

Jurisprudential Principles as the Foundations of the Mahdavi Government in the School of Imam Khamenei

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine and elucidate the jurisprudential principles whose application within the school of Imam Khamenei undoubtedly paves the way for the establishment of the Mahdavi government. This study has been conducted through a descriptive–analytical method, using library-based sources, and its data have been collected from the Qur'an and Sunnah, the opinions of jurists, and the documents, statements, and speeches of the Supreme Leader. The findings indicate that the framework of His Eminence's school can be discerned through principles derived from jurisprudence such as the Principle of Justice, the Principle of *Nafy al-Sabil* (Negation of Domination), the Principle of Guiding the Ignorant (*Irshad al-Jahil*), the Principle of Aiding Righteousness (*I'anaḥ 'ala al-Birr*), the Principle of Preventing Evil (*Daf' al-Munkar*), and the Principle of Blocking the Means (*Sadd al-Dhara'i'*), among others. These principles contain general directives that manifest within both individual and social spheres—cultural, educational, political, economic, and military. Jurists have formulated them based on the evidences of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and reason, and their foundation—centered on justice—has been institutionalized upon divine principles and objectives from which deviation is impermissible. In accordance with God's command in the Qur'an, "*So remain steadfast as you have been commanded*" (Q 11:112), steadfastness in these principles is deemed obligatory. Therefore, in the school of His Eminence, the foundations, objectives, and principles derived from them are immutable, whereas methods—being subject to human fallibility—may change. On this basis, His Eminence's positions have remained constant across all domains, and throughout his leadership, no alteration has occurred in either his words or deeds.

Keywords: jurisprudential principles, foundations, objectives, Mahdavi government, Imam Khamenei, school

Introduction

The science of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which encompasses the totality of religious imperatives and prohibitions, has today acquired a special significance among the Islamic sciences. This is because it has transcended the limited domain of individual rulings and now seeks to respond to the supra-individual needs of the Islamic community. This mission reveals the necessity of examining its interaction with other branches of the human and Islamic sciences (Banari, 2009, p. 13). Jurisprudence, by employing its own principles, can formulate foundational rules that, when properly considered and applied, can guide the requisites of individual and social life in various dimensions—doctrinal, legal, political, social, and educational, among others.

Jurisprudential principles provide general directives that, within *fiqh*, are termed *qawā'id fihiyyah* (jurisprudential maxims), whose propositions are prescriptive. Jurisprudential maxims are general rulings that operate across the various chapters of *fiqh* and serve as sources for deducing particular rulings. These maxims constitute the infrastructure of Islamic jurisprudence, and their comprehension holds a distinguished place in the derivation and understanding of jurisprudential issues, as well as in enhancing one's capacity for legal reasoning and analysis (Kazemi & A'rafi, 2021, p. 30, 400). The evidential bases of these maxims are Qur'anic verses, the traditions of the Infallibles (peace be upon them), rationally independent judgments, and the consensus of the wise (*binā' al-'uqalā'*).

The jurisprudential principles governing the Mahdavi system—constantly regarded by the Supreme Leader—are established upon divine foundations and objectives. The foremost goal of the Mahdavi government is the establishment of justice and the negation of oppression, as Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) stated: “When the *Qā'im* rises, he will rule with justice, and oppression shall vanish during his days” (*Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 52, p. 338). Accordingly, the objectives and foundations in His Eminence's school are encompassed by the noble verse: “*So remain steadfast as you have been commanded, and those who have turned with you*” (Q 11:112). This means that deviation from the principles and values is impermissible, and steadfastness must be maintained.

On this basis, throughout the leadership of the two Imams of the Revolution (Imam Khomeini and Imam Khamenei), no change has been observed in either action or discourse. Nevertheless, in selecting the methods most conducive to greater effectiveness, they have considered refinement, improvement, transformation, and the correction of error as ongoing and permanent undertakings, while steadfastness in the method itself is not deemed necessary.

Therefore, within the school of His Eminence, the strategic principles can be discerned through such foundational maxims as justice (*‘adl*), negation of domination (*naḥy al-sabīl*), guidance of the ignorant (*irshād al-jāhil*), aiding righteousness (*i‘ānah ‘ala al-birr*), prevention of evil (*daf‘ al-munkar*), and blocking the means (*sadd al-dharā‘i*). Although numerous other maxims exist under the rubric of jurisprudential principles that undoubtedly apply to individual, social, political, cultural, and educational domains and may be classified among the strategic jurisprudential principles, this paper, within its limits, seeks to elucidate several of the most significant among them.

1. The Principle of Justice

The actions of the Almighty God, given the absolute attribution of justice (*‘adl*) across the domains of creation, legislation, and recompense, are founded upon justice. Hence, all divine injunctions are characterized by the inherent attribute of justice (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 2016, p. 151). Consequently, the concept of justice, from the dawn of human existence to eternity, has occupied an inseparable place in human life; thus, justice must be regarded as a trans-temporal and trans-spatial phenomenon (Shirvani & Abin, 2019).

Justice—defined as “*placing everything in its proper place*” (Moein, 1983, vol. 2, p. 2279) and synonymous with the negation of injustice—is, according to Islamic scholars and other realist schools, an objective and concrete reality rooted in creation, not a merely conventional construct based on societal or governmental consensus. For this reason, Imam ‘Alī (peace be upon him) described it as the source of life: “*Justice is life*” (*Ghurar al-Hikam*, no. 247), and in another narration stated, “*Justice is the life of divine rulings*” (*ibid.*, no. 383). Therefore, jurists have considered justice to be the most essential attribute of rulers and guardians of religion, the most complete manifestation of which is undoubtedly to be found within the governance of the Mahdavi era.

