

## **The Need of Identifying the Vulnerable Sectors of Economy and Prioritizing Them Based on the Practical Model of Economic Policies of Imam Ali (AS)**

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### **Abstract**

*The economic policies of any government is a manifestation of its thoughts and behaviors in solving the, social and economic problems of the society. In the Islamic history, the government of Imam Ali is known to be an outstanding government in this regard.*

*At the time when Imam Ali took the government in his hands the Islamic society was in an ideal economic situation thanks to the wealth and riches that were gained as the results of the past Islamic conquests but at the same time many people of the society were facing harsh economic and financial problems. Therefore Imam Ali as soon as becoming the Caliphs of Islamic society halted the ongoing trend of Islamic conquests and started the fair and equal distribution of the income gained in these conquests and the property that was confiscated and the wealth that was gained through illegal means. He made these actions, a first priority in his economic reform plan. These efforts of Imam Ali in his very short tenure of government reformed the economic structure developed by the previous governments and presented a role model for economic policies based on the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (p b u h) that was also accompanied by great successes.*

*In this article ,by presenting the economic reform plan of IMAM Ali (as) and the executive solutions regarding its implementation, an effort has been made to introduce (as much as possible) the priorities for the implementation of Imam Ali economic system and to present it as role model for the economy of resistance .*

**Keywords: Imam Ali; economic policy; economic reforms; economic disciplines; economy of resistance**

## **Introduction**

The way and method of government of Imam Ali is based on the Qur'anic teachings and upon the strict compliance of the way and method of prophet Muhammad (P-B-U-H). Observance of rights and human values and the implementation of the social and economic justice and the effort to fight with the crooked and deceitful notions and mentality about politics and economy are some of the attributes of the government of Imam Ali, because of these characteristic and attributes the Islamic history remembers his government as outstanding and a unique one in all means. Many scholars in the Islamic history has commented about Imam Ali government and mentioned his management in the reviving of the religion as a role model for all religious governments and praised the implementation of justice in the social and economic sectors.

The main governing principle of the economic notion of Imam Ali (as) is the observance of rights of every person regardless of creed faith and culture and implementation of justice, abstinence and austerity regarding the employees of the government from accumulating illegal wealth, struggle against the rentiers and returning the confiscated estates and properties back to the public treasury, protection of human dignity and observing their sanctity in the society, social security for the poor and needy whereas these affairs were greatly undermined in the previous governments, the economic reforms of Imam Ali (as) were focused on two areas: 1) theory and explanation of the idea of Islamic economy and 2) presenting a suitable model for the implementation of justice and struggle against corruption., Truly these reforms were very successful in the respected areas.

As a result, the Islamic Ummah was gifted with a stream full of thoughts, notions and the behaviors regarding the Islamic government and a criterion for the evaluation of governors regarding their practice of Islamic teachings in life.

The need for discussing this topic gains high importance from the fact that in today's world economics has a very unique role in everyday life and therefore we cannot ignore it or deal towards it with connivance.

Some of the other factors because of which we cannot ignore economy is that the ravages in economy not only causes the disruption in businesses and livelihoods of the people but also has heavy impacts on the religion and the belief of resurrection of the people.

Secondly this topic can be a suitable and an effective model for the world today especially as it can present us with the formula for the formation of economy of resistance and can help us in the way of growth of economy and development. This article at present is a collection of information based on library research and historical description.

## **General: Concepts**

Before entering into the main discussion it is necessary to explain the meaning and the concepts of some of the important vocabulary of this article.

## 1. Concept of Economy

In Arabic economy means *Iqtisad*. The word *Iqtisad* comes from the root word *Qasd* which means the right way. The word *Iqtisad* has two meanings in the vocabulary where as one of the meanings is good i.e. Mediocrity the middle of both extremes for e.g. generosity which is Mediocrity extravagance and stinginess and like bravery which Mediocrity courage and fear. This same meaning has been used in ayah nineteen of Surah luqman.

«اقصد في مشيك»

“His second meaning swings between good and bad for e.g. what is assumed vast and unlikely between justice and oppression”. (Luqman, 19)

«فمنهم ظالم لنفسه و منهم مقتصد»

“But are among them some who wrong their own souls some who follow a middle course”. (Fatir, 32)

*Raghib Isfahani* says: that's mean journey moderate which is not too far and sometimes it also interpreted as near and in the terminology economy is the middle mode between Indulgence or extravagance and manipulation. Almighty Allah says:

«والذين اذا انفقوا لم يسرفوا لم يقتروا و كان بين ذلك قواما»

“And those who if they give they are not excessive nor stingy but they are in a measure between them” (Furqan, 67)

The same concept of the word *Iqtisad* has been interpreted in the words of Imam Ali in *Nahj al-Balagha*:

«ما عال من اقتصد»

“Anyone who profess moderation never become needy” (Sharif razi, 2009)

Therefore it is very clear that the intention of sensible approach and a steadfast way between two extremes and based on the same mentioned meaning the word *Qasd* and its derivatives are mentioned at various places in *Nahj al-Balagha*.

Imam Ali (as) says:

«لن يهلك من اقتصد»

“Anyone who profess modesty shall never perish” (Tamimi Amidi, no date)

And the word *Iqtisad* in this meaning and concept is very common and prevalently used in *Nahj al-Balagha*, so that it can explain the meaning and concept of terminology being used today.

