

The Expediency of Kingdom in Iranian Political Thought

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Keywords

Iran
Political thought
Kingdom
Expediency

Abstract

The concept of expediency is an important and common concept in the history of political thought. Viewing the political legacy remained from ancient Iran and drawing an analogy of which with the literary works remained from the Islamic era, one can perceive that “expediency of the kingdom” is a central concept in the Iranian political thought. Also in the Islamic era and by translation of Iranian works, this concept was reflected in Siyasatnama which resulted in expediency-based politics. Given the history of Iranian political thought, the present article investigates the place and the role of this concept by giving an account of it. The results of the study indicate that in Iranian thought, expediency of the kingdom is not an abstract concept and can be applied to anything that has contributed to the development of the kingdom, spreading of knowledge, increasing the power and credibility and stability of the state.

Introduction

The concept of the expediency of the kingdom is among the key concepts in the Iranian political thought which is compared with the concept of the public interest in the western political thought and the concept of the expediency or interest of the system in the modern political thought. The root of this concept is traced back to the era of Sassanid political thought and the Islamic era, also by reviving the idea of ideal kingdom, it was raised within the theory of Islamic hierarchy. The present article raises this question that, what were the place and role of the concept in expediency of kingdom in the Iranian political thought in the ante-era of Islam. To reply to this question, we can claim that the expediency of the kingdom is the central concept in the Iranian political thought as it not only connects the ancient era with the Islamic era, but also organizes other related concepts, and based on which we can make a perception of the surveilling political thought in this era. This concept includes implications such as the public interest and the interest/expediency of the system in the modern ideology and meaningfully systematizes the desirable political system, restricts the power scope of the ruler and presents a criterion to avoid the autocracy and improve efficiency. In this regard, we first explore the dimensions of this concept in the Iranian ideology before the emergence of Islam, and then investigate how it was transferred into the political thought of the Islamic era in the light of *Siyasatnama*. In the end, we examine the criteria and solutions on the identification of this concept within the idealistic-Shahi theory and Islamic hierarchy.

Fundamental position

Among the set of concepts in the Iranian political reflection, the concept of the expediency of the kingdom is assumed to be the most fundamental. Just like the ancient Greek political thought in which the concept of public expediency is the central axis which draws the desirable political system, and also the ruling principles which play an important role (Aristotle, 2015), it plays the same substantial role in the Iranian political thought. As mentioned

in Dehkhoda dictionary, the expediency of the kingdom includes whatever that the interest of the country and the expediency of the kingdom depends on. This expression is recorded in the same meaning in many Arabic literary works and Farsi translations in the Islamic era. We can deduce the meaning of the interest and the expediency of the kingdom from any applications of this expression that its Pahlavi equivalent also implies. Accordingly, the Iranian political thought has been obsessed with drawing a kind of political system which could secure the interest of the kingdom. We can affirm that the brightness of the Iranian civilization in the Achaemenid and Sassanid era is due to the reason that they established their political system based on a scheme which facilitated securing the expediency of their kingdoms. Ibn Khaldun assumes the expediency of the kingdom to be the criterion for distinguishing the rational politics from the religious politics believing that it is “the kind of politics in which the expediency is observed generally for the public and specifically for the king. Such a politics was unique to Iranians and relied on wisdom medium” (Ibn Khaldun, 1988, p. 377).

The expediency of the kingdom and the idealistic-Shahi

Zoroastrian wisdom in ancient Iran led to the emergence of a kind of political thought that the concept of Idealism-Shah was central to it. In this regard, Shahi is classified into two general categories of good and bad. The good Shahi who is referred to as Houkhshathre in Zoroastrianism is the ruler who “realizes the ideology of benevolence in his territory” (Kenavat, 1977, p. 58). As properly put by Fatholah Mojtabaei, “the good Shah in terms of fairness is the position that the virtues of whom are in parallel with those of divine; therefore, the righteous Shah who is singled out by God and who is considered the closest to him shall have to be the manifestation of God and represent his will on earth. Whatever such a Shah does is approved of by God; so his rule is the rule of God in the world” (Mojtabaei, 1974, p. 120).

This perception was based on the attitude held by people of ancient Iran over the world which was rooted in the Zoroastrian religion. According to this perspective, Ahura Mazda is God and his followers follow the special

ritual stipulated by him which is referred to as آرتَه or آشه (rta/ aša/ arta). آشه was the principle and the order of the universe by which the world was organized and the mankind was bound up with respect it (Rezaei Rad, 2011). The survival of this world, the principle, and expediency of the city and country, and the happiness and fulfillment of humans in both worlds depend on this ritual. Thinking good thoughts, saying good words, and doing good deeds are achieved in the light of coordination with this ritual, and whoever comes to this understanding, he will forever be secured (Mojtabaei, 1974).

