

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Mechanisms of Transcendent Governance in Combating Administrative Corruption from the Perspective of Imam Ali (AS) (Supervision)

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## Abstract

Supervision is one of the just and effective mechanisms for ensuring the fair distribution of economic resources and safeguarding people's rights from violations and the usurpation of citizens' entitlements. It is also a key tool in combating administrative corruption in all its forms. The significance of this mechanism stems from its crucial role in achieving governmental objectives, particularly in promoting social and economic justice and fighting administrative corruption. Consequently, supervision holds a distinguished position in the thought of Imam Ali (AS) and was among his top priorities. This emphasis reflects his belief in its importance for establishing justice and restoring the people's trust in governance. In this regard, he stated: "By God, if I find that something unjustly taken from public funds remains in someone's possession, I will return it, even if it was used for marriage or purchased for slave women. Justice provides room and ease for everyone, while tyranny and oppression constrict life and make it even more unbearable for those who impose it." (Nahj al-Balagha)

Based on the conscious and systematic supervisory measures of Imam Ali (AS), the following principles can be derived:

1. Strengthening employees' self-motivation, leading to enhanced self-supervision, where a Muslim individual feels that a constant observer is always present.
2. Selecting honest, trustworthy, and competent individuals to carry out supervisory responsibilities.
3. Ensuring the neutrality and independence of supervisory institutions so that they remain free from affiliation with any political party or specific faction.
4. Improving employees' living standards and providing them with a decent livelihood to prevent them from coveting what citizens possess.
5. Enhancing the living conditions of those in supervisory roles to make bribery and undue influence more difficult.

**Keywords:** Transcendent Governance, Imam Ali, Administrative Corruption, Supervision, Combating, Nahj Al-Balagha.

## 1. Introduction

Supervision holds a significant position in Islam due to its impact on safeguarding public wealth and protecting communal rights. Numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an emphasize this principle, fostering a sense in every Muslim that Allah Almighty is

constantly observing and monitoring their actions. The purpose of this divine oversight is to guide individuals and Muslim societies toward public discipline and social justice, achieved through obedience to Allah's commands, striving for His pleasure, and attaining eternal salvation.

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For this reason, Islam endeavors to strengthen the self-restraint of Muslims, instilling in them the awareness that they are always under observation. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) also highlighted this truth, stating:

“Be aware that all of you are shepherds, and each of you is responsible for your flock. A man is a guardian over his household and is accountable for them; a woman is a guardian over her husband’s household and is accountable for it; and a servant is responsible for his master’s property. Indeed, each of you is responsible and will be questioned about your responsibility.” (Dailami, 1371, Vol. 1:184).

Imam Ali (AS), during his governance after the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), followed a practical approach that emphasized supervision over the actions of officials and citizens. He strongly upheld the necessity of accountability for government officials, demonstrating this through his actions. Even if such accountability provoked dissatisfaction among those being held responsible, the people under his governance came to realize the value of this practice in ensuring the proper execution of tasks, achieving social justice, and restoring public trust in leadership, which had been tarnished by previous governments.

This study, based on the author’s belief in the importance of supervision and its role in promoting social justice and combating administrative corruption, seeks to explore this topic. Using a descriptive-analytical method, the study delves into Imam Ali’s (AS) teachings and practices regarding supervision over his government officials. The hope is that this research will prove beneficial in an era where Islamic societies increasingly require sincere and conscious supervision.

### 1.1 Research Hypotheses

This research is based on the following hypotheses:

1. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS) had a unique perspective on the application of supervision as a mechanism to combat administrative corruption, safeguard citizens’ rights, and protect public wealth. This mechanism is characterized by its comprehensiveness, depth, and practical applicability. It can also be utilized to achieve transparency and honesty in various governmental institutions, promote holistic development, and uphold the dignity of citizens.
2. Imam Ali’s (AS) administrative vision is distinguished by its strength, coherence, reliance

on logical principles, and robust mechanisms in combating various forms of corruption. His perspective on governance was that it is an organized system, not a chaotic mix. He viewed governance as a purposeful system, not created randomly, but rather designed to achieve significant goals in life.

3. Imam Ali (AS) was the first to design and establish a comprehensive administrative system that included defining job roles, testing the competencies of officials as leaders and subordinates, outlining their duties and rights, creating methods and mechanisms for supervision and accountability, and defining the dimensions of administrative responsibility. This system also included an organizational structure for all responsibilities, duties, and authorities, and a meticulous approach to supervision, tracking, and evaluation aimed at satisfying both external and internal stakeholders (citizens). Additionally, he adopted the principle of accountability with a strong system based on specific standards for motivation, rewards, and penalties, all of which represent the most prominent aspects of good and transcendent governance.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

This study seeks to identify the role that supervisory mechanisms can play in combating and addressing administrative corruption, as well as to highlight their importance in promoting good and transcendent governance. Additionally, it aims to elucidate the significance of supervision in ensuring proper execution of tasks and the correct performance of administrative officials. Conscious and systematic supervision can achieve many objectives, including:

1. Protecting officials and governors from breaches of trust.
2. Safeguarding public wealth.
3. Preserving the material and moral rights of individuals in society.
4. Ensuring the timely completion of projects based on plans prepared by the Islamic government.
5. Strengthening citizens’ trust in a government that holds its officials accountable.
6. Establishing discipline in the selection of officials and managers based on their expertise and personal capabilities.