Explication of the Maxim of Justice

Martyr Murtadha Motahhari, in elucidating the juridical function of justice, stated: “The principle of justice is one of the Islamic standards by which everything must be measured. Justice stands among the causes of divine rulings, not among their effects. It is not that whatever religion declares is justice; rather, whatever is just, religion declares” (Motahhari, 1989, p. 14).

The designation of justice as a juridical principle can be understood in two respects: first, justice functions as a general rule for deriving divine laws; and second, it serves as a criterion or standard applied when a ruling derived from other evidences conflicts with social justice. In other words, the principle of social justice serves for the jurist (*faqīh*) both as a source and as a criterion—by which

he may derive a legal ruling and also test the soundness of his derivation. Thus, justice can be considered a jurisprudential maxim through which a jurist either deduces a ruling or evaluates the correctness of his deduction (Mehrizi, 1997, nos. 2–3, p. 189).

Accordingly, the scope of the principle of justice is broader than that of other maxims. While most maxims occupy the status of secondary jurisprudential principles contingent upon foundational axioms, the principle of justice functions not only as an independent jurisprudential maxim but also as a foundation for other maxims. In other words, it may both serve as a source for the derivation of rulings and act as the criterion by which other principles are measured. For instance, the maxim *lā ḍarar* (“no harm”) may be understood as a manifestation of the principle of justice and the negation of injustice, since identifying instances of harm requires recourse to the standards of justice and injustice. As Āqā Ḍiyā’ ‘Irāqī observes, “There is no doubt that harm (*ḍarar*) and reciprocal harm (*ḍirār*) are among the clearest examples of injustice and transgression, which, according to the explicit text of the Qur’an, are forbidden” (‘Irāqī, 1998, p. 39).

Among the scriptural proofs to which jurists have appealed is verse 25 of Sūrat al-Ḥadīd:

“Indeed, We sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that mankind may uphold justice.”¹

According to this noble verse, God has granted the mission of the prophets, the revelation of the heavenly scriptures, and the legislation of divine law for the establishment and implementation of justice.

Undoubtedly, this verse designates the collective duty of society as the *upholding of justice* (*qiyām bi’l-qist*). Some scholars argue that this phrase bears a broad and comprehensive meaning that extends beyond individual relations to encompass all dimensions of justice (A’rafi & Mobalegh, 2020, p. 84).

Accordingly, exegetes have proposed two possible meanings for the preposition *bi-* in *bi’l-qist*: one of transitivity (*ta’addī*) and the other of accompaniment (*muṣāḥabah*). The transitive interpretation—implying that people should actively establish justice—is more consonant with social justice and the Mahdavi governance. This is because, under the transitive reading, the verse calls humanity to proactive engagement in establishing justice, whereas the accompanying interpretation—suggesting that people merely act justly in their affairs—reflects a passive stance less aligned with the dynamics of social justice.

¹لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ

Justice in the School of Imam Khamenei

His Eminence, the Supreme Leader, describes the Mahdavi government as a monotheistic society accompanied by the full establishment of justice, stating: “That which Mahdism heralds is precisely what all prophets and all missions were sent for—the creation of a monotheistic world, formed upon the foundation of justice and through the utilization of all the capacities that Almighty God has endowed within humankind. Such is the era of the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance): the era of a monotheistic society, the era of the sovereignty of divine unity, the era of the true dominion of spirituality and religion over every aspect of human life, and the era of the complete and comprehensive establishment of justice in every sense of the word.” (Speech, July 9, 2011)

He has likewise identified the most prominent slogan of Mahdism as *the anticipation of the establishment of justice* (Speech, October 22, 2002).

Accordingly, among the seven key recommendations presented in his “Statement on the Second Phase of the Revolution” (*Bayānīyah-ye Gām-e Dovvom*), His Eminence dedicates the fourth principle to “justice and the fight against corruption,” declaring: “These two are inseparable. Economic, moral, and political corruption constitute the festering tumor of nations and systems; and if such corruption infiltrates the structure of governments, it becomes a destructive earthquake that strikes at their legitimacy. This is far more serious and fundamental for a system like the Islamic Republic, which requires a legitimacy beyond conventional norms and more foundational than mere social acceptability.”

In another passage, he declares attention to justice obligatory upon all, stating: “Justice stands at the forefront of the primary objectives of all divine missions, and within the Islamic Republic it holds the same rank and position. It is a sacred concept in every time and place, and its complete realization will only occur under the government of the Master of the Age (may our souls be sacrificed for him). Yet, in relative terms, justice is always attainable everywhere and at all times, and it is a divine obligation incumbent upon all—especially rulers and those in power.”

2. The Principle of *Nafy al-Sabīl* (Denial of Domination)

The Principle of *Nafy al-Sabīl* is one of the jurisprudential maxims that extends over all individual and collective rulings of Muslims—spiritual, political, economic, and cultural. Its central theme is the prohibition of non-Muslims’ domination over Muslims in these domains. Based on this principle, any

agreement or contract between Muslims and unbelievers that leads to the superiority or control of the latter over the former is deemed impermissible.

