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# Equality Before the Law from Imam Ali's Viewpoint

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## ABSTRACT

Equality, in fact, is the most fundamental issue in the Islamic worldview and one of the branches of the robust tree of Tawhid. Equality aims at eliminating discrimination and moving toward human ascendancy. Therefore, this article mainly focuses on scrutinizing the basic and principal issues related to equality and God-given rights or inalienable rights from Imam Ali's peace be upon him point of view. Despite a brief period of governance of Islamic society, Imam Ali (PBUH), compared to other periods, paid special attention to the many variations among races, languages, colors, religions and political parties. However, a legal analysis of his words and practice in this regard is of great difficulty, because he was not only a jurist and a mystical as well as ethical leader, but also a metaphysics scholar, a Qur'an exegete, an Islamic legal systems commentator and, a governor. Indeed, no historian or writer, however deft and dexterous he maybe, can draw a true picture of the Commander of the Faithful even in a thousand pages, nor can he explain the dreadful events which took place in his time. The things which this thought of, and acted upon, had not until that point been seen or heard by anyone. It is more than a historian can cover even in a very detailed treatise. Hence, whatever picture of Imam Ali is described by author will inevitably be incomplete. The present article attempts to explain equality before the law, in referring to a competent court and receiving just examination from Imam Ali's (PBUH) viewpoint.

**Keywords:** Equality, Law, Imam Ali (PBUH), Islamic ruler, Justice.

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## Introduction

The first and most basic right emphasized by the Qur'an is the right to be regarded in a way that reflects the sanctity and absolute value of each human life. Each person has the right not only to life but also to respect, not by virtue of being a man or a woman, Muslim or unbeliever, white or black etc, but by virtue of being a human being. The Qur'an puts great emphasis on the right to seek justice and the duty to do justice. Justice encompasses

both the concept that all are equal and recognition of the need to help equalize those suffering from a deficiency or loss (Ishaque, 1980). Yet justice is not absolute equality of treatment, since human beings are not equal as far as their human potential or their human situation is concerned. While each person's humanness commands respect, the Qur'an also establishes the right to recognition of individual merit. Merit depends not on

gender or any other characteristic, but only on righteousness. Righteousness consists of "just belief" plus "just action," including faith, prayer, wealth-sharing, equitable and compassionate behavior, and patience in the face of hardship or difficulty. In Islamic wisdom, human beings are similar to the teeth of a comb which are all of the same height. Equality in Islam Islamic equality, in fact, has its roots in the most fundamental issue in Islamic worldview i.e. Tawhid (MakarimShirazi, 1370). From an Islamic viewpoint, all the people whether boss or subordinate, rich or poor, powerful or weak are equal and impartially subject to the laws of punishment and reward, thus nobody is given a right or any other kinds of privilege beyond the law. There is mutual relationship between the human beings, and the public laws which have joined them with one another. It is necessary to respect these laws for the reformation of the nation and not only for achieving personal ends. (Elha'mi, 1360). The Qur'an strongly guarantees all fundamental human rights. These rights are so deeply rooted in our humanness that their denial or violation is tantamount to a negation or degradation of that which makes us human. These rights came into existence with us, so that we might actualize our human potential. In Islam, every individual ought to obey the law. For instance once when the daughter of Imam Ali (Zaynab) had borrowed a necklace from the Muslim's treasury (beyt al-mal) for a short time, Imam Ali got angry when he knew about it and he threatened the treasurer to be punished for his carelessness. He said to his daughter: "I would have punished you if you had not guaranteed it against risk." He was very adequate in distributing the wealth and the gains among the people so that the all,

far or near, could enjoy their shares equally. (Tahmasebi, 1423)

Nowadays the world's population is divided into two classes; a group living in extreme poverty that a bit of food is not possible for them and another group surrounded with affluence and riches living at ease and luxury. Many of the leaders and governments in this day and age depend on hoarding and storing commodities and monies, with the strategy of making gains for oneself or for a limited part of society, however Imam ALI never agreed to this conduct. Some leaders currently favour one class of society over another, and lawmaking is sometimes controlled exclusively through lobbyists and sometimes people on an individual level have lost any value and honour in the eyes of their leaders. Imam Ali would volunteers to help farmers with their farming and would provide social assistance himself to the poor and unfortunate. (Asadi, 2012) He said: "One class cannot exist peacefully, cannot live happily and cannot work without the support and good wishes of the other."

