

# Managerial Responsibility in Cooperation with Oppression: A Jurisprudential and Legal Analysis Based on the Time of Occurrence and Its Consequences

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Oppression is one of the greatest human challenges, with its negative effects being perceptible not only on individuals but also on society as a whole. In fact, many of the problems and calamities that befall individuals and societies stem from oppression. A key subject in Shi'a political jurisprudence is the prohibition of cooperating with oppressors and assisting them, which is emphasized as a means to counter oppression and social corruption. Managerial responsibility concerning cooperation with oppressors is of great significance from this perspective, as managers, being in positions of decision-making and supervision, may directly or indirectly play a role in the occurrence of oppression. Therefore, examining the responsibility of managers in cooperation with oppression from the standpoint of the time of occurrence (before, during, or after the act) and the jurisprudential and legal consequences of such cooperation is essential. This study aims to analyze the different forms of cooperation in oppression based on the time of occurrence and to examine its ruling from the perspective of Imami jurisprudence and legal principles using a descriptive-analytical method. The findings indicate that cooperation with a tyrannical ruler, particularly when it strengthens an oppressive government, is prohibited. Even in cases where such cooperation does not directly reinforce a tyrannical regime, certain jurisprudential arguments still deem it unlawful. Additionally, the punishment of an accomplice in Islamic law, as an instance of *a'ānat 'alā al-ithm* (assistance in sin), is examined, demonstrating that if the legal and jurisprudential conditions are met, the accomplice must also be held accountable. These analyses underscore that managers must take responsibility for any form of cooperation with oppression, and in cases where they have assisted oppressors, they must be held accountable according to jurisprudential and legal principles.

**Keywords:** *Imami Jurisprudence, Time, Oppression, Managerial Responsibility, Cooperation in Oppression.*

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## 1. Introduction

Oppressing others means exceeding established boundaries. In reality, human behavior, speech, and actions are governed by specific limits within various situations and social interactions. When an

individual disregards these limits and oversteps them, they engage in oppression. Every person, in both their individual and social life, possesses rights that others are obligated to respect, just as they themselves must honor the rights of others. Oppression occurs when individuals fail to respect each other's rights. It is one of the gravest



major sins, to the extent that the Holy Qur'an refers to disbelievers as the true oppressors: "*Indeed, the disbelievers are the oppressors*" (Qur'an, 2:254).

In committing an act of oppression, the direct perpetrator may be a single individual, but numerous preceding and subsequent factors may contribute to its occurrence and perpetuation. Careful examination often reveals that multiple individuals are involved in enabling and sustaining acts of oppression.

The greater the spiritual status of the oppressed person and the closer they are to the Almighty, the graver and more reprehensible the oppression against them becomes. In this context, oppression against the divine proofs (*hujaj Allāh*), such as the Prophets and their successors, cannot be equated with oppression against ordinary people. Consequently, Islamic law has established specific rulings concerning these sacred figures. An act that constitutes oppression against them due to their esteemed status may not necessarily be considered oppression when committed against others. Similarly, an offense that is deemed oppressive in both cases may incur a far harsher punishment when directed at them—for instance, verbal abuse against others may result in discretionary punishment (*ta'zīr*), whereas the same offense against an infallible figure (*ma'sūm*) may warrant execution. Based on this principle, participation in oppression against the Ahl al-Bayt (*the Prophet's family*) may have broader implications than participation in oppression against others. Given that the Almighty has established love for them as the recompense for prophethood, it is evident that Islamic law demands a higher standard of conduct toward them than toward other Muslims. Accordingly, an action may be considered participation in oppression against the Ahl al-Bayt while not being classified as such concerning others, or, even if it is, the severity of its consequences may be lesser.

Some jurists assert that assisting an oppressor in their injustice is classified as a major sin (Ansari et al., 1994; Mufid, 1993). This study seeks to examine the different types of cooperation in oppression against the Ahl al-Bayt based on the time of occurrence, as interpreted in Imami jurisprudence.

## 2. Managerial Responsibility in Cooperation with Oppression

Managerial responsibility in relation to cooperation with oppression is a critical issue in Islamic jurisprudence and legal studies. It pertains to the role and accountability of managers in situations where their actions lead to oppression and the violation of others' rights. Within this framework, managers may directly or indirectly contribute to oppression—whether through flawed decision-making, negligence in supervision, or facilitation of oppressive actions.

From a jurisprudential perspective, an individual's responsibility in oppression varies depending on the type of cooperation, intent, and temporal circumstances. In legal terms, the consequences of any form of cooperation or negligence in this context may differ, potentially leading to penalties or compensation for damages. Therefore, a thorough analysis from both jurisprudential and legal perspectives is essential to determine the extent of managers' responsibilities regarding oppression and its implications in various dimensions.

Examining managerial responsibility based on the time of oppression is also crucial, as cooperation in oppression can occur at different stages of its execution. For instance, managers may be unaware of an impending injustice before it occurs, or they may fail to address it after its occurrence. This highlights the fact that each stage of oppression's occurrence can result in distinct types of responsibility and legal consequences for managers. Consequently, identifying these stages and analyzing their impact from a jurisprudential and legal perspective is necessary to correctly define and enforce individual and organizational responsibilities.

### 3. Types of Cooperation in Oppression Based on the Time of Occurrence

#### 3.1. Cooperation in Oppression Before Its Occurrence

Participation in oppression before it occurs is a rationally established concept: whoever lays the foundation for an action is considered a partner in all its subsequent consequences, whether good or bad. This principle is widely accepted by rational individuals and is also supported by religious texts. For instance, it is stated that whoever establishes a virtuous practice will share in its reward as long as others follow it, and whoever initiates an evil practice will share in its punishment whenever it is emulated (Narāqi, 1995).