According to this perspective, the expediency of the kingdom is also the same as the coordination between the social and the ruling system with this ritual, and an idealistic Shahi system is the one that secures this coordination. Therefore, in the Iranian ideology, the expediency of the corruption of the kingdom is intermingled with the good and the bad Shahi system, respectively. As quoted by Mojtabaei in Dinkret this connection is described as following:

“The bases of Shahi are wisdom, truthfulness, and constructiveness; its time is for God; its sign is the surveillance of justice in the world, prosperity, welfare, wisdom, truthfulness, and constructiveness; reverence for the wise, trustworthy and helpful people who truly deserve it; humiliation of people who ask for it; happiness and prosperity for all the people; sound reputation for the king whose prudence benefits the world... the bases of a bad Shah are ignorance, lie and corruption; its time is for the evil; its sign is corruption and oppression in the world, misery, destruction, stupidity, and hypocrisy; power for the ignorant and liars; humiliation for the ones deserve respect; reverence for the ones who deserve humiliation; poverty and misery for the people; reputation for the tyrant of whose ignorance and oppression the evil is prevailing” (Mojtabaei, 1974, pp. 121-122).

Hence, the surveillance of justice, prosperity, welfare, wisdom, truthfulness, constructiveness, reverence for the wise and trustworthy and helpful people who deserve respect; humiliation for the corrupt who ask for it; joy and prosperity for all the people, they are all the main signs and

elements of expediency of the kingdom. On the contrary, surveillance of tyranny in the world, misery, destruction, ignorance, and hypocrisy; power for the ignorant and liars; humiliation for the ones deserve respect; reverence for the ones who deserve humiliation; poverty and misery for the people; reputation for the tyrant, they are all signs of corruption in the kingdom. In the ancient Iranian ideology, the idealistic Shahi system will present when Shah is healthy, victorious in martial arts; possesses traits such as wisdom, truthfulness, religiousness, and in the light of which moves the kingdom forward. Wisdom, in the Iranian ideology, is accompanied by truthfulness and inconsistent with hypocrisy, while truthfulness and opposing hypocrisy are the most important virtues that the expediency of the kingdom depends on. In this regard, Darius says:

“The king Darius says: From this moment you will be the king. So, refrain from lying and punish whoever lies. If you think so, my country will be safe” (Mojtabaei, 1974, p. 34).

Ruling and religion supporting which form the base for a wisdom-based governorship are two definitions companionship of which in a person is an essential requirement for an idealistic Shahi. In the light of benefiting from these traits, the requirements for the regal arts are met, the king empowers in securing the expediency of the kingdom, and protects people from tyranny and oppression.

In the theory of idealistic Shahi, the expediency of the kingdom depends on the conscientiousness of people and the class (caste) system. Conscientiousness is about doing the duties that everyone is supposed to do in his position (Rezaei Rad, 2011). Conscientiousness is discussed based on the concept of “خوره” or “خُورَنَه.” Whoever reaches his self “خوره” he will attain the self-perfection and the light of “خوره” will flash in his face. To reach this stage of humanity, one should do only what is within his dignity and persist with conscientiousness. “When somebody insists on doing a job that he doesn’t know enough about, he may damage it or leave it undone or even if he satisfies the owner, he has assumed the responsibility and the guilt is on him.” (Tafazzoli, 1985). The one who doesn’t attend the conscientiousness, he

has violated the rituals ruling the universe, disconnected from righteousness and chosen hypocrisy. Therefore, the expediency of the kingdom is intermingled with conscientiousness and class system through the concept of leprosy. That is why conscientiousness which was the highest ambition of Zoroaster is the same as rebuilding the world and life (Mahmoodizadeh Dehbarezi, 2017, p. 328).