Then Imam Ali (a s) uses the term of *Iqtisad* in a much broader and vast concept and extend it to all the fields of life:

«إذا رغبت في صلاح نفسك فعليك بالاقتصاد والقنوع والتقال»

If you want to try to reform yourself then adopt Contentment in your life. (Sharif razi, 2009)

The term used by Greeks to mention economy is Echos Nomos which is in the meaning of household management. (Lodoeweeg, 1971) He believes that economics is a knowledge which studies about the relationship between humans and their physical needs which are present in nature for free. (ibid) The Islamic intellectuals have tried to separate to economic sciences from the school of economics. *Nabhani* believes that economy or *Iqtisad* is for the regulation, security and increasing the wealth and he says: Economic sciences discuss about this but the distribution of wealth is one of the duties of economic system and according to this the regulation of wealth is a science and the distribution of wealth is a type of idea and notion. (Nizaam iqtisaadi, pg 42)

By referring to this type of classification and in the light of what is mentioned in *Nahj al-Balagha* we find that the speeches and sayings of Imam Ali (as) includes all the two aspects. Regulation of wealth is a science and its distribution in this regard that it includes principles and policies of economic sciences and also it includes the foundations and pillars of the school of economics that within itself highlights the importance Islam gave to both aspects of economy

## 2-The Economic Discipline

In Arabic the term used for order and discipline is *Nazm* and *Inzibaat*. These two terms are very close to one another and conveys one common concept.

*Nazm* means to redact something into a discipline unit and to place minor affairs in an equal and regular mode. In two books *Al-A'ain* and *Lisaan al-Arab* a definition which is very close to which is described here is mentioned i.e. to putting up and adjusting (redacting) the pearls and the things similar to this into a discipline unit and placing them into a single string is called *Nazm* (order). (Ibn manzoor, no date; farahiidi, 1993) For example, if the beads of the praying beads are placed in a regular manner in a single string and wired them it is said that they have been given the order (*Nazm*). In Arabic the word *Inzibat* on the weight of *Infiaal* is from the root word *Zabt* which means to protect ,to register and to imprison or detain something or a story which is in fact the same retention or preservation of something but in a special style and close to order (*Nazm*) (ibid)

As a result; order and discipline in the meanings of to organize, regulate, to bring something into an order, finding an order and in the meanings similar to these has been used. (Azarnoosh azartaash, 1999) The intended purpose from the order and discipline of economics are as follows

- 1- Regulating the economic affairs and the lives.
- 2- Regulating the production and consumption.

Order and discipline in the chapter of economics includes all the stages of it including production, distribution and consumption.

In the production areas, the production workshops should have work order and discipline and a suitable production so that process of production remains immune from the every sort of damage or disturbance. If the production factories have the right order and management with a disciplined and regulated working human resource then the production process will be methodical, always having a growing trend. An order and planning should also govern the distribution of products and services so that the service always take place on time and no trouble should be created for the society and the consumer market. These two stages requires precise scientific management and Provision of the necessary facilities so that by employing them the production and distribution process take place in a good manner. The consumer sector belongs to the very consumers in itself and there should be an optimized utilization take place in this regard.

Order and Discipline (*Nazm Wa Inzibaat*) in every task is a factor of growth and development in it. Anyone who has order and discipline in his personal and social life achieves more success. In all categories of religious orders there is a ruling order and discipline in place for example in the daily prayers during day and night have a special time and order and if the prayers are not performed at their specific time and with their specific order according to the judgements (*Fatawas*) of all jurists the prayers are void and null altogether and the person should perform the prayers again or should perform the missed or lapsed prayers. Likewise the fasts in the month of Ramadan starts from a given specific time and ends at a specific time otherwise it is not enough perhaps sometimes religious duty like *Qadaa* and *Kaffare* becomes obligatory for the person anyway, order and discipline governs all the Islamic values and rulings (*Ahkaam*) based on that the specific formula should be performed accordingly.

Regulation (giving order and discipline) in this meaning can be found abundantly in the lives (way and method of life) of Ma'soumin or Imams (as) including their private and individual lives as well as social and political lives.

Imam Ali (as) as he observed the discipline in all the matters he also recommended it to his governors and followers. Imam Ali (as) in the covenant of governorship belonging to Malik Ashtar says:

«و اياك و العجلة بالامور قبل اوقاتها او التسقط فيها عند امكانها او اللجاجة فيها اذا تنكرت او الوهن عنها اذا استوحشت فضع كل امرٍ موضعه و اوضع كل امرٍ موقعه»

“Do not make haste to do a thing before its time, nor put it off when the right moment arrives. Do not insist on doing a wrong thing, nor show slackness in rectifying a wrong thing. Perform everything in its proper time”. (Mohammadi rey shahri 2000; sharif razi, 2009)

Also Imam Ali (as) in his will to Imam Hassan Mujtaba (as) and Imam Hussain (as) in the last moments of his life says:

«اوصيكم و جميع وُلدي و اهلي و من بلغه كتابي، بتقوي الله و نظم امركم»

“I order you, all my children, my family and to those that my will reaches them that fear The Almighty Allah and have discipline in all the affairs of life.” (Sharif razi, 2009)

Discipline and order are from the important educative and cultural indicators in the economic activity and in all of the production process the distribution and consumption should be observed and the performers of jihad in this regard must attire themselves with the attributes of discipline and order and must perform their duties and responsibilities in this way economic growth will be achieved and there will be no problem for the people.

## 2- Economy from the Perspective of Imam Ali (as)

The economic viewpoint of Imam Ali (as) is not profit oriented. His viewpoint is not just after the worldly profits and its not abbatial in a manner that it may generally count the profits as abominable rather it encourages the people to be active in their lives with observing the limits and values ,Imam Ali (as) says:

Pursuit work and livelihoods as if you will always remain in this world and do think about hereafter as if you are on the verge of death.