### 1.3 Research Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study is the historical-

analytical approach, which serves as the primary method in this research. It involves examining and analyzing the significant statements of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) regarding the mechanisms of supervision and their effectiveness in achieving a just government as well as controlling administrative corruption. Given that the Alawi method of supervising government employees in various fields serves as a living model, attention is paid to some texts attributed to Imam Ali (peace be upon him), wherein various supervisory strategies are utilized to reform administration and reduce administrative corruption.

#### 1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the following:

1. It highlights one of the most important mechanisms (strategic supervisory mechanisms in combating administrative corruption in government institutions).
2. It demonstrates how administrative supervision mechanisms can contribute to combating administrative corruption and achieving integrity and transparency in institutions across different countries, ultimately leading to comprehensive development.
3. It aids in introducing one of the most significant scientific methods adopted by Imam Ali (peace be upon him) in combating corruption.
4. It contributes to adherence to ethical standards in government institutions and sheds light on an aspect of Imam Ali's (peace be upon him) administrative thought in formulating guidelines and strategies for combating and reducing administrative corruption.
5. It emphasizes the Islamic community's rich scientific and ethical heritage, which acts as a strong deterrent against the spread of administrative corruption in Muslim societies.

#### 1.5 Organization of the Research

This research comprises an introduction, three main sections, a conclusion, and recommendations. In the introduction, after discussing the concept of supervision, four key topics are addressed: research methodology, the significance of the study, research objectives, and research hypothesis.

- Section One: Explores the key concepts and terminology used in the study, including the

concepts of administrative corruption and supervisory mechanisms in both linguistic and technical contexts.

- Section Two: Discusses patterns of administrative corruption and its manifestations.
- Section Three: Examines the types of supervision employed by Imam Ali (peace be upon him) during his governance to combat administrative corruption and the mechanisms to prevent it.
- Conclusion and Recommendations: Summarizes the findings of the study and offers recommendations for applying Imam Ali's (peace be upon him) teachings in modern governance to combat corruption.

#### 1.6 Conceptual Clarification

##### 1.6.1 First: Transcendent Governance in Linguistic and Terminological Terms

##### *Linguistic Definition of Governance*

The term "good governance" consists of two components:

##### 1.7 Ḥukm (حُكْم):

- In Arabic lexicons, the linguistic meaning of "ḥukm" is defined as follows:
  - "Al-ḥukm" (with a ḍamma on the ḥā' and sukūn on the kāf) refers to knowledge and understanding.
  - "Ḥakam" (with a fatha on the ḥā' and a ḍamma on the kāf) means to become wise.
  - In Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ: "Al-ḥukm" is defined as judgment and adjudication. For example, it states:
    - "Ḥakama baynahum" means "he judged between them."
    - "Al-ḥikmah" is wisdom derived from knowledge.
    - "Al-ḥakīm" refers to someone who is knowledgeable, wise, or perfect in their affairs.
    - "Al-ḥakam" (with two fathas) means "judge."
    - "Ḥakkamahu fī mālihi", means "he entrusted him with judgment over his wealth."
    - "Al-muḥākama" refers to litigation before a judge.
    - In a hadith: "Paradise belongs to the muḥakkamīn"—a reference to individuals who were given the choice between apostasy and death during the incident of the People of the Trench and

chose steadfastness in Islam, even at the cost of their lives (Ibn Manẓūr, 1405: 592).

### 1.7.1 Transcendent (*Mut'ālī*)

Transcendent governance refers to a system of governance based on a divine value system, such as Islam, aimed at achieving worldly and eternal well-being for people within a geographical domain or even broader areas. According to the theory of transcendent governance, sovereignty belongs solely to God, who alone has the authority to govern mankind. Therefore, rulers derive legitimacy only as long as they possess self-purification, public acceptance, and adherence to divine commands. In transcendent governance, the organization of relationships, compliance, and the activation of capacities among stakeholders and beneficiaries are guided by divine direction and the will of the people (Ibn Manẓūr, 1405: 592).

## 1.8 Terminological Definition of Transcendent Governance

In terminological terms, “transcendent governance” refers to the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority at all levels—government, civil society, and the private sector. It encompasses the long-term outcomes of development across generations and extends beyond the state to include private and civil society domains.

Thus, transcendent governance can be defined at the level of authority as follows: The exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage affairs at all levels. This includes the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which individuals and groups can express their interests, exercise their legal rights, fulfill their obligations, and resolve disputes (2000: 795).