One of the foundational evidences for this principle is verse 141 of *Sūrat al-Nisā*²:

“And never will Allah grant to the disbelievers a way [of dominance] over the believers.²”

Although jurists have differed as to whether this verse expresses a creational (*takwīnī*) or legislative (*tashrīʿī*) decree, all are in agreement—at least in its definitive sense—that it indicates a legislative ruling. As the contemporary jurist al-Bujnūdī states:

“According to this verse, in the realm of legislation there exists no ruling that would grant the unbelievers any form of authority, superiority, or dominion over the believers and Muslims, nor has such a ruling ever been legislated or established. This applies across acts of worship, transactions, and political affairs. Hence, the noble verse expresses a legislative ruling, and this principle holds precedence over primary evidences and legal rulings.” (Bujnūdī, 1993, p. 225)

Another textual basis for this principle is the Prophetic tradition:

الإِسْلَامُ يَغْلُو وَ لَا يُغْلَى عَلَيْهِ وَ الْكُفَّارُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ
الْمَوْتَى لَا يَحْجُبُونَ وَ لَا يَرِثُونَ

“Islam prevails and is not to be prevailed over; and the unbelievers are as the dead—neither do they prevent inheritance nor do they inherit.” (Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, 1413 AH, vol. 4, p. 334)

This narration, “*al-Islām ya ‘lū wa lā yu ‘lā ‘alayh*,³” consists of two clauses: one affirmative (“Islam prevails”) and one negative (“and nothing prevails over it”). The affirmative clause indicates that, in all rulings legislated for Muslims, the superiority of Islam and the believers over unbelievers is maintained; the negative clause, conversely, negates any form of superiority or authority that non-Muslims might hold over Muslims by virtue of legal rulings. Thus, both linguistically and juridically, the narration provides complete and explicit support for the validity of the Principle of *Nafy al-Sabīl* (Bujnūdī, 1993, p. 230).

Application of the Principle of *Nafy al-Sabīl* in Juristic Rulings

Shi‘i jurists have invoked this principle in numerous instances to prevent the domination of non-Muslims over Muslims. One notable example is the decree

² وَ لَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا
³ الإسلام يغلو و لا يغلى عليه

prohibiting tobacco use issued by the renowned jurist Mīrzā Shīrāzī, in opposition to granting the British company a monopoly over Iran's tobacco trade. Relying on this principle, he declared tobacco prohibited, leading to the annulment of the concession in 1309 AH (1891 CE).

Another example is the opposition to *capitulation laws* (*kāpitūlāsiyūn*) by Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Revolution, in 1964 CE. Invoking this very principle, he protested against the bill granting American citizens—including military advisers—judicial immunity in Iran, beginning his public declaration with the verse:

“And never will Allah grant to the disbelievers a way [of dominance] over the believers.” (Q 4:141)

Following the same enduring principle and the jurists' interpretation of it, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran enshrined Articles 152 and 153 accordingly.

Article 152 stipulates:

“The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based upon the rejection of all forms of domination and submission, the preservation of full independence and territorial integrity, the defense of the rights of all Muslims, non-alignment with hegemonic powers, and the establishment of peaceful and reciprocal relations with non-hostile states.”

Article 153 further declares:

“Any treaty resulting in the domination of foreigners over the natural and economic resources, culture, army, or other affairs of the country is forbidden.”

The Principle of *Nafy al-Sabīl* (Denial of Domination) in the School of Imam Khamenei

In the school of Imam Khamenei, adherence to this strategic jurisprudential principle can be discerned across multiple domains: in the **cultural sphere**, such as his opposition to UNESCO's 2030 Education Agenda; in the **economic sphere**, through his call for supporting Iranian products; in the **military sphere**, through his unwavering support for the Islamic Resistance Front; and in the **political sphere**, through his emphasis on distrusting the United States in nuclear negotiations, among others.

Undoubtedly, the content and intent of the UNESCO 2030 Agenda reveal that Western systems, under the pretext of cultural development, crime prevention, and gender equality, seek to exert ideological influence over the educational and pedagogical systems of Islamic countries—an endeavor designed to establish a modern form of cultural domination. Therefore, despite the fact that the then-government had made the implementation of this document its primary objective, the wise Leader of the Revolution thwarted its execution through decisive intervention.

Accordingly, His Eminence criticized the 2030 Agenda, stating:

“By what right does an allegedly international organization—one under the influence of the world’s major powers—grant itself authority to dictate obligations to nations that possess distinct histories, cultures, and civilizations?” (Speech before educators, May 7, 2017)

In an address to the members of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, he further stated:

“I am dissatisfied with these members as well—they should have been vigilant. This is the Islamic Republic of Iran, where the foundation is Islam and the Qur’an. This is not a place where the corrupt, destructive, and deviant lifestyle of the West may be allowed to exert influence.” (ibid.)

Among the themes that His Eminence has persistently emphasized—and which, over many consecutive years, appeared as the slogan of the year—are **the “resistance economy”** and **support for domestic production**. Attention to these priorities not only promotes self-sufficiency but also, in accordance with the Principle of *Nafy al-Sabīl*, prevents foreign domination and colonial dependency within the Islamic society.

Undeniably, foreign economic control over an Islamic nation erodes its independence and national dignity, enabling external powers to infiltrate the most sensitive centers of political and cultural decision-making and to alter the Islamic way of life. Such influence and domination stand in direct violation of the Qur’anic verse of *Nafy al-Sabīl* (Khazaei et al., 2019, no. 91, p. 65).

This concern has long been shared by Islamic thinkers. As Martyr Murtadha Motahhari wrote:

“Islam seeks to prevent non-Muslims from exercising influence or control over Muslims. This objective is achievable only when the Muslim nation is economically self-sufficient and not in need of others. Otherwise, economic dependence inevitably leads to bondage and servitude—even if it is not called by

that name. Any nation that stretches out its hand in economic need toward another is, in truth, enslaved by it, regardless of diplomatic formalities.” (Motahhari, n.d., p. 21)

In this spirit, Imam Khamenei has repeatedly emphasized the importance of independence from colonial powers, stating:

“National independence and dignity are vital for any country. For a nation to be free of subjugation and to have no master over it is essential. Our nation has proven that non-dependence on the United States and other great powers does not lead to backwardness—it leads to progress.” (Speech at the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza, March 21, 2013)

Taken together, the statements and positions of the Supreme Leader demonstrate numerous and diverse applications of this jurisprudential maxim. The field of **political jurisprudence** appears most directly connected to the Principle of *Nafy al-Sabīl*, as relations with other nations—especially in the modern era—take many forms. In all such interactions, the dignity and authority of the Islamic government, which itself constitutes the groundwork for the Mahdavi governance, must be preserved in accordance with this principle.