Imam Ali (as) when he talks about the daily time table of a believer and how should he divide and organize his day night hours. He says:

«لِلْمُؤْمِنِ ثَلَاثُ سَاعَاتٍ: فَسَاعَةٌ يُنَاجِي فِيهَا رَبَّهُ وَ سَاعَةٌ يُرْمُ مَعَاشَهُ وَ سَاعَةٌ يُحَلِّي بَيْنَ نَفْسِهِ وَ بَيْنَ لَذَّتِهَا» (ibid)

Imam Ali (as) in this speech considers economy as having a role likewise of worship. He believes economy is a set of actions that follow a value system ruling over humans .Since the main goal of this value system from the Islamic viewpoint - with regard to two natural aspects present in human beings (1) aspect of seeking perfection and (2) righteous inclination aspect - is to achieve divine proximity. All the actions of a believer must be according to this normative so that he can achieve his goal. Hazrat Ali (as) in this regard says to Malik Ashtar:

«وَ لِيَكُنْ أَحَبُّ الْأُمُورِ إِلَيْكَ أَوْسَطُهَا فِي الْحَقِّ وَ أَعَمَّهَا فِي الْعَدْلِ وَ أَجْمَعَهَا لِرِضَى الرَّعِيَّةِ» (ibid)

The most beloved tasks for you must be those which are the most compatible with the Almighty GOD; the most extensive in justice and the most comprehensive in attracting the (as) satisfaction of people. From this we can witness the perfection seeking look of Imam Ali towards economy and worldly activities everywhere in his life, letters and in the orders issued

Imam Ali says to his governor in Azerbaijan (*Asha'as Ibn Qais*) by him to his governors.

«إِنَّ عَمَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَكَ بِطُعْمَةٍ وَ لَكِنَّهُ فِي عُقْبِكَ الْأَمَانَةُ» (ibid)

That means the viewpoint of Imam Ali towards economy and material and worldly affairs is influenced by his Epistemology and is far above from the materialistic school of thought which have very narrow mindedly tried to abstract everything in this material world. The belief in the hereafter and having life s philosophy such as the one being explained in the Quran have great differences with other materialistic schools of taught in practice and behavior and a comprehensive study of all of them requires more time and effort which is beyond this article.

If from the perspective of profit –oriented school of thought the main target is to achieve profit and for achieving profits all means can be used in the perspective of Imam Ali (as). Firstly, the main target is not to achieve material benefits. Secondly, for achieving the target



though it may be a sacred one all means cannot be used for example we can relate to following events:

1- In the war of *Siffien* Imam Ali didn't allow his army to close the water supply for *Muawiey* army whereas the *Muawiey* army had closed the water supply for them previously.

2-The acceptance of arbitration by Imam Ali and ordering Malik Ashtar to retreat whereas they were just few steps behind victory

Imam Ali (as) in this context, orders his governor of Egypt i.e. Malik Ashtar in the following:

«وَلَا يَدْعُوَنَّكَ ضِيقُ أَمْرٍ لَزِمَكَ فِيهِ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ إِلَى طَلَبِ انْفِسَاجِهِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ فَإِنَّ صَبْرَكَ عَلَى ضِيقِ أَمْرٍ تَرْجُو انْفِرَاجَهُ وَفَضْلَ عَاقِبَتِهِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ غَدْرِ تَخَافُ تَبِعْتَهُ»

If an agreement of Allah involves you in hardship do not seek its repudiation without justification, because the bearing of hardships through which you expect relief and a handsome result is better than a violation whose consequences you fear. (ibid)

### 3- Economic Reforms of Imam Ali (As)

The sincere and endurable efforts of about a quarter of century of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (p b u h) against the deviations, tyranny and injustice were forgotten in the next quarter of a century after his death. During the twenty five year period of the caliphs surprising developments occurred and the cultural structure that was formed at the time of Prophet Muhammad (p b u h) was stricken with fundamental changes in the direction of the culture of ignorance with the same elements – but this time with the name of religion-was prevailing over the society are as follows: The blind following from the chiefs and elders, the dominance of the ignorant, the rule of violence, honor and pride in terms of ancestry and tribe, Authoritarianism and dictatorship, Competition in worldliness and the legitimacy of force, Fading freedom and free thinking, Moral collapse. (Dilshad Tehrani, 1998)

The Islamic society with the spreading territories, expanding administration and with Muslims nominal rise was caught by the deviations and values of the time before the prophet Muhammad was sent by god.

«الَا وَ ان بليتكم قد عادت كهيتها يوم بعث الله نبيه» (ibid)

Imam Ali (as) very clearly states that, at the time of third caliph specially during his last days of life the people at that stage of time because of the enormous embezzlements from the public treasury, the posts that were given to unrighteous men and the corruption that came into being in the society because of these matter returned to the age of ignorance. (Makarem shirazi, 2006)

The ethnic and tribal distinctions and political and religious derivations re-emerged in the Islamic society and the rulers of Islamic society for the sake of continuity of their power behaved very improperly and a part of their unreligious functions come into force in the field of economic policies.

In the continuation of our discussion, In behavioral terms we will refer to the main agendas of his programs during his caliphate. Since the tenure of the government of Imam Ali (as) started after the tenure of the previous three caliphs and after the Deteriorating situation that was created at the time of Usman, all of his programs are focused in the direction of spreading social and economic justice, we will elaborate on this by benefiting from the collection of his conducts during his government and also from the orders and decrees he gave to his governors.

### 3-1. Open Justice and Elimination of Discrimination

The first principle policy of Imam Ali (as) was to eradicate Inadmissible and grim distinctions that had been formed in the society because of the false practices of the previous caliphs. Step by step it overrun from the limits set for it in the offices and it became a style. It caused the plundering of public treasury and had a major role in day by day increasing of gaps between the different classes of society. Imam Ali insisted very hardly to eradicate these distinctions in a manner that many of his close friends, relatives and some of the *Ash'aaab* the companions of Prophet Muhammad (p b u h) became angry from Imam Ali. He used to answer the objectors as follows: I have not seen in the book of ALL MIGHTY ALLAH that sons of *Ismail* (Arabs) have virtue over the sons of *Ish'aaq* (non-Arabs). (Mahmoodi, no date)

Imam Ali (as) when accepted the caliphate and government he enumerated that the philosophy behind accepting this is the Adjudication of the rights of the oppressed and he opened a new horizon for the whole world.