Indeed, the Islamic civilization does not allow such distinction of classes; therefore Imam Ali in his famous epistle to the governor of Egypt wrote: "There are many indigents among people, who do not request for more than their share when they are badly in need of more. For God's sake, safeguard their rights because the responsibility lays on you before God. Assign a portion from the treasury for their living and education wherever they are, whether near at hand or far from you. The rights of the all ought to be protected by you." He often said: "Wherever there are palaces and affluences there are surely many lost rights beside them." In Islam there is no private trial and every claim must be settled in the public courts. That in the Umayyid and Abbasid periods

specific courts were held for elites and courtiers, was against the nature of Islamic laws. (Ja'fariLangerudi, 1373).

### **Equality in Imam Ali's government**

In Imam Ali's (PBUH) government the most significant principle observed was the principle of equality; all the individuals were equal before the laws, no one was given any privileges and all the people were regarded as humans and brothers rooted in the same ground. Imam Ali (PBUH) was pretty aware that a great deal of dissatisfaction and social corruption is caused by discrimination. Since when discrimination is exercised in a country, the citizens, rather than fulfilling their responsibilities, attempt to approach to the central core of the government and gain more privileges through servility, lying and treachery. Consequently, the praised ones are those who are better at lying and servility rather than those who have served the country more through well accomplishing their duties. (GolsorkhiKashani, 1348)

#### Relation of justice and equality

Fortunately, there have been conducted inclusive and fruitful studies on the issue of justice in Nahj al-Balaghah (Mutahhari, 1350; Hosseini, 1379; Latifi, 1379; Hakimi, 1380). In the Islamic culture, the term justice has so wide a range of definition that it also covers the concept of equality to some extent; therefore justice is used numerously in Imam Ali's (PBUH) speeches. In many cases equality is a sign of justice. It is clear that Islam has given a chance to the followers of the other religions to associate with the Muslims freely and that the Muslims should deal with them peacefully. Considering this truth, Imam Ali recommended people, especially his officers, to be fair and just to everyone, whether acquainted or not, and to fulfill their promise when they are in treaty with foreigners. (Tahmasebi, 1423)

Imam Ali (PBUH) viewed equality as a principle. Having a glance at his governing writ to Malik al-Ashtar, we will notice that all his commands included in the writ are directed toward every individual who lives in the Islamic society and no difference in nationality, race, color etc is made between people. Such equality is observable in thirty sentences of his writ (MohegheghDamad, 1380). The quotes came from Imam Ali's directive to Malik al-Ashtar, his appointed governor of Egypt. The words of the Imam provide a comprehensive framework of ethical governance. We further ask ourselves; "How great must his conduct have been, such that after thousands of years have elapsed, the United Nations in the year 2002 uses his words to chide Muslim nations on how to conduct themselves?" (Asadi, 2012)

Imam Ali's life and concepts of justice are closely bound up with the history of Islam. This appeared especially during his caliphate. Whenever his name is mentioned the words of justice and equality comes to mind. At the beginning of his life he fought against injustice and oppression of Quraysh to spread justice of Islam. In the last days of his life he confronted terrible difficulties in order to realize justice among people and at last he was martyred for it. He regarded people with reverence, whether they were Muslims or non-Muslims. He did his best to distribute wealth and spoils among them justly. Some great Arab men stated their grievance openly because that their share from the Muslim's treasury (beyt al-mal) was equal to that of the poor. (Tahmasebi, 1423) Now to clarify the issue, equality is scrutinized in the following areas; a) equality before the law, b) equality in referring to a competent court and receiving just examination.

Meaning and scope of equality before the law

Equality before the law is sometimes misunderstood. It does not necessarily mean "same treatment". Equality before the law is a fundamental concept of every legal system. All judicial officers take an oath to administer the law without fear, favour, affection or ill will. (Roberts, 2011) They also must treat all parties fairly regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, age, religious affiliation, socio-economic background, size or nature of family, literacy level or any other such characteristic. Indeed, respect and courtesy should be the hallmarks of judicial conduct. Paternalistic or patronizing attitudes have no place in the court room.

### **Equality before the law**

Equality before the law, also known as legal equality, is the principle under which all people are subject to the same laws of justice. All are equal before the law (Roberts, 2011). Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination". According to the United Nations, this principle is particularly important to the minorities and to the poor. Hence, the law and the judges must treat everybody by the same laws regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status etc, without privilege.

