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The Pragmatic, Realistic Vision in Al-Jabri's Political Thought

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ABSTRACT: This study examines Mohammed Abed al-Jabri's political perspective on Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, particularly his view of Muawiyah's political experience and his assessment of him as having successfully transitioned the Islamic state from a caliphate model to a political monarchy, even going so far as to consider him the third founder of the Islamic state after the Prophet. Abu Bakr, as the research stops at Al-Jabri's reading of the political approach that Muawiyah followed, and what he attributes to him of skill in employing political means to achieve goals, which in some aspects is close to the Machiavellian perspective in the practice of politics. In contrast, the research seeks to reread this vision in light of a number of historical narratives contained in the Islamic cultural heritage, which reveal other aspects of Muawiyah's policy and practices in managing power, especially those related to consolidating and monopolizing power and using means that raise problems related to the principles of justice and political freedom. Hence, the research turns to questioning the extent to which Al-Jabri's reading of Muawiyah's experience is consistent with the intellectual foundations from which he started in his conception of political practice, especially those related to liberal values and limiting political tyranny. This section examines Muhammad Abed al-Jabri's political perspective on Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, particularly his assessment of Muawiyah's political experience and his characterization of it as a successful transition from the Islamic state based on the model of the caliphate to a political monarchical state. Al-Jabri went so far as to regard Muawiyah as the third founder of the Islamic state, following the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and Abu Bakr. The section also addresses al-Jabri's interpretation of the political methodology adopted by Muawiyah and his attribution to him of considerable skill in employing political means to achieve political ends, an approach that, in certain respects, approximates the Machiavellian conception of political practice. In contrast, this study seeks to re-examine al-Jabri's perspective in light of a number of historical accounts preserved within the Islamic cultural heritage, which reveal other dimensions of Muawiyah's policies and in the exercise of power, particularly related to consolidating authority, monopolizing political power, and employing means that raise questions concerning the principles of justice and political freedom. Accordingly, the section proceeds to critically examine the extent to which al-Jabri's interpretation of Muawiyah's experience is consistent with the intellectual foundations upon which he based his conception of political practice, particularly those associated with liberal values and the limitation of political authoritarianism.

INTRODUCTION

The sedition surrounding the killing of Uthman ibn Affan is considered one of the most prominent manifestations of the transformation and deviation that the Islamic nation witnessed in the period following the death of the Prophet Muhammad.(

﴿عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ﴾ This stage revealed the escalation of the dispute among Muslims regarding the issue of political and religious leadership, and the accompanying divergence in positions and orientations, which contributed to the exacerbation of the internal division, and ultimately led to a sharp political, social and doctrinal conflict among the components of the Islamic society, which al-Shahrastani (d. 548 AH / 1154 AD) expressed by saying: “The greatest dispute among the nation is the dispute over the Imamate, for no sword has been drawn in Islam on a religious basis as much as it has been drawn over the Imamate in every era.”¹⁾ This conflict took two divergent paths; the first of which was represented by the position of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib. (ؓ) He sought to preserve the path of the Islamic call and its principles established by the Prophet. The other path was represented by the pursuit of monopolizing power and employing its tools to ensure political dominance. This divergence did not stop at the limits of the sedition that ended with the killing of Uthman, but extended to the subsequent stage, especially in the political conflict between Imam Ali. (ؓ) And Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, who ended up establishing the political monarchy model under Muawiyah, and Muhammad Abed al-Jabri considered ²⁾ This transformation, within the framework of his reading of the Islamic political experience, is a form of political success, which prompted us to question the intellectual foundations from which he started in evaluating this experience, especially his tendency to employ the utilitarian realistic vision in interpreting political action and evaluating its results. From here, the idea of this research, entitled “The Utilitarian Realistic Vision in Al-Jabri’s Political Thought,” crystallized.

