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Social Justice and Unity and Its Relationship with the Ideal Society from the Perspective of Abolhasan Ameri

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ABSTRACT

Ameri has a special perspective on the ideal society and its realization. He proposes individual and social moderation or justice and individual unity between internal forces and social unity among the members of society. Ameri believes that moderation, as the main component of virtue and happiness, acts at both the individual and social levels. At the individual level, moderation of the forces of the soul leads to the realization of the virtue of unity and ultimately causes the perfection of the human form and individual happiness, and at the social level, moderation is the factor that unifies society. Unity in society is the factor that keeps it Durable and differentiation in it causes its corruption and ruin. This unity is achieved from total justice and can be considered, from Ameri's perspective, an effect or characteristic of culture. This moderation and unity are not only raised in the individual and total dimension, but also include other dimensions such as the geography of the earth. Religion, with its individual and total moral and juridical commands, reason, with its sovereignty over powers, and love, with its unification of similar matters, play a fundamental role in achieving total moderation or justice and social unity.

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Introduction

One of the central concerns of Islamic philosophers has been the conditions and causes of the realization of a desirable society. One of the positions from which Islamic philosophy entered the discussion of civilization and culture has been the issue of a desirable society or the valuation of societies, which has been accompanied by the examination of what social virtue is. One of the most important periods influential in this study is the third and fourth Islamic centuries, during which culture and civilization - after a period of decline in Iran - regained their independence and were maturing, and for this reason, in those centuries, the real need of these categories to basic theories had become more apparent than ever.

The famous philosopher of that period, Abu Al-Hasan Ameri (381 AH), was one of the central thinkers who, while presenting a philosophical account of moderation and justice¹ that occurs in the context of Islamic culture and civilization - in the true sense of the word -, is led to the element of unity as the main effect of moderation and the factor of stability of society. Before Amiri, the second teacher, Farabi, had extensively entered into such discussions, and it can be said that Farabi, in his time, devoted his main attention to theorizing about civilization and culture (of course, in accordance with the Islamic environment) (for example, see: Farabi, undated, p. 46). After him, Ibn Sina (for example, see: Ibn Sina, 1953, p. 112) and Miskawayh al-Razi can be considered as examples of figures who have given philosophical thoughts in this area. Amiri's view, which presents a kind of moderate and unity-oriented value, reveals a virtuous person in the individual sphere and a virtuous society in the social sphere, but the relationship between

1. Given the diverse and irregular use of the two terms moderation and justice in Ameri's works, while paying attention to the possibility of distinguishing between these two terms in philosophy, in this article we have used them almost in the same sense. We may consider moderation to be a lower degree or a precursor to justice. However, due to the lack of centrality of the difference between these in the subject of the present article and the lack of terminological recording of this difference in Ameri's work, I have not committed myself to respecting it in this article.

the two (individual and society) is not a necessary relationship or a ratio of part to whole. In other words, a virtuous and desirable society does not necessarily arise from the gathering of moderate people. However, in Islam, a framework has been designed to pave this path – that is, the journey from gathering virtuous individuals to forming a virtuous community.

The central point of the present article is that moderation and its unification are the factors that sustain society, while avoiding moderation and achieving differentiation cause corruption and ruin in society. The aforementioned moderation in the context of society is such that, considering the type of Ameri's encounter, it can be considered the main attribute of a desirable culture from his perspective. In other words, it can be said that the moderate direction of society that the complete form of which is the unity of society and is considered the underlying pillar of society, can be considered by him as culture, or in a better way, the moderate context of which the aforementioned unity is the main and central effect, can be considered as culture from the perspective of our philosopher. Another main principle in this research is that this moderate context or culture, in its desired state, has a result or fruit called unity. In other words, the formation of a desirable culture has stages that can be drawn in a continuum, from moderation to unity and from mere society to civilized society. The importance of moderation in this discussion is so central that it also has a serious impact on geographical, behavioral, and outward aspects of human beings. Love is also an effective category in this process that should be given serious attention in this research.