Here I must say it does not mean that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is according to Islamic law because some human rights are not accepted in Islamic law (Shariah), such as a woman's right to

marry whoever she wants. Divergences between the Western world and Islamic world in the field of human rights are sometimes unavoidable. (Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, 1990) The Holy Qur'an proposed a solution to such divergences: "We have given each of you a code of law plus a program [for action]. If God had wished, He might have made you into one community, but compete rather in doing good deeds so He may test you by means of what He has given you. To God is your return entirely, and He will notify you concerning anything you have been disagreeing about". (The Food (Maidah), verse 48).

Although equality before the law is one of the basic principles of classical liberalism (Kukathas, 2003; Evans, 2001) it is clear that there are some fundamental differences between equality before the law in Islamic point of view and classical liberalism, i.e. Islam does not agree with classical liberalism. For instance, classical liberalism is based on human beings deciding what human beings should do, and secularism; while Islam is based on God deciding what human beings should do, and faith.

Everyone who comes into contact with the court system (whether represented or self-represented) must be treated fairly and without any discrimination. Otherwise, public confidence in the judicial system will be compromised. We have some conventions relating to human rights, discrimination and the need to treat people fairly. These have been specifically enshrined in the following statutes: the Racial Discrimination, Disability Discrimination Act, Age Discrimination Act, and etc. Each of these statutes defines discrimination in similar terms to Imam Ali(PBUH) definition but the important and undeniable thing is that Imam Ali(PBUH) mentioned and used such as

this valuable concept about 14 centuries before.

Important to justice is equality before the law for all the individuals. To clarify this, two issues are elaborated separately. Imam Ali(PBUH), as his first measure, attempted to prevent the discriminating presumption of the law. Because, developing and legitimizing such presumption would turn into a threatening danger which consequently would diminish most of the rights of the Islamic country dwellers. On these grounds, Imam Ali(PBUH) stood against Al-Khavarij. Al-Khavarij, through misinterpreting the Qur'an, had formed a legal system in which the offenders were presumed to be and trialed as disbelievers and thus were deprived of their natural and constitutional rights. In his commentary on the Nahj al-Balaghah, the son of Abi al-Hadid inclusively discusses the legal viewpoints of Al-Khavarij and how they deduced legal principles from the Qur'anic verses. For instance, from the verse "Of God's comfort no man despairs, excepting the people of the unbelievers." (Josef, Verse 87), Al-Khavarej inferred that a sinner, due to his/her sin and persisting in doing that sin, is disappointed about God's grace and, thus, is a disbeliever and must be tried on this basis (Salehi; Heydari, 1390).

Al-Khavarej interpreted these verses in a way that defined a sinner as a disbeliever and thus subject to the laws against them. Such an interpretation led to deprivation of some citizens of their basic God-given rights and natural rights such as right to life and, consequently, caused the equality law to diminish. Imam Ali(PBUH) prevented wrong inference of legal principles from the Qur'anic texts and this is a proof of Imam Ali's (PBUH) attention to the importance of equality before the law. Once upon a time Prophet said, "Ali is

never separated from the Truth nor the Truth from Ali." (Shahrashub, Vol.III). Here are presented some examples of this attention:

According to a narrative (hadith), Imam Ali(PBUH), addressing Umar, argued that perfect implementation of legal penalties, either in the case of relatives or non-relatives, is an issue which prevents an individual from standing in need of other people (Al-Hor al-A'melee, T.18). A real instance of this argumentation happened in the Uthman period. Uthman appointed Walid as the governor of Kufa. But due to his corruption and the public claims against him, Uthman ousted Walid from power and, based on sufficient proofs, sentenced him to flagellation. Nevertheless, because of fear of Uthman, no one dared to execute the verdict. Eventually Imam Ali(PBUH) took hold of the whip and approached Walid. Then Walid begged him saying 'for the sake of God and our kinship'. Ali (PBUH) responded 'Silence! The Sons of Israel were annihilated for not executing God's verdicts.' and then started to flagellate him (MohagheghDamad, 1380)

All this was done by Imam Ali so that the right of every person to lead a peaceful life might be ensured, and the people should not be divided into two groups, one of whom should be very happy and the other should be very much grieved. (Jordac Lebanon, 1421) Imam Ali had clearly understood that it will be very dangerous to divide the people into two classes and to prefer one of them to the other. This will retard the intellects, create malice in the spirits, and introduce oppression and injustice in the judgments and transactions, and all sorts of mischiefs and corruptions will appear. The result will be that ambition for life will die and the people will become pessimistic and will entertain ill-will towards one another.