We do not mean utilitarianism here in its negative, opportunistic moral sense, but rather in its pragmatic, instrumental sense. That is, al-Jabri judges history based on what succeeds in reality, not on moral righteousness. He views the success of Mu'awiya's immediate policies and the means he used to seize power as superior to the policies of Imam Ali. (ؓ) Al-Jabri described it as apolitical, saying: “Ali was opposed to Uthman in the name of ‘the faith,’ and when he was given the oath of allegiance as Caliph... he wanted to nullify the influence of ‘the tribe’ and ‘the spoils’ at once and make everything about ‘the faith,’ and that was a kind of apolitical practice in politics.”³⁾ And in another place he stated: ((Ali failed and he had to fail because the “necessary consensus” that was required at that time as a “determining and decisive factor” was the consensus between “spoils,” “tribe,” and “doctrine,” and Muawiyah succeeded in this matter.))⁴⁾.

This vision became apparent to Al-Jabri after he applied his three determinants - the tribe, the creed, and the spoils - to the events of Islamic history. He then devoted a section under the title of Manifestations, meaning the results produced by the Arab political mind after several events and turning points in Islamic history. The first of these manifestations is the state of political kingship, beginning the discussion about that state with a famous prophetic hadith narrated by Sunni sources in abundance, which reads: ((The Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: The caliphate in my nation will last thirty years, then kingship after that. Then he said to me, Safina: Hold onto the caliphate of Abu Bakr, the caliphate of Umar, the caliphate of Uthman, and hold onto the caliphate of Ali, (may God Almighty be pleased with them. He said: So we found it to be thirty years.))⁵⁾.

Despite the critical dimension inherent in the text of this hadith against the structural transformations that occurred in the system of government, Sunni narrations—or at least some of them—did not employ it in the context of political condemnation or denigration; rather, it was used in another way that sought to confer historical legitimacy on the new sovereign phase initiated by Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. Since the hadith confirms a historical event that had already taken place, a group of authors included it within the discussions of the signs of prophethood as a miraculous report of the unseen, represented in the accurate prediction of the transformation of the caliphate into a hereditary monarchy after the passing of three decades.⁶⁾ Without scrutinizing or examining the validity of what the Sunnis have said, Al-Jabri goes along with what they have said, saying: Therefore, the “tyrannical rule” established by Muawiyah acquires its religious legitimacy, not only from the “pledge of allegiance” which was by “consensus” to the point that the year of his appointment and Al-Hasan’s abdication to him was called the “Year of Unity,” but also from the fact that it came as a confirmation of what the Prophet (PBUH) had previously informed us of.⁷⁾

In this context, Al-Jabri agrees with the Sunni reading by emphasizing the ideological use of this hadith, adopting the same interpretive approach. However, the systematic investigation indicates that the authenticity of the hadith and its inclusion within the discussions of “Proofs of Prophethood” as a miraculous report of the unseen does not necessarily entail legitimizing the political phase initiated by Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. The prophetic foresight of the future and its outcomes encompassed all aspects of the news—good or bad, righteous or corrupt—and the mere occurrence of what was reported

historically does not grant it legislative cover or justificatory value, which weakens the argument from the hadith as a tool to legitimize the new system of government.

Then Al-Jabiri poses a question: Why do some Sunni sources try, so carefully, to prove the legitimacy of the "kingdom" established by Muawiyah, even though they all agree that it was a "deviation" from the "caliphate" as it was during the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs?⁸ To answer this question, he said: ((Someone might say: This represents the official ideology of Muawiyah's state and the Sunni state in general, and that the Sunnis only said this in response to the Shiites and the Kharijites who did not recognize the legitimacy of Muawiyah's rule or the rule of those who came after him (in addition to the fact that the Kharijites criticize the last six years of Uthman's caliphate and the caliphate of Ali after the arbitration, just as the "Rafidites" of the Shiites criticize the caliphates of Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman). An objector might say: If we do not recognize the legitimacy of the rule established by Muawiyah and those who came after him until today, which was of the same type, will we then judge the rule in Islam from the Rightly Guided Caliphs until today as illegitimate? And what will remain after that?⁹

