorrect structures. Therefore, the poverty alleviation policies of the welfare state are aimed at eliminating the shortcomings of both.

In the view of Imam Ali (AS), the main causes of poverty are not limited to behavioral and individual causes, as in liberalism, whose elimination is only within the scope of the individual's power and ability, nor, as in the belief of socialists, are they related only to structural causes and beyond human power and ability. Rather, as in the view of the welfare state, both individual shortcomings and shortcomings of the market, society, and the state are considered. Therefore, poverty alleviation policies in the view of Imam Ali (AS) should address both individual and structural aspects.

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