

Personal and Social Freedoms in Iran

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Different concepts have been introduced with regard to freedom. However, what is common in all of them is that freedom refers to the state of not being a slave, prisoner, etc. In other words, the person has the power to do or not to do something and use the opportunities available at the social level.

Man is a social being, i.e., his being becomes meaningful by being in the community and living together is his basic psychological requirement. In order to live together, one cannot act care-

lessly and rely only on one's own desires. All scholars agree that freedom without borders is an anomaly and chaos that endangers the foundation of social life. That is the reason that throughout history, humans have passed laws and rules to simultaneously protect freedom and ensure that one's action of one does not cause harm to others and damage society as a whole.

Today, there are countless types of freedom, perhaps the most important of which are "personal

freedom" and "social freedom". Personal freedom in its broadest sense implies the freedom of a person in making choices, owning and using property, freedom of religious beliefs and faith, and freedom of speech and opinion. The constitutions protect these freedoms against the government or any other person and protect citizens from encroachment on their freedom.

Individual freedom can also be considered as the privacy of a person, which gives him the power

of choice and action in his interactions and relationships with different people and human groups, as well as presence in cultural, political, economic, legal, and ethical fields.

In his book, *Azadi-e- Ma'navi* (Spiritual Discourses), Ayatollah Motahhari has while defining freedom, written: "One type of freedom is social freedom when a person is free from other people. Others are not an obstacle to his growth and development, do not lock him up, and do not turn him into a prisoner to stop his activities. Others do not exploit him, do not enslave him, that is, do not use all his intellectual and physical powers for their own interests."

Social freedom refers to the freedom of speech, pen and press, freedom in choosing the type of government and choosing the ruler, freedom of political parties and organizations, freedom of political criticism and opposition, freedom of faith and religion, freedom of choice of job, housing and spouse,

freedom of production, distribution, consumption, etc. It is quite evident that some of these issues are of a political aspect, some are of cultural aspect, some are of civil aspect, and some are related to economic activities.

The concept of freedom in religious thought is different from the concept of freedom in non-religious thoughts. According to the frameworks and rules of religion and the worldview that governs it the definition of freedom changes according to the intellectual and ideological foundations of a person.

Usually, in non-religious thought, freedom has material roots, and freedom is defined along this path while in the divine worldview, which believes in the divinity of religious laws, the frameworks of freedom are defined within the boundaries of religion.

According to Imam Khomeini, "Islam and all monotheistic schools of thought came to free people from the bondage of those who tried to control hearts and everything and have everything under their control. Islam came to free people from captivity... Just as Islam pays attention to the material aspects of this world and the governance aspects of this world, the ruling of this world, it also pays attention to the spiritual aspects of life, and attention to the spiritual aspects is more important than the attention to the material aspects of life."

In a comparative study of the concept of freedom in Imam Khomeini's thought and Western thought the author has pointed out five issues:



1- In Imam Khomeini's view, freedom is based on Islam and monotheistic laws. While in Western thought, it is about absolute freedom.

2- In Imam Khomeini's thought, the source of freedom is divine laws, and in Western thought, it is materialism.

3- In Imam Khomeini's view, the boundaries of freedom are both personal and social, determined

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by divine laws, which govern personal and social issues, while in Western thought, the boundaries are determined on the basis of man-made laws and If there is any limitation, it is based on the principle of conflict of freedoms.

4- In Imam Khomeini's thought, the existing obstacles to freedom are both internal and external, but in Western thought, the obstacles are only external and no attention

has been paid to the inner aspect of man, i.e., human growth and perfection and the spiritual aspect of man.

5- In both views, freedom can be both positive and negative.

It should be noted that acceptance of absolute freedom causes anarchy and disorder, and denial of freedom leads to tyranny. In the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran, an attempt has been made to

consider security and public interest in a non-absolute framework, while maintaining the principle of freedom, public order, and Moral-Islamic frameworks.

Considering that Iran's Islamic state is a system that has made both Islamism and republicanism the foundation of its establishment and views freedom from the religious point of view, it is obvious that all these principles have been

taken into consideration in the constitution of the country, which are referred to as “fundamental rights and freedoms” or “rights and duties of the government and individuals”.

Articles 19 to 42 of Chapter 3 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, are dedicated to the individual, social, judicial, and security rights and freedoms of the people. It is to be noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the leading countries in preserving the freedoms of its people, and equality between both genders, all races, ethnic groups, and religious sects. Based on Islam’s emphasis on the equality of all human beings and that piety is the only cause of superiority (before God Almighty) and not skin color, wealth, and status, creating equal opportunities in benefiting from educational, developmental, and welfare facilities has always been on the agenda of the agents of this country. Iran has also been one of the leading countries in the field of protecting women’s freedoms and giving them equal rights and opportunities and making their presence in different jobs including being teachers, university professors, firefighters, pilots, ministers and deputy ministers, and members of the parliament and Islamic Councils possible.

One of the strengths of the Islamic Republic of Iran is creating equal opportunities in the whole country, for all people, in the field of using communication tools. Considering that today the Internet is the most important means of communication in the world, efforts have been made

to provide the possibility of using it on all roads and in all cities and villages, and everybody can use all conventional and authorized means of communication such as telephone, telegraph, telex, e-mail, fax, internet, etc., within the framework of legal limits.

Keeping in view the strict laws of Islam with regard to preserving human dignity, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers it its duty to protect the life, wealth, and honor of its citizens and make every possible effort in protecting their personal and private affairs in order to create a healthy environment in the society for. Even according to Article 39 of the Constitution: Insulting the honor and dignity of a person who has been arrested, detained, imprisoned, or exiled by law is prohibited in any way and is punishable.

As regards social rights and freedoms, the basic condition for freedom is that it does not harm the freedom of others and does not violate Sharia and legal standards.

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In this context, the government has tried to prevent large class differences in society by creating employment opportunities and monitoring that equal material opportunities. Helping the weaker sections of society is also one of the priorities of the Islamic Republic so that those who are destitute, especially among villagers and laborers, can have a peaceful life in accordance with their human status and dignity.

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Among its results, it is possible to point out that Iran has world-class universities, professional professors, and top-class scientists at the world level. All of which have contributed to making the country independent in many scientific and practical fields. The presence of male and female scientists and experts, despite the sanctions and foreign threats, has brought acceptable self-sufficiency to Islamic Iran and promises a bright future.

The social security system of the country has the duty of supporting people who, for whatever reason, are unable to provide for their family’s livelihood and it is the responsibility of the government to cater to the needs of people in cases such as retirement, unemployment, old age, disability, road accidents. need for health care services in the form of insurance, etc., from public revenues.