According to the literary works remained from Achaemenid ages, humans are divided into three classifications based on their *خوره* or existential talents. Religion supportive, battle supportive and farmer (Mojtabaei, 1974). In the literary works remained from the Sassanid era, however, multiple classifications present regarding social classes; and Shah is in the top with superiority over others. Attachment to any class was based on the natural qualifications; therefore, transposition from the classes was restricted and transgression from any of them was considered “همه کارگی” (it may refer to a state of idleness) and a sin. According to this perspective, preventing the transposition of disqualified people to higher classes was considered the criterion for justice and while this principle was observed humans enjoyed the expediency of living (Tansar, 1976). A good Shah who is aware of the expediency of the kingdom will be the guarantor of observing this class principle and order (Mojtabaei, 1974; Tansar, 1976). In replying to Gashnab’s criticism against Ardeshir who asked about people’s jobs, ethics and families, Tansar evaluated it as a measure in line with the expediency, because it prevents idleness and keeps everyone busy doing what God has assigned them for. He concludes accordingly as follows:

“keeping people busy with their occupations and prohibiting them from other people’s jobs preserve the universe and its beings; and to the rain that keeps the earth alive; to the sun that cooperates; to the wind that blows the souls that if torment comes, excess becomes unlimited; we think that it is living and advisable” (Tansar, 1976).

The idealistic theory of Shahi also finds the expediency of the kingdom dependent on the relationship between religion and government, and the idealistic government is realized when the power is intermingled with

justice, religion and wisdom (Mojtabaei, 1974). The best rule according to this theory is the one that religion and government are amalgamated, and the king who is religion supportive rules. It seems that this feature was raised to prevent division in the sources of power, and unite the government.

The expediency of the kingdom and governorship

In the ancient Iranian ideology, the expediency of the kingdom was considered a criterion for decision making and administrating the government. This limited the scope of the ruler's strength and hampered his tyranny. Contrary to the common attitude that assumes the imperial system of ancient Iran tyrannical, one can learn from the texts and literary works remained from that period that tyranny of Shah was indecent and led to the termination of his greatness and power. Darius describes his virtues this way:

I am not a tyrant. When I'm angry, I manage it by reason. I have my ego fully under control (Mojtabaei, 1974, p. 35).

In idealistic Shahi, expediency was not determined autocratically. We can strengthen this perception by two arguments. Firstly, the ideology of idealistic Shahi has emphasized consultancy regarding it indecent to make any decision without it. According to this perception, the autocracy of Shah and being indifference to other people's opinions led to the termination of his rule. As mentioned in Balkhi's *Fars-Nama* (book of Fars), Jamshid "commanded a group of wise, knowledgeable and witty attendants to obtain knowledge to resort to them when making decisions on the affairs" (Rajaei, 1994, p. 61). Secondly, the political system of the kingdom and the social structure in ancient Iran was in a way that restricted the political power in action and prevented Shah from autocracy. As such, a council of adept superintended Shah's affairs evaluating their consistency with the expediency of the kingdom.

The expediency of the kingdom in the Islamic era

The forceful nature of "Iranian" element in the establishment of the Islamic

civilization caused the reflection of the concept of Iranian political thought in the political literature of the Islamic era. This took place in the light of translating the Persian literary works such as *Kalila and Demneh*, and the letter of Tansar by Ibn al-Muqaffa (724-759AH), an Iranian educated thinker. The concept of the expediency of the kingdom is among the concepts that came into the Islamic ideology in the same way and raised in the compilation, namely *Siyasatnama* as a criterion to determine the scheme of the political system and the rituals of the governorship. *Siyasatnamas* rebuild the political thought in the idealistic Sassanian and Shahi eras within a cultural framework and Islamic civilization. Hence, their key concepts are the ones within the context of the literary works in the Ante-Islamic era. Based on this perception, we can investigate how this concept was addressed in two periods within the Islamic era; the transition era and the era of compiling *Siyasatnamas*

1. Transition era

As mentioned, the fundamental concepts of the Iranian political thought in this era found a way to the Muslim thinkers' mind through translation of Persian literary works. *Kalila and Dimna* is the first political piece from the Islamic period in which the concept of the expediency of the kingdom was raised. In the first story of *Kalila and Dimna*, Dimna maintains that his intention for approaching the lion who is the symbol of Shah is to advise him regarding the expediency of his kingdom and inhibit him from corruption:

“I will go to him to find out about his deeds... if he intends to do an affair advisable for the good of the kingdom, I will embellish it in his thoughts and encourage him; and if he tempts to do corruption, I will soften it in his thoughts and condemn it” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 76). The role model in this book, the king by his governorship, “represents the interests of the people” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 208). According to this perspective, “the expediency of the kingdom, its stability and the sustainability of its blessings depends on the survival of Shah, and Shah shall not consider himself equal to anything else” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 248). An Indian philosopher has drawn an analogy between two kinds

of kingdoms; the good kingdom in which a wise and experienced Shah rules who cares about the expediency of his kingdom and people giving their interests priority over his own. The superiority of the king over the base is bound up with giving priority to the expediency of the people treating them as if he is not obsessed with his interests (Bukhari, 1991, p. 156). Second is the bad kingdom in which “the nature of Shah reflects refractoriness and pride, and his kindness benefits no one” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 202).