An example of this can be seen in a letter sent by Abdullah ibn Umar to Yazid, in which he rebuked him for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him). Yazid responded: *"Fool! ... If the truth was with us, then we fought justly, and if the truth was with them (Imam Hussein and his companions), then your father ('Umar) was the first to establish this practice and to initiate the killing and persecution of the people of truth"* (Ibn Tawus, 1981).

Some renowned Sunni scholars have also acknowledged that the foundation for the martyrdom of the leader of the youth of paradise was laid on the day the caliphate was usurped from Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and that Imam Hussein was, in essence, martyred on the day of *Saqīfa* (the event in which Abu Bakr was appointed caliph).

Al-'Allama Safadi, a prominent Sunni scholar, narrates in his authoritative work *Al-Wafī bi al-Wafayāt* from the famous poet and judge Abu Bakr ibn Qari'a:

"Had it not been for the people's fear and the political authority of the caliph, I would have revealed the secrets of the Prophet and his family in such a way that it would render Malik and Abu Hanifa redundant. I would have published a document narrating the events of the accursed treaty (*Ṣahīfa Mal'ūna*), and I would have shown you that Imam Hussein was truly martyred on the day of *Saqīfa*, not in Karbala" (Safadi, 2000).

Some prominent Imami jurists have also expressed this notion in poetry. For instance, the late Gharawi Isfahani, known as *Kompani*, states:

"Harmlah did not shoot that arrow when he shot it; rather, the one who paved the way for him did. An arrow came from *Saqīfa*, and its bow was in the hands of the caliph".

Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hosseini Milani elaborates on the reluctance of some Sunni scholars to curse Yazid, stating: "As mentioned earlier, some Sunni scholars argue that Yazid should not be cursed. When asked why, given his numerous crimes, they respond that cursing Yazid would lead people to curse those above him, ultimately implicating figures whom they deem beyond reproach. Indeed, the involvement of certain caliphs in the events of Karbala stems from the fact that, during the time of Umar ibn al-Khattab, part of the Levant (*Sham*) was conquered by Muslims. Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan was appointed as its governor by Umar, and upon his death, his brother Mu'awiya succeeded him. Once the entire

Levant came under Muslim control, Mu'awiya became its sole ruler. Uthman ibn Affan, during his caliphate, retained Mu'awiya in this position. At that time, Abu Sufyan joyfully remarked to Uthman: 'You have upheld family ties!' Consequently, all those who facilitated Mu'awiya's rise to power share in his deeds—both good and bad. But in reality, did Mu'awiya ever commit any good?" (Hosseini Milani, 2009).

### 3.2. Cooperation with Oppression During Its Occurrence

Cooperating with an oppressor while they are committing an act of oppression is among the most explicit forms of assisting a tyrant and is undoubtedly considered a major sin. Examples include handing a whip to the oppressor so that they may lash an innocent person, providing them with a pen to write or sign an unjust ruling, restraining a victim so that the oppressor can beat, kill, or imprison them, and similar actions.

One of the most blatant manifestations of aiding an oppressor is defending and supporting them. Anyone who, in a court of law, takes responsibility for defending an oppressor while being fully aware of their injustice (*man tawallā khuṣūmata zālimin*), whether as an attorney or by assisting them in their tyranny (*aw a'āna 'alayhā*), is subjected to divine condemnation and the fire of Hell (*abshir bi-la'nat Allāh wa nār jahannam*). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: *"Whoever assumes the task of defending an oppressor or aids them in their injustice, when the Angel of Death descends upon them, they will be told: 'Rejoice in the curse of God and the fire of Hell, and what a dreadful fate it is.'"*

Moreover, anyone who guides an oppressor in their injustice will be resurrected alongside Haman (the vizier of Pharaoh), and both the instigator and the oppressor will suffer greater punishment than other inhabitants of Hell.

Among the worst and most reprehensible forms of assisting oppressors is aiding them in their oppression against believers. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: *"Whoever reports a fellow believer to a ruler in a way that provokes the ruler's anger against them—even if no harm comes to the believer as a result—God will nullify the good deeds of the informer. But if the ruler punishes the believer, God will place the informer in the same level of Hell as Haman."* (Hurr al-Amili, 1988, Vol. 2, p. 401).

### 3.3. Cooperation with Oppression After Its Occurrence

A true believer, by virtue of their faith, cannot remain indifferent or neutral in matters of truth and falsehood, justice and oppression. Faith dictates that one must take a stance against any act of injustice, condemn it, and disassociate from it. Consequently, any form of endorsement, justification, approval, or indifference toward oppression is unacceptable for a believer and is, in reality, a form of cooperation with the oppressor. In Islamic law, such inaction is considered sinful.

Imam al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) stated in *Sahifa Sajjadiya*: "O Allah, I seek Your forgiveness if an oppressed person was wronged in my presence and I did not come to their aid." (*Sahifa Sajjadiya*, Supplication 38, Section 1).

According to hadiths, any form of emotional or ideological alignment with an oppressive group renders an individual a participant in their actions. Whoever loves a wrongdoer's actions is considered a partner in their deeds. Allama al-Majlisi dedicated a chapter in *Bihar al-Anwar* titled "Whoever Approves of an Action is Like the One Who Committed It" (Majlisi, 1986).