Consequently the society will be ruined. So long as these two classes exist in a society a conflict between them is inevitable and it will involve the loss of many lives. (Jordac Lebanon, 1421).

### **Transgression from law and equality**

More important is the other side of the coin, i.e. when an offender is sentenced to a punishment beyond the legal limitations. This is more significant especially when the law enforcers are influenced by emotions and it makes them transgress the law and make decisions based on their emotions. In one of his speeches, Imam Ali(PBUH) said: 'God has specified some limitations. Thus never trespass them (Al-Hor al-A'melee, T.18). On these grounds, when Imam commanded Qanbar (his servant) to enforce a punishment on a man and he gave him three more lashes, Imam Ali(PBUH) whipped him with three lashes in return for his transgression (Al-Hor al-A'melee, T. 18).

Now we go back to dry and sandy Arabia of fourteen centuries ago where ignorance and party spirits were spread. Ordinary people could never look forward to the positions that were held by the nobles. Imam Ali proclaimed freedom and equality and those, who were entitled to virtue, became high-ranking officials during his government. He urged people to behave fairly towards each other without letting differences trouble their life. Although such privileges were cancelled by the charter of the Human Rights organization under the name of freedom and equality, it took a long time until the west got rid of the gloom of the ignorance of the Middle Ages. (Tahmasebi, 1423) In spite of this declaration of the Human Rights, we regretfully see the racial feelings and supremacy over other nations and bloody wars throughout the world. The shameful act of killing the Palestinians in Sabra and

Shatilla camp and the felony of the Sorbs in Kosovo and Herzegovina are not just stories. These ugly and hateful events are written down in the pages of history like a stain on man's forehead.

### **Religious freedom in Imam Ali's government**

Another point is that there were many Jews and Christians living under Imam Ali's domination. They were free to practice their rituals and their rights were secured by the government. One day when Imam Ali was exhorting people to jihad, he said: "It is reported that the enemy has taken ornaments off the legs and the ears of two Christian women, who were under the Islamic rule. And then he said: "One, who hears this startling news and dies, is not to be blamed." (Mutahhari, 1350) But regretfully today, in the twenty first century, the Muslims are treated inhumanely in many countries (Rippy&Elana, 2006; Rippy&Elana, 2008) and more terribly in places where the people were ruled previously by colonial policy like India, Somalia, Guinea and others under the pretense of reforming the civil organizations and sometime, under the pretense of administering justice or settling discipline and peace.

Imam Ali said: "It is sufficient for you to educate yourself that you avoid what you dislike from the others." History mentioned that the independence of the local Churches was respected by the Muslims when they occupied Spain. The Muslims associated with the Christians in a friendly manner, but after a time when the Spaniards got their country back, they established many courts to inquire about the people's beliefs. The main duty of those courts was to inquire about the Muslims in order to accuse them of a bad precedent to be used later as a cause of condemnation. They used the most

shameful acts of torture to suppress the Muslims in a way that history had not mentioned like it at all. (Tahmasebi, 1423) Imam Ali(PBUH) considered everyone to be equal before the laws and never allowed anybody to escape the law. He never let an individual be oppressed in the name of law. Imam Ali enjoys a very high position in the history of human rights. His views were linked with the thinking of Islam. The central point of his views was that despotism should come to an end, and class discrimination should be eliminated from amongst the people. Whoever has recognized Imam Ali and heard his remarks and understood his beliefs and views about human brotherhood knows that he was a sword drawn on the necks of the tyrants. His entire attention was directed towards the enforcement of the rules of equity, equality, and justice. His thoughts and manners and his government and politics were all dedicated to the achievement of this purpose. Whenever any oppressor encroached upon the rights of the people or treated the weak in a humiliating manner or ignored their welfare and threw his own burden on their weak shoulders, Imam Ali gave him a tough fight. (Jordac Lebanon, 1421)

Imam Ali at the beginning of his rule said: "I will summon those who have deprived people of their rights to the court and I will apply the law to them even though it doesn't please them." Those, who enjoyed from the public treasury during the reign of Uthman, expected that Imam Ali (s) would never refuse to employ them in the state affairs, but he in the first day of his caliphate said: "I will get back all the wealth gifted to this and that even if they have paid them to their wives as dowry." He was too strict about the public money to the extent that he displeased his older brother Aqil, who was blind and troubled with having a large family, when he had

requested more than his share from the Muslim's treasury (beyt al-mal). (Tahmasebi, 1423).