Examples of his statements and positions grounded in this principle, which contribute to the realization of the Mahdavi government, include:

- Establishing order and discipline within the armed forces and enhancing their morale and access to advanced equipment;
- Strengthening public awareness and vigilance regarding the enemy;
- Avoiding underestimation of the enemy, in accordance with reason, religion, and experience;
- Fortifying spiritual and Islamic unity with Muslims worldwide;
- Persevering under external pressures;
- Preserving unity and solidarity;
- Upholding *jihād* and martyrdom;
- Safeguarding the dignity of Muslims;
- Valuing and reinforcing the *Basij* (mobilization force);
- Observing the principle of expediency (*maṣlahah*);
- Supporting oppressed and Muslim nations such as Palestine, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan;
- Combating global arrogance (*istikbār jahānī*);
- Articulating the revolutionary goal of achieving independence free from dependency and establishing an Islamic government.

3. The Principle of Guiding the Ignorant (*Irshād al-Jāhil*)

Linguistically, *irshād* denotes leadership, direction, guidance, bringing one to the right path, and reform (Dehkhoda, 1998, vol. 1, p. 425). In jurisprudential terminology, retaining the same lexical meaning, it signifies *informing*, *preaching*, and *teaching*; thus, *irshād al-jāhil* means to make an ignorant person aware and to guide him (Kazemi & A'rafi, 2021, vol. 30, p. 72).

One of the essential dimensions of religion consists of prescriptive rulings (*aḥkām taklīfiyyah*), which are established on the basis of real benefits (*maṣāliḥ*) and harms (*mafasid*). Observing them ensures the individual and social felicity of humankind. These rulings, according to the type and degree of the underlying benefit or harm, are divided into five categories—the most preventive of which are the obligations (*wājibāt*) and prohibitions (*muḥarramāt*). Even among the recommended (*mustaḥabbāt*) and the discouraged (*makrūhāt*), one can discern preventive effects (Khosrowshahi, 2014, p. 65). Many personal and social transgressions stem from people's ignorance of divine rulings, especially concerning forbidden acts and their harmful consequences. Hence, the essential function of this principle is the obligation to convey and declare religious rulings to those ignorant of them.

Jurists have applied this principle under the *Maxim of Guiding the Ignorant* across several chapters of jurisprudence. For example, Āqā Ḍiyā' 'Irāqī, in his discussion of *commanding the good and forbidding the evil*, holds that if the perpetrator of an evil act is unaware of its subject, then enlightenment through *irshād al-jāhil* must precede *forbidding the evil* (Kazazi 'Irāqī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 31). Likewise, Ayatollah al-Khoei considers teaching one's spouse and children the rulings of prayer, purity, and impurity as obligatory by virtue of this principle (al-Khoei, 1995, vol. 3, p. 253). Ayatollah Bahjat also regards informing others of the direction of the qibla as obligatory from the same principle (Bahjat, 2003, p. 204). According to the majority view, when an individual is ignorant of a ruling (*ḥukm*), the jurist must teach him the law; but if he knows the ruling yet is unaware of the factual circumstance (*mawḍū'*), such as knowing that impurity must be avoided but not realizing that his clothes or carpet are impure, then guidance is not required except in specific cases (Kazemi & A'rafi, 2021, vol. 30, p. 64).

This obligation is a *collective duty* (*wājib kifā'ī*): it initially rests upon the entire community—particularly scholars—to arise and teach others the essentials of belief, morality, and obligatory knowledge. Once such communication and instruction are realized, the obligation is lifted from others (*ibid.*, p. 199).

Awareness-raising and the instruction of religious rulings and essentials have always been integral to the practice of the Infallibles (peace be upon them). When

the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) appointed Mu‘ādh as governor of Yemen, he instructed him:

“O Mu‘ādh! Teach them the Book of God and cultivate them upon virtuous morals... Manifest all aspects of Islam, both its minor and major parts; devote most of your concern to prayer, for it is the pillar of Islam after acknowledging the faith. Remind the people of God and of the Day of Judgment, and continue admonishing them, for it strengthens their resolve to act upon what pleases God. Then appoint teachers among them to instruct and nurture the people.”⁴ (al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 1403 AH, vol. 74, p. 127; Ibn Shu‘bah al-Ḥarrānī, *Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl*, 1404 AH, p. 25)

In this narration, the Prophet—through the expressions “*‘allimhum kitāba-llāh*” (teach them the Book of God), “*aẓhir amr al-islām kullah*” (manifest all of Islam), and “*buth fthim al-mu‘allimīn*” (appoint teachers among them)—obligated the ruler to give priority to instructing the divine Book and the religious laws, particularly prayer, and to employ instructors for this purpose. Likewise, through “*aḥsin adabahum*” (train them in good morals) and “*ittabi‘ al-maw‘izah*” (adhere to admonition), he defined the ruler’s duty to promote moral and ethical cultivation by virtue of *irshād al-jāhil*. All these verbs appear in the imperative form, denoting the obligatory nature of enlightenment and education of the community.

Undoubtedly, guiding members of society in general and one’s family in particular—through teaching and explaining religious injunctions—plays a crucial role in preventing deviance and crime. Prayer, in particular, as indicated by the verse “*Indeed, prayer restrains from indecency and wrongdoing*” (Q 29:45), possesses an inherent preventive benefit, deterring sin in a natural and existential manner. Likewise, the Qur’an’s elucidation of penal rulings—such as those concerning homicide and injury (Q 2:178; 5:45), armed rebellion (Q 5:33), adultery (Q 24:2), theft (Q 5:38), and slander (Q 24:4)—as well as the awakening of the Muslim community to political and cultural issues, the enlightenment regarding the interests of Muslims, and the discernment of truth from falsehood, can collectively foster a sound and dignified society.