Thus, participation in oppression is not confined to a specific location nor limited to the time when the act occurs. Anyone who later aligns themselves, even in thought, with an oppressor is considered a partner in their wrongdoing. Clearly, an oppressor is disqualified from justice (*'adl*), and in some cases, approval of oppression can lead to a person being expelled from the faith, even if they outwardly perform religious rituals such as prayer and fasting.

For instance, approving of the killing of prophets and their successors is tantamount to being a part of the crime itself. No one doubts that those who were content with the murder of Imam al-Husayn (peace be upon him) were outside the fold of faith, even if they prayed, fasted, and recited the *shahada*. Such individuals have been cursed by the infallible Imams and are, without doubt, among those whom God has condemned in the Qur'an: "Indeed, the curse of God is upon the wrongdoers." (Qur'an, 11:18).

Cooperation with oppression after its occurrence can take multiple forms, some of which also overlap with cooperation during the act itself.

#### 3.3.1. Justifying the Oppression and Making Excuses for the Oppressor

One way of participating in oppression is by rationalizing, censoring, distorting, or absolving oppressors of their crimes. This is often carried out by corrupt scholars, court poets, propagandists, and other individuals who sell their faith for worldly gain. The Holy Qur'an criticizes the misguided for following poets, except for those who use their poetry to support the oppressed:

*"As for the poets, only those who are astray follow them... Except for those who believe, do righteous deeds, remember God frequently, and defend themselves after being wronged. And soon the oppressors will know what fate awaits them."* (Qur'an, 26:224, 227).

#### 3.3.2. Approving of the Oppression

Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) said that Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stated:

*"Indeed, faith consists of approval and disapproval. The she-camel (of Prophet Salih) was slain by a single man, yet because others were pleased with the act, they all faced punishment. When a just leader emerges, whoever is pleased with their rule and supports them in justice becomes their ally. Conversely, when an unjust ruler emerges, whoever is pleased with their governance and supports them in tyranny becomes their companion."*

The Holy Qur'an holds the Jews of the Prophet's time responsible for the murder of previous prophets, even though they did not directly commit the killings:

*"Say, 'Indeed, messengers before me came to you with clear proofs and with what you said. Why then did you kill them, if you are truthful?'"* (Qur'an, 3:183).

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) explained this verse: *"God knew that they did not personally kill the prophets. However, because their hearts and inclinations were aligned with those who did, He considered them killers due to their approval and inner acceptance of the crime."* (Ayashi, 2001).

According to Islamic narrations, even approving of the continued existence of oppressors constitutes an act of oppression. Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) stated:

*"Whoever wishes for the continued existence of tyrants desires the disobedience of God. Indeed, the Almighty praises Himself for eradicating the oppressors, saying: 'So the last remnant of the people who wronged was cut off."*

*And praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.' (Qur'an, 6:45)."* (Kulayni, 1986).

### 3.3.3. *Concealing the Oppression of Oppressors or Trivializing It*

One form of cooperation with oppressors is concealing the truth of the oppressed and hiding the injustices committed by oppressors. The Holy Qur'an explicitly prohibits concealing the truth, condemns it in multiple verses, and warns of divine punishment for those who do so:

*"Do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know it."* (Qur'an, 2:42).

Furthermore, after stating that God does not love the public disclosure of offensive speech, the Qur'an makes only one exception to this rule—when a person has been subjected to oppression:

*"God does not like the public mention of evil speech, except by one who has been wronged."* (Qur'an, 4:148).

Thus, the narrations from the Imams (peace be upon them) prohibit concealing oppression and its consequences. Imam al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) wrote a letter to Muhammad ibn Muslim al-Zuhri, a well-known religious scholar of his time who served the oppressive Umayyad rulers. In the letter, the Imam rebuked him:

*"God has taken a covenant from religious scholars in the Qur'an that they must clarify the truth and not conceal it. Yet, you have hidden the fear that an oppressor should have regarding the consequences of their injustice and have paved the way for their tyranny. They have made you the central axis of their oppression. Have they not used you as a bridge to achieve their goals? Have you not become a ladder for their misguidance, through which they trap ignorant fools? By means of you, they cast doubt upon true scholars, making people believe that all scholars are like you, leading to widespread distrust of scholars. In return for all this service, what have these oppressors given you? Whatever they have given you is worthless compared to what they have taken from you."* (Harāni, 1986; Ibn Sa'd, 1986; Ya'qubi, 1994).

### 3.3.4. *Praising Oppressors*

Another form of cooperating in oppression is praising an oppressor in a way that strengthens their power, allowing them to commit more injustices, or

emboldening them through flattery. The gravity of this act, aside from the previously mentioned evidence against enjoining evil, is highlighted in a narration cited by Sheikh Ansari. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

*"Whoever honors and glorifies a wealthy person out of greed for their wealth, God will be angry with them and will place them in the lowest level of Hell, in a coffin of fire, alongside Qarun."* (Muhaddith Nuri, 2008).

It is clear that this narration applies even more strongly when the praised individual is an oppressor. Therefore, if the person being praised is also a tyrant, the one who praises them is even more deserving of divine punishment.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said:

*"Whoever praises a tyrannical ruler or humbles themselves before them out of greed will be their companion in Hell."*

He further stated:

*"Whenever a sinner is praised, the Throne of God trembles, and His wrath falls upon the one who praised them."* (Qomi, 1994).