## 1.9 Secondly: Administrative Corruption in Language and Terminology

### 1.9.1 Administrative Corruption in Language

Corruption, derived from the root word “*fasad*” (فساد) meaning ruin and destruction, refers to a lack of integrity and uprightness. It is described as the opposite of righteousness (حالة صالحة) and uprightness (قيامة قائمة) (Al-Firuzabadi, n.d.: 391; Al-Zabidi, n.d.: 452). Therefore, corruption signifies harm and negative changes, involving actions and structures deviating from the correct and ethical path, leading to deterioration. In Arabic, the term is used in various contexts, including economic, political, and social domains, to indicate disobedience, violations of laws and ethics, and non-

compliance with principles and regulations. It reflects the degradation and destruction of situations caused by such disruptions. In Arabic literature, the term is employed to describe moral and social deviations that lead to economic, political, and social weakening and destruction (Al-Raghib Al-Isfahani, 1412 AH: 379).

### 1.9.2 Administrative Corruption in Terminology

In socio-political terminology, administrative corruption is defined as: “*The behavior of a government employee who, for personal interests such as family, kinship, friendship, financial gain, or abuse of position and violation of instructions, exerts personal or partisan influence, thereby violating legal duties. This behavior may include the use of bribery to obstruct justice or disrupt social order*” (1994: 26). This type of behavior represents a severe deviation from official and ethical duties in government work, encompassing the exploitation of job positions to achieve personal or restricted benefits, such as those for family or friends, as well as unjust actions for personal gain or the exercise of personal influence. This behavior often involves using bribery to attain unlawful goals, such as obstructing justice or influencing decisions of government bodies. Moreover, it includes misuse of public funds, such as unlawfully benefiting from public resources for personal gain. Such behavior damages public institutions and society as a whole, necessitating vigorous efforts to combat it, including the imposition of legal penalties on those responsible. The roots of administrative corruption lie in the deterioration of an employee’s or official’s moral and social values, as well as errors in the selection process for such positions, weak evaluation and accountability mechanisms, and the lack of effective financial and administrative penalties for delinquent employees. Additionally, some citizens contribute to the spread of corruption by offering financial and symbolic gifts to employees to expedite their transactions.

## 1.10 Thirdly: Supervision in Language and Terminology

### 1.10.1 Supervision in Language

The equivalent term for “supervision” in Arabic is “*riqāba*” (رقابة), which has multiple meanings, including guarding, monitoring, and observing. It denotes protection and vigilance over something, as illustrated by the phrase, “*بيقر موقلا*”, meaning the guardian and protector of a group (Ibn Manzur, 1405 AH: 425). Ibn Manzur explains the term “*بيقر*” (*raqīb*) as: “*A guardian who is*



*never unaware of anything*” (Ibn Manzur, 1405 AH: 424). For instance, in a prophetic narration, it is stated:

”هتیب لهأ یف أمحم اوبقرا“

(“*Be watchful over Muhammad through his family*”), meaning to protect and safeguard the Prophet’s family (Ibn Manzur, 1405 AH: 424).

### 1.11 Supervision in Terminology

In Islamic jurisprudential terminology, supervision refers to the laws and principles derived from Islamic Sharia, which hold individuals accountable for their actions, whether related to their religious or worldly affairs (Ibn Dawood, n.d.: 3). In Islamic Sharia, supervision involves the application of rules and regulations derived from the Qur’an and the Sunnah to oversee human actions in various aspects of their lives. The primary sources of this supervision are the Holy Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet. For example, the Qur’an emphasizes the legality of financial and economic supervision in the verse: “*Do not give the weak-minded your property, which Allah has made a means of sustenance for you*” (An-Nisa: 5). It also warns against betrayal in the verse: “*It is not for a Prophet to act dishonestly. And whoever betrays will bring forth that with which he betrayed on the Day of Resurrection; then every soul will be fully compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged*” (Al-Imran: 161). Commenting on this verse, Al-Tabari beautifully states: “*Just as it is inappropriate for a Prophet to betray, it is equally inappropriate for others to betray or misuse public funds and violate the rights of the people*” (Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari, n.d.: 353).

Fakhr al-Razi writes in this regard: “You should know that betrayal is forbidden with everyone, and dedicating this prohibition to the Prophet has its own benefits. One of them is that the higher the status and dignity of the person being betrayed, the more reprehensible the betrayal becomes, and since the Prophet is the best of humans, betrayal against him will result in the utmost disapproval. The second reason is that revelation would come to him continually, and thus anyone who betrays him may have revelation come down regarding their betrayal, and a disgrace will be set up for them both in this world and the Hereafter. The third reason is that at that time, Muslims were experiencing much poverty, so betrayal at that time was even more disapproved” (1981: 72). As for the legitimacy of supervision in the Sunnah: The Noble Prophet (PBUH) played a significant role

in the implementation of administrative, economic, and financial supervision within the Islamic state. He placed great emphasis on the importance of supervision in safeguarding the state from corruption, protecting public rights and wealth, and preventing Muslim workers from falling into unlawful acts.