In an attempt to explain the Sunni conscience, Al-Jabiri concludes that Muawiyah's rule was the alternative that came to put an end to the strife, stop the bloodshed, and protect the core of Islam from fading away and extinction after the bitter civil war. He states: "The reality is that all these questions and objections are valid, but there is something deeper than that. The Sunni conscience views Muawiyah's 'kingship,' first and foremost, as the alternative that came to put an end to the strife that threatened the existence of the nation as a whole, and indeed the existence of Islam as a religion, which ignited in the last years of Uthman's reign to develop into a brutal and bloody civil war, first between Ali on one side and Talha and Al-Zubayr on the other, and then between Ali and Muawiyah. From this angle, Muawiyah's 'kingship' appears as a 'salvation,' as a way out of a decaying situation that threatened Islam and its state with extinction."¹⁰

In fact, al-Jabiri's argument in this context faces a number of methodological and historical criticisms. Al-Jabiri tends to view Mu'awiya's rule as a rescue of the Islamic state from the turmoil of the sedition that engulfed it. However, this argument overlooks the structural foundation of Mu'awiya's own role within this sedition; he was a key player in fueling the conflict against the legitimacy of the government of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib.(v)And a key driver of pivotal events such as the Battle of Siffin and the arbitration issue, which in turn was a radical starting point for the birth of the Kharijite sect and the deepening of sectarian and political division. Based on fair historical investigation, the existential credit for preserving the realm of Islam and preventing bloodshed within the nation is structurally due to the historical initiative of Imam al-Hasan ibn Ali.(v)In relinquishing the caliphate, which was the position that represented the true embodiment of saving the egg of Islam, and not imposing a fait accompli based on dominance.

In tracing the manifestations of the pragmatic utilitarian vision in the political thought of Muhammad Abed al-Jabri, his problematic thesis emerges, which relies on including the experience of Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan in the rank of the "third founding" of the Islamic state, making it an extension of the original founding of the Prophet. He tells us: "The truth is that if a person looks objectively at what happened, he must see in Muawiyah's 'kingdom' a new founding of the state in Islam and a rebuilding of it. The first founding was at the hands of the Prophet (peace be upon him) after the migration to Medina, and the second founding was at the hands of Abu Bakr through his firm decision to fight the apostates and not to concede to them any aspect of Islam as a religion and a state. Then came the fitna in the time of Uthman, turning into a destructive civil war that threatened a state of statelessness, so Muawiyah's 'kingdom' came to end this war and re-found the state."¹¹

This argument, at its core, stems from the parameters of a purely Machiavellian political realism. To characterize the transformation of the caliphate into a hereditary monarchy as an inevitable process reflects a complete disregard for the philosophical and ethical identity upon which the Islamic state was founded. This is because the state, in its initial foundational conception, was not merely a procedural tool for imposing security, monopolizing the instruments of coercion, and preventing bloodshed at any political cost. Rather, it represented a morally and ethically grounded entity whose existential legitimacy was derived from the principles of absolute justice and equality. This foundational ethical principle is the essential structure that Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib sought to establish.(v)To establish and manage it through a political model based on constitutional legitimacy and strict principles; an experience that Al-Jabri subjected to an unfair epistemological trial, as he branded it a political failure.¹²Based on pragmatic and instrumental measuring tools belonging to Machiavellian philosophy, which sees remaining in power and maintaining the state's security structure as the sole and ultimate standard of success,

according to the principle that "the end justifies the means."¹³ Oblivious to the fact that the nobility of goals in foundational Islamic thought is inextricably linked to the purity of means.

The truth is that al-Jabiri overlooks several historical facts because they do not serve his view that Muawiyah succeeded in establishing a new system to protect the Islamic state from the throes of sedition. This is what one researcher pointed out, saying: "Al-Jabiri is biased towards Muawiyah... and forgets several facts, namely that Muawiyah was the second cause of this chaos after his rebellion against Caliph Ali, and that he is responsible for the rivers of blood that flowed. Moreover, Muawiyah's state did not know stability as al-Jabiri thought; rather, armed opposition, specifically by the Kharijites, remained a constant feature of it, as well as the resulting comprehensive civil war after Muawiyah II abdicated, and then the overthrow of the Umayyads in an armed revolution, in addition to the great persecution that affected everyone."¹⁴