Accordingly, the Supreme Leader, in adherence to this jurisprudential principle, has emphatically articulated the concept of “**Jihād al-Tabyīn**” (“the struggle for elucidation”), describing it as “*a definite and immediate obligation*” (Speech to

⁴ يَا مُعَاذُ عَلِّمُهُمْ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَ أَحْسِنْ أَدَبَهُمْ عَلَى الْأَخْلَاقِ الصَّالِحَةِ وَ أَظْهِرْ أَمْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ كُلَّهُ صَغِيرَهُ وَ كَبِيرَهُ وَ لِيَكُنْ أَكْثَرُ هَمِّكَ الصَّلَاةَ فَإِنَّهَا رَأْسُ الْإِسْلَامِ بَعْدَ الْإِقْرَارِ بِالذِّينِ وَ ذِكْرِ النَّاسِ بِاللَّهِ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَ اتَّبِعِ الْمَوْعِظَةَ فَإِنَّهُ أَقْوَى لَهُمْ عَلَى الْعَمَلِ بِمَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ بُتِّ فِيهِمْ الْمُعَلِّمِينَ

economic activists, February 8, 2022). He has emphasized that this duty concerns all individuals, declaring:

“Today, all of us must engage in the field of elucidation.” (Speech, September 27, 2021)

Regarding the neglect of this duty, he has warned:

“Without elucidating the truth, public opinion will remain in darkness and confusion, and the enemy will exploit that ambiguity.” (Speech, June 28, 2003)

Furthermore, he has underscored that elucidation must be accompanied by knowledge, rationality, and ethical method:

“Elucidation has its own requirements, and adherence to them is the condition for the effectiveness of truthful discourse. The essential rule in this regard is that one must employ an ethical approach in performing this task.” (Speech, September 27, 2021)

It is worth noting that the drafting of the *Statement on the Second Phase of the Revolution (Bayānīyah-ye Gām-e Dovvom)* constitutes one of the most salient instances of **Jihād al-Tabyīn** undertaken by His Eminence.

4. The Principle of Aiding Righteousness (*I‘ānah ‘alā al-Birr*)

The Arabic term *i‘ānah* derives from ‘awn, meaning “to help” or “to assist someone in performing a task” (Ibn Manẓūr, 1988, vol. 9, p. 494). In jurisprudential terminology, it signifies providing the means or creating the conditions for another person’s act to be realized. The application of *i‘ānah* is conditional upon the external occurrence of the assisted act (Mobalegh & A‘rafī, 2020, vol. 26, p. 134).

The term *birr* literally denotes “dry land,” and since land is characterized by breadth and openness, *birr* (with a short vowel on the first syllable) came to mean “expansive goodness,” while *barr* (with a long vowel) denotes “one who performs much good” (Qurashi, 1991, vol. 10, p. 180). In Qur’anic, hadith, and juristic usage, *birr* has two principal meanings: obedience to God and benevolence toward others. From a semantic standpoint, obedience (*tā‘ah*) encompasses benevolence, for doing good to others constitutes an act commanded by God and is, therefore, a form of obedience. *Birr* in the sense of obedience includes performing obligatory and recommended acts and refraining from prohibited and disliked ones (ibid.).

Taqwā (piety) literally means “to protect something from harm or danger” (ibid.). Thus, *i‘ānah ‘alā al-birr wa al-taqwā* refers to enabling others to perform obligatory and recommended deeds and to avoid prohibited and disliked acts—on the condition that such assistance actually leads to the fulfillment of those obligations or avoidances (ibid., p. 135).

This principle plays a vital role in strengthening the spirit of cooperation, mutual aid, and the moral health of society. Its importance is such that Muḥaqqiq Sabzawārī, the author of *Kifāyat al-Aḥkām*, considered cooperation to be the very manifestation of societal health, stating: “A healthy society is one in which the spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance—and the prevention of corruption and transgression—prevail, and in which all individuals advance together upon this path” (Davoudabadi, 2013, p. 3).

The foremost textual basis for *i‘ānah ‘alā al-birr* is the Qur’anic verse:

“*And cooperate in righteousness and piety*” (Q 5:2). Here, *ta‘āwanū* is a verb in the imperative form, which prima facie indicates obligation. Accordingly, aiding righteousness is deemed obligatory—except in certain cases where contextual indicators imply recommendation (Mobalegh & A‘rafi, 2020, vol. 26, p. 136). However, some jurists maintain that due to external contextual evidence, the command should not be interpreted as mandatory but as recommended, except in cases such as rescuing a drowning or burning person, where clear evidence renders assistance obligatory (Bujnūrdī, 1998, vol. 1, p. 359).

Consequently, whether the command “*and cooperate in righteousness and piety*” is understood as obligatory or recommended, it can be inferred—considering the continuation of the same verse, “*and do not cooperate in sin and aggression*” (Q 5:2)—which, according to all jurists, renders aiding sin and transgression forbidden—that if the failure to aid in righteousness results in sin or aggression, then aiding in righteousness becomes obligatory. Under such an ethic of mutual assistance, cooperation, and benevolence—values that promote mental well-being and the moral health of families and society—it may be expected that, through the guidance of this verse, a community will cultivate righteousness, justice, and prosperity, thereby laying the groundwork for the Mahdavi governance.

Undoubtedly, caring for the affairs of Muslims and defending the oppressed are among the clearest manifestations of *i‘ānah ‘alā al-birr*. Muslims cannot remain indifferent toward one another, as the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

“Muslims are brothers; their blood is equal, and they are united against all others.”