The concept of the expediency of the kingdom is one of the most fundamental concepts in the letter of Tansar. In Tansar’s view, one of the features of a good king is awareness about “the expediency of the world” and “when he is not aware of it, corruption comes to light” (Tansar, 1976, p. 58). Therefore, he shall have to think of securing the expediency of his kingdom and people consistently, and when perching on his throne remind himself that “I will be victorious in determining the expediency of my people, God willing” (Tansar, 1976, p. 89). According to this perspective, the expediency of the kingdom and the religion are intermingled because observing the religious principles is bound up with the expediency of the world, “they were born from the same mother and cannot be separated” (Tansar, 1976, p. 53). Tansar argues that the most outstanding feature of an idealistic king is “acting out of expediency by thinking of the future of the kingdom to be remembered for his good deeds” (Tansar, 1976, p. 52).

Being committed to the expediency of the kingdom and securing it, depends on observing some requirements and conditions that the first of which is the ingeniousness of the king. According to Kalila and Dimna’s perspective, “securing the kingdom is more challenging than obtaining it” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 203), and its permanence is at first dependent on the ingeniousness and assurance of the king. That is because the expediency and assurance are not met without the Shah’s ingeniousness and knowledge” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 230). Ingeniousness of the king means his awareness about the following affairs; first, he knows the authorities and the staff along with their strengths and weaknesses; he can distinguish the virtuous from the vicious; second, he assigns anyone to his proper job.” Third, he evaluates everyone

the strengths and weaknesses of everyone relative to the job they are assigned to, because “not every weakness affects every deed.” Finally, he constantly is aware of their functionalities through reports “so that, good-doers can be distinguished from bad doers.” The king must not be indifferent to those reports by “rewarding the good doers and dismissing the bad doers” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 230).

Tansa has also stressed providence in governorship after mentioning ingeniousness and capability of Ardeshir and his bright resume in prospering Iran, “careful attention to the expediency of the people who come after him” and giving priority to their interests. In his opinion, the political arena is part of “the world of corruption in its opposite meanings” (Tansar, 1976, p. 87) which is different from the absent world, and just as scholars have said “though we are living in a finite world, it is wise to do things for our survival and the afterlife.”

In addition to ingeniousness, “the king must never be ignorant of his affairs that they are critical and never end unless by assurance.” The king’s assurance means that before doing anything he makes sure it is expedient to prevent from failure.” Contrary to this feature is being skeptical which mean “not taking any preventive measures and not knowing what to do to make things right again” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 97). Assurance is subject to not hastening when dealing with affairs and act with caution when treating an enemy. The king also must not leave the affairs to fate, because “it is up to him to act out of reason and leave the destiny and fate to the judge (God), and approach them in a way that others do not assume that there must be other rational solutions for them” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 226).

The second factor in securing the kingdom is benefiting from a group of elite and noble who are characterized by truthfulness, loyalty, chastity, religiousness, wittiness, and dignity” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 231). That is because no one like kings needs people with well-intention, wisdom, knowledge, and art.” The noble must be “religious, dignifies, sociable, honorable, loyal, faithful and kind;” people who are not refractory when given power and moderate when being poor” and by and large they keep the balance in any

time. Their intention of getting close to the king is not making money but securing the expediency of the kingdom and preventing corruption. Among the elite who play an effective role in securing the expediency of the kingdom, the role of the ingenious minister is the most outstanding, because “the job of governorship is not done but by the efforts of the ministers, and the job of ministers is not carried out but by the supporters and authorities.” The stability of the kingdom depends on consulting the wise and prudent minister” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 245), and “trusting a weak and uncertain minister” is an effective factor in instability of the kingdom. The value of an ingenious minister is more than a division of a great number of soldiers, and he must favor the kingdom by offering wise opinions in a way that does not provoke the king (Bukhari, 1991, pp. 201-202). On the hand, “the minister must be pleased and united with the king, and this unitedness must be accompanied with prudence, reserve, and chastity so that it deserves the king’s taking action accordingly (Bukhari, 1991, p. 245).