### 3.3.5. *Silence in the Face of Oppression*

Ignoring and remaining silent in the face of oppression is also a form of assisting the oppressor and enabling their injustice. A person does not even have the right to remain silent in the face of oppression because one cannot remain indifferent to truth and falsehood. Whenever oppression occurs, one must take a stance, support the truth, and stand by the oppressed. Remaining silent or indifferent only strengthens injustice, making it harder for seekers of truth to choose the right path. Thus, an indifferent person bears responsibility for the oppression that results from their inaction and is required to react against injustice. At the very least, they must turn away from the oppressors so that they do not continue their wrongdoing.

The Holy Qur'an groups those who remain silent about oppression together with the oppressors themselves, declaring divine punishment upon both groups while only granting salvation to those who actively oppose injustice:

*"When they disregarded the warnings given to them, We saved those who forbade wrongdoing and seized the wrongdoers with a severe punishment for their wickedness."* (Qur'an, 7:165).

As the verse clearly indicates, the people in this scenario are divided into three groups: those who forbid oppression, the oppressors, and those who remain silent. Only the first group is saved, while the other two groups are doomed.

Commenting on this verse, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) stated:

*"Both groups perished, and only the group that forbade wrongdoing was saved."* (Gholami Jaliseh, 2011).

Verse 165 of *Surah Al-A'raf* is one of the 290 verses in which God addresses the issue of oppression. According to Allama Tabatabai, the key message in the first part of this verse—*"When they disregarded the warnings given to them, We saved those who forbade wrongdoing"*—is that remaining silent in the face of immorality and failing to sever ties with oppressors is equivalent to participating in their corruption. This, in turn, leads to sharing in their punishment.

Allama Tabatabai explains:

*"The phrase 'When they disregarded the warnings given to them' refers to their neglect of divine admonitions, even if they remembered them in their minds. The divine punishment occurs as a consequence of their disregard for God's commands and their refusal to heed the warnings of His prophets. Otherwise, if mere forgetfulness were the issue, then punishment would not make sense, as forgetfulness itself naturally negates responsibility and accountability."* (Tabatabai, 2011).

#### 4. Examining the Ruling on Assisting an Oppressor

The various forms of assisting oppression and oppressors can be classified into three categories:

1. Assisting the oppressor in their act of oppression.
2. Being among their supporters without directly participating in their oppression—for example, having one's name registered in their administrative records without engaging in injustice, or participating solely in their beneficial works such as building mosques, flood barriers, or installing lights on roads.
3. Neither assisting them in oppression nor being considered among their allies, but merely performing a task for them once or twice, either voluntarily or in exchange for compensation (Subhani Tabrizi, 2003, Vol. 1, p. 241).

##### 4.1. Assisting an Oppressor in Their Oppression

Islamic jurists unanimously agree that aiding an oppressor in their act of injustice is absolutely prohibited (*ḥarām*) based on the four primary sources of Islamic law: the Qur'an, Sunnah, consensus (*ijmā'*), and reason (*'aql*). The evidences supporting this prohibition are as follows:

###### A. The Qur'an

**First Verse:** *"Do not cooperate in sin and aggression."* (Qur'an, 5:2).

Some jurists have cited this verse as proof that assisting an oppressor in their injustice is forbidden (Ansari, 1991, Vol. 1, p. 215).

**Second Verse:** *"And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest the Fire should touch you."* (Qur'an, 11:113).

This verse has been used to prove the prohibition of aiding an oppressor in their wrongdoing (Bahrani et al., 1986; Narāqi, 1995). It is evident that if even the slightest inclination toward an oppressor is forbidden, then aiding them in their oppression is, without a doubt, even more severely prohibited. Supporting an oppressor in their injustice is the highest degree of inclining (*rukūn*) toward them.

Sheikh Tabarsi, in his exegesis of this verse, states:

*"God Almighty has prohibited compromising in religion, hypocrisy, and inclining toward oppressors, saying: 'Do not incline toward those who do wrong...' According to a narration from Ibn Abbas, this means: do not lean towards the polytheists in any aspect of your religion. Al-Suddi and Ibn Zayd interpreted it as forbidding weakness in resisting tyrants. It has also been narrated from Qadi that the 'rukūn' prohibited in relation to oppressors refers to actively engaging in their oppression, expressing approval of their actions, or showing friendship toward them. However, visiting them or interacting with them solely to avoid their harm is permissible."* (Tabarsi & Tabatabai, 1993).

Allama Tabatabai also interprets this verse as follows:

*"From the context of the previous and subsequent verses, it is clear that they are sequential in their purpose. The first verse forbids people from being among the oppressors, while the second prohibits approaching, inclining toward, or relying on them in religious and existential matters. Thus, the phrase 'Do not incline toward those who do wrong' prohibits leaning toward*

them, placing trust in them, and basing religious affairs upon their falsehoods." (Tabatabai, 2011).

The meaning of "inclining toward oppressors" includes love, goodwill, and obedience to them (Tabatabai Karbala'i et al., 1997). It also signifies reliance upon them, and the term *rukūn* in this verse has a broad meaning that even encompasses silence in the face of oppression, since forbidding evil (*nahy 'an al-munkar*) is obligatory (Mamqani, 1937).

Jurist Muhaqqiq Naraqī, using this verse as evidence, states:

*"If even a slight inclination (rukūn) toward an oppressor is prohibited, then how much more severe is the prohibition of actually assisting them?"* (Narāqī, 1995).

Muhaqqiq Khoei also comments on the application of this verse, stating:

*"The meaning of prohibited inclination and reliance may refer to having affection for them, in which case, aiding them would, without question, be even more forbidden. Alternatively, rukūn may refer to actively engaging in oppression alongside them."* (Khoei, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 325).