## 2. Models of Administrative Corruption

By examining the reality, some examples of administrative corruption can be identified, some of which may be committed knowingly, while others may occur due to ignorance or a lack of attention to the seriousness and consequences of such actions. Some of these examples include: bribery, gifts, rewards, extortion, prioritizing nepotism, fraud, embezzlement, theft, forgery of documents, exploitation, tax evasion, and failing to place the right person in the right position (meritocracy), using public funds for private gain, illegal mediation, extravagance, and waste. There are many other aspects in public matters and titles that will be discussed further below:

1. Nepotism: This phenomenon is widespread in the political and social systems of Islamic societies, with examples including the appointment of friends and relatives who are less

qualified or unqualified in place of others who are more educated and qualified. This leads to the improper placement of individuals in positions of responsibility. In part of his letter to Malik al-Ashtar, Amir al-Mu’minin (peace be upon him) calls for justice and the elimination of any form of discrimination, saying: “Be just to Allah and to people, to yourself, to your family, and to those among your subjects who have your favor, for if you do not do so, you will oppress” (Abdah, 2008: 53). Justice towards God and people means obeying His commands and prohibitions, and justice towards people means avoiding any form of discrimination or favoritism. This is something that rulers throughout history have often fallen into, granting privileges to their friends, family, and favored individuals, which they never give to others. This discrimination is the root cause of various forms of corruption and instability in governments. He also says: “Whoever is raised without qualifications will be brought down without any wrongdoing” (Al-Amidi, 8613).

2. Nepotism and Courteousness: This refers to instances where some officials show favor to certain individuals, granting them special privileges even though they do not deserve them, while there

are more deserving individuals. However, for personal reasons, such as relationships of kinship or favor, others are given priority. For example, a teacher who awards the highest grades in class to a student who is a relative, even though they are not the best student. Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) says in his letter to Malik al-Ashtar: "Then look into the affairs of your workers, and appoint them based on testing. Do not appoint them based on favoritism or partiality, for these are the roots of oppression and betrayal. From among your workers, choose those with experience and modesty, those from noble families with a strong history in Islam, for they have the best morals, the purest lineage, the least ambitious, and the sharpest insight into the consequences of matters" (Al-Sharif al-Radi, 1380: 53). This demonstrates that the relationship between officials and favoritism leads to the monopolization of goods and public services by a small group of influential citizens or those with family connections to the officials and administrators.

3. Bribery: Bribery is one of the most obvious forms of administrative corruption. Bribery, whether accepted by the recipient, the giver, or the intermediary between them, is forbidden and a major sin. Anyone who accepts a bribe must return it to its rightful owner and has no right to dispose of it. In the case of gifts, accepting them from auditors, especially those working in the judiciary or handling daily affairs and commitments, is also prohibited. This leads to a lack of trust in them and encourages corruption, sparking greed and the disregard of laws and the rights of others. As Allah the Almighty says: "And do not consume your wealth among yourselves unjustly or send it to the rulers in order to consume a portion of the people's wealth in sin while you know [it is unlawful]" (Al-Baqarah: 184).
4. Neglecting Job Duties: This means that an employee spends more of their working time on personal phone calls or attending to private matters at the expense of work, or failing to perform their tasks to the required standard, or leaving work before the official working hours end.
5. Waste of Public Funds: This refers to using public funds for the personal benefit of an employee or official, or granting unjust exemptions to certain individuals or businesses from paying taxes or customs duties.

## 2.1 Supervision from the Perspective of Imam Ali (AS)

Imam Ali (AS) used various mechanisms to combat administrative corruption during his rule, and one of the most important of these was the mechanism of overseeing his administrators and holding them accountable for their actions. He believed that they should be held responsible for the corruption they committed. Imam Ali (AS) did not limit himself to simply dismissing corrupt governors, but he also supervised new governors and sent letters outlining his principles to ensure the proper management of the affairs of the Muslim community. A prime example of this is his letter to his governor in Basra, Uthman ibn Hunaif, in which he wrote:

*"After this, O son of Hunaif, it has come to my attention that one of the youths of Basra invited you to a feast, and you went there. A lavish banquet was laid before you, and bowls were set in front of you. I never thought that you would accept the invitation of people who turn away the poor and seat the rich at their table. Look into what you are eating at the houses of such people. Anything you are doubtful about in terms of its permissibility, throw it away, and consume only that which you are certain has been acquired through lawful means."* (al-Sharif al-Radi, 1380: 54)

This letter is one of the most important letters in Nahj al-Balagha and offers many lessons for all seekers of the truth, especially for rulers and leaders of Islamic countries. It contains several key sections:

1. The First Section: Imam Ali (AS) informs his governor Uthman ibn Hunaif that he has heard reports of his participation in a banquet held by one of the elites of Basra, a feast where only the wealthy attended, and a lavish spread was prepared. Imam Ali reprimands him for accepting an invitation to such a feast.
2. The Second Section: Imam Ali (AS) reminds Uthman that every person should have a leader in life. He then describes his own lifestyle as a leader, explaining that he has only two old garments and two loaves of bread, without accumulating wealth. However, he emphasizes that he does not expect Uthman to live like him. What he expects is that Uthman does not forget simplicity, piety, and abstinence.
3. The Third Section: Imam Ali (AS) recalls the story of Fadak and says that the only wealth that was in the hands of the Ahl al-Bayt was Fadak, which was taken from them by the envious and enemies

of the Prophet's family. He mentions that although he does not need Fadak or any other wealth, the end for all of us is death, and our final resting place will be a narrow, dark grave.