1. Virtue, justice, and its role in the formation of unity (unity) in the two sphere individual and society

Human happiness has been a very concerning issue in Islamic philosophy. Ameri considers happiness to be the perfection of the human "form" (reason) in both theoretical and practical aspects (Ameri, 2019, p. 52). Islamic philosophers have considered this happiness to be the result of

acquiring theoretical and practical virtues. From Ameri's perspective, this perfection is achieved through the acquisition of the three virtues of chastity, courage, and wisdom, and of course, the highest virtue is justice (ultimate moderation), which includes the other virtues (Ameri, 2019, p. 160). It is worth noting that the inclusion of justice over other virtues is not the inclusion of a set; rather, it is a union in which the Included object, is the effect or result of multiple things and somehow belongs to a higher and more complete level of those parts. Ameri believes that this value, which "includes" other values, is "born" from the intermediate state of the soul among those other virtues. (Ameri, 2019, p. 289). The expression of birth in Ameri's language refers to the realization of a new thing called justice, which is a specific and distinct entity, not a collection or mixture of virtues. In other words, the perfection of the form, which is considered by Ameri as human happiness, is the other feature of justice, and until justice resulting from the moderation of the three powers is formed, this unified "form" will not be completed. In other words, as a result of the moderation of powers, a new being is produced, which is called the human "form" with the characteristic of justice, and before this form or justice is achieved, a personal and unique form for man cannot be assumed - except in a very weak way.

In support of the above conclusion, Ameri believes that the survival of every real thing, including the survival of man, is linked to justice (Ameri, 2019, p. 188), and eternity is linked to justice, and corruption and decay are linked to lack of moderation (Ameri, 2019, p. 152). In other words, the greater the justice – which is the unifying aspect of other virtues – the greater the survival of the thing that has justice, and the greater the lack of moderation, imbalance, and plurality of virtues, the greater and sooner the corruption of the thing characterized by injustice will come. Also, in confirming the point that injustice is accompanied by more plurality and differentiation, Ameri attributes another negative attribute called harm, which means suffering and torment, directly to differentiation and plurality, which is the opposite of unity and oneness (Ameri, 1398, p. 71).

He states explicitly: The more the separate powers of man gather and unite, the higher their rank and become stronger, and the more they separate from each other and become more numerous, the lower their existential degree and become weaker (Ameri, 1375, p. 369).

Therefore, it should be emphasized that from Ameri's perspective, justice does not result from the juxtaposition of chastity, courage, and moderate intellect; rather, Ameri considers this juxtaposition to be only the joining of separate matters to each other (and not the achievement of justice), and its opposite is the splitting of the parts of a connected matter (Ameri, 2019, p. 71). Similarly, the moderation of a power does not mean several good and several bad things that have a moderate outcome; rather, it means a single virtue that has all those qualities in a unified way (Ameri, 2019, p. 99); not simply their combination with each other.

The same situation is true for society. The explanation is that a blissful society is a society that has virtue, the necessary condition of which is the virtue of the individuals of that society - such as moderation in the existence of the individual, the necessary condition of which is the moderation of his powers - and in other words, the prerequisite for the virtue of the community is the virtue of the individuals; but just as the virtue of the individual means the unity of powers and the achievement of a unified matter that encompasses all the virtues of powers, the virtue of the community is also the result of the emergence of a unified just matter that is not simply the aggregate of individual justices, but a single justice that is comprehensive in relation to different individual justices and gathers all justices in the same unity. In other words, social justice is not simply the result of the sum of individual justices. Ameri believes that the unvirtuous Medina and the people of sin and error are a Medina that cannot be considered a unity and should be considered as multiple Medinas (Ameri, 2019, p. 215). Thus, he equates an unhappy Medina with a lack of unity, which shows that from his perspective, the enjoyment of social virtue, which is collective justice, cannot be achieved except by achieving unity in society. Of course, he does not consider this

virtue to be independent of individual virtues and believes that collective virtue cannot occur unless there are individual virtues (as a necessary but not sufficient condition) (Ameri, 2019, p. 215). Quoting Plato, he says: A happy society is a wise, courageous, and chaste society, and it does not have to be populous and wealthy; rather, it must be a single united society (Ameri, 2019, p. 217). This statement means that a blissful Medina, while possessing all the perfections (such as wisdom, courage, and chastity), must have unity, and having those perfections in a dispersed form – or in other words, in different parts of society – is not enough, and the aforementioned perfections can be considered a necessary condition for the realization of a blissful society. In this way, just as individual justice brings about a unity in man that is inherent in the human form, and the perfection of this form determines the ultimate happiness of the individual, social moderation also brings about a unity in society that is a form for society, and society, without this unified form, is not considered a society - in the idiomatic sense of the word. Given that in contemporary cultural sciences, culture is considered the main factor in the formation of society and the agent that forms unity in it, this form of social unity in Ameri's view - which is also considered the invisible factor in the formation of society - can be considered by him to be the same "culture" - despite the fact that he himself did not mention culture or a word with its meaning.