## B. The Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition)

Numerous *mutawatir* (widely transmitted) and *mustafidha* (well-attested) narrations prohibit assisting oppressors (Al-Kashif al-Ghita, 2000; Tabatabai Karbala'i et al., 1997). Some of these narrations are as follows:

### First Narration

Waram ibn Abi Firas reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *"Whoever walks toward an oppressor to assist them while knowing that they are an oppressor has exited the fold of Islam."*

### Second Narration

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *"Whoever breaks an oath of allegiance, raises the banner of misguidance, conceals knowledge, unjustly seizes wealth, or assists an oppressor in their oppression while knowing that they are an oppressor, has certainly disavowed Islam."* (Majlisi, 1986).

These narrations have been cited as evidence for the prohibition of assisting oppression. The argument is that such narrations express severe condemnation, implying that the act in question is a grave sin. Since it is unreasonable to interpret "exiting Islam" literally, it must be understood as rhetorical exaggeration (*mubalaghah*), emphasizing the gravity of the sin. Such hyperbole is inappropriate for minor sins, so its presence

suggests that assisting oppression is a major sin, particularly when it is mentioned alongside acts such as breaking oaths of allegiance and promoting misguidance (Mousavi Khomeini, 1975).

These narrations do not suggest a prohibition against assisting oppressors in neutral or benevolent acts. Most of them specify assisting in oppression itself rather than offering general assistance. At minimum, since they are mentioned in conjunction with oppression, their general applicability is limited. The conditional phrasing of the last narration further restricts its scope to assisting in oppression (Mousavi Khomeini, 1975).

### Third Narration

Sukuni narrates from Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), who transmits from his forefathers that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *"On the Day of Judgment, a caller will proclaim: 'Where are the supporters of tyrants? Those who prepared ink for them, tied their money bags, or even dipped a pen in ink for them—gather them together with the oppressors!'"*

A slightly different version of this narration states: *"On the Day of Judgment, a caller will announce: 'Where are the oppressors, their supporters, and their associates—even those who merely sharpened their pens or prepared their ink? Gather them all into an iron coffin and cast them into Hell!'"*

Imam Khomeini, in his analysis of this narration, suggests that the phrase *"those who prepared ink for them"* may be conjunctively linked to *"the supporters of tyrants,"* indicating that both phrases emphasize aiding oppression, whether directly or indirectly. Thus, the narration should not be interpreted as prohibiting general assistance to oppressors in matters unrelated to their injustice. Some versions use the phrase *"even those who merely sharpened their pens,"* indicating that even the smallest forms of cooperation with oppression are condemned (Mousavi Khomeini, 1975).

### Fourth Narration

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *"Whoever hangs a whip in the presence of a tyrannical ruler, God will turn it into a seventy-cubit-long serpent, which will be unleashed upon them in Hell, where they will dwell eternally."*

This narration explicitly refers to aiding an oppressor in committing acts of oppression. It may even extend, by analogy, to individuals who administer punishments under the authority of oppressive rulers, indicating that

such individuals are part of the oppressive system (Mousavi Khomeini, 1975).

Since aiding oppressors is often motivated by a desire to elevate their status, expand their influence, and increase their power, its prohibition is undeniable. Such acts are functionally equivalent to oppression itself, as they strengthen the oppressor's ability to commit further injustice (Sahib Jawahir, 1986).

#### Fifth Narration

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: *"The one who commits oppression, the one who assists in oppression, and the one who approves of it are all partners in the crime."* This narration affirms the prohibition of assisting oppression. The term "partners" suggests that all three—perpetrator, assistant, and supporter—share responsibility and punishment (Makarem Shirazi, 2008). The meaning of "partnership" here implies equal participation in the sin and its consequences. Since oppression is an indisputable major sin, it follows that assisting and approving of it are also major sins. If one argues that the three cannot be equally culpable—since, for example, murder is graver than approving of it—this interpretation can be understood as rhetorical emphasis, reinforcing the severity of aiding oppression (Mousavi Khomeini, 1975).

Alternatively, the term "partnership" may not imply complete equality in punishment but rather shared guilt in the crime itself. That is, while degrees of culpability may differ, all are considered sinful due to their involvement (Mousavi Khomeini, 1975).

#### C. Reason

If an oppressor is unable to commit injustice without assistance, then reason dictates that aiding them is prohibited. Reason equates the supporter of the oppressor with the oppressor in terms of the immorality of their actions, accountability, and liability. In summary, reason unequivocally deems it forbidden to assist an oppressor in their injustice.

According to this argument, which has been accepted by some jurists (Khoei), reason's judgment on the repugnance of assisting an oppressor in their oppression is as clear as its judgment on the repugnance of oppression itself (Fadil Lankarani, 2006, Vol. 1, p. 203). In other words, just as reason independently rules that oppression is reprehensible, it also independently rules that assisting an oppressor in their oppression is equally reprehensible (Ruhani, 2008). However, the definite

ruling of reason applies only to assisting them in their oppression. Assisting them in other sinful acts is not necessarily judged in the same manner by reason—whether it involves the oppressor or any other individual (Fadhil Mohammadi Lankarani, 2007).

Some scholars have objected to this reasoning, arguing that the rational argument may be framed as follows: reason deems assisting oppressors in their oppression to be reprehensible, and based on the principle of correlation (*mulāzima*) between rational and religious judgments, religious law would also prohibit it. However, this argument is criticized because reason does not have access to the underlying motives (*milākāt*) of religious rulings. In other words, reason does not encompass all aspects of divine knowledge, and therefore, deriving religious rulings solely from rational perception is not valid (Tabatabai, 2011).