### **Equality in referring to a competent court and receiving just examination**

It is clear that social justice is based on righteous judgments of the judges. Therefore Imam Ali had instructed the judges with many legal instructions in order to spread justice everywhere. According to Imam Ali's instructions, every judge ought to treat the litigants equally in looking at them, talking with them and in seating them so that the judge's relative would not exploit the opportunity to gain illegal benefits and that the judge's enemies would not despair of justice. Once he said to the second caliph Umar: "There are three things that if you put in practice, you won't be in need of other thing;

1-Enforcement of the religious law upon the stranger and acquaintance equally. 2-Judging according to the book of Allah (Qur'an) in state of anger or consent. 3-Just division of the spoils between the lowly people and the nobles and between the black and the white." (Tahmasebi, 1423)

Among infallible principles of Imam Ali's (PBUH) government was observing equality by governors. In this regard, Imam Ali(PBUH) wrote to some of the governors 'Attend all your subjects equally. Beware not to look or stare at any of them in a manner that makes the elites have covetous eyes on your cruelty and the weak be disappointed about your justice (Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter 53). In this letter Imam Ali(PBUH), immediately after stating the equality principle, speaks about the social effects of breaking this principle, i.e. the elites covet cruelty and the weak are disappointed about justice. Imam ALI made great strides to ensure his governors and officials were free from corruption

and greed and treated people with dignity, honor, and kindness (Salehi; Abbasi, 1390) as he told his officials: "Behave humbly with the people, keep yourself lenient, meet them with a big heart, and accord them equal treatment, so that the high should not expect injustices from you in their favor, and the low should not be despondent of your justice towards them." (Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter 53). On equality, Imam ALI urged his leaders to show mercy and recognise weaknesses of humans: "Remember, Malik that amongst your subjects there are two kinds of people: those who have the same religion as you have; they are brothers to you, and those who have religions other than that of yours, they are human beings like you. (Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter 53).

These two issues have a great influence on preserving social stability and public security, since, when the weak get disappointed about justice and the powerful look forward to oppression, the society is afflicted by corruption and thus the oppressed find rebellion as their last resort. (Musa'zade, 1384). Addressing Shorayh, the judge, Imam Ali (PBUH) states the same words 'So establish equality among subjects through your words and look in order for your friends not to cast covetous eyes on you and for your enemy not to be disappointed about your justice (Al-Hor al-A'melee, T.18). The ending part of this quote contains a crucial point, i.e. the judge and judicial system ought to function so justly and impartially that even the enemies trust them and never despair of their justice. Since, from Imam Ali's (PBUH) viewpoint, the most vital objective of the judicial system is to preserve subjects' rights and to establish security and righteousness in the society (Hashemi, 1380).

Moreover, in his letter to the governor and his agent, Imam Ali(PBUH) warns them

against disappointing the weak. Since, the weak put their trust on the governor, thus their disappointment and the governor's special attention toward the elites will damage justice. Therefore, since justice is a crucial point in adjudication, even the enemy must be willing to trust Islamic justice and adjudication. In fact, Imam Ali was the philosopher of Islam. Philosophy comes into existence by means of wisdom and intelligence and strong power of perception and inference. A philosopher is he, who mentions a number of important matters in a brief narrative and endeavors to live according to his words. He occupies the highest position not only among the philosophers of Islam, but also among the unique personalities of the human race. It may become known as to how far the following words of the prophet proved to be true about Imam Ali. "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate"

In Imam Ali's government all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, birth, national or social origin, property or other status. In fact, one of the heritage of Imam Ali is justice, equality, and equity, and subsequently, the history of his enemies is tainted by oppression and tyranny. His speech, dress, and actions were humble and just, and his love towards God led his conduct towards righteousness. Imam Ali believed in total justice enacted through government. He believed in providing for the elderly, the needy, the orphans and special counselors and such people. He was also a champion of open government, and that meant a government that could be approached by



every individual citizen in confidence. (Asadi, 2012).