2. The design of justice and unity at the three individual, social and geographical levels

Considering the previous discussions, it became clear that moderation is the component of justice and that is the component of culture - the same single platform whose essence is the unity of society. Also, the moderation of the three forces in the individual and society was mentioned earlier. Ameri also adds another level to the representatives of moderation, which is called geographical moderation. While accepting the element of geography in moderation, he considers the example of social

moderation as "Iranshahr" (Ameri, 2006, p. 65 and Hamo, 2010, p. 16). This is because, in his opinion, material geography, like the human body and soul, as well as society, accepts a moderate state, and the interpretation of this state in geography is a point or region of the world that has the most moderate climate and animals and humans. Of course, in this case too, the most important axis for realizing a moderate state in geography is reason (Ameri, 2006, p. 66), and it is the reason of humans that primarily causes the formation of moderation in a geographical area, and other factors are in a secondary position. It is because of this subordination of moderation to reason that animals do not possess culture and its necessities (Ameri, 2010, p. 76).

Therefore, from Ameri's perspective, moderation can be realized not only in the human body and soul and in the structure of society, but also in the environment and even geography, and this is what creates a unified whole from the set of components involved in human life, in which each thing is placed in its proper place. It is worth noting that references to "Iranshahr" were also reported before him, including Ibn Rosteh in the third century (Ibn Rosteh, 1892, p. 96). Mas'udi also mentioned Iranshahr in the first half of the fourth century (Mas'udi, 1381, pp. 36-37). Also, Maqdisi (381 AH), who was contemporary with Ameri, has clarified this matter and the term Iranshahr (Maqdisi, 1906, p. 47), and after Ameri, people such as Yaqut Hamavi (624) (Hamavi, 1995, p. 289) and Mostofi (750 AH) (Mostofi, 1381, p. 19-22) have referred to Iranshahr and its moderation. It is also worth mentioning that the issue of the influence of geography on civilization and culture (beliefs, customs, etc.) other than Ameri was expressed by philosophers such as Farabi in the period before Ameri and by Ibn Sina in the period after Ameri, and this matter has been expanded in detail by the Ikhwan al-Safa. Another type of expansion of the axes of moderation to matters outside the category of ethics can be seen among researchers of that period, such as Ibn Meskuyah, in response to Abu-Hayyan Tawhidi, examining the relationship between virtue and the physical condition of its owner (Tawhidi, 2019, p. 106).

3. How to achieve the ideal society from Ameri's perspective

After analyzing unity as the main characteristic of the ideal culture from Ameri's perspective, we will discuss his view on how to achieve the ideal society.

In the individual dimension, following his predecessors, he enumerates the types of virtues that are formed on the basis of dividing the soul into its powers; with the difference that he also refers to its objective requirements. For example, he deals with "will" (hemmah) as a moral description, explains its middle ground, examines its object, and considers its difference from its corresponding concepts, and then pays attention to its practical realization (Ameri, 2019, p. 122).

Ameri follows the same path in the social dimension; he proposes the centrality of justice in society and discusses it (Ameri, 2019, p. 197). Similarly, as with the individual aspect of justice, he also proposes the opposite situation of justice in the social dimension, namely, oppression. It is worth noting that this type of dealing with justice by Ameri is different from his aforementioned philosophical analysis of justice. He mentions Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (AS) as a symbol of social justice, who advised Malik al-Ashtar to refrain from oppression and introduced the oppressor as doomed to destruction in this world and the hereafter (Ameri, 2019, p. 200). The concept of harm (harassment) versus justice was previously mentioned, and it was made clear that the former is divisive, corrupting, and destructive, while the latter is sustaining and creative; in a social context too, oppression is destructive, while justice is unifying and sustaining. According to Ameri, social injustice destroys the unity resulting from social justice – which is a characteristic of a desirable culture – and in other words, injustice destroys the desired cultural situation. The agency of justice in relation to survival is something that Islamic philosophers have long paid attention to. For example, Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi says that individual and personal moderation will lead to the survival of the body (Tusi, 2004, p. 163).