4. The Fourth Section: Imam Ali (AS) emphasizes that his simplicity is not due to an inability to enjoy the material benefits of this world, but because he carries the heavy responsibility of leadership. This position requires him to share in the hardships and sufferings of the weakest of people. He insists that he will not sleep full at night while any of his people go to bed hungry.
5. The Fifth Section: Imam Ali (AS) addresses the potential criticism that if Ali ibn Abi Talib lives such a simple life, he might be weak and unable to display the courage and valor he is known for in battle. He responds by explaining that desert trees, which receive less water and nourishment, grow to have tougher wood.
6. The Final Section: Imam Ali (AS) turns to address the world itself, rejecting it and disavowing its allure. After praising those who fulfill their duties before God through worship and night prayers, he once again calls Uthman ibn Hunaif to fear God and live a simple life so that he may be saved from the fire of hell.

In another letter to Ziyad ibn Abihe, Imam Ali (AS) swears an oath, saying: "By God, I swear a true oath that if I hear that you have betrayed even a small amount of the spoils of war, I will deal with you in such a way that you will become weak and burdened with the expenses of your family, and you will be humiliated and degraded. Peace be upon you." (al-Sharif al-Radi, 1380: 20)

### 3. Supervision in the Philosophy of Imam Ali (peace be upon him)

Supervision in the philosophy of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) has a unique philosophy with a specific goal and a profound view on human and economic objectives, which can be achieved through competition. Supervision in Imam Ali's (peace be upon him) philosophy is based on an Islamic foundation, primarily focusing on the humanity of the individual, preserving his dignity, safeguarding his religion, and protecting his rights from waste and destruction. Supervision in Imam Ali's approach is a pious form of supervision based on faith and devotion to God, distinct from harsh and severe behaviors. Instead, it is characterized by friendliness and kindness toward

officials and employees, protecting them from corruption and deviation. This approach is evident in Imam Ali's supervision of officials and administrators during his service to Malik al-Ashtar.

In his letter to Malik al-Ashtar, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) says: "*Then carefully observe their actions, and send trustworthy and loyal spies among them. For your secret observation of their affairs will motivate them to be honest and compassionate towards the people. Protect them from misdeeds. If any of them stretches their hand toward treason, you will have the eyes of your spies to bear witness against them, and you can rely on that as evidence. Then impose the punishment on their body and hold them accountable for their actions. You should humiliate them and label them as traitors, marking them with the shame of suspicion.*" (Abduh, 2008, p. 423)

*"Then consider your employees' work carefully, and appoint them only after testing them. Do not assign them tasks based on personal preferences or without consulting others, for that is a form of oppression and treason. Choose officials from among those with experience, modesty, and piety, who come from noble and pious families with a strong track record in Islam, for their morals are more respected, their reputation is more secure, their greed is less, and their foresight is greater. Then provide them with abundant wages so that they will work more towards their self-improvement, and with their needs met, they will not touch the public wealth. This will serve as a strong argument against them if they do not follow your orders or betray your trust."*

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) continues: "*Then examine the behavior of your officials, and appoint trustworthy spies to oversee them. Your secret surveillance of their actions will ensure they act with integrity and kindness toward the people. Take great care with your close associates. If any of them commits treason and your spies confirm it, rely on their testimony and punish them with a whip. Take back any public wealth in their possession, then humiliate them, mark them as traitors, and place the collar of dishonor around their necks.*"

Therefore, supervision in Imam Ali's (peace be upon him) perspective is not merely about preventing mistakes and fighting against oppression. Its aim is not to accuse workers of crimes, but rather to ensure the integrity of the community and protect it from betrayal to the Imam and the people. This means that



Imam Ali's (peace be upon him) supervisory thinking carries ethical and protective values, grounded in a social philosophy aimed at advancing the community toward perfection and growth. It also strives to establish social security and achieve justice among individuals in society, considering the role and value of each person. His work—rewarding the righteous and punishing the wrongdoers for their misdeeds—has many outcomes. One of the most important social objectives is to create a healthy and secure society.

#### **4. Indicators of Exalted Governance from the Perspective of Imam Ali (Peace be upon Him)**

In this section, an attempt will be made to present the indicators of exalted governance from the governmental viewpoint of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and explore the content of these indicators in his perspective:

##### **4.1 Accountability and the Right to Express Opinions**

This indicator refers to the extent of participation citizens can have in the selection of the government and political system. It also reflects the level of freedom of speech, freedom of political parties, associations, gatherings, and media. According to this indicator, the more citizens have freedom to engage in political life, with political parties, associations, and media being active and free to express their views, the better the governance system is. One of the most important characteristics of an Islamic government is respecting the public's views and fulfilling the people's wishes. For this reason, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was never willing to seize power by any means. He believed that a government could only be considered exalted if it was based on adherence to rational and legal principles and the acceptance of the people. Although, according to Shiite theological principles, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was the rightful and divinely appointed Caliph and Imam, he never sought to impose his rule on the people. When faced with the people's invitation to accept the caliphate, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) displayed a unique behavior throughout history. He even insisted that, if possible, the people should exempt him from accepting the caliphate, saying: "Leave me, and choose someone else. If you leave me, I am like one of you. Perhaps I would be more obedient and submissive to the ruler than you. And if I were your minister and advisor, that would be better than me becoming your emir and leader." (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, p. 123). Imam Ali