#### D. Consensus (Ijma')

A review of legal texts (*fiqh*) reveals that the prohibition of assisting an oppressor in their oppression is unanimously accepted by all jurists, making it an issue of *ijma'* (scholarly consensus).

It has been claimed that there is *ijma'* on the prohibition of assisting an oppressor in their oppression (Al-Kashif al-Ghita, 2002; Ansari et al., 1994). Some scholars even assert that this ruling is unanimously accepted among all Muslims, including both Sunni and Shi'a scholars (Fadhil Mohammadi Lankarani, 2007).

However, considering that the sources upon which this *ijma'* is based are known, it does not hold independent authority (Fadhil Mohammadi Lankarani, 2007). In reality, this is a *documented consensus (ijma' madraqi)*, which lacks binding authority. In other words, as some jurists have pointed out, it is possible that the scholars who reached this consensus did so based on the arguments already mentioned. Therefore, their consensus does not independently reveal the opinion of the Infallible (*Ma'sūm*) (Tabatabai, 2011). Moreover, this consensus is classified as *transmitted consensus (ijma' manqūl)* (Al-Kashif al-Ghita, 2000), which does not carry any authoritative weight (Mirza Nuri, 2008).

#### 4.2. Being Among the *A'wān al-Zālimīn* (Supporters of Oppressors)

Being categorized under the title of *A'wān al-Zālimīn* (supporters of oppressors) is itself one of the prohibitions in Islamic law. This means that if an

individual has a certain level of involvement with an oppressive regime such that they are considered among its supporters, they have committed a religiously forbidden act.

As Muhaqqiq Khoei states, if common perception (*'urf*) identifies someone as a supporter or associate of oppressors, they are deemed to be among them. For example, if it is said that a person is the scribe of an oppressor, their architect, or their treasurer, they are considered part of the oppressor's system (Khoei).

Some jurists believe that accepting a governmental position under a tyrannical ruler is one of the clearest examples of aiding an oppressor and is strictly prohibited, as a governor (*wālī*) is among the greatest of an oppressor's supporters.

Muhaqqiq Khoei further states:

*"There is no doubt about the prohibition of an individual becoming a supporter of oppressors, and all the arguments that establish the prohibition of assisting oppressors in their oppression also apply to them. Additionally, numerous narrations specifically prohibit joining the party of oppressors or having one's name registered in their administrative records."* (Khoei).

#### 4.2.1. *Reasons for the Prohibition of Being Among the A'wān al-Zālimīn (Supporters of Oppressors)*

Some jurists believe that all the evidences proving the prohibition of assisting an oppressor in their oppression also apply to the prohibition of affiliation with oppressors and being among their supporters (Khoei, n.d.). Additional evidences for this prohibition include the following:

##### A. The Qur'an

1. *"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you."* (Qur'an, 4:59).

According to this verse, obedience to the Messenger of Allah and the Imams (peace be upon them) is obligatory. This is because Allah has both commanded obedience and granted them authority (*wilāyah*) and sovereignty (*sulṭānah*). If they were not divinely appointed, obedience to them would not be obligatory, as sovereignty and authority, according to reason, belong exclusively to Allah, who can grant them to whomever He wills.

Thus, if a person assumes governance without divine authorization, they are considered a usurper (*ghāṣib*),

and any action they take in matters of governance and public wealth is unlawful (*ḥarām*), as it constitutes unlawful disposal of another's property without permission. There is no distinction between the one who seizes power unlawfully and those whom a tyrannical ruler appoints to positions such as judgeship, regional governance, tax collection, and similar responsibilities (Khomeini, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 321). Such individuals are, in fact, counted among the supporters and allies of the oppressor.

##### B. The Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition)

###### First Narration

One of the most significant narrations on this subject appears in *Tuhaf al-'Uqūl*, cited at the beginning of *Makāsib* by Sheikh Ansari. This narration, after discussing different types of transactions, mentions governance (*wilāyah*) and states:

*"As for the unlawful form of governance, it is the governance of an unjust ruler and their officials. Working for them and earning from them through their governance is strictly prohibited. Whoever does so, whether to a small or large extent, will be punished... Under the rule of a tyrant, all truth is eroded. For this reason, working with them, assisting them, and earning from them is forbidden—except in cases of absolute necessity, akin to the necessity of consuming blood or carrion."* (Ansari et al., 1994).

This narration explicitly states that holding office under an oppressive ruler is prohibited because it contributes to the destruction of truth and justice.

###### Second Narration

Ziyad ibn Abi Salamah narrates from Imam Musa al-Kazim (peace be upon him):

*"The least that Allah will do to one who assumes a position under a tyrant is that He will place them in a tent of fire until He has completed the judgment of all creation."* (Kulayni, 1986).

This narration clearly prohibits accepting employment under an oppressor, as such an individual is considered among the supporters of tyrants in common perception (*'urf*).

###### Third Narration

A narration in *Ṣaḥīḥat Dawūd ibn Jarbi* recounts that one of the servants of Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) said:

"I was in Kufa when Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) arrived in Ḥīrah. I went to him and said: 'May I be

sacrificed for you! If you would speak to Dawud ibn Ali or some of the rulers, I could obtain a governmental position.'

The Imam replied, 'I would never do that.'

I returned home and thought deeply. I said to myself, 'Perhaps he refused because he feared that I would commit injustice or tyranny. By Allah, I will go to him and take an oath with severe consequences that I will never commit injustice, never oppress anyone, and always act with justice.'