Besides these matters, Kalila and Dimna illustrate the corrupt and immoral image of politics which challenges the benevolent and leads the kingdom to destruction, in a realistic way. This situation is mostly the result of envy, competition and the conflict between the noble and the elite for getting closer to Shah and taking advantage of the privileges. This makes the virtuous elite to leave politics and stop taking responsibilities (Bukhari, 1991). In the story of the lion and Shahar, the reason for isolation of the good-doers and leaving politics is described as follows:

“Two people can serve the king and I am neither of them; either the artful who achieves what he wants by cunning or an unknown and meek people of whom no one jealous their position. However, it would be challenging for the one who intends to serve the king with his word of advice, honesty, and truthfulness,” since the king’s attendants would become his enemy due to their jealousy (Bukhari, 1991, p. 232).

Isolation and dissolution from the king that takes place as a result of jealousy and hatred is the most influencing factor in the devastation of the kingdom and bad for the expediency because, in such a situation, lazy and

ignorable people would gather around the king. In these people's opinion, getting closer to the king provides opportunities to take personal advantages such as resolving deprivation from themselves and from their friends and relatives, security and peace in times of war and sedition, enjoying women's company and so on, in the light of the king. Finally, these people mask their lack of knowledge, ignorance and behavioral deficiencies in the light of the king (Bukhari, 1991, pp. 89-90).

Influencing the ruler's attendants and to fulfill their interests, this profiteer and opportunist group always conspired against the wise (Bukhari, 1991, p 239). This conspiracy is committed in a very clever way that Shah finds it expedient for the good of his territory. The king only resorts to hesitation, avoiding haste, prudence, and consultancy and praying to refrain from its harmful consequences. Though the wrongdoers make a martyr of themselves and look for justifications when their conspiracy is revealed, the king should not overlook it, since their penalty strengthens the kingdom, inspires the divisions and assures the public. The conflict and contest which is the result of profiteering and opportunism of a noble class of the society lead to the ruin of the elite which is damaging for the well-being of the kingdom. King's wives, however, play an important role in neutralizing it. The author, in the story of Shazram and Irehkht, has stressed the importance of Shah's wives in stabilizing the kingdom, after mentioning Shah's forbearance and the wise minister's role:

“Among all who are thoughtful of the expediency of the kingdom, it's the dwellers who if wise, agreeable, expedient, then people will feel prosperous in the religion and life, and their dignity is bound to their discretion. Though the king stands a man, if not patient and wise, and the wise men and the monks dare not to share their humble benevolences, he would fail in every deed” (Bukhari, 1991, pp. 245-246).

Friendship is another treasure which is emphasized in the story of Kalila and Demneh as one of the effective factors in ensuring the well-being of the kingdom (country) and passing through challenges. The second story in this book under the title of “Hamayeli pigeon, crow, mouse, turtle, and gazelle”

has investigated the importance and role of friendship in the social union. The story ends with a report of the wonderful effects of such a friendship among four animals: “as the friendship among these four animals reaches this point, see if human who is the greatest of creatures and possesses wisdom and knowledge remains steadfast in his friendship enormous comfort and delight will present” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 174).

Just as sympathy is valuable in the relationship between friends, cruelty, and hostility also observe some principles, because “not all friendships are in the same manner and not all hostilities stay with the same entity.” The friendships that involve opportunism or fear may take the form of opposition. “Albeit there are friendships with latent enmity and enmities with latent friendship”. Even conflict with the adversary should be based on prudence and the king makes decisions after consulting the elite.

The story of “crows and Owls” gives valuable implications on how to treat a strong adversary who has harmed the country and still reckoned to be a threat to the security. It is not recommended to engage in opposition with such an adversary, “because it is not wise to start a conflict with the one against whom you are defenseless”. Though the fight is not appropriate, “one should not accept oppression and humility”.

Also, in the literary work that Ibn al-Muqaffa has compiled, the well-being of the kingdom enjoys fundamental importance. He believes that the ruler should not only be prudent of the public interest in his time but also have the discretion to make appropriate decisions for their future. Being negligent to the well-being of the country is the most destructive factor in the government, and the most vicious ruler in the public’s eye is the one who does not care about that or who is incapable in doing so. He assumes the well-being of the time in the well-being of the ruler, the noble class and the elite. Corruption is mostly rooted in the corruptness of the ruling class and especially the leader himself. The elite and the noble class in the political system have the position of average influence in a way that the well-being of the majority depends on them, while the well-being of them depends on the leader. (Ibn al-Muqaffa, 1989 p. 328). It is a given that the general power of the

people in terms of awareness, knowledge, and skill is limited, therefore when “the noble class of the society among whom the religious scholars and experts superintend their affairs and listen to their objectives and needs and attempt to secure them with expediency, the society will become healthy, God’s blessings would be abundance and everyone can achieve what they want”. Just like “the noble class who need a leader by the medium of whom God make them virtuous” (Bukhari, 1991, p. 323).