But in order to offer a just examination, choosing an adjudicator is a hampering challenge. In these regards Imam Ali(PBUH) writes 'then choose to judge among men him who in your sight is the most excellent of subjects, i.e., one who is not beleaguered by complex affairs, who is not rendered ill-tempered by the litigants, who does not persist in error, who is not distressed by returning to the truth when he recognizes it, whose soul does not descend to any kind of greed, who is not satisfied with an inferior understanding (of a thing) short of the more thorough, who hesitates most in obscurities, who adheres most to arguments, who is the least to become annoyed at the petition of the litigants'. (Salehi; Heydari, 1390).

Imam Ali was the first judge who proved the rights of the people from philosophical point of view and said that it is the duty of the rulers to pay due consideration to these rights. Besides in the case of claimants it is also necessary to observe justice in the case of all persons in the matter of general administration. People are under obligation to perform certain acts for the reformation of the society in which they live. Imam Ali(PBUH) was also so diligent about the enforcement of a verdict that, in a case, ousted 'Abu al-Aswaddweli' of adjudication. Since he was sure that he had not committed any crimes or treacheries, Abu al-Aswad asked about the reason. Imam responded 'I observed that your speech was louder than that of the litigants' (MohagheghDamad, 1380).

The Commander of the Faithful (PNUH) believed in two preconditions, i.e. 'tasks are accomplished by the staff' and 'the staff incompetency blights effectiveness'. In addition he viewed justice and competency as crucial to the political system and thus appointed the most competent and

efficient persons to do the tasks (Alikhani, 1380). Choosing such people, Imam Ali(PBUH) paid much attention to their abilities, skills, personality traits, beliefs and insights. (Haghpanah, 1381). Imam Ali established public laws and national unity, and treated all the individuals as one person in the matter of rights and responsibilities. In his orders and judgments he fully observed this principle which is being followed strictly by the civilized people of the present times.

### **Conclusion**

The present article presented a brief account of equality-related issues and principles from Imam Ali's (PBUH) point of view. The mental upbringing of the Imam Ali took place with this thinking that equity and justice should be enforced in such a way that equality should be established and one class should not enjoy any supremacy over another class and every person should receive that to which he is entitled. His impartial policy was pleasant for the weak as much as unpleasant for those who sought privileges and it was the main reason for most of the wars and intrigues against Imam (like the battle of camel). To Imam Ali(PBUH), the right to life is the most fundamental human's right and during his government it was best respected indeed; also equality and respecting rights were truly observed in practice rather than only in mere words and mottoes. Although sometimes in all around the world these statutes do not apply to judicial officers in court, the professional expectation is that judicial officers will act without discrimination. Imam Ali(PBUH) best draws the schema of an Islamic government which allows establishing equality, justice and it is no exaggeration to say that Imam Ali(PBUH) was a martyr to the cause of equality, equity, and justice.

When the Commander of the Faithful attained to the caliphate the conditions were very precarious. The people were divided into two groups. The persons belonging to one of those groups were prepared to lay down their lives in support of the pious and just Imam. The other group supported Bani al-Umayyah and endeavored to strengthen their government and kingdom. Bani al-Umayyah had also been endeavoring for years to establish their rule on a permanent footing. They knew that their program was beset with difficulties, but they were determined to succeed and had decided to do away with anyone who obstructed them, although he might be a very great and respectable religious personality. Considering the above subject there is no doubt about the fact that the responsibility assumed by Imam Ali was very difficult and onerous. Various reasons and intricate circumstances had made Imam Ali face many difficulties which could not be overcome easily. The world of that time was topsy-turvy, the conditions were revolutionary and the events were frightening and the responsibilities of Imam Ali were so great and burdensome that the caliphate and the religion of Islam depended on them. By solving these problems and overcoming these difficulties Imam Ali performed a task which made his qualities known to the world. The world came to know how mindful he was of public rights, equity, justice, and equality, how determined he was to promote individual and collective virtues, and with what patience and perseverance he achieved his objects. Undoubtedly, Imam Ali (PBUH) is the symbol of the justice-seeking voice. It must be kept in mind that these issues were introduced in a time when discrimination between colors, races, tribes and religions was considered to be a social truism; a

truism which still has traces in some societies. In fact, the championship of Imam Ali was in the matter of justice & equality. So much so that even after the passage of more than fourteen hundred years his wonderful achievements are a beacon light for us and extremely useful for making our lives sublime. Finally, this conclusion can be drawn that the Commander of the Faithful (PBUH) attended to promoting and stabilizing the principles of equality in different aspects such as social equality, equality before the law, equality in receiving the Muslim's treasury (beyt al-mal) and equality in labour.

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