(peace be upon him) has numerous statements on this topic, one of which, in a letter to Malik al-Ashtar, he says: "In policy-making, choose the approach that is closest to truth, justice, and is more pleasing to the general public, and this should be your

main consideration." (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, p. 412). He also advises Malik al-Ashtar that power should never be used to fulfill personal desires in society and says: "Never say that I have been made your ruler and that my command must be obeyed. This approach leads to financial corruption, weakens the religion, and brings about the fall of power." (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, p. 405). Imam Ali (peace be upon him), in a letter to al-Qalam ibn Abbas, the governor of Mecca, says: "There should be no intermediary or envoy between you and the people except for your administration. Never prevent those who have needs from meeting you, because if they are turned away from your door, their problems will never be solved." (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, p. 285). Imam Ali (peace be upon him) recognizes the right of the people to question all branches of government and obligates the government to answer the people's questions. In this regard, he writes to Malik al-Ashtar: "If people think you are oppressing them, explain openly to them and clarify your reasons to dispel any suspicions. By doing this, you will maintain your leadership, practice justice, and win the people's hearts with kindness and transparency." (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, p. 217).

##### **4.2 Political Stability and the Absence of Violence**

This indicator concerns the likelihood of a government and political system being destabilized or overthrown by non-legal means and violent tools. Based on this indicator, the more unstable a country is politically, the weaker its governance system. On the other hand, a country with greater political stability scores higher in governance quality. Imam Ali (peace be upon him), both during his period of exile from power under the caliphs and during his own reign, never resorted to violence. He always sought to resolve conflicts through dialogue and peaceful methods. Governments that follow materialistic and worldly methods attempt to use any tools to attract the attention of the people without truly considering their welfare. However, Imam Ali's (peace be upon him) approach was characterized by kindness, compassion, and attention to the needs of the people, with a focus on serving God's creation. As he wrote in a letter to Malik al-Ashtar: "Make your heart open to kindness and compassion, and never be harsh and oppressive to them, considering their suffering as a gain for yourself." (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, p. 215).



According to Imam Ali (peace be upon him), kindness and affection with the people play a significant role in winning their hearts and governing effectively. This is a core Islamic principle that Imam Ali (peace be upon him) adhered to and regarded as crucial in governance. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) considers bloodshed and violence as a divine punishment and a cause of the destruction of blessings and the shortening of a government's lifespan, and sees it as not only weakening the foundation of a government but also destroying it. (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, p. 219). He further emphasizes that in an Islamic government, even injustice towards an ant is unacceptable. (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, p. 329).

### 4.3 Effectiveness of Government

This indicator evaluates the quality of public services, citizen services, and their independence from political pressures. It also assesses the quality of public policies and their implementation, as well as the commitment the government shows towards these policies. The better the quality of public and citizen services, the more independent these services are from political interference, and the higher the government's commitment to them, the better the governance system. In other words, effectiveness refers to the government's ability to legislate, adjudicate, and make managerial decisions regarding the rule of law, as well as the quality of public service provision and its independence from political pressures. Imam Ali (peace be upon him), in the preface of his letter to Malik al-Ashtar, states: "This is a command from Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, to Malik al-Ashtar, when he appoints him as the governor of Egypt, to collect the taxes from the land, fight his enemies, reform the people, and build the cities of Egypt." (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, p. 203).

According to Imam Ali (AS), a state is one that is financially secure in terms of collecting taxes and covering costs and budgets. In terms of defending against enemies, it also possesses a strong military and jihadist power. In this case, the people's affairs are reformed, and cities are developed. Therefore, Malik Ashtar, as the governor of Egypt, should not seek personal titles or power for himself, nor should he be driven by material gain. Instead, he should take charge of the country's administration, collect taxes, fight against the enemies of the people, provide protection to the nation from its enemies, guide them toward material and spiritual improvement, and develop the cities and regions of the governance—building

the people, the land, and raising ethical and spiritual values.

Based on this letter, part of the fundamental ideals of governance includes ensuring the economic stability of society, focusing on growth, reform, and the training and development of the faithful citizens, as well as providing public welfare. Imam Ali (AS) places significant emphasis on the importance of production and development in the collection of taxes and the establishment of infrastructure. In Sermon 40, delivered to the Khawarij, he mentions important aspects of governance and the necessity of it, including the seven duties of a just ruler. Through him, the wealth of the state is gathered to provide for defense, development, and order. He fights against the enemies, secures the roads, and ensures the weak get their rights from the powerful (Nahj al-Balagha, text 65). Imam Ali (AS) paid great attention to the inspection of his governors to ensure the effectiveness of his orders. He always advised his governors to appoint experienced, committed, and trustworthy people as inspectors to review the actions of their officers and report their findings (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, letter 21153).