The right and virtuous people do not cooperate until they are asked to. That is why they may not be known or used. On the other hand, the vicious people try to get closer to the leader by flattery and hypocrisy. This tempts others and as a result, a gang of criminals forms the ruler’s attendants. Finding such a condition, the virtuous people would tend more to step aside, since they find it hard to work and face such immoral people. Examples of people, in Ibn Moqfe’s opinion, are the Iranian educated people living in Iraq who are rarely found among Muslims with such faith, chastity, wisdom, and wittiness. These people live in anonymity and isolation due to the infamy of the authorities, and the flattery of the caliph’s advisors (Bukhari, 1991).

Ibn Moqfe’s perception about the position of military forces and the way of treating them reflects his attitude towards expediency. In his opinion, military forces need to make their thought, word, and deed right and stay away from aggression and confusion. In this regard, the ruler should provide a clear, brief and comprehensive plan and instruction, while elaborating on what they must do or what they must avoid and asking the wise men to guide others accordingly. The ruler must not leave economic responsibilities like the collection of taxes to the military forces since it damages their image. He also must know the anonymous people who are senior to the current leaders and promote them. Moreover, he must nurture in them the traits like moderation and modesty while keep them unaffected by the opulent. Their payment must be on schedule and regularly paid based on a specific system so as not to take any complaints. The payment must be appropriate with the economy to meet their needs properly. Finally, no military information should be kept from the ruler and he must not worry about spending to

obtain it from reliable people (Bukhari, 1991).

Ibn al-Muqaffa has addressed the political ethics in two books, *الادب الصغير*, and *الادب الكبير* arranging it based on the concept of the well-being of the kingdom. Despite his idealistic view of the governance and considering the moral and expedient governorship, he didn't dismiss the politically wicked minds and power relationships emphasizing on piety. In his opinion, observing ethical principles in the political arena is challenging in a way that one can say: "فان الاخلاق مستحيله مع الملك" (Bukhari, 1991, p. 253). This perception, however, does not negate the desirability of ethical principles in the political arena in practice, it rather implies its frustration given the logic of the ruling power surveilling the political arena.

2. Siyasatnama (book of government) recording era

Siyasatnama writing is an important trend in the history of Iranian political thought which has been shaped in the continuation of Iranian ideology before Islam and around the concepts derived from it. In the abstract of "سير الملوك", Khajeh Nizam al-Mulk Tusi (1017-1092AD) argues that the purpose of siyasatnama is to discuss the rules of the governorship and that its primary task is to organize the relationship between Shah and the rest of the classes of the society (Tusi, 1921). The concept of expediency is one of the most fundamental concepts in the siyasatnama and Khajeh has begun the first sentences this book with the following concept:

"In all eras and times, mighty lord singles out one from among his followers nurturing in him the skills and arts of ruling, attributing him the expediency and the peace of the people to him, closing the doors of corruption and scandals to him and making him honorable in the eyes of his people so that they make a living in the light of his justice and security and pray for the continuation of his governorship" (Tusi, 1921, p. 13).

From such a perspective, the primary task of the governorship is securing the interests of the world and peace while hampering the way to corruption, scandal, and rebel. This way, the government can bring about justice,

security and as a result, people's loyalty. In Khajeh's view, the moral and idealistic kingdom with such description is distinguished from the bad kingdom. The fine kingdom deserves following because it is accompanied by the due "wisdom and knowledge" to provide for its expediency. In the light of this wisdom and knowledge, the ruler "would have his inferiors' company in the best way," realize their reward and punishment and command "what entails the prosperity of the world." In defining expediency, Khajeh stresses construction and prosperity counting them as following:

"Digging qanats, building bridges, running farms, developing new cities and constructing high buildings, Caravanserai (motel/hotel), schools." The ruler who takes such measures, "the spiritual reward for these deeds and the people's prayers will meet him in joy in the afterlife" (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 15)

In Khajeh's perception, God's satisfaction and the expediency of the country is bound to "the good deed in relationship with people and justice established among them", because with the people's prayers "the rule is stabilized," "its power is increasingly pervaded" and such a kingdom "makes its way to prosperity and happiness in this life and the life after which meeting God with happily as said by wise men, *المُلك يبقِي مع الكفر و لا يبقِي مع الظلم*. This excerpt means that a kingdom will remain with disbelief but never with oppression" (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 17). Therefore, justice and inhibition of oppression is the most superior expediency that the ruler shall have to work for. In doing so, "for two days a week, the king shall have to take care of oppressions, bring the criminals to justice and listen to public's voice" until "the news about this just spreads throughout the kingdom," and "the oppressive be afraid of their deeds." Moreover, authorities should be advised to be fair on God's followers, charge them only what is right with kindness." They should also look out for them "and question ministers and trustees about their earnings to see if they are just because the corruption and truthfulness of the king and the kingdom depend on him" (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 19 & p. 30)