(*Al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 403)

In this light, the Supreme Leader, adhering to this divine and humanitarian principle, has made the defense of the oppressed and the support of the downtrodden a central tenet of his policy, declaring:

“We consider the defense of Muslims and the defense of oppressed nations among our fundamental policies, and we shall never deviate from it.”
(Friday Prayer Sermon, Tehran, June 4, 1993)

He further stated in expounding the school of Imam Khomeini:

“Imam [Khomeini] never abandoned the defense of the oppressed of the world for the sake of the world’s arrogant powers. Throughout his life, he regarded the issue of Palestine as a central concern. In his testament and statements, he explicitly emphasized the cry of ‘Yā lil-Muslimīn!’—the call for the solidarity of the oppressed nations—through clear defense of their rights, the defense of the Palestinian people, and of every other oppressed nation.”
(Commemoration of Imam Khomeini’s passing, June 3, 2008)

5. The Principle of Preventing Evil (*Daf‘ al-Munkar*)

One of the most significant strategic jurisprudential principles frequently discussed by jurists is the *Principle of Preventing Evil (Daf‘ al-Munkar)*. The author of *Miṣbāḥ al-Fiqhah* defines *daf‘ al-munkar* as follows:

“The meaning of preventing evil is to incapacitate the wrongdoer from committing the sinful act or from actualizing it externally—whether he desists from the act by his own choice or not.”
(al-Khoei, 1992, vol. 1, p. 181)

This principle is affirmed in the noble Qur’anic verse:

“Were it not that Allah repels some people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted.” (Q 2:251)
and also in another verse that encompasses this concept:
“Let there arise among you a group inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong; and they are the ones who will prosper.” (Q 3:104)

According to the latter verse, the practical dimensions of *enjoining good* and *forbidding evil* fall under the broader concept of “inviting to goodness.” The expressions “*they enjoin*” and “*they forbid*” represent specific instances of that

general invitation. In other words, *amr* (commanding) and *nahy* (forbidding) are more specific than *daʿwah* (invitation), for sometimes an invitation may take the form of advice rather than command or prohibition (Kazemi & Aʿrafi, 2021, vol. 30, p. 343).

Jurists distinguish between *preventing evil* (*dafʿ al-munkar*) and *removing evil* (*rafʿ al-munkar*), the latter being synonymous with *forbidding evil* (*nahy ʿan al-munkar*). As stated in *Miṣbāḥ al-Fiqhah*:

“Preventing evil means incapacitating the wrongdoer from committing a sinful act, whereas *forbidding evil* entails prohibiting or restraining according to the prescriptions of the Sharīʿah.” (al-Khoei, 1992, vol. 1, p. 181)

However, Muḥaqqiq Irwānī does not accept this distinction, arguing instead:

“In reality, *forbidding* and *removing evil* constitute *preventing evil*; for restraining a person from committing a sin that has already occurred is *removal*, while restraining him from repeating a sin that has not yet occurred is *prevention*.” (ibid.)

Thus, according to Irwānī, every act of *forbidding evil* inherently includes an element of *preventing evil*. This interpretation corresponds closely with the criminological distinction between **penal prevention** and **non-penal prevention**.

In any case, whether one considers *preventing* and *removing evil* as distinct or identical, jurists concur that *preventing evil*, like *removing evil*, is obligatory. As stated in *al-Makāsib*:

“One can argue for the prohibition of selling an item to someone known to use it for unlawful purposes, on the grounds that preventing evil, like removing it, is obligatory.” (al-Ansari, 1994, vol. 1, p. 141)

Imam Khomeini likewise affirms in his *Kitāb al-Bayʿ*:

“Preventing evil, like removing it, is obligatory.” (Mūsawī Khomeini, 1990, vol. 5, p. 215)

Moreover, in *Taḥrīr al-Wasīlah*, he presents a legal scenario illustrating the importance of crime prevention:

“If preventing evil requires entering the offender’s home or property and interfering with his possessions—such as his dwelling or belongings—it is permissible to do so, provided that the wrongdoing in question pertains to a matter

of such gravity that God would never consent to its occurrence, such as the killing of an innocent soul. In other cases, without consideration of importance and proper hierarchy, such intervention is problematic, though not entirely excluded in some degrees of certain wrongs.” (Mūsawī Khomeini, 1989, vol. 1, p. 480)

Thus, the importance of *preventing evil* is undeniable, as it serves as a safeguard for social well-being. Neglecting it, on the other hand, effectively constitutes *assisting in sin* (*i‘ānah ‘alā al-ithm*), which is unquestionably prohibited.

Accordingly, the Supreme Leader has placed particular emphasis on this jurisprudential principle across all levels of society—especially among public officials. He has repeatedly reminded them of its importance, stating:

“Enjoining good and forbidding evil guarantee the *good life* (*ḥayāt ṭayyibah*) in the Islamic system. We must act to witness its effects. Enjoining good has two stages: speaking and action. The stage of action—meaning the use of power or enforcement—today rests with the government and must only be carried out with its authorization. But the stage of speech is obligatory upon everyone, and all must perform it without hesitation.” (Meeting with the people of Qom, January 9, 1990)

Elsewhere, he declared the vitality of the Islamic community dependent upon the practice of *enjoining good and forbidding evil*:

“The issue of *enjoining good* is not a new one—it is an everlasting duty of Muslims. The Islamic community remains alive through the performance of this duty. The very stability of the Islamic government depends upon enjoining good and forbidding evil. For as it has been said, if this duty is abandoned, ‘God will place your wicked ones in authority over you, and your righteous ones will pray, but their prayers will not be answered.’ The endurance of Islamic governance and the preservation of righteous leadership depend on the establishment of enjoining good and forbidding evil.” (Meeting with scholars and clerics, 1992)

6. The Principle of Blocking the Means (*Sadd al-Dharā’i*)

The term *sadd* in Arabic linguistics means “to close,” “to prevent,” or “to block,” and Arabic lexicographers define the verb *sadda* as *aghlaqa* (“to shut”) (Aḥmad ibn Fāris, 1994, vol. 3, p. 66). *Dharā’i* is the plural of *dhari‘ah*, which carries multiple meanings, the most common of which is “means” or “instrument.” The author of *al-Furūq* defines it as “a means to something” (*al-dhari‘ah: al-wasīlah li’l-shay*) (al-Qarāfī, 1993, vol. 2, p. 194). In jurisprudential terminology, *sadd*

al-dharā'i ' refers to **preventing any act that, by common experience, leads to corruption or wrongdoing** (Makārim Shirāzī, vol. 2, p. 541).