### 4.4 Quality of Laws

This refers to the state's ability to create and implement policies, regulations, and systems that promote the activities of the private sector. The more the government can develop policies and systems that enable the private sector to flourish, the higher the quality of its regulatory framework. Imam Ali (AS) views justice as the highest form of reform, because weaknesses, disorder, and inefficiency arise from the misplacement of affairs. A just policy is one that places every matter in its rightful position, and justice places everything in its rightful place (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, 527). Imam Ali (AS) sees the stability and durability of any political system in the maintenance of justice and fairness among the people, avoiding any form of discrimination between different social classes. He advised his governors to treat those under their rule with justice and fairness, warning that if they fail to do so, they will be unjust to them (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, 205).

### 4.5 Rule of Law

One of the aspects that Imam Ali (AS) gave serious attention to was the governance based on law and the true implementation of divine law. If someone acted contrary to the law, regardless of their status, Imam Ali would implement divine laws and punish

them accordingly, without accepting any intercession. As previously mentioned, he outlined his lofty goals in Sermon 121 of spreading spirituality, ensuring security, and increasing the well-being of society while emphasizing justice and the rule of law. His interaction with his brother Aqil, who requested a larger share of the public funds, demonstrates his commitment to the sanctity of divine law. In his rule, no one was oppressed, and all were equal before the law. His firmness when a person, claiming to act in the name of religion, tried to bribe him, is evident in his statement: “Either you entered through religion to deceive me, your mind is disturbed, or you are possessed by jinn, or you are speaking nonsense. I swear by God, if I were to receive the seven continents and everything under the sky to disobey God and take a single grain from an unjust ant, I would not do it” (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, 1337).

#### 4.6 Fighting Corruption

Imam Ali (AS) is unparalleled among historical rulers in his fight against corruption. He stated: “Indeed, a ruler is the trustee of God on Earth, the enforcer of justice in society, and the one who prevents corruption and sin among the people” (Gharar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim, 204). Regarding the gifts given by the previous caliph to his relatives from the public funds, Imam Ali returned these funds to the Muslims, saying: “I swear by God, if I see that the dowries of women or the price of slaves have been taken from the public treasury, I will return it, for there is justice in this, and whoever cannot bear justice will find oppression even harder” (Nahj al-Balagha, Dashti, 39). Regarding the financial misuse by Shurayh al-Qadi, the judge of Kufa, Imam Ali remarked: “I have been informed that you bought a house for 80 dinars, wrote a deed for it, and signed the witnesses. Shurayh, admit it if you did not buy that house with the money of others and with illicit wealth, for if you did, you will have lost both this world and the next” (Nahj al-Balagha, Mulayti, 393). Additionally, in a letter to Musaylima ibn Humayra, the governor of a city in Iran, he said: “I have received a report that you have distributed the spoils of war among the members of your tribe. If this is true, you will be disgraced in my eyes, and your value will diminish” (Nahj al-Balagha, same).

#### 4.7 Types of Supervision

##### 4.7.1 Self-supervision (Internal and Conscientious Supervision)

Self-supervision is a process in which a Muslim feels the presence of God’s watchfulness over themselves,

as well as their words and actions (Iyasa’ra, 2010, p. 145). The Holy Quran contains many verses that encourage the development of inherent competition among Muslims through education, training, and reminders of divine blessings. Caring for trust, adhering to virtue, and acting kindly are parts of loyalty to God and His gifts. One of these verses is: “Indeed, Allah has always been over you, an Observer” (An-Nisa: 1), and also: “But indeed, man, against himself, will be a witness” (Al-Qiyama: 14). It is natural that internal supervision is more precise and effective than external supervision because a person is more compassionate toward themselves and, out of love for themselves, seeks to protect them from harm, trouble, and ruin, and is the most eager to benefit from it and achieve what they desire (Al-‘Amili, 2003, p. 16). Imam Ali (peace be upon him) emphasized the growth of self-discipline through stimulating the conscience, focusing on fear of God, and striving for His pleasure (Abduh, 1387, p. 416). In another place, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: “The most beloved remembrance to you should be the remembrance of goodness, so control your desires and avoid what is not permissible for you. Being miserly toward oneself, showing fairness in what one loves or dislikes” (Abduh, 2008, p. 417).

##### 4.7.2 Governmental Supervision

History books are filled with numerous texts that show Imam Ali’s (peace be upon him) practice of supervising the actions of his officials and his refusal to rely solely on optimism or trust in people, as human nature is weak, and hands may be tempted to steal from the property of Muslims and the public treasury. In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) instructed Malik al-Ashtar: “Then, supervise their deeds and send trustworthy and loyal spies among them. Your surveillance of their affairs will encourage them to uphold trust and be kind to their subjects. Be cautious of your subordinates, and if any of them is found to have committed treason, the reports of your spies will serve as proof. You can punish them for their actions, humiliate them, and label them with the mark of treason, and you will ensure the dignity of your governance” (Abduh, 2008, p. 425). Thus, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) not only instructed his officials to report on others but also specified the essential qualities for those tasked with this duty. They must be trustworthy and loyal, so that no false information is spread and the truth is not lost. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) emphasized that when it comes to judging the misdeeds of officials, one should not rely on a single report but gather information from multiple

sources to strengthen the case against the wrongdoer. Moreover, he emphasized that the information must be accurate and from reliable, trustworthy sources so that no official is unjustly accused (as stated in the Quran, “O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful” (Al-Hujurat: 6)).