Khajeh attributes the expediency of the country to the moral minister because “when the minister is morally qualified the country would be prosperous, the divisions and the people fulfilled and the king relieved. However, when the minister is morally disqualified, there would be unrest in the country that the king could not find out the reason and be constantly obsessed.” He argues that “the ruler is elegant by the authorities, and superior to all of the authorities is the minister; if he is bad and oppressive, the authorities will all follow” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 214), moreover, “a good minister makes a good king” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 218).

In addition to a good minister, it is advisable to be thoughtful and pondering when choosing the noble and authorities and other staff, so that they do not intend oppression or restrict people’s rights. Khajeh exemplifies the story of Anushirvan who penalized the governor of Azerbaijan for the oppression against an old woman and as such “due to one policy Anushiravan made his all kingdom became sound and fine, all crimes suspended, and the world became a better place” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 50). To prevent misuse of power, he suggests the circling of the elite and replacing them in two to three years so that “they do not find power, have no obsession of progress and contest, treat the people right and that the kingdom finds prosperity” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 52)

In line with restricting corruption and oppression, the king shall have to be constantly aware of the well-being of the people and the division forces. Because, in the public’s view, “he is either aware of the corruption and the oppression taking place in the kingdom, or he is not. In the first assumption, he is oppressive, and if he is not aware of it, he is ignorant of it.” Of course, the job of reporting to the ruler shall have to be “the responsibility of trusted people who do not have treacherous intentions because the decency and corruption of the kingdom depend on them” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 80) The thirteenth chapter under the topic of, “an account of the issue of sending spies and exercising prudence advisable for the kingdom and the people,”

was designated for the practice of reporting Shah on what was going on in the kingdom (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 94).

The perception of *Siyasatnama* regarding the relationship between religion and government in moving Iranian ideology forward and also the expediency of the country is dependent on the expediency of religion, “because the kingdom and religion are an example of two brothers. Whenever the country experiences unrest, it will be the same with the religion and corruption and misuse of religion will become common. Whenever the religion is endangered, the country will be disturbed and criminals gain power”. In Khajeh’s view, misuse of religion and *bid‘ah* (an innovation in the religion) are two “evils and corruptions” elimination of which “enhances justice and fairness, benevolence is strengthened and corruption is disposed of” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, pp. 74-75).

As mentioned before, in Iranian ideology, justice has been intermingled with equality, therefore, the expediency of the country depends on it. *Siyasatnama*, also stresses this principle marking “the lack of regulation and perspective” in the country’s affairs as the primary sign of crisis. In such a condition, honorable people are humiliated, criminals find power, and the benevolent are debilitated”. Meanwhile, the dishonest and unworthy people gain power, “the noble and virtuous people are deprived”, disqualified people use labels for themselves, “Sharia becomes ineffective”, the base becomes disobedient, military forces unduly exercise their power and all the country’s affairs fall out of balance” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 178).

According to this perspective, when a just and wise king comes to power in the light of God’s blessing, “he bestows upon that king wisdom and knowledge to make all affairs right, consult many about king’s procedures for moving the country forward, observe all kingdom’s rituals, put people to work based on their skills and qualities”, bring the worthy staff back to their righteous position and remove the unworthy ones from their position.” One of the measures advisable for the good of the kingdom and that “kings in all times maintained” is “they treated the old households and the children of kings with

reverence and kept them from any humiliation.” Moreover, they entitled “the master of indulgence and the wise men, Alevilers, warriors, and readers of Quran a share of the house of money (treasury)” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, pp. 179-180).

According to this perspective, Khavaheh Nizam al-Mulk regards the matter of securing the expediency subject to scientists and adept people serving Shah. In his opinion, “the habit of open-minded kings has been to revere the elders and veterans, keep the experienced and competent people close, and appoint them to appropriate jobs so that when dealing with an important affair such as marriage, and investigation in the religion, he consults them.” In Khajeh’ opinion, the task of recognizing the expediency must be based on consulting “the wise men, veterans and the experienced people.” He believes that “consultation in the affairs is a sign of making the best decisions,” on the other hand, “lack of consultation in the affairs is a sign of being self-opinioned and such a person is an autocrat ruler” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, pp. 116 - 117). Relying on the prophet’s character sketch, Khajeh states that despite all the blessings and miracles, God commands him “وشاورهم في الامر.” Therefore, “as the king wants to make a decision or do something important, he can consult the elders and adherents so that everyone shares his opinion about the issue until the best decision on which the majority agree upon is obtained.”