The historical origin of the principle dates back to the mid-second century AH. According to legal theorists (*uṣūlīs*), the first jurist to establish it as a source of legal reasoning was **Mālik ibn Anas**, founder of the Mālikī school. After him, the concept expanded and became recognized as an independent source of *ijtihād* (legal inference). Some scholars even regarded it as constituting one-quarter of the *Sharī'ah*. Ibn al-Qayyim, a leading Sunni jurist, stated:

“The doctrine of blocking the means (*sadd al-dharā'i* ') constitutes one quarter of the law, for the law is divided into commands and prohibitions. Commands are of two kinds: those that are intrinsically intended, and those that serve as means to an intended purpose. Likewise, prohibitions are of two kinds: those whose harm lies within themselves, and those that serve as means to another harm, though not harmful in themselves. Thus, blocking means leading to prohibited ends constitutes one quarter of religion.” (Gohari et al., 2018, p. 115)

For instance, the **Ḥanbalī** jurists, on the basis of this principle, prohibit women from visiting cemeteries because such visits are often accompanied by lamentation and immodest exposure, which may lead to moral corruption; therefore, the means to such a situation must be blocked from the outset (*ibid.*).

Shi'a *Imāmī* jurists, however, do not accept *sadd al-dharā'i* ' as an independent principle or legal maxim. Nonetheless, they discuss its implications within the framework of **the prohibition of the means to the unlawful** and **the obligation of the means to the obligatory**, both of which overlap with the same conceptual foundation. Thus, while they reject it as a formal principle, they nonetheless recognize its functional significance in preventing crime and vice.

Accordingly, although the *Imāmī* jurists do not cite *sadd al-dharā'i* ' as a general rule across jurisprudence, it is evident from their collective views that they, along with other schools that reject its independent authority, **strongly emphasize combating the causes, means, and tools of wrongdoing**. They maintain that crime prevention must utilize every legitimate and effective method available. *Sadd al-dharā'i* ' thus represents one of the **most crucial preventive strategies** against crime and deviation—namely, the elimination of opportunities, temptations, and provocative conditions that lead to sin (Mīr Khalīlī, 2011, p. 31).

A narration supporting the essence of *sadd al-dharā'i* '—which forbids the preliminary causes of sin—is reported by Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd, who transmits from the Prophet (peace be upon him):

“The Messenger of Allah cursed wine, its presser, the one for whom it is pressed, its seller, its buyer, its server, the one who receives its price, its drinker, its carrier, and the one to whom it is carried.” (al-Ṭūsī, 1986, vol. 9, p. 104)

In this ḥadīth, the Prophet (PBUH), since *drinking wine* is prohibited, declares all preparatory acts leading to it as cursed and therefore prohibited. Clearly, **preparing the means to a prohibited act** constitutes *assistance in sin* (*i‘ānah ‘alā al-ithm*), which, according to the Qur’anic verse “*Do not cooperate in sin and aggression*” (Q 5:2), is itself forbidden. Consequently, **preparing the means to sin is also unlawful**.

Hence, in the Islamic penal policy, every form of assistance or cooperation in committing crimes is strongly condemned and, in some cases, criminalized (Mīr Khalīlī, 2011, p. 31). The Prophet (PBUH) said in a sound tradition:

“On the Day of Resurrection, a caller will proclaim: ‘Where are the helpers of the oppressors?’—everyone who prepared an inkwell for them, stitched a bag for them, or assisted them in any task—gather them all with those oppressors.” (al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, 1988, vol. 17, p. 180)

A similar legal approach appears in modern Islamic penal law, which draws upon the implications of *sadd al-dharā’i‘* by criminalizing complicity and assistance in wrongdoing. For instance, Article 639 of the Islamic Penal Code states:

“The following persons shall be sentenced to imprisonment from one to ten years, and in the case of paragraph (a), the premises shall also be temporarily closed by court order:
(a) Whoever establishes or manages a center of corruption or prostitution;
(b) Whoever encourages people to corruption or prostitution or facilitates it.”

Thus, regardless of debates over its strict juristic authority, the **substantive essence of *sadd al-dharā’i‘*** is clear: it calls for **preventing the causes and preconditions of corruption and crime**. Both reason and revelation obligate avoidance of all environments and means that lead to wrongdoing. Governments and societies alike are therefore required to adopt proactive preventive measures whenever individuals are exposed to the risk of sin or crime, thereby “blocking the path to corruption.”