«و ما اخذ الله من العلماء ان لايقاروا على كظه الظالم ولاسغب مظلوم لالقيت حبها على غاربها» (Sharif razi, 2009)

«ان علينا خطب ثانی يوم بیعته فی المدینہ فقال: الا ان کل قطیعه اقطعها عثمان و کل ما اعطاء من مال الله فهو مردود فی بیت المال» (Abdo, 1988)

But the capitalist class thought that Imam Ali will make comprise with them against their submission and obedience. *Walid bin aqabe* send *Abi Mueet* to Imam Ali (as) and he said to Imam: oh you *Abul Hassan* we are from the brothers and relatives of you but you repulsed us all with a single arrow (you treated us like others). Today we want to do allegiance with you but with a condition that the wealth and property that was given to us in the time of *Usman* you will not retake it from us. Imam once again strictly showed his determination in following and carrying out the path he started thus Imam eradicated all discriminations that were present in the system of distribution of wealth. (Adil adiiib, 1998)

This method that Hazrat Ali (as) applied for the establishment of general equality amongst all the people was the major reason behind the relinquishing of Imam Ali by the notables and joining hands with the son of *Abu Sufyaan* because he never gave preference to nobles over normal people likewise he never consider an Arab to be superior over a non-Arab because humans in creation and in the conscience of Ali are brothers of one another, Imam Ali never compromised with the heads and leaders of the tribes whereas the son of hind did compromise and he never spend public money in buying the Appeasements and inviting others towards him. (jurdaad, 1996) One of the root causes of the formation of *Khawarij* were the unjust actions and behaviors of the previous caliph and the widespread governmental and economic corruption.



In the era of *Umar* a special type of culture and education was prevailing in the society and this special spirit and morale formed the next generation. The era of *Usman* with its special characteristics caused the revival of tribal traditions and mentality, emergence of tribal autocracy, conversion of spiritual noblesse of the government of *Umar* into tribal landlord noblesse caused severe reactions in Muslim idealists that were mentioned, against this system. (Khakrand, 1993) Whereas Imam Ali (as) in his actions and behaviors related to his relative and friends never observe negligence even for an instant or so, and never gave unjust preference to someone over another. Ali after becoming the caliph equally distributed the wealth, as was the method of Prophet Muhammad and this method greatly embarrassed *Talha* and *Zubair* and they rebelled against him. (Ahmed ibn yaqub, 1968)

«و في اليوم الثالث من ايام عهد الامام دعانا الناس الى استلام اعطياتهم من بيت المال حيث امر كاتبه عبيد الله ابي رافع ان يسير على النهج التالي: ابدا با لمهاجرين فنادهم واعطا كل رجل مهم حضر ثلاثة دنانير ثم ثن بالانصار فافضل معهم مثل ذلك ومن حضر من الناس كلهم الاحمر والاسود فاضع به مثل ذلك» (Muhammad rai shehry, 2000)

He for the sake of Adjudication of people rights had a firm resolution. He authenticated the ruling power and extended the justice from his own house and family to every level of community and his governors and with everything which is unjust he intends to fight with it though it maybe for the sake of need or from his close friends. (Sharif razi, 2009)

Imam in the distribution of public treasury did not distinguished between his sister and his slave girl and to everyone he gave 20 dirhams similarly he did not distinguished between his Qureshi wife who considers herself to be noble and a non Arabic wife and when objection is made about this behavior of Imam Ali he says: I will never distinguish between black and white and there is no difference between the sons of *Ismail* and *Ishāq* and I have not seen any superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab in the holy Quran.

Imam Ali (as) did not distinguished between his sister umm Hani and her non-Arab slave girl in the distribution of public treasury and he gave equal share to both of them, when his sister objected to him he replied:

I have not seen any difference mentioned in the Quran between the sons of *Ismail* and *Ishāq* (between Arab and no Arab)

«دخلت عليه اخته ام هانى بنت ابوطالب فدفع اليها عشرين درهماً فسألت ام هانى مولاتها العجميه فقالت كم دفع اليك امير المؤمنين (ع)؟ فقالت: عشرين درهماً، فانصرفت مسخطة؛ فقال لها، انصرفي رحمك الله، اني والله لا اجد لبني اسماعيل في هذا الفىء فضل على بني اسحاق» (Majlisi, 1982)

The establishment and spreading of justice is one of the basic principles of the philosophy behind sending the prophets by God. (Hadid, 25)

Surely except Hazrat Ali (as) - who had grown up in the shadow of teachings of Prophet Muhammad (p b u h) in the Islamic school of thought - it is not expected from anyone else.

### 3-2. Presenting a Role Model of Simple Living from His Own Personal Life

As the multiple traditions of history tells us that the third caliph and his governors had an affluent and luxurious life but the lifestyle of Imam Ali was very simple and non –luxurious. He tried all efforts to sense the pain of the deprived and to spend a life like the poor and needy men of the society.

«ان الله تعالى فرض على ائمه العدل ان يقدروا انفسهم بضعفه الناس كيلا يتبينغ بالفقير فقره»  
(Sharif razi, 2009)

The Almighty Allah has made it obligatory for the just rulers to spend their lives in the same level like that of deprived and needy ones of the society so that the poverty of the poor not cause them to grief and to become distress which is perishing in nature. Imam Ali in the instructions made by him to his governors has expressed his simple way of living to be a practical role model for them for example, he says to them in this world his two old clothes are sufficient for him.

Be aware your leader from this world is satisfied with his two old clothes and from the meals of this world he is content and satisfied with two loaves of bread, I do not possess a single span of land and expect from the amount of nutrition and nourishment that is necessary for an injured animal (referring to a very small quantity) I have not benefitted from to nourishments of this world. This world in my eyes is more inferior then the bitter seed that are used in tanneries. (Sharif razi, 2009)

The simplicity of Imam Ali was not a slogan for the social consumption or mummery but according to Imam Baqir (as) Imam Ali (as) ruled for five years and this time period he did not build anything for himself, did not allocate even a single piece of land or property to anyone and did not inherited any gold or silver. (Kuleni, 2009)

This type of governance in the whole of history has become a role model which is unrepeatable and inaccessible for the rulers claiming to be religious or for the claimants of a religious government.

### 3-3. Social Security and the Elimination of Poverty

Imam very seriously followed the instructions made by Prophet Muhammad (p b u h) in his will during his tenure .Prophet had instructed Imam Ali that do not trample the affairs of the poor and needy whom are a section of society .Distribute a specific portion from the wealth related to god and from their certain due from the *Zakat* which is designated for them by Allah between them. (Noori tabarsi, 1967) Therefore Imam Ali (as) while instructing Malik Ashtar, regarding the poor says" For the sake of Allah, regarding what Allah has orders us to perform about their portion from his wealth perform it and distribute between them in very city a partial from public treasury which is in your hands, a partial of cereals and a portion from the booty of the lands conquered by the Islamic forces. (Sharif razi, 2009)

Social security of the disable and the retire persons were the prime priorities of the *Alavi* government

Be caring towards orphans and sympathize with the old and disable because they are helpless and may not they ask others and this a very tough and hard task for the governors and surely observance of rights is difficult. (ibid) He writes to *Qasm Ibn Abbas*, one of his governors, look at the wealth belonging to God which has been gathered before you! give it to the elderly and the poor near you and to those who are very poor and in dire need and whatever is left send it to me so that I can also distribute it amongst the poor near me. (ibid)

This narrative is very popular about the Imam Ali that he saw a Christian beggar, he asked from the people who were there about the beggar they replied he is a Christian, then Imam said you have benefitted from his services when he was young and now when he has become old and weak you have forsaken him. Then he ordered to spend from the public treasury on the old Christian beggar. (Hur amoli, no date)

The social security programs of Imam Ali were so widespread that everybody in *Kufa* including the lower class were given food, housing and water supply from the river *Furat* (*Euphrates*). (Majlisi 1982)

The second most essential target of Imam economic reforms related to the social security of the Islamic society was to eradicate and uproot poverty and distress that was created in the society because of the injustices of the previous governments. At that time income of Muslims thanks to the enormous booties of the successive conquests had been multiplied to many times so that there was no shortage of income in the caliphate and the economic problems were caused by unjust, cruel and uncalculated distribution of wealth.

Poverty is one of the major factors behind the crime and immorality present in the society. It has a very close relationship with the misery and adversity of the society, moral disorder and factors of Promiscuity, flattery, envy, distrust etc.

Every government which tends to pay attention towards efflorescence of human talent present in the society must eliminate poverty, unemployment and mendacious jobs from the society. On the other hand Imam Ali reproves indolence and dependence upon others

«ملعون من القى كله على الناس»

The one who totally depends upon others and uses wages of other is cursed and damned near the Almighty Allah. (Ibn Shabeh Harrani, 1974)

And on the side. He encourages the efforts made in way of having a good and peaceful life. Imam Ali (as) in the recommendations made by him to Malik Ashtar, he advises him to pay attention regarding the lives of the poor and orders him to be kind towards them.

«ثم الله الله في الطبقة السفلى من الذين لا حيلة لهم من مساكين و المحتاجين و اهل البوسى و الزمنى و احفظ الله ما استحقك من حقه فيهم و اجعل لهم قسماً من بيت مالک و قسماً من غلات صوافى الاسلام فى كل بلد» (Sharif razi, 2009)

For the sake of God, for the sake of god pay attention toward the lower class of the society (towards the poor, destitute and the crippled ones) and as they are helpless and

destitute, Some of them express their neediness while other don't and do save and preserve their rights as Allah has ordered us to do. The behavior of Imam Ali regarding the disable persons from Muslims or non-Muslims is very elegant, one day Imam saw a blind person begging in the road, he asked about him so he was told that he is a Christian Imam said: till the time he had the ability to do work you benefitted from him but now when he has become old you are prohibiting from him and then he ordered to spend on him from the public treasury. (Sharif razi, 2009)

(Mohammad rai shehri, 2000) «استعملتوه حتى اذا كبر و عجز منعتوه؟ انفقوا عليه من بيت المال»

The attention of Imam Ali (as) towards the poor and helpless of the Islamic society and the welfare for them was in a manner that Imam Ali in describing the living conditions of the people says:

«ما اصبح بالكوفة احد الا ناعماً ان ادناهم ليأكل البرّ و يجلس في الظل و يشرب من ماء الفرات»

You will not find anybody in *Kufa* who is not benefitting from the prosperity and blessings even the poorest persons of the city of *Kufa* eats from wheat breads, drinks from the sweet water of *Furat* (Euphrates) and have housing. (Majlisi 1982)

One of the results of having oppression in the society is the destruction of spiritual and physical aspects, in this situation the ones who experience the uttermost financial and economic pressure are the lower income class and the poor because they cannot express their destitution nor the unjust rulers have ears to hear their voice of destitution and on the other hand the unjust rulers by presenting faulty statistics, by making false claims and by feeding the authorities increase this pressure on them but in the administration of justice people enjoy their lives by experiencing true peacefulness and the real meaning of life and this point is very important that the government can provide peacefulness for its people by literally eliminating poverty and destitution from their lives in a way that the gaps created between rich and poor should reach to a minimum extent.