Another factor which is considered important according to Siyasatnama regarding the expediency of the kingdom (country) is the stress placed on refraining from assigning more than one job or role to an individual. Khajeh believes that “the open-minded kings in all times never appointed anyone to more than one job or assigned two men to one job” and that was because “when two jobs are assigned to one person, one of them is always ruined” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 201).

He considers the oversight of more than one positions as an indication of the government's inadequacy and writes the following in order to criticize the political structure of his own time: “Today there are men with no competency, who have tens of occupations and if any other vacancies arise,

they will claim them to earn more gold.” He reminds us of the marginalization of the competent in this situation: “Why should one of the unprofessional, inadequate and multi-occupational have a reputable, be trusted while one competent man has none?”

Contrary to the idea of ancient Iran, Nizam al-Mulk is pessimistic about women's involvement in politics and does not consider it right. In his view, “women are not striving and full of reason, and their purpose is the survival of generation.” The political insight of women is not strong and influences the interests of the proprietors, hence the pursuit of their view in the administration of the state is corrupted. “There will be a collapse in the kingdom and religion ... and whenever the king's wife dominates the king, there will be disgrace and evil, sedition and corruption” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, p. 226). According to Buzar-i-Jammuhr, he cites the answer to the question about the Sassanian collapse: “It was caused by two things: one is that great works had been assigned to the ignorant, and another was that they did not buy the knowledgeable and the wise men, and worked with women and children” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 230).

According to the principle of sovereignty, Nizam al-Mulk has also made recommendations on the financial regulations of the king. First, “The king has always had two treasures: One of the treasuries of the principal and one of the treasuries of expenditure and finance, which resulted in more to the original treasury and less to the expenditure.” According to him: “This is the order of the king so that the interests of the country do not disconnect from each other, and to maintain the prosperity of the subjects and the treasury and to eliminate the uncaring greed of the king (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, pp. 299-300). Secondly, those who were prominent agents or figures shall not “stop serving since it is considered both disgraceful and unmerciful.” Thirdly, he shall have financial discipline and plan; he shall write the financial, income and expense account, and shall spend by reflection, and ultimately observe the moderation, and will maintain moderation” (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 305).

Siyasatnama also sets out its political ethics and the conventions of

affiliation with the king regarding its view of expediency. As an example, he prohibits the king from joking with the advisor and other associates because the wisdom and self-esteem do not allow harassment and impudence with these people. Instead, he recommends that he should gather his beloved and servants to fill his fatigue with them. He also justifies avoiding haste in decision making based on sovereignty and writes: "I saw many practices that were corrupted because of haste" (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 171).

Conclusion

The concept of expediency of the kingdom has always held an important place in the era of Iranian political thought. As in ancient Greece and Aristotle's thought, adherence to the general interest was considered a criterion for distinguishing the correct and healthy political system from false and corrupt, in the political thought of Iran too; the ideal and superlative kingdom depended on sovereignty. The interest of the kingdom, on the one hand, sets out the pattern of desirable government and, on the other hand, has been the criterion for making political decisions and actions. This concept has a central place in the whole of Iranian thought so that the totality of the theory and key political concepts can be arranged somehow around it.

In Iranian thought, expediency of the kingdom is not an abstract concept and can be applied to anything that has contributed to the development of the kingdom, spreading of knowledge, increasing the power and credibility and stability of the state. Expediency discernment has not been arbitrary but has been done through expert and consultative work. In addition, the sovereignty of the kingdom not only did not violate moral norms but was accompanied by adherence to ethical principles. Therefore, Nizam al-Mulk quotes from Buzar-i-Jammuhr, saying: "if the king desires to stand above all the rest of the kings, he shall make his ethos worthwhile." He asked: "how?" He said: "He shall put aside the vice and put in work the virtue" (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, 1961, p. 235).

This impression is different from the idea of the separation of, morality from the politics that were expressed in the new era in Machiavelli. Because, according to this idea, political power follows the rules and requirements that are not always consistent with ethical rules and may not even be compatible with them. Hence, in the pursuit of the expediency of the system, not only should it not be ethical, but it can be transmitted whenever required. Machiavelli's reflection of the expedient reflects a realistic view, while the Iranian conception represents an idealistic one.

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