I then returned to the Imam and said: 'May I be sacrificed for you! I thought about your refusal and assumed that you prevented me out of fear that I might commit injustice. So, I have sworn oaths: If I oppress or wrong anyone or fail to act with justice, then all my wives are divorced, all my slaves are freed, and I will bear the severest consequences.'

The Imam asked, 'What did you say?'

I repeated my oaths. He then lifted his head toward the sky and said: 'Reaching the heavens is easier for you than fulfilling this (i.e., holding such a position while maintaining absolute justice).'" (Kulayni, 1986).

Sheikh Ansari, commenting on this narration, presents two possible interpretations: either the Imam meant that acting justly in such a position is impossible, or he meant that permitting the individual to accept the position was out of the question (Ansari et al., 1994).

#### 4.3. *Assisting an Oppressor in Matters Unrelated to Their Oppression Without Being Considered Among the A'wān al-Zālimīn (Supporters of Oppressors)*

Helping an oppressor in matters unrelated to their oppression—such as providing services, tailoring, construction work, treasury management, or safeguarding their assets—can still be considered a form of cooperation in oppression. These activities, in themselves, may not be inherently prohibited (*ḥarām*) if they do not contribute to strengthening the oppressor or make the individual part of the oppressive system. Examples include renting a vehicle to them, hiring a vehicle from them to transport lawful goods such as food supplies between cities, or working as a laborer on an oppressor's property in exchange for wages.

Although the prohibition of this category is not universally established, as some scholars have argued, a strict precaution (*iḥtiyāṭ shadīd*) favors avoiding such actions. First, the generality of previous narrations on

the prohibition of aiding oppressors can be understood to include such cases. Second, such situations often expose individuals to the risk of developing *rukūn* (emotional inclination) toward the oppressor, placing them in significant spiritual danger.

An example of this principle is illustrated in the statement of Imam Musa al-Kazim (peace be upon him) to Ṣafwān al-Jammāl:

Ṣafwān ibn Mihrān al-Kufi was a companion of both Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq and Imam Musa al-Kazim (peace be upon them). He was known for his piety and upright character and made a living by renting out camels. Ṣafwān narrates:

"One day, I visited Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (peace be upon him), and he said: 'Ṣafwān, all your actions are commendable except for one.'

I asked, 'May I be sacrificed for you! Which one?'

He replied, 'You rent your camels to this man (Harun al-Rashid).'

I responded, 'I do not rent them out due to greed for wealth or for use in hunting, entertainment, or extravagance. Rather, I rent them because he needs them for the Hajj pilgrimage. Moreover, I do not personally accompany them—only my servants do.'

Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (peace be upon him) asked, 'Does the payment for the rental remain with him and his family until they return and pay you?'

I said, 'Yes, they owe me until they return.'

The Imam then said, 'Do you wish for them to remain alive until they pay you?'

I replied, 'Yes, naturally.'

The Imam then said, 'Whoever wishes for their survival is among them, and whoever is among them will be in Hell.'

Ṣafwān continued: 'After hearing this from Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (peace be upon him), I sold all my camels.'

When this news reached Harun al-Rashid, he summoned me and said, 'I have heard that you have sold all your camels.'

I replied, 'Yes, I have become old, weak, and unable to manage them properly. My servants do not maintain them well, and they are no longer viable for business.'

Harun responded, 'Never! Never! You have done this because of the suggestion of Musa ibn Ja'far (peace be upon him)!''

I replied, 'What do I have to do with Musa ibn Ja'far?'

Harun said, 'You are lying! If it were not for the rights of our past association, I would have killed you this instant.'"

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) further stated: "*Whoever desires the survival of oppressors, in essence, desires that God be disobeyed on earth.*"

### 5. Cooperation in Oppression from a Legal Perspective

In statutory law, there is no specific discussion explicitly titled "cooperation in oppression." Instead, legal scholars and criminal law experts analyze the concept of cooperation in committing wrongful acts under terms such as *participation*, *complicity*, and *abetment* in crimes. When examining these terms, the closest legal equivalents to the concept of cooperation in oppression in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) are *complicity* and *abetment* in crimes involving violations of personal rights. Therefore, this section of the study examines these legal principles from the perspective of jurists and legal scholars.

Dr. Noorbahā (1989) writes:

*"A criminal accomplice is someone who collaborates with one or more individuals in the material execution of a specific crime with a clear criminal intent, in coordination with their partners, in such a way that they can be recognized as a partner in the crime according to common understanding."* (Nourbaha, 1990).

Dr. Goldouzian, another distinguished professor of criminal law, defines criminal cooperation as follows:

*"Criminal cooperation occurs when two or more individuals work together to commit the material element of a crime. Thus, a co-perpetrator is someone who, along with another person or persons, directly engages in executing the material acts that constitute the crime."* (Goldouzian, 1993).

Another legal scholar defines a criminal accomplice as:

*"A person who, with the intent to commit a crime, collaborates with one or more individuals in carrying out the material aspects of a specific offense. In other words, a criminal accomplice is someone who, along with others, contributes to the material execution of a crime to such an extent that each participant is considered an independent perpetrator of the offense."* (Validi, 1992).

These definitions indicate that a co-perpetrator must have actively participated in the execution of the crime in such a way that their actions contributed to the

commission of the offense alongside the principal perpetrator.

### 6. Analyzing the Elements of Criminal Abetment in Statutory Law

According to Note 126 of the *Islamic Penal Code*, criminal abetment requires a unity of intent and a temporal connection between the abettor's actions and the principal offense. Furthermore, the abettor must not only share intent with the perpetrator but also establish a causal link between their actions and the criminal outcome.