Amiri enumerates the causes of unity (ittihad) and separation (forghah)

and considers it the duty of the ruler to care for this unity and its causes. This unity is so strong in his opinion that it leads to a situation where the property of each individual is as if it were the property of another individual: “It is essential that whatever one person has, belongs to another... to the extent that they become one body” (Amiri, 1398, p. 201). He introduces this unity as the unity of the different parts of a single body and in explaining this single body he considers it a plural unit that, while being one, contains a plurality within itself (Amiri, 1399, p. 36). The analogy of the unity of society to the unity of the body is also found in the words of Farabi (Farabi, 1364, p. 42). Farabi believes that the ideal society (utopia) is like a body whose powers and functions are complete and perfect, and which functions correctly and orderly, and is not subject to defects or damage. Just as the members of a single body serve the function of a main member and have a unity in this way, the virtuous society also has a unity similar to the aforementioned unity (cf. Farabi, 1995, p. 114).

Just as Amiri, on the individual level, considers justice to be a branch of moderation in the three faculties of the soul, a society that has become unified and has acquired culture on the collective level must be wise, steadfast (steadfast and courageous), and chaste. He explains the three aforementioned characteristics by emphasizing that society is not a collection of individuals and must have a single identity – which can be called culture (Amiri, Al-Saadah, p. 217).

It is worth noting that the connection between moderation and unity is seen in the works of other Islamic philosophers such as Ibn Sina (for example, see: Ibn Sina, Bayta, p. 386). He says in Nejat: “All moderation is in the abundance of composition or temperament, and unity occurs in its abundance” (Ibn Sina, 1379, p. 590 and Hamo, 1363, p. 17), which clearly indicates the causality of moderation with respect to unity.

4. Factors for the realization of social justice and unity

4-1. The role of religion (Islam) in the realization of social justice and unity

One of Ameri's special views on this subject is that Islam guides and manages this process of social unification as a process of society-building and culture-generating. In other words, by proposing individual virtues and personal justice and moving from these virtues and justice to collective virtues and justice, Islam provides a platform in which, by achieving individual virtues and justice in a planned path, social virtues and justice – not the sum of individual virtues and justice, but the production of those individual traits in the path of forming a moderate and unified collective identity – are achieved. Society naturally has classes such as noble and lowly, strong and weak, friend and enemy, etc. Islam has given individuals in each class instructions that, if followed, will result in individual virtue, and at the same time, these actions are designed to play a role in others (Ameri, 2006, pp. 62-63). For example, Islam has ordered the rich class to free themselves from financial dependencies by giving to the poor class in order to refine themselves and achieve individual happiness, which at the same time, these gifts play an important role in others, and therefore, by ordering forgiveness and charity, etc., in Islam, both individual virtue occurs and a collective virtue (relative wealth at the community level) prevails, which ultimately leads to social balance and justice (Ameri, 2006, pp. 63-64). In fact, just as religion initially uses promises and injunctions to individuals to lead them on the path of righteousness and righteousness, and then tries to transform this entry into physical traits and inner virtues, in the case of society, it also starts with individuals to lead the community at a basic level through guidance, and then tries to transform these individual virtues into a single collective virtue (Ameri, 2010, p. 76).

4-2. The role of reason in creating justice and unity

Unity as a product specific to man - from Ameri's perspective, within the

framework of human internal powers, it is the product of reason (Ameri, 2019, p. 52). In other words, it is reason that ultimately, as a power that moderates other powers on two theoretical and practical levels, establishes a balance and unity between those powers and their virtues. In fact, reason prevents excess and deficiency in each power and gives each power a moderate attribute and ultimately establishes a moderation and balance between the powers, which is interpreted as the justice of the powers, which is the whole situation of the rulership of reason over the other powers. Therefore, this general moderation of the powers is the same rulership of reason over the powers that causes all powers to move towards the completion or perfection of one thing, which is reason, and this perfection leads to human happiness. Thus, the aforementioned situation will be the same situation of unity and it became clear that this situation is achieved by reason.

It is noteworthy that for philosophers, it is this reason that, as a distinguishing feature of man from animals, realizes the culture that other animals - who are devoid of reason - lack. Therefore, social unity from Ameri's perspective, like culture from the perspective of many philosophers, is a specific product of human reason, and this is also a confirmation of the necessity of unity and culture.

4-3. The role of love in creating unity

As mentioned above, the coexistence of virtuous individuals in society is a necessary condition for the realization of a virtuous community, and its sufficient condition is that this coexistence turns into unity, which is different from the mere inclusion of disparate things. It was also mentioned that this aspect of unity or the basis for its formation can be considered behalf of Ameri to be culture.