#### 4.7.3 Public Supervision

Another form of supervision is public oversight, where the people participate in monitoring the actions of governors, officials, and state leaders, seeing it as their civic duty. They evaluate and supervise the performance of their leaders. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) encouraged and trained the people not to remain silent in the face of violations of their rights, saying: “Do not mix with me out of politeness, and do not think that I am reluctant to receive what is rightfully said to me, nor to seek admiration for myself. For, anyone who feels burdened by the truth being said to them or by justice being presented to them, will find that following it becomes more difficult for them. Therefore, do not refrain from speaking up for what is right or advising with justice” (Abduh, 2008, p. 329). The oversight system established by Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was rigorous, and no action was hidden from him. Thus, one of the most important ways for people to participate in politics is through their right to evaluate and supervise the actions of governments. For example, we can look at some examples in this regard

#### 4.7.4 Criticism of Ibn Hanaf

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) learned that one of his officials in Basra had accepted an invitation to a party, and he responded by writing to him: “After this, O Ibn Hanaf, it has come to me that a man from the youth of Basra invited you to a banquet. You hastened to it to adorn yourself with colors and food were presented to you. I did not think you would accept the invitation of a people whose families are poor and whose wealthy ones have been invited” (Abduh, 1387, p. 405).

#### 4.7.5 The Story of Suda bint Amara al-Hamdani

She narrated: “I met him in front of a man who had control over our alms and had wronged us. I found him while he was standing in prayer. When he saw me, he came close, soft and kind, and asked if I needed anything. I said, ‘Yes,’ and explained my matter. He wept and said: ‘O God, You are a witness that I did not instruct them to wrong Your creatures, nor did I

abandon Your rights.’ Then he took a piece of leather from his pocket and wrote on it: ‘In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate: A clear proof has come to you from your Lord, so give full measure and weight and do not deprive people of their due. Do not cause corruption on earth after it has been set right. This is better for you if you believe’” (Al-A’raf: 85). Suda bint Amara says: “When you read this book, be mindful of the work at hand, and until someone comes to you for it, keep it safe and return the letter to me, then deliver it to its rightful owner” (Ibn al-Sabbagh, 2011, p. 184-185).

#### 4.7.6 Imam Ali’s (peace be upon him) letter to some of his officials

“As for you, the people of your town have complained about your harshness, rudeness, and disdain. I have looked into this and found that they are not worthy of being approached for their polytheism, nor should they be despised for their covenant. Therefore, wear a robe of gentleness mixed with a touch of severity for them, and treat them justly...”

## 5. Conclusion

Based on what has been discussed, it can be concluded that: It is clear from what has transpired that supervision plays a crucial role in achieving social justice in society, as well as in promoting righteous governance, preserving resources and lives from harm, waste, and extravagance, and ensuring that tasks are done with appropriate quality and that projects are executed according to established principles and standards. On the other hand, supervision and accountability of those who are deficient strengthen the relationship between individuals and the state, which contributes to the realization of happiness, well-being, and improved living conditions for future generations. For supervision to be effective, it requires righteous role models who embody values in their actions and avoid slogans and conflicts that deviate from reality. Therefore:

1. Effective supervision plays a very important role in achieving social justice, promoting righteous governance, preserving resources and wealth, and improving the quality of operations and project execution. Furthermore, this supervision can strengthen the relationship between members of society and the state, and thus contribute to the realization of happiness and social welfare for the community.
2. Given the importance of supervision, it is recommended to develop and implement



appropriate models and rules for supervision and related accountability issues.

Additionally, educating and raising awareness about the importance of supervision and ethical conduct at all levels of society, including government and citizens, is essential.

3. Furthermore, programs and policies must be designed to ensure cohesive and effective supervision across all sectors and dimensions of society, with coordinated efforts to combat corruption and inefficiencies.
4. In this time, when we are deeply in need of the spirit and thoughts of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) regarding the preservation of assets and rights, safeguarding the country, maintaining human dignity, and fighting financial and administrative corruption, the role of supervision and accountability within the government must be activated. This would ensure that officials and individuals, without discrimination, accept responsibility and are held accountable. We can draw inspiration from Imam Ali (peace be upon him)'s approach to establishing informed and organized supervision foundations.

Therefore, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen the role of supervision and accountability across all public, private, and governmental sectors, ensuring effective and fair issues for both officials and citizens.
2. Increase awareness of the importance of supervision and the fight against corruption through educational and awareness campaigns in schools, universities, and communities.
3. Develop reporting systems for corruption and encourage transparency and accountability at all levels of government, companies, and institutions.
4. Strengthen legal measures and laws to combat corruption and enforce strict penalties for offenders.
5. Support community initiatives and young people who work to enhance transparency and integrity in both public and private affairs.
6. Strengthen international cooperation (among Islamic countries) in the fight against corruption and exchange experiences and knowledge to reinforce joint efforts in this area.

7. By implementing these recommendations, significant progress can be made in combating corruption and enhancing supervision and transparency in societies, which aligns perfectly with the principles and values of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) in justice, equality, and integrity.

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