Through his deconstruction of Sunni literature, Al-Jabiri aims to shed light on the nature of the Sunni position and its methodological justifications in dealing with the two distinct political approaches of Imam Ali (u) and Muawiyah, he mentions, saying: ((Whoever reads Sunni writings thoughtfully and carefully will feel that there is between the lines a sense of satisfaction with Muawiyah, not because he was better than Ali ibn Abi Talib, but because he proved, or events proved, that he was more capable than him, as he was able to save the Islamic state from complete collapse, and even renewed its youth by resuming the conquests.¹⁵

From this argument, we can deduce that al-Jabiri has completely accepted this view without criticism or scrutiny. Therefore, we may ask: How did events prove that Mu'awiya was more capable than Imam Ali (u)? What are the criteria for that ability according to Al-Jabiri or others? Imam Ali (u) He says: "By God, Muawiyah is not more cunning than me, but he is treacherous and immoral. Were it not for my hatred of treachery, I would be the most cunning of people, but every act of treachery is immorality, and every act of immorality is disbelief."¹⁶ One researcher also pointed out the difference between the policies of Imam Ali (u) and Muawiyah's policy, saying: "The difference between Ali and Muawiyah in conduct and politics was great and far-reaching... Ali believed in the caliphate as Muslims imagined it... He saw that it was his right to establish justice in its broadest sense among the people... As for Muawiyah, he followed a path that can only be described as that of a generous, shrewd Arab man, giving people as much as he could give them, and connecting with those he wanted to win over from among the leaders and chiefs, finding no harm or fault in that. So the ambitious found with him what they wanted, and the ascetics found with Ali what they loved."¹⁷ Then how can the Islamic state be saved from collapse by someone who was a major cause of that collapse?

As for the Sunni view of Imam Ali's policies (u) Al-Jabiri states: "If the Sunni authors' affection for Ali ibn Abi Talib was great and profound, not only because he was the Prophet's cousin and the husband of his daughter, but also because of his upright conduct and his rare Islamic character, then the 'political mind' among the Sunnis in general does not hide its displeasure and pain at the hesitation that characterized his political behavior, especially during the time of the fitna and during the arbitration."¹⁸ He cited as evidence a saying of Al-Hasan Al-Basri (u) On the authority of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (u) And he accepted arbitration, saying: "The Commander of the Faithful, Ali, may God have mercy on him, was always recognized as victorious and aided by triumph, until he ruled. So why did you rule when the truth was with you? Why don't you proceed, I don't care, while you are on the right path?"²⁰

However, the critic of the Arab mind refrained from subjecting this narrative to critical analysis and scrutiny, readily accepting the statement attributed to Imam Ali (u) His hesitant stance during the arbitration issue at the Battle of Siffin; ignoring a host of historical accounts that clearly and unequivocally confirm that the Imam (u) He was never content with the course of arbitration; rather, he was forced into it under duress and coercion. When the people of Syria raised copies of the Quran on spears, calling for the rule of the Quran, Ali (peace be upon him) said: "O servants of God, I am the most deserving of responding to the Book of God. But Mu'awiya, Amr ibn al-As, Ibn Abi Mu'ayt, Habib ibn Maslama, and Ibn Abi Sarh are not people of religion or the Quran. I know them better than you do. I was with them as children and as men, and they were the worst of children and the worst of men. It is a word of truth used to justify falsehood. By God, they did not raise it because they know it and act upon it, but rather it is deception, weakness, and treachery. Lend me your arms and your skulls for just one hour, for the truth has reached its limit, and nothing remains but to cut off the root of those who have wronged." Then, about twenty thousand men, fully armed and clad in iron, came to him, their swords at their shoulders, their foreheads

darkened from prostration. They called him by his name, not as Commander of the Faithful: "O Ali, answer the people's call to the Book of God if you are summoned to it, or we will kill you as we killed Ibn Affan. By God, we will do it if you do not answer them!" He replied, "Woe to you! I was the first to call to the Book of God and the first to answer it. It is not permissible for me, nor is it acceptable in my religion, to be called to the Book of God and refuse. I am only fighting them so that they may submit to the rule of the Quran, for they have disobeyed God in what He commanded them, broken His covenant, and rejected His Book. But I have already informed you that they have plotted against you, and that they do not intend to act according to the Quran." They said, "Send for al-Ashtar to come to you." Al-Ashtar had been on the outskirts of Muawiyah's camp the morning after the Battle of al-Harir, **preparing to enter it.** ⁽²¹⁾ Al-Jabiri then completes the Sunni view of Imam Ali's policies. ^(u) He said: ((...However, the Sunni conscience does not hesitate to "apologize" to Ali and other companions who allowed matters to develop into that state of chaos which resulted in the killing of Uthman and the civil wars that followed. Whatever the case, the Sunnis dealt with the result of the conflict between Ali and Muawiyah on the basis of the principle that says, "If you do not want what you want, then want what you want." Hence, they looked at Muawiyah's "kingship" from its positive aspects: Muawiyah was able to unite the Muslims and build a strong state.)) ⁽²²⁾ In an attempt to justify this view, Al-Jabiri states: "Without a doubt, when Sunni political thought praises Muawiyah in this way, it does so by comparison with some of the kings and rulers who came after him, and not by comparison with the behavior of Abu Bakr and Umar."²³

In fact, this argument involves an implicit admission by Al-Jabiri that undermines his intellectual and political foundations from their roots; as it demolishes his thesis based on the new establishment of the state, confirming that Muawiyah's rule was nothing but the pivotal point from which the nation descended from the embrace of the caliphate to the injustice of the oppressive monarchy, and their praise of Muawiyah was only relative praise that is read in comparison to the evil of what came after him, not the good of what came before him. Here the fundamental contradiction emerges: How can someone whose era was a threshold for an extended political deviation be installed as the third founder of the state and the guardian of its original line?

In an attempt to dispel any ideological suspicion surrounding his arguments and intellectual positions, Al-Jabiri poses a preemptive question to declare his dissociation from any ideological bias or attempt to justify Muawiyah's actions or polish his image, saying: ((Are we working here to "rehabilitate" Muawiyah?))²⁴

To answer this question, he said: ((In reality, such concerns are far from our field of thought. We look at the past as it was, not from the perspective of "nothing better could have been done" nor from the standpoint of "what should have been done." Our subject requires us to look at historical events from the perspective that seeks their determinants and contents. If we look at the state as a political phenomenon, first and foremost, we will find that Muawiyah's "kingdom" was indeed the "state of politics" in Islam, the state that would be the model that has remained prevalent to this day.))²⁵

This argument reveals what can be termed Mohammed Abed al-Jabri's pragmatic and realistic vision, as he tends to attribute a political determinism to the experience of Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, as if the establishment of hereditary monarchy and political despotism was the only possible option for achieving stability and building the state. This perception overlooks the political model that Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib sought to establish. ^(u) And Imam Hassan bin Ali ^(u) The state was based on building an institutional state based on consultation and public consent, far from consecrating power on the basis of inheritance or imposing the ruling dynasty. Describing Muawiyah's experience as representing a "state of politics" overlooks the profound repercussions of his policies on the legitimacy of the political system. Establishing the principle of hereditary rule and imposing allegiance to Yazid by relying on the tools of power and financial influence contributed to weakening the legitimacy of the state and undermining the foundations of its stability. The effects of this were manifested in the outbreak of many revolutions and political uprisings, accompanied by civil wars and bloody conflicts that contributed to shaking the pillars of Islamic society and bringing it into a phase of political and social turmoil.

Al-Jabiri also emphasizes that Mu'awiya created a political sphere in his state, stating: "When we describe Mu'awiya's 'kingdom' as a 'political state,' we do not mean by this those aspects of his character, such as shrewdness, forbearance, negotiating skills, and what is known as 'Mu'awiya's hair' (a metaphor for his delicate balance). While these aspects are important and positive from a political standpoint, they remain matters of personal conduct, not of the state's structure. We mean that Mu'awiya, through his personal conduct as a seasoned politician and the social developments that occurred during

his reign, actually created what sociologists and political scientists today refer to as a 'political sphere.' This does not in any way imply a transition from a tribal state to a 'benevolent tyrant' (or a 'just despot,' as the leaders of the modern Arab Renaissance termed it), let alone a 'state of institutions' in the contemporary European style. Rather, it concerns a state in which political practice is not directly determined by the three determinants (tribe, spoils, and creed), but is characterized by the practice of politics within these determinants. It remained..." The "tribe" acts as a defining framework, and "booty" continues to play its role as a decisive determinant. At the end of the analysis, doctrine played its role as an ideological cover... but the action of these determinants, which was direct in the previous stage, will become, with Muawiyah's rule, an action practiced through the mediation of politics.²⁶

Based on this argument, he relies on a statement by the strict Maliki jurist Ibn Arabi (543 AH/1148 AD), which was transmitted by Ibn al-Azraq (896 AH/1490 AD), who said: "Ibn Arabi said: Before this day, in the early days of Islam, the princes were the scholars and the subjects were the soldiers. The system was consistent, and the common people were the commanders, one group, and the princes were another. Then God separated the matter with His perfect wisdom and prior decree, so the scholars became one group and the princes another, and the subjects became one class and the soldiers another, and so matters conflicted."²⁷Commenting on this, he said: "This text contains a clever observation that most eloquently expresses the essence of the transformation that occurred in the structure of the state and society in Islam, by moving from the 'Caliphate' to the 'Kingdom.' If we wanted to express the content of this transformation by employing the contemporary political-sociological term, we would say: It is a transition from a state without a political sphere to a state in which a special sphere emerged in which politics is practiced as politics, but always within the action of the three determinants."²⁸However, Al-Jabiri selected a part of Ibn Arabi's statement and ignored the rest because it does not align with his political view of Muawiyah's rule. Ibn Arabi completes the text, saying: ((So matters became conflicted, and the public's situation did not improve, and people were led astray from the path. Then they wanted to be upright, as they claimed, but they did not find it and they will never find it, for it is impossible for someone who deviates from the path to reach the goal.))²⁹Ibn Arabi, in saying this, means that the well-being of the nation and its system requires that leadership and authority be guided by Islamic jurisprudence and legal scholarship, as was the case in the early days. He argues that the separation of executive power from Islamic jurisprudence is the primary cause of the instability of people and societies. This position contradicts the "political utilitarian" vision adopted by al-Jabiri, which he embodied in his interpretation of Mu'awiya's rule. This led al-Jabiri to selectively quote this text to avoid undermining his political argument, since the essence of the opinion rejects the utilitarian dimension in favor of the doctrinal principle embodied in the policies of Imam Ali.(u)This is the policy that Al-Jabiri labeled as "non-politics".

Al-Jabiri concludes that the emergence and crystallization of the political sphere was decided pragmatically under the weight of doctrinal disputes that resulted in the emergence of sects, and legislative differences that were embodied in the emergence of schools of jurisprudence, saying: ((The Caliphate state was without a "political sphere" because the dispute had not yet occurred, neither at the level of doctrine (sects) nor at the level of Sharia (schools of jurisprudence). The Caliphate state was a direct extension of the state of the call, the state of "revelation." And when it moved from limited "raids" to real wars, first the Wars of Apostasy and then the wars of the great conquests, diversity and multiplicity occurred in society, and the dispute began and "interpretation" began.))³⁰In fact, this argument contains a degree of paradox, since the "state of the Caliphs" did not constitute a structural extension of the "state of revelation." If this assumption were correct, the first group would not have witnessed the points of contention in "Al-Saqifa," and the subsequent differences in political visions that were intertwined in their formation by doctrinal motives at times, and tribal and economic determinants at other times.

Based on the utilitarian and realistic determinants that govern Al-Jabiri's vision of political thought, he concludes that Muawiyah's circumstantial superiority was not devoid of positive outcomes; Thanks to him, results were achieved that served the institutional structure of the Islamic state at that time. He states: "Muawiyah's victory over Ali, in his own words, represented a victory for those 'who benefit from reward and wealth' in work and positions 'over those who strive and are ignorant of them.' In our own terminology, 'tribe' triumphed over 'creed.' At the top, Marