

## **Conceptual Mappings of the Metaphor of GOVERNMENT AS A CAMEL in Nahjul-Balagha**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores the conceptual metaphor of GOVERNMENT AS A CAMEL as presented in Nahjul-Balagha, a seminal work of literature attributed to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib. Utilizing the framework of cognitive linguistics, specifically the theory of conceptual metaphors, the research examines how the metaphor encapsulates complex ideas related to governance, leadership, and social responsibility. An attempt is made to answer the question: What implications can the semantic domain of "camel" have for the semantic domain of "government"? By analyzing key passages from Nahjul-Balagha, this article infers several conceptual mappings such as the teleological approach to governance, the rebellious nature of power and the necessity of confronting abuse of power, the competence of the leader, meritocracy in offices, etc. The findings suggest that this metaphor not only reflects Imam Ali's views on the hardships and responsibilities of leadership but also provides a lens through which modern readers can understand the intricate relationship between rulers and their communities. Ultimately, the study aims to highlight the relevance of this metaphor in contemporary discussions on governance, emphasizing the continued significance of Imam Ali's insights in addressing current political challenges.

### **Keywords:**

Conceptual Metaphor, Governance, Imam Ali, Nahjul-Balagha.

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## **Introduction**

**Problem Definition:** Metaphors have long been recognized as a powerful linguistic tool, transforming abstract ideas into relatable imagery. However, the theory of conceptual metaphor takes this understanding further, positing that metaphors are not merely ornamental expressions but fundamental to how we think and understand the world. Developed primarily by cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their groundbreaking work, *Metaphors We Live By*, this theory suggests that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, shaping our perceptions, actions, and interactions. From viewing time as money to understanding life as a journey, metaphors influence our attitudes and behaviors in profound ways.

Nahjul-Balagha, which contains the wise speeches and letters left by Imam Ali, can be considered one of those texts with high rhetorical and metaphorical aspects. However, despite the Imam's infallibility from the Shiite point of view, he also had experience in governance, which makes his speeches backed by practical wisdom for non-Shiites and even non-Muslims. Imam Ali used many metaphors in his various forms of speech, including sermons, letters, and sayings. However, in the field of political thought, the domain can be narrowed down further and the number of these metaphors can be counted. This article seeks to get as close as possible to the semantic core of governance from the Imam's perspective by selecting only one of metaphors used in the words of the Imam, the GOVERNMENT AS A CAMEL.

**Importance:** According to great scholars and thinkers, the life of Imam Ali and his way of governing is an important model for human life. This is of greater importance to Muslims, especially Shiites, because in Islamic teachings, the Imam has the status of a leader of society, and other Muslims must follow him and his lifestyle.

**Necessity:** In the current era, when different governance models are implemented in the world, Muslim countries should try to follow a model that stems from Islamic culture and semantic system. Of course, this is not incompatible with utilizing human experiences, especially in technical issues. But, moving beyond the discussion at the level of governance techniques, if we want to discuss at the level of political philosophy and political thought, that is, the basic principles that create and support the values of the political system and the governance model, then an attempt to come closer to understanding Imam Ali's attitude is necessary.

**Objectives:** Therefore, the purpose of writing this article is to approach the Imam's view and attitude towards the phenomenon of

government by using a new methodological tool, namely the implications of conceptual metaphor.

**Questions and Hypotheses:** This article attempts to answer the question of what are the implications of the metaphor GOVERNMENT IS A CAMEL for governance. Using the theoretical framework of "conceptual metaphor", the author has inferred some mappings as implications and connotations of GOVERNMENT AS A CAMEL.

### **1. Literature Review**

There have been works written about the metaphors of Nahjul-Balagha and also about the government in Nahjul-Balagha or from the perspective of Imam Ali. However, I did not find any specific works about the metaphors of government in Nahjul Balagha. In one case, Shirin Pourebrahim (2018) has examined the role of metaphors in the production and understanding of the social system of the discourse of Nahjul Balagha through a case study of animal metaphors. In this study, she has mentioned the animal metaphor in the form of a camel and its applications in various concepts in different fields. However, firstly, she has not properly discussed the metaphor "GOVERNMENT IS A CAMEL"; secondly, she has not addressed its implications (in the field of governance). Also, in her master's thesis titled "The Implications and Semantic Axes of the Camel in Nahjul-Balagha," Karami Koushki Qazi (2014) believes that Imam Ali used the semantic domain of this word, which is often in the form of rhetorical figures, to explain concepts such as Islam and the Ahl al-Bayt, caliphate, beliefs, worship, ethics, creation, sedition, and the Umayyads. However, she did not address the issue of government and governance in a specialized and detailed manner.

Zokae et al. (2019) have examined political metaphors in Sermon 93 and Letter 10 of Nahjul-Balagha. However, firstly, their article considers metaphor from a literary perspective; secondly, it is limited to the aforementioned sermon and letter and generally addresses the subject in terms of style of expression.

Therefore, the written works related to the subject of the article have either generally examined parts of Nahjul-Balagha from the perspective of conceptual metaphor and therefore have not addressed the metaphors of government, especially GOVERNMENT AS A CAMEL; or have paid attention to the category of metaphor in Nahjul-Balagha from a literary perspective; or have basically considered the topic of government in Nahjul-Balagha from a perspective other than conceptual metaphor. Therefore, my article is innovative and has no analogues.

## 2. Methodology

This research is of the interpretative description type. Therefore, the author tries to analyze the data related to the subject based on the methodological possibilities of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. In this regard, the study of the connotations of the word "camel" in Nahjul-Balagha in places where it is used for the government is at the center of attention. In this way, the mappings between the source and target domains are extracted and their connotations are interpreted. There is only one point about the ontological approach of the conceptual metaphor theory, which I have explained in the final paragraph of the theoretical framework section.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

In this article, I will use the theoretical possibilities of Conceptual Metaphor Theory which is located in the field of cognitive linguistics. According to the theory of conceptual metaphor, thinking has a metaphorical nature. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) stated:

“Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature....[So] the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor.... Since communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting, language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like.” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 3).

By raising the question “What are the general aspects that govern the ways of verbal expression, referred to as poetic metaphors within the framework of classical thought?”, Lakoff seeks to prove the incorrectness of classical theories and argues that we should look for the general mechanisms that govern metaphorical and poetic expressions in thought, not in language. According to him, these are general mappings in conceptual domains. Moreover, these conceptual mappings are not limited to poetic expressions but also involve everyday language. Therefore, the origin of metaphor should be found in the way one mental domain is conceptualized in terms of another mental domain (Lakoff, 2011: 136-137).

According to Lakoff and Johnson, “Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding.” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 37) Thus, metaphor establishes a kind of similarity between the two domains. Barcelona defines metaphor as "a cognitive mechanism through which one experiential domain is mapped onto another experiential domain in such a way that the second domain is understood to some extent through the first domain." He believes that both

of these domains must belong to different overarching domains, which is the very cognitive concept of metaphor (Barcelona, 2011: 10).

Lakoff believes that metaphor arises from cognitive and epistemic similarities between the source and target domains. Therefore, it primarily relates to human thought, and language plays a secondary role. The similarity between elements of the two domains is ontological, while the similarity between relationships of elements within one domain and relationships of elements in another domain is epistemic (Qaemi Nia, 2012: 34). There are numerous examples in this regard. Lakoff uses the well-known example of LOVE IS A JOURNEY. Based on this, the domain of love is understood in a completely different domain, such as a journey. Here, the journey is in the source domain, and love is in the target domain. There are ontological correspondences in which the entities of the domain of love (i.e., lovers, their shared goals, problems, etc.) correspond systematically to entities in the domain of the journey (i.e., travelers, travel goals, travel problems, destination, etc.) (Lakoff, 2011: 143) In this context, the cognitive correspondences, by mapping the knowledge related to travel onto the knowledge related to love, enable us to contemplate and speak about love using the knowledge we have gained from travel.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, "Our experiences with physical objects provide the basis for an extraordinarily wide variety of ontological metaphors, that is, ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances." (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 26) The use of ontological metaphors serves various purposes. Personification is one of the mechanisms that occurs in ontological metaphors. It enables us to understand a wide range of experiences with nonhuman beings in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 34) Lakoff and Johnson cite several examples in this regard:

Life has cheated me.

Inflation is eating up our profits.

The acts of cheating and eating are attributed to "life" and "inflation" respectively. In fact, these two categories are personified. As Lakoff and Johnson stated:

"Here inflation is personified, but the metaphor is not merely INFLATION IS A PERSON. It is much more specific, namely, INFLATION IS AN ADVERSARY. It not only gives us a very specific way of thinking about inflation but also a way of acting toward it. We think of inflation as an adversary that can attack us, hurt us, steal from us, or even destroy us. The INFLATION IS AN ADVERSARY metaphor therefore gives rise to and justifies political and economic actions on the part of our

government: declaring war on inflation, setting targets, calling for sacrifices, installing a new chain of command, etc.” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 34-35)

### **3.1. Embodiment of Metaphor**

Lakoff discusses how metaphors come into being and how they impose themselves on human lives. According to him, metaphors impose themselves on real life through the creation of new correspondences in experience. For example, if we consider that a thermometer and stock market graphs indicate an increase in temperature and prices with an upward movement and a decrease with a downward movement, we can see that the metaphor MORE IS UP imposes itself. However, metaphors do not always manifest in such an overt; rather, they crystallize in bodily states, social institutions, social customs, laws, and even foreign policy, and discourse and history forms. For example, in the field of foreign policy, one of the main metaphors is A STATE IS A PERSON and according to this metaphor, we have friendly states and enemy states (Lakoff, 1992). In general, it can be said that the most fundamental values in a culture correspond with the construction of basic metaphorical concepts in that culture (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003: 21).

The last and very important point that I must make in this part of the article is that the theory of conceptual metaphor belongs to an anti-foundational and non-essentialist approach from an ontological point of view, which is fundamentally incompatible with the foundations and principles of Islamic ontology. Lakoff and Johnson have stated this explicitly:

“Metaphors... play a central role in the construction of social and political reality... We do not believe that there is such a thing as objective (absolute and unconditional) truth, though it has been a long-standing theme in Western culture that there is. We do believe that there are truths but think that the idea of truth need not be tied to the objectivist view. We believe that the idea that there is absolute objective truth is not only mistaken but socially and politically dangerous. As we have seen, truth is always relative to a conceptual system that is defined in large part by metaphor. Most of our metaphors have evolved in our culture over a long period, but many are imposed upon us by people in power—political leaders, religious leaders, business leaders, advertisers, the media, etc.” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 160-161)

Therefore, in this article, I have tried to use the possibilities of their theory only as a methodological tool and I am not committed to their ontological and epistemological foundations. Of course, some researchers may consider a strict correlation between ontological, epistemological and

methodological foundations, but I believe that this correlation is not very strong, especially in the field of methodology, and the researcher can use the methodological possibilities of an anti-foundationalist approach despite adhering to foundationalism. However, this issue should be discussed in another article.

### **3.2. The Conceptual Domain of Government**

Government is the highest manifestation of power and authority in society. With its possession of sovereignty, the government is responsible for establishing and enforcing laws within the community. The institution of government serves as the tool for the exercise and implementation of sovereignty (Bashirieh, 2001: 24). In political science terminology, "government" refers to the collection of institutions possessing sovereignty. However, the term "state" is so prevalent in its application to government that ignoring it may lead to misunderstandings among the audience. Although the modern notion of differentiating between government and state emerged with the advent of the modern state, there is no debate regarding its supreme authority in governing society. Therefore, here we refer to government in a general and philosophical sense. Perhaps the use of the term "government" would better convey the intended meaning. However, this term itself is also subject to debate, but it can be used in a broader sense. In this paper, nevertheless, we will use the common term government; since it evokes three different meanings in the popular language: the act of governing and leadership, the political regime, and the executive branches of power (Qazi Shari'at Panahi, 2004: 103). Hence, from the perspective of this discussion, the term "government" seems more appropriate.

Significant disagreements, however, exist regarding the functions and characteristics of government in the history of political thought. Nevertheless, there may be some minimal functions of government that enjoy a broader consensus among different schools of political thought, such as the concept of ensuring security, which is the fundamental basis of government. Imam Ali also, in refuting the arguments of the Kharijites who claimed that government belongs solely to God and not to humans, after discussing the necessity of the existence of a prince (whether good or bad), mentions some of the characteristics of the institution of government including the provision of internal and external security: "...People need a good or bad ruler so that believers can be engaged in their work under the shelter of it, while disbelievers can benefit from it, and people can lead their lives through the stability of the government. The ruler collects and manages the public treasury, and it is through it that one can fight against enemies.

Roads become safe and secure, and the rights of the weak are secured from the powerful. The benefactors are in prosperity and are safe from the hands of the malefactors” (Al-Razi, 2004: 82, Sermon 40). There are, furthermore, numerous disputes regarding the origin of government, which are beyond the scope of this paper's discussion.

#### **4. Discussion and Findings**

##### **4.1. Metaphors of Government in Nahjul-Balagha**

There is a general rule according to which, to understand an unknown, one must start from a known thing. Here, we can recall the saying of the ancients based on “the analogy of the sensible to the tangible”. This method can also be observed in the Quran and Nahjul-Balagha. In general, the areas of origin in metaphorical expressions are mostly taken from sensory matters and experiences of human daily life in order to be tangible and tangible to them. Therefore, these areas are strongly influenced by the environmental culture. For example, hand tools, animals, plants, body parts, etc. can be mentioned as widely used areas of origin. In the Holy Quran, many metaphors have been used based on these areas of origin. An example of the metaphor of the tool is the verse “And with Him are the keys of the unseen...” (Holy Quran, Surah Al-An’am (6), verse 59).

As the title of the article suggests, the subject of the research is the type of attitude and mentality of Imam Ali towards the government. Basically, all linguistic forms, including political language, are full of metaphors. The metaphors on which the government mentality is based vary in different languages and cultures, which indicates the fundamental influence and role of the language and culture of any society on the structure of political consciousness, and consequently, the political structure in that society. For example, the root of the English word "government" goes back to a word in ancient Greece meaning "rudder"(1), i.e. a means of steering a ship, and its verb also means "to guide". However, when we examine the root of the Arabic word "politics", we see that it is related to a word from the ancient Middle East meaning "horse" or to an Arabic verb meaning "to groom" or "to train a horse" (Lewis, 1999: 36). The supporting metaphor in both cases is the metaphor of "journey." But here we can notice the difference in the mentality of the Greeks and Arabs towards the government. If the government is like a ship with a rudder, then society is considered like a ship in a rough sea whose ruler has to prevent the ship from hitting rocks and sinking by controlling the rudder. Therefore, the Greek and Western understanding of travel refers to sea travel. However, if the government is considered like a horse, then land travel is considered. It is natural that sea



and land travel, although they are essentially travel and have basic commonalities, each has its own specific requirements and implications. Therefore, the mentality of the government can produce specific political structures and mechanisms based on each.

#### **4.2. The metaphor of camel**

Among the tangible things that Arabs were familiar with at the time of the emergence of Islam, one can mention camels. Arabs used the conceptual possibilities of camel in many of their proverbs and poems. The Quran also uses various words such as camel, she-camel, and dromedary to convey specific meanings from the semantic field of camels. Also, Imam Ali's speech in Nahjul-Balagha, including letters, sermons, and sayings, is full of metaphors and similes, so much so that it can be the subject of separate research on its own. One of the famous sermons of Imam Ali is the third sermon in Nahjul-Balagha, known as the Ash-Shaqshaqiyyah sermon. In this sermon, he beautifully reveals the instrumental aspect of the caliphate and government by using the metaphor of camel. Therefore, here I want to see, assuming that there is a government, what goals and functions the government as a "camel" can have. Therefore, first I will take a look at the characteristics and attributes that can be conceptually listed for the camel, and then I will attempt to compare the source domain (camel) with the target domain (government).

##### **4.2.1. Conceptual mappings of the camel for government**

###### **4.2.1.1. The teleological approach to governance**

When vehicles or tools related to travel such as horses, camels, or ship rudders are used as a metaphor for government, the supporting metaphor is GOVERNING IS A JOURNEY. Just as a journey must always have a clear destination, the destination and purpose of government are also clear for Imam Ali. In numerous sermons and letters, he states his goal of accepting the caliphate, and essentially the philosophy of Islamic government, as spreading justice and eliminating discrimination (Al-Razi, 2004: 48, sermon 3), reforming the affairs of the lands [Bilads], and establishing the forgotten Divine Bounds and laws (Al-Razi, 2004: 189, sermon 131). Therefore, here too, when the Imam uses the camel, the supporting conceptual metaphor is this perception of governing as a journey. In addition to the fact that governance is like a journey and the camel is considered a suitable means of a journey in the real and mental environment of the Arabs, the nature of the camel itself has interesting conceptual mappings for governance as

travelling. From here, we examine the metaphor of government as a camel and its mappings.

The camel has been one of the most suitable vehicles due to its resistance and adaptability to harsh weather conditions. Especially considering the desert nature of the Arabian Peninsula, this animal was very popular with the Arabs. They usually traveled long distances with it. Some of the characteristics of this animal, which can be considered as the source domain, are: a means of long journeys, resistance, low consumption but high profitability, rebelliousness, and the need to tame it. As can be seen, some of these characteristics are positive and some are negative. Therefore, the use of this metaphor can well illustrate these two aspects of power. In three passages of Ash-Shaqshaqiyah sermon, Imam Ali refers to the nature of the caliphate and government by using the camel metaphor. The first passage refers to self-interest and abuse of power; The second passage refers to the rebellious nature of power and the need to properly control it; and the third passage refers to good goals as the criterion for legitimate power. In the following, we will examine each of these three passages and present the conceptual mappings of the camel for government.

#### **4.2.1.2. Self-interest and abuse of power**

The first passage: "It is strange that during his lifetime he [Abu Bakr] wished to be released from the caliphate but he confirmed it for the other one [Umar] after his death. No doubt these two shared its [camel] udders strictly among themselves [Both of them milked the camel of caliphate hard and benefited from its fruits]"(1) (Al-Razi, 2004: 48, Sermon 3).

Perhaps the reason for the Imam using the camel metaphor to describe the government is this reference to the two positive and negative aspects of power and government. The above passage, which is quoted from the beginning of the third sermon, in a way tells the negative aspect of government; here the Imam emphasizes the abuse of power by the previous caliphs by using camels. They use the phrase "milking hard"(3) to refer to the two of them profiting from the material benefits of the government.

After the conquests, especially during the period of the second caliph, social changes occurred in Muslim society. The Arabs who had suffered from economic deprivation before Islam, enjoyed a prosperous life after the conquests and thanks to the blessings of jihadi spoils. While the first caliph also tried to follow the policy of equality in the distribution of the treasury (Bayt al-Mal), like the Prophet (PBUH), the second caliph, by establishing the "Diwan Ata" which was responsible for the distribution of jihadi spoils and the treasury, determined the salaries of Muslims based on

tribes and kinship to the Prophet (PBUH) and precedence in Islam (Feirahi, 2009: 168-169). Although Umar had religious motivations in this work, Uthman, the third caliph, was a businessman and a member of the Quraysh nobility. By allocating economic and political resources of power to his relatives, he caused the Umayyads to gain power, creating a severe class divide in Muslim society, and as a result, public dissatisfaction and rebellion against him. The Imam takes these social conditions into account when he comes to the caliphate. Therefore, he must go through a difficult and uneven path to get out. Therefore, the camel metaphor can also be a positive aspect to indicate the necessity of a productive and low-cost government to take steps towards difficult and fundamental reforms. As a result, we see that the Imam made the fight against special interests his main policy from the very beginning.

#### **4.2.1.3. Fighting against exclusiveness and rent-seeking**

At the very beginning of his caliphate, Imam criticized the policy based on discrimination and divided the treasury equally among the people. After the people pledged allegiance to him in the year 35 AH, Imam announced his government policies in his first speech, in phrases full of all kinds of literary emphasis: "...you will be severely subverted, bitterly shaken as in sieving and fully mixed as by spooning in a cooking pot till the lowest of you becomes the highest, and the highest of you becomes the lowest, and those who outstripped in Islam and were previously isolated will come to power, and those who wrongfully took the lead will be pushed back"(4) (Al-Razi, 2004: 57, Sermon 16).

Also, on the second day of his caliphate, the Imam said in a sermon about returning the large amount of wealth that Uthman had given to some of his relatives: "By Allah! I will return the looted property to its original owners wherever I find it, even if they have married it or bought slave girls; for in justice there is openness for the general public, and he for whom justice is dear, it is harder for him to bear oppression"(5) (Al-Razi, 2004: 57, Sermon 15).

#### **4.2.1.4. The rebellious nature of power and the need to properly control it**

The second sentence: "The owner of it is like a rider of a rebellious camel. If he tightens the reins, the animal's nostrils will be torn, and if he lets it loose, it will fall into the abyss"(6) (Al-Razi, 2004: 48, Sermon 3)

Another negative aspect of power that can be understood from the camel metaphor is its rebelliousness and, therefore, the necessity of its restraint and control. Imam expresses this point well in the above passage.

Of course, the Imam refers to the rebelliousness of power in several places in Nahjul-Balagha: “Whoever attains power wants everything for himself” (7)(Al-Razi, 2004: 500, Saying 160); “Whoever achieves his desires seeks superiority(8)” (Al-Razi, 2004: 507, Saying 216). Here, power is like a rebellious camel that must be restrained, otherwise it will bring ruin and corruption. Similarly, the ruler is like a rider who, if he does not have sufficient skill or if he does not have good intentions in taking the caravan to its destination, will overthrow himself and his society. The important point is to pay attention to the correct and appropriate use of the tools of power; that is, as can be seen from the phrase of the Imam, power must be properly channeled and the channels for its correct application must be established through the law. In today's world, various mechanisms have been devised for this, including issues such as the separation of powers and oversight of power. Therefore, the need to control power does not mean limiting it excessively, but rather, while limiting it, it must maintain its efficiency and effectiveness. According to one contemporary researcher, "Political power must be exercised in the form of laws to ensure its dominance and institutionalized to continue life... Power is distributed among political institutions in proportion to the developments and evolutionary relations of society. Competencies are categorized and the appropriate organs for each activity assume the duty of exercising them" (Qazi Shari'at Panahi, 2004: 100). Imam has many sayings, three of which are mentioned here as strategies for properly controlling power.

#### **4.2.1.5. The Competence of a Leader**

Just as a camel cannot reach its destination without a rider, the existence of a ruler and government is necessary. But this ruler must be as skilled and benevolent as a rider. Here the discussion of the qualifications of a leader arises. The person who is responsible for leading and governing a society must have the abilities and characteristics necessary to guide that society towards its goals. Just as the rider of a camel must be aware of how to ride it and have sufficient ability to do so. In addition, it is necessary to know the destination and the path he wants to take, otherwise he may go astray. If in an Islamic society, the goal and destination is to guide people towards justice and monotheism (Holy Quran, Surah Al-Hadid (57), verse 25), how can someone who is not guided himself want to guide and lead people! In the year 34 AH, when the people complained to him about the actions of the third caliph and asked him to speak to the caliph, the Imam addressed Uthman and said: “So know that the best of God's servants in His sight is a just leader who is himself guided and guides others...and the worst of people

in the sight of God is an oppressive leader who is himself misguided and a source of misguidance for others(9)” (Al-Razi, 2004: 234-235, sermon 164).

#### **4.2.1.6. Meritocracy in Offices**

The Imam addresses the people regarding the necessity of a government by a worthy individual: “O people! The most deserving person for the caliphate is the one who is the strongest in governing and most knowledgeable about the commands of God in this regard(10)” (Al-Razi, 2004: 247-248, sermon 173). In one of the passages of the command to Malik Ashtar, the Imam addresses Malik regarding the selection of worthy individuals (meritocracy) in the government system: “Look into the affairs of your executives. Give them an appointment after testing them and do not appoint them according to partiality or favoritism because these two things make up the sources of injustice and unfairness. Select from among them those who are people of experience and modesty, hailing from virtuous houses, having been previously in Islam because such persons possess high manners and untarnished honor. They are the least inclined towards greed and always have their eyes on the ends of matters...(11) (Al-Razi, 2004: 435, letter 53).

#### **4.2.1.7. Consultation and Criticism**

Governing and managing a society cannot be done by one person alone; especially in contemporary societies where the role of governments has become much broader than before, both in terms of depth and breadth, and political systems have extensive bureaucracy. Therefore, the need for experts and specialists in various fields of government activity, even as consultants, is necessary and obvious. Therefore, one of the characteristics of a good ruler/politician/leader is to benefit from expert consultation. Imam Ali addressed Malik Ashtar as the governor of Egypt and said: “Keep on increasing your conversations with the scholars and discussions with the wise in order to stabilize the prosperity of the areas under you and to continue with that in which the earlier people had remained steadfast(12)” (Al-Razi, 2004: 431, Letter 53) He also said in one of the sermons he delivered in Siffin about the type of relationship between the people and the leader: “Therefore, do not abstain from saying the truth or pointing out a matter of justice because I do not regard myself to be above erring. I do not escape erring in my actions except that Allah helps me (in avoiding errors) in matters in which He is more powerful than I(13)” (Al-Razi, 2004: 335, sermon 216). As can be seen, the Imam invites people to consult and criticize correctly and benevolently, even though he enjoys divine immunity.

#### **4.2.1.8. The desired power criterion**

The third verse: “Behold, by Him who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings, if people had not come to me and supporters had not exhausted the argument and if there had been no pledge of Allah with the scholars to the effect that they should not acquiesce in the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed, I would have put the reins of [the camel of] the caliphate on its own shoulders and would have given the last one the same treatment as to the first one. Then you would have seen that in my view this world of yours is not better than the sneezing of a goat(14)” (Al-Razi, 2004: 50, Sermon 3).

Someone should be placed on the throne of the caliphate and government who, first, is knowledgeable; second, takes steps towards eliminating discrimination and injustice. One of the principles of good governance is non-discrimination and equality of individuals in society. Basically, the starting point of human rights is this same principle of non-discrimination. This principle includes all measures related to the state (Hadavand, 2005: 84). From the very beginning of their rule, the Imam determinedly and without any consideration or political games, the policy of eliminating discrimination and combating special interests as the guiding principle of the government; because basically, for the Imam, gaining and maintaining power in itself has no value. Both in his words and in his actions, Imam pointed out the inherent worthlessness of power and considered it valuable only as a means to achieve the truth and eliminate falsehood. Ibn Abbas says: “I went to the Imam in the land of *Dhi-Qar*, and he was getting his shoes cobbled. When he saw me, he asked: How much is this shoe worth? I said: It has no price. He said: By God, this worthless shoe is more beloved to me than ruling over you, unless I use it to uphold a truth or to repel a falsehood” (Al-Razi, 2004: 76).

### **Conclusion**

Metaphor, which has acquired a new meaning in the framework of cognitive sciences today, is considered a major component of human thought, and from this perspective, thinking is essentially metaphorical. Based on the theory of "conceptual metaphor," many metaphors can be pursued in the field of political thought. Imam Ali's words in *Nahjul-Balagha* are full of various metaphors, so they can be well used in the framework of the theory of "conceptual metaphor." Among the metaphors that can be conceptually mapped to the realm of power and government, we can mention the metaphor of GOVERNMENT AS A CAMEL.

The mappings that are made from the source domain of the camel to the target domain of government and power are as follows: A rebellious

animal must first be tamed and then ridden, otherwise it will not be possible to exploit it. If the government is like a rebellious camel, its ways of rebellion must be blocked. Therefore, in a political system, mechanisms must be thought of and implemented to control the power of the government that prevents rebellion and abuse of it. Here, the essence of power is meant, otherwise, in different political systems, one can find appropriate solutions and mechanisms that are appropriate to the time and environmental conditions by using human experience. When the Imam uses the camel, which is a means of traveling a long distance, to refer to the government, it should be kept in mind that the administration of society has a difficult and long path ahead of it that requires a government and a ruler that is appropriate to it.

In the period after the Prophet (PBUH) until the rule of Imam Ali, the class structure of society and consequently, the culture of the people had undergone changes that made it difficult to restore it to the model of the time of the Prophet (PBUH). Under these circumstances, the government of the Imam had to face many obstacles and difficulties in order to move on this path. Therefore, the government must be proportionate to this main goal; just as a camel is a suitable vehicle for crossing a long and difficult road. The government must be inexpensive but efficient.

In this article, eight conceptual mappings of the camel metaphor for government were extracted and inferred as follows:

1. The teleological approach to governance
2. The necessity of confronting self-interest and abuse of power
3. Fighting against exclusiveness and rent-seeking
4. The rebellious nature of power and the need to properly control it
5. The competence of the leader
6. Meritocracy in Offices
7. Consultation and criticism
8. The criterion of desirable power

## Notes

## 1. Πηδάλιο

2. فَيَا عَجَبًا بَيْنَا هُوَ يَسْتَقِيلُهَا فِي حَيَاتِهِ إِذْ عَقَدَهَا لِآخِرِ بَعْدَ وَفَاتِهِ، لَشَدَّ مَا تَشَطَّرَا ضَرْعِيهَا
3. تَشَطَّرَا ضَرْعِيهَا
4. لَتُبْلِلَنَّ بَلْبِلَةً وَ لَتَغْرِبَنَّ غَرْبَةً وَ لَتَسَاطَنَّ سَوَاطِنُ الْقَدْرِ حَتَّى يَعُودَ أَصْفُلُكُمْ أَغْلَاكُمْ وَ أَغْلَاكُمْ أَصْفُلُكُمْ وَ لَيَسْبِقَنَّ سَابِقُونَ كَانُوا قَصْرُوا وَ لَيَقْصِرَنَّ سَابِقُونَ كَانُوا سَبَقُوا.
5. وَ اللَّهُ لَوْ وَجَدْتُهُ قَدْ تَزَوَّجَ بِهِ النِّسَاءَ وَ مُلِكَ بِهِ الْإِمَاءُ لَرَدَدْتُهُ. فَإِنَّ فِي الْعَدْلِ سَعَةً، وَ مَنْ ضَاقَ عَلَيْهِ الْعَدْلُ فَالْجَوْرُ عَلَيْهِ أَضْيَقُ.
6. فَصَاحِبُهَا كَرَائِبِ الصَّعْبَةِ إِنْ أَشْنَقَ لَهَا خَرَمَ وَ إِنْ أَسْلَسَ لَهَا تَقَحَّمَ.
7. مَنْ مَلَكَ، اسْتَأْثَرَ.
8. مَنْ نَالَ، اسْتَطَالَ.
9. فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ أَفْضَلَ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِمَامٌ عَادِلٌ هُدًى وَ هَدًى..... وَ إِنَّ شَرَّ النَّاسِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِمَامٌ جَائِرٌ ضَلُّ وَ ضَلُّ بِهِ.
10. أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنْ أَحَقَّ النَّاسُ بِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ، أَقْوَاهُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَ أَعْلَمُهُمْ بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ فِيهِ.
11. ثُمَّ أَنْظِرْ فِي أُمُورِ عَمَالِكَ فَاسْتَعْمِلْهُمْ اخْتِبَارًا، وَلَا تُؤَلِّهِمْ مُحَابَاةً وَآثَرَةً، فَإِنَّهُمَا جَمَاعٌ مِنْ شُعْبِ الْجَوْرِ وَ الْخِيَانَةِ. وَ تَوَخَّ مِنْهُمْ أَهْلَ التَّجَرِبَةِ وَ الْحَيَاءِ، مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَيُوتَاتِ الصَّالِحِ.
12. وَ أَكْثَرَ مَدَارِسَةِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، وَ مَنَاقِشَةِ الْحُكَمَاءِ، فِي تَنْبِيهِ مَا صَلَحَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرٌ بِلَادِكَ، وَ إِقَامَةِ مَا اسْتَقَامَ بِهِ النَّاسُ قَبْلَكَ.
13. فَلَا تَكْفُوا عَنْ مَقَالَةٍ بِحَقِّ أَوْ مَشُورَةٍ بِعَدْلِ، فَإِنِّي لَسْتُ فِي نَفْسِي بِفَوْقِ أَنْ أُخْطِئَ وَ لَا أَمِنُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ فِعْلِي إِلَّا أَنْ يَكْفِيَ اللَّهُ مِنْ نَفْسِي مَا هُوَ أَمْلَكُ بِهِ مِنِّي.
14. أَمَا وَ الَّذِي فَلَقَ الْحَبَّةَ وَ بَرَأَ النَّسَمَةَ لَوْ لَا حُضُورُ الْحَاضِرِ وَ قِيَامُ الْحُجَّةِ بِوُجُودِ النَّاصِرِ وَ مَا أَخَذَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْعُلَمَاءِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقَارُوا عَلَى كُفَّةِ ظَالِمٍ وَ لَا سَعَبَ مَظْلُومٍ لَأَلْقَيْتُ حَبْلَهَا عَلَى غَارِبِهَا وَ لَسَقَيْتُ آخِرَهَا بِكَأْسِ أُولِهَا وَ لَأَلْفَيْتُمْ دُنْيَاكُمْ هَذِهِ أَزْهَدَ عِنْدِي مِنْ عَفْطَةِ عَنَزٍ.



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