By default, crimes are considered intentional offenses. When discussing intentional crimes, it is unnecessary to specify intent explicitly. However, in contrast, when discussing unintentional offenses or distinguishing them from intentional ones, it is essential to specify whether the offense was committed negligently or deliberately. Legal scholars unanimously agree that criminal abetment does not apply to unintentional crimes, as the principal offender lacks intent, thereby negating the possibility of shared intent between the abettor and the perpetrator. Consequently, the elements of criminal abetment in this context refer exclusively to intentional crimes.

First, the legal basis for abetment must be examined—i.e., under what circumstances the law recognizes an act as criminal abetment. This principle is primarily addressed in Article 126 of the *Islamic Penal Code* (2013). However, the legal foundation of criminal abetment is not confined to this article; it is also scattered across various other legal provisions, such as Articles 512, 584, and 614 of the *Islamic Penal Code* (1996) (Goldouzian, 1993). Furthermore, in Islamic jurisprudence, the Qur'an and narrations from the Prophet and the Imams have prohibited *i'ānat 'ala al-ithm* (assistance in sin) and prescribed punishments for it.

### 7. Material Element of Criminal Abetment

It is evident that merely intending to commit a crime is insufficient; the perpetrator must manifest their intent through an action or omission. However, in the case of criminal abetment, passive inaction (*tarq fi'l*) does not constitute abetment, as abetment requires an affirmative act. Additionally, mere silence or failure to prevent a

crime cannot be classified as abetment for the same reason.

Criminal abetment can be categorized into *material* and *psychological* forms. Examples of psychological abetment include coercion, inducement, deception, and manipulation, while material abetment includes providing the means, facilitating the crime, or making its commission easier (Mousavi Khomeini, 1975).

## 8. Psychological Element of Criminal Abetment

As stated earlier, criminal abetment requires *unity of intent* and *temporal coordination* between the abettor and the principal perpetrator. If the abettor's intent arises after the crime has been committed, abetment is not established.

## 9. Conclusion

Islam considers aiding in oppression as one of the gravest sins, which has been condemned in both the Qur'an and Hadith. Throughout history, tyrants such as Pharaohs have relied on submissive and opportunistic individuals to sustain their oppression. The Qur'an, in *Surah Al-Ma'idah*, verse 2, explicitly forbids assisting in oppression while emphasizing cooperation in righteousness and piety. Additionally, it warns that inclining toward or collaborating with oppressors leads to eternal punishment in Hell.

Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) contains an extensive discourse on *i'ānat 'ala al-ithm* (assisting in sin) and *mu'āwanat al-zālimin* (aiding oppressors), supported by numerous Hadiths. These sources emphasize that one of the most reprehensible acts is aiding tyrants, criminals, and wrongdoers, as it causes a person to share in their dire fate.

This study examined cooperation in oppression at three stages: before oppression (through facilitation or foundational support), during oppression (through direct assistance), and after oppression (through various forms such as approval, consent, silence, and distortion of truth), based on multiple narrations. Subsequently, the ruling on aiding an oppressor was analyzed from the perspectives of reason (*'aql*), the Sunnah, and scholarly consensus (*ijma'*).

The findings indicate that assisting in oppression, regardless of whether it occurs before, during, or after the act, is equivalent to direct participation in injustice

based on transmitted evidence (*dalīl naqlī*) and rational principles (*mu'ayyidāt 'aqlī*). Cooperation in oppression, when it entails aiding the oppressor in their wrongdoing or becoming one of their recognized supporters and allies, is categorically prohibited (*ḥarām*). However, the prohibition of assisting an oppressor in other lawful matters—where such assistance does not classify the individual as one of the *A'wān al-Zālimin* (supporters of oppressors)—remains a subject of deliberation. Nevertheless, given the absolute prohibition conveyed in several narrations, strict precaution (*iḥtiyāt*) suggests avoiding such forms of assistance, except in cases of necessity (*ḍarūra*) or *taqiyya* (concealment for self-preservation).

The study also examined the legal perspective on criminal abetment (*mu'āwanat fi al-jarimah*) as a form of *i'ānat 'ala al-ithm* (assisting in sin), demonstrating that, under Islamic law, a criminal accomplice can be legally prosecuted when specific conditions and criteria are met. The analysis of criminal complicity further revealed that when both the material (*rukn māddī*) and psychological (*rukn rawānī*) elements of criminal abetment are present, the accomplice is subject to legal punishment.

Finally, the lack of managerial accountability in cases of cooperation in oppression can have significant and widespread consequences on individual, social, legal, and ethical levels.

At the individual level, the failure of managers to uphold accountability may lead to the normalization of injustice and corruption within organizations and institutions. When managers do not take responsibility for preventing oppression, subordinates may feel emboldened to disregard laws and ethical principles, ultimately diminishing employee trust and team cohesion.

At the social and legal levels, neglecting managerial responsibility in addressing oppression can exacerbate inequalities and social injustices. Victims of oppression may be denied access to justice, and if accountability mechanisms remain ineffective, they may perceive the legal system as incapable of counteracting managerial abuses. From a legal standpoint, this issue could lead to an increase in lawsuits against managers and organizations, resulting in financial penalties, criminal sanctions, and reputational damage to institutions.

On a broader scale, neglecting accountability in oppression-related cases can foster public distrust toward governmental and private institutions, ultimately weakening the legal and ethical foundations of society.

In conclusion, ignoring this issue could lead to the perpetuation of systemic oppression and violations of individual rights within organizations and society, ultimately fueling corruption, discrimination, and institutionalized injustice.

### Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

### Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

### Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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