Maybe the first duty of a just government in the path of economic reforms in the society is paying attention towards the livelihood of the poor because with poverty and destitution corruption, depravation, misery and discontent will spread and become popular in the society and the stability of the government will be in danger.

### 3-4. Supporting Businesses for Creating Booming Markets

One the solutions of Imam for the reformation of economy is business development and providing the possibility for the rich to perform trade and commerce and in the same way supporting the professionals and industrialists. Imam believed that by the development of trading, supporting the industrialists, employing the human resource and by the protection of human values he will achieve his goal of a prosper society. The order which he had written to Malik Ashtar in this regard, its true observance can bring economic development in the society.

I want to advise you about your businessmen and industrialists. Treat them well, and order your officers to follow the same policy. There may be local businessmen carrying on

their trade in certain places or those who send their merchandise from one place to another. There may even be those who import and export goods. Similarly there may be industrialists and manufacturers as well as industrial labor or men engaged in the handicrafts. They all deserve sympathy, protection and good treatment. They all are the sources of wealth to the country. They provide goods for the consumers. Most of these traders carry and convey these goods from across deserts, seas and over open lands and mountains, their consignments are brought from distant lands, often from places which are not easy to approach and where usually people do not care or do not dare to go. (Syed razi, 2009)

Thus rightly supporting the traders and industrialists can be effective in bringing economic development and in lowering the unemployment rate. This also indicates that Imam considered this group to be very important for the society and government.

### 3-5. Tax Reforms to Improve Earnings

One of the most important sources of earning for the governments in the course of history is taxation and same was the case with the government of Imam Ali. Tax reforms pay a major role in improving the economic condition of the government and society because with the incensement of income through taxation, the government can spend more on development and eliminating the deprivations. If the collection of taxes is in a systematic form people by paying the taxes will not get under financial burden therefore Imam for the securement of the point that government may perform his duties properly proceeded in collecting the taxes and regulating the public treasury. (Sharif razi, 2009)

In the same way appointed agents for the collection of *Zakat*, *Khiraj*, *Jazijyeh* and the other items.

### 3-6. Paying Attention toward Civil Development

Development and prosperity are the main features of Imam economic reforms .Paying attention towards the development which is explained in the speeches of Imam Ali (as) will originate public trust for their rulers, welfare and development for the people and economic growth in the society. Imam Ali in the context of explaining the governing values describes about the development of cities and their growth and prosperity and says:

«فضيله السلطان عماره البلدان» (Mohammad Rai Shehri, 2000)

And he believes that the development, construction and prosperity are one of the major duties of humans living on earth:

«فاعلمنا سبحانه انه قد امرهم بالعماره ليكون ذلك سبباً لمعايشهم بما يخرج من الارض من الحب و الثمرات و ما شاكل ذلك» (Hakimi; hur e amoli, no date)

According to the luminous word of Imam Ali (as) the collected taxes should also be spent in the development of cities and when people see that their money is being spend on their well-being and convenience they feel satisfaction and in this way cities will be developed.



«ولیکن نظرک فی استجلاب الخراج عماره الارض ابلاغ من نظرک فی و من طلب الخراج بغير عماره اخرب البلاد و اهلك العباد و لم يستقم امره الا قليلاً»

You must think about the development of land before thinking about the collection of taxes because these taxes are collected due to the developments and anyone who collects taxation without development he has indeed destroyed the cities and his people and that government will not last long. (Sharif razi, 2009)

Hence Imam is saying that stability of government is conditional to the civil development, correct utilization of taxes and a fair and unoppressive mechanism of collecting taxes. He directs the focus of rulers to this point that they should think more about the civil developments in the cities rather than thinking about collecting the taxes and should make efforts in this regard.

### 3-7. Fight against Corruption

One of the weak points of governors is said to be preferring the people close or related to them over others in political and social matters. The relatives of the rulers think that they have the right to take bigger portions from the public treasury, especially at the time of third caliph it had become an official practice but Imam Ali fought with these policies and did not consider any preference and special privileges for his brothers, sisters and children. He treated them equally like others. A narration from *Nahj al-Balagh* in which *Aqil* demands from Ali is illustrative of this reality:

By Allah, I certainly saw (my brother) *Aqil* fallen in destitution and he asked me a saa' (about three kilograms in weight) out of your (share of) wheat, and I also saw his children with disheveled hair and dusty countenance due to starvation, as though their faces had been blackened by indigo. He came to me several times and repeated his request to me again and again. I heard him, and he thought I would sell my faith to him and follow his tread leaving my own way. Then I just heated a piece of iron and took it near his body so that he might take a lesson from it, then he cried as a person in protracted illness cries with pain and he was about to get burnt with its branding. Then I said to him, "Moaning women may moan over you, O, *Aqil*, Do you cry on account of this (heated) iron which has been made by a man for fun while you are driving me towards the fire which Allah, the Powerful has prepared for (a manifestation of) His wrath? Should you cry from pain, but I should not cry from the flames?"

Or when his daughter *Umm E Kulsoum* asked the treasurer for borrowing a necklace for three days on the occasion of *Eid Ul Adha* and he gave it to her. When Imam saw this necklace he protests and says if that not so that you have borrowed this necklace I would have cut off your fingers for stealing from public treasury and you would have become the first woman from Hashmi tribe whose hands have been cut off because of robbery. (Ibn e shehr ashub, 1988)

The Imam's careful consideration on the observance of social economic justice and his reform policies are so that every just and fair person will appreciate it. Imam in his letter to Malik Ashtar says:



A governor has favorites and people of easy access to him. They misappropriate things are high-handed and do not observe justice in matters. You should destroy the root of evil in the people by cutting away the causes of these defects. Do not make any land grants to your hangers on or supporters. They should not expect from you the possession of land which may cause harm to the adjoining people: (Sharif razi, 2009)

«لا تقطن لاحد من حاشيتك و حامتك قطعيه ولا يطمعن منك في اعتقاده عقده» (ibid)

He remind his governors to observe caution towards public treasury:

«ان هذا المال ليس لى و لا لك، انما هو فى ء المسلمين»

Undoubtedly this wealth does not belong to me and you but is for the all the Muslims.  
(ibid)

The restoration of the property illegally confiscated from the public treasury back to its original place was one of his major agenda s in his fight against corruption. Imam in his first sermon clearly states that he will restore all the confiscated property from the public treasury

«ان علياً خطب ثانى يوم بيعته فى المدينه فقال : الا ان كل قطيعه اقطيعها عثمان و كل مال اعطاه من مال الله فهو مردود فى بيت المال»

You must know that all the wealth and property which belonged to god and was gifted to others in the era of *Usman* will be restored. (ibid)

Or his first public speech he says:

«والله لو وجدته قد تزوج به النساء و ملك به الاماء لرددته»

I swear to god if I found any assets which have become women s dowry or from which slave girls have been bought or have been scattered in cities I will restore them for the public usage. (ibid)

This policy of Imam of restoring the confiscated properties was did not confined in the level of being a slogan and the confiscators also realized that Imam will not compromise with them on this matter and this firmness of Imam in this issue resulted him in the form of two wars of *Jamal* and *Siffien*.

### 3-8. Keeping the Moral and Practical Control of Governors

Imam in the spending and usage of the public treasury practiced in a manner that if we elaborate on it, accepting it for those who are not aware of Imam's way and method will be difficult and far from believing.

The order to carve the nibs (for low ink consumption), observance of spacing (for low paper consumption) and to place a personal lamp next to a lamp belonging to public treasury in his office and by becoming satisfy with a very minimum sort of life, all these are proven historical facts that both the friends and the enemy of Imam Ali have consensus on them. (Mashaik faridni, 1990)

Imam Ali while addressing *Ziyad* (successor of *Ibn Abbas* the governor of Basra) who had practice imprudence in the consumption of public treasury says:

«فَدَعَ الْإِسْرَافَ مُقْتَصِدًا وَ اذْكُرْ فِي الْيَوْمِ غَدًا وَ اَمْسِكْ مِنَ الْمَالِ بِقَدْرِ ضَرُورَتِكَ وَ قَدِّمِ الْفَضْلَ لِيَوْمِ حَاجَتِكَ».  
(Sharif razi, 2009)

And he also says to Malik Ashtar:

«إِيَّاكَ وَ الْإِسْتِنَارَ بِمَا النَّاسُ فِيهِ أَسْوَةٌ»

Refrain strain from specifying the matters in which all people are equal. (ibid)

Therefore a person in charge who believe that, it is his right to behave in all sorts of way and who gives oneself priority in the usage of public facilities is absurd. Imam Ali (as) regarding this matter, in his letter to his governor in Basra when one of his nephews had use the public money for performing the pilgrimage to Mecca says:

Why did you go to mecca with public money, are you not afraid from the day of resurrection and you are using public money for your journeys. You should fear from God!!!!

«فَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَ ارْذُدْ إِلَى هَوَاءِ الْقَوْمِ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ ثُمَّ أَمَكَّنِي اللَّهُ مِنْكَ لَأُعْذِرَنَّ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِيكَ وَ لَأَضْرِبَنَّكَ بِسَيْفِي الَّذِي مَا ضَرَبْتُ بِهِ أَحَدًا إِلَّا دَخَلَ النَّارَ»

Practice virtue (*Taqwa*) in your life and return the public property and wealth to them otherwise if I caught you, I will kill you with a sword who has not killed anybody but he has gone to the hell .I swear to GOD if Hassan and Hussein had committed these acts I will have acted in the same way without observing any kinship and familial ties with them. (ibid)

Therefore according to the teachings of Imam Ali and his practical model ,the ruler has a duty to strictly observe the public interests and in the way of protecting public rights he should not hesitate in performing any task and by reminding his self with the hereafter he should refrain his self from all abuses and economic immoralities and we should not forget this point that the governor may be pious and righteous person in his own practical life but those who around him like his relatives , friends and sub ordinates may commit moral sins in economic and financial issues and me may not even notice them. Bribery, greed and taking illegal commissions for solicitation by the ones closed to the rulers are one of major problems of today s economy .In these matters the ruler must try personally to uproot these problems , Imam Ali reminds about this ominous economic aspect and says:

«ثُمَّ إِنَّ لِلْوَالِي خَاصَّةً وَ بَطَانَةً فِيهِمْ اسْتِنَارٌ وَ تَطَاوُلٌ وَ قِلَّةٌ إِنْصَافٍ فِي مُعَامَلَةٍ»

A governor has favorites and people of easy access to him. They misappropriate things, are high handed and do not observe justice in matters. (ibid)

Imam in the continuation of letter he focuses attention of Malik Ashtar to this point that he may not provide the basis for his relatives to take bribe and illegal commissions for solicitation and to pay more attention towards his relatives and companions comparing with other ordinary people.