From his perspective, what is considered the cause of this unity is love. He says: "Love unites souls" (Ameri, 2019, p. 134). In fact, it is love that causes the true connection of human souls in society and makes them a true unit. Because love is an inner and heartfelt state and at the same time

a real connection - between several people - and therefore it gives a real connection to the real existence of humans or human souls. With this real connection between the real existences of humans, a genuine unity occurs in the field of human interaction. He explains how love occurs in human relationships as “similar loves similar” (Ameri, 2019, p. 70). In fact, he speaks of an ontological principle that similarities in the realm of reality cause the convergence of similar things and this similarity in the human realm appears in the form of love in the real existence of humans, that is, human souls. The opposite of such a unity in society, which Ameri considered to be the result of the love of souls for each other, is the state of hatred and aversion that arises when beings with different and contradictory existential structures are confronted (Ameri, 2019, p. 136) and is called “harm” in the individual sphere and is the opposite of love (Ameri, 2019, p. 70).

It is worth noting that prioritizing love for the formation of society is also seen in the expressions of Farabi before Ameri (Farabi, 1985, p. 71) and also after him in the works of Ibn Sina (Ibn Sina, 1997, p. 498) and Khawaja Nasir (Tusi, 1994, p. 124).

Conclusion

Ameri considers unity as a factor in the realization of the desired society and its survival. The unity he has in mind is one in which all parts and classes of society are placed in their proper and special places, and unity is achieved through this proportion and arrangement. In other words, the main factor in the formation of unity for Ameri is moderation or justice, which is not only presented as a balance of the forces of the soul (lust, anger, and reason) and at the individual level, but also acts as a unifying factor at the social level. This social unity, according to Ameri, can be considered in a single collective identity called "culture", which is known as the main basis for the formation of a civilized and virtuous society. Ameri defines moderation and justice at the individual level as the balance of the three forces of the soul. This balance primarily leads to the

realization of individual virtues such as chastity, courage, and wisdom. However, the ultimate individual virtue is justice or moderation, which is presented as a sum of forces and gathers all other virtues. Ameri emphasizes that this individual justice creates an inner unity among human powers that leads to a complete human form, and therefore, without this unity, man will not be truly and completely complete.

At the social level, moderation also acts as a unifying factor. Ameri believes that a society that enjoys virtue must also enjoy social unity. This social unity is realized through social justice, which is not simply the sum of individual justices, but a single and comprehensive justice that gathers all individual justices within itself.

According to this view, from Ameri's perspective, culture, which can be considered the main basis for the realization of social unity, is realized by human reason. Reason, as the distinguishing feature of man from animals, is the main factor in the creation of culture. Because it is reason that is the source of justice for all powers, and the moderation and unification of the levels and aspects of human existence occur in the shadow of reason. Hence, Ameri believes that culture is a specific product of human reason and that animals lack culture due to their lack of reason. This social unity, which is created through collective moderation and social justice, leads to a civilized and virtuous society.

Ameri also introduces love as the main factor in creating social unity. Love is an inner and heartfelt state that connects human souls to each other and makes them a true unit, and Ameri believes that love causes a true bond between humans, which is the basis of social unity and the formation of culture. On the other hand, hatred and grudges cause division and the destruction of social unity.

In addition to moderation in the forces of the soul and society, Ameri also refers to geographical moderation. He believes that geography also plays a role in the formation of culture and civilization, and sees an example of social moderation in "Iranshahr". Ameri emphasizes that reason is the main axis of realizing geographical and cultural moderation.

Ameri believes that Islam, as a comprehensive system, provides a platform for the formation of a moderate or just culture and society by guiding individuals towards individual and collective virtues. By providing moral and social instructions, Islam guides individuals towards individual virtues such as chastity, courage and wisdom, and at the same time, places these individual virtues on the path of forming a moderate and unified collective identity. In other words, Islam forms a united and civilized society by creating a balance between individual and collective virtues.

Thus, it can be said that from Ameri's perspective, moderation, as the main element of virtue and happiness, functions at both the individual and social levels. At the individual level, moderation of the soul's powers leads to the realization of the virtue of justice and unity and ultimately leads to the perfection of the human "form" and individual happiness, and at the social level, moderation and justice, as a factor that unifies society, forms a virtuous, complete and civilized society.

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