Accordingly, the Supreme Leader has repeatedly emphasized the significance of this principle in crime prevention. In the *Statement on the Second Phase of the Revolution* (*Bayānīyah-ye Gām-e Dovvom-e Enqelāb*), he declares:

“Regulatory and governmental institutions must decisively and vigilantly prevent the formation of the seeds of corruption and combat its growth. Such a struggle requires faithful, courageous, and pure-hearted individuals—people of spiritual fortitude, with clean hands and illuminated hearts.”
(February 11, 2019)

One of the most important manifestations of social corruption prevention is **the safeguarding of chastity and modesty** (*‘iffah*). Accordingly, the Supreme Leader has stated:

“Removing the veil was a prelude to removing chastity; it aimed to strip society of modesty and to distract people with the powerful force of sensuality, so that they would abandon all other pursuits. And for a time, they succeeded—but the deep faith of the Iranian nation did not permit it.”
(Meeting with university students of Yazd Province, January 3, 2008)

He further explained:

“In movements that claim to defend women, the principal pillar must be the preservation of feminine modesty (*‘iffat*). In the West, neglect of this matter led to widespread immorality. They ignored chastity, and as a result, society fell into debauchery. Chastity is the foundation of a woman’s dignity—it elevates and honors her, even in the eyes of lustful men. The issues of hijab, maḥram and non-maḥram, of looking and lowering the gaze—all exist to safeguard chastity.”
(Meeting with a group of women, October 22, 1997)

In summary, what can be discerned from **the school of thought of Imam Khamenei** is that his vision of **justice-centered governance** remains constant through adherence to enduring jurisprudential principles. These principles—rooted in the Qur’an, Sunnah, and reason—are immutable in essence. However, he views **methods** as reformable, since human approaches may be fallible. Hence, while the goals and principles remain fixed, the **means must continually evolve** for greater accuracy and effectiveness.

As he explains:

“In our goals and principles, our standard must be: *‘So stand firm as you have been commanded’* [Q 11:112]. Deviation from principles and values is impermissible; the objectives are divine and beyond doubt. Yet in our methods, continual refinement, correction, and change are necessary. We must see which of our methods—even those familiar to us—are flawed and reform them. We must never confuse constancy in principles with rigidity in methods. Steadfastness is required in goals, not in methods.”
(Meeting with the Assembly of Experts, September 21, 2004)

Conclusion

1. The jurisprudential principles consistently emphasized by the Supreme Leader are grounded in divine foundations and objectives, upon which the edifice of the just Mahdīan government is established. The goals and principles within his school of thought are encompassed by the Qur’anic injunction “*So stand firm as you have been commanded, and those who turn back with you*” (Q 11:112), meaning that deviation from foundational values and principles is impermissible. The most significant of these principles include **justice**, **negation of domination (nafy al-sabīl)**, **guiding the ignorant (irshād al-jāhil)**, **assistance in righteousness (i‘ānah ‘alā al-birr)**, **repelling evil (daf‘ al-munkar)**, and **blocking the means (sadd al-dharā’i‘)**.
2. The concept of **justice** is a transhistorical and transspatial reality—an objective and ontological truth rather than a mere construct. The foremost aim of the Mahdīan government is the realization of justice and the eradication of oppression. Jurists, recognizing its paramount importance, have treated it as a fundamental legal principle upon which independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) may be based or against which legal conclusions may be tested. Accordingly, in the school of Imam Khamenei, the pursuit of justice is an obligation incumbent upon all, ranking foremost among the primary purposes of all prophetic missions. In the Islamic Republic, it retains the same status and dignity as the ultimate means of establishing divine justice on earth.
3. According to the principle of **negation of domination (nafy al-sabīl)**, any treaty or agreement between Muslims and non-Muslims that results in the latter’s ascendancy or control over the former is strictly prohibited. The primary textual basis of this principle is the Qur’anic verse “*And Allah will never grant the unbelievers a way over the believers*” (Q 4:141), which indicates a prescriptive (legislative) prohibition. The practical manifestations of this principle in Imam Khamenei’s thought can be observed in various domains—**cultural** (his opposition to UNESCO’s 2030 Agenda), **economic** (his advocacy for domestic production and support of Iranian goods), **military** (his endorsement of the Islamic Resistance Front), and **political** (his distrust of the United States in nuclear negotiations).
4. Undoubtedly, many crimes and social disorders arise from people’s ignorance of religious rulings—particularly concerning prohibitions and their harmful consequences. Based on the principle of **guiding the ignorant (irshād al-jāhil)**, jurists hold it obligatory to instruct and clarify divine laws to the uninformed. Within the school of the Supreme Leader, this principle is embodied in the doctrine of “**Jihād al-Tabyīn**” (the Jihad

of Clarification)—a moral and religious campaign that he has described as both “a definite duty and an urgent obligation.”

5. Jurists, following the Qur’anic verse “*Cooperate in righteousness and piety*” (Q 5:2), consider **assisting in good** (*i’ānah ‘alā al-birr*) to be obligatory. Undoubtedly, concern for the affairs of Muslims and defense of the oppressed are among its clearest manifestations. In accordance with this divine and human principle, the Supreme Leader has made **support for the oppressed and downtrodden**—the very hallmark of Mahdīan governance—the focal point of his policy, affirming that **defense of Muslims and oppressed nations** constitutes one of the Islamic Republic’s fundamental and immutable principles.
6. Jurists have declared **repelling evil** (*daf‘ al-munkar*) to be obligatory, just as **removing evil** (*raf‘ al-munkar*)—or *amr bi’l-ma’rūf wa nahy ‘an al-munkar*—is obligatory. When neglected by government or society, such negligence amounts to *assistance in sin* (*i’ānah ‘alā al-ithm*), which is indisputably forbidden. Given its critical importance, the Supreme Leader has described this principle as “**the guarantor of a wholesome life** (*ḥayāt ṭayyibah*) **within the Islamic system.**”
7. Although *Imāmī* jurists do not ascribe independent probative authority (*ḥujjiyyah*) to the principle of **blocking the means** (*sadd al-dharā’i’*), they affirm that its substance—**the prevention of corruption and wrongdoing**—is mandated by both reason and revelation. Thus, they have ruled that all causes, instruments, and circumstances leading to crime or vice must be curtailed. The Supreme Leader has repeatedly invoked this principle in emphasizing crime prevention, declaring that: “Supervisory and governmental institutions must decisively and vigilantly prevent the formation of the seeds of corruption and combat its growth.” (*Statement on the Second Phase of the Revolution*, February 11, 2019).

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