«وَلَا تُقْطِعَنَّ لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ حَاشِيَتِكَ وَحَامَتِكَ قَطِيعَةً وَلَا يَطْمَعَنَّ مِنْكَ فِي اعْتِقَادِ عُقْدَةٍ تَضُرُّ بِمَنْ يَلِيهَا مِنَ النَّاسِ فِي شَرْبٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ مُشْتَرَكٍ يَحْمِلُونَ مَوْنَتَهُ عَلَى غَيْرِهِمْ فَيَكُونُ مَهْنًا ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ دُونَكَ وَعَيْبُهُ عَلَيْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ»

A governor has favorites and people of easy access to him. They misappropriate things are high-handed and do not observe justice in matters. You should destroy the root of evil in the people by cutting away the causes of these defects. Do not make any land grants to your hangers on or supporters. They should not expect from you the possession of land which may cause harm to the adjoining people over the question of irrigation or common services whose burden the grantees place on the others. In this way the benefit will be rather theirs than yours, and the blame will lie on you in this world and the next. (ibid)

another immoral act that depicts financial corruption and the rulers cannot remain save from it is bribe (*Rishwa*) it shows that the authorities have not performed correctly in giving public their rights and the public is forced to give bribes for getting their rights. There are many narration in the condemnation of it and according to the teachings of *Ahle Bayt* (*Household of the Prophet*) the one who gives and the one who receives both are in hellfire. Imam Ali (as) refers to this point as follows:

One day *Asha'as Ibn Qais* brought a dish containing food for Imam Ali which angered him and said to *Asha'as* : is it from charity, *Zakat*, gift or a bribe whatever it may be it is haram for us *Asha'as* he replied it is a gift. In the continuation of this narration from *Nahj al-Balagh* Imam says I thought so if they have poured snake spittle and poison in it, I swear if they give me seven continents of the world; so that I may disobey god or to take illegally a bran skin from an ant mouth I will never do that. (ibid)

One of the other steps taken by Imam Ali (as) was the supervision of wealth of the governors and their interactions with others. Imam had instructed his governors to abstain from going to the parties of the rich and also from multiplying their wealth and property. The third letter of *Nahj al-Balagh* is the one which Imam wrote to *Shurayh Qazi* the son of *haris* when he bought a house having a price of eight Dinars in which he expresses his anger and warns him or the letter which Imam wrote to *Usman* son of *Hanif* the Imam's governor of *Basra* when he attended a party given by one of wealthy people of *Basra* and Imam in that orders him to abstain from attending this type of parties:

O, *Ibn Hunaif*, I have come to know that a young man of *Basra* invited you to a feast and you leap towards it. Foods of different colors were being chosen for you and big bowls were being given to you. I never thought that you would accept the feast of a people who turn out the beggars and invite the rich.

Or the letter which Imam wrote to *Munzir Bin Jarud* in which he condemn him for treason and materialistic pacifism:

If the reports that have been send to me regarding you are true then your family camel and your shoestrings are better then you. A person having these qualities is not fit for governing and issuing decrees or that his rank may increase or to become a trustee. (ibid)

And Imam says:

I have to come to know that the booties which were gained through the arrows and horses of the Muslims and they have shed blood for this, you are distributing it amongst the Bedouins of your tribe who have chosen you I swear by god who rips the seeds and creates human beings if this news is true you have lowered your honor and position near me. Be aware that all the Muslims have equal share in the distribution of booties. (ibid)

So Imam on the one side by paying special attention towards the acts and behaviors of his governors he evaluates their government and on the other side he abstains them from the accumulation of wealth and extreme materialistic pacifism and he presented his self and his character as a role model in all of these matters.

### **Result and Outcome of Our Discussion**

The Imam's effort to follow the path of economic reforms of Prophet Muhammad (p b u h) reforming the economic policies of previous caliphs- although this was not continued in governments that came into being after the government of Imam Ali (as), is believed to be a turning point in political history of Islam .The precise explanation of Islamic economic though by Imam Ali in three aspects of theory, practice and utilization by the government of Imam Ali resulted in that it did not become a part of politics and slogans to deceive people by the governments came after the period of Imam Ali (as) and it was looked as a principle of actions for a just government and as criterion for evaluating governments in the history whereas no ruler in the history of Islamic governments like Imam Ali have followed these Islamic economic policies.

Simplicity in the personal life of Imam Ali (as), supervision and strictness of Imam towards the actions ,behaviors and wealth of his governors ,fair and equal treatment of Imam Ali (as) in abstaining his governors, relatives and friends from taking governmental bribes and unjust commissions, observance of human dignity and values in the economic policies and a methodical supporting of the needy- without encouraging the culture of beggary – where some of the economic reforms of Imam Ali that can be introduced to the whole world society as an economic role model that by following Imam path of reforms today's world can also heads toward growth and prosperity.

In the end we can conclude that from the economic policies of Imam Ali (as) the following results can be obtained:

- 1- According to the idea of Imam Ali (as) justice is a prerequisite for the economic development of the society and solely by increasing the production income without having justice in place cannot bring about general public welfare and the society will reach a deadlock.
- 2- Unequal distribution of public treasury will results in the welfare of a specific group of people from the society and will cause deprivation in other groups of society, but an equal and fair distribution will results in the welfare and prosperity of the whole society.
- 3- The economic justice is, of so great importance that at times the ruler may have to sacrifice the increase in production of the society for establishing justice in the society and for the fair distribution of income in the society.

4-The ravages that were caused in the past as a result of incorrect income distribution policies cannot be resolved by just abandoning the past methods but along with it the wealth and property that was unjustly confiscated from the public treasury and given to others should be restored to its original place.

5- The criterion for the seizure of illegal income is not extralegal in nature, but basic criterion is that it is unjust and unlawful in nature therefore if a ruler like Usman unjustly gives the wealth and property of Muslims to others although it is legal but it should be confiscated based on the basic criterion.

6- All the Muslims are equal in benefitting from the national income and there is no superiority for the citizens of one city over the other. In the Islamic government even the religion and a person's higher commitments are not seen as a reason for him to have a greater share in benefitting from the materialistic gains.

7- The fear from the opposition and condemnation of the wealthy people may not deter the Islamic government from the confiscation and restoration of the wealth and property belonging to the greedy people although it might result in the form of the war of *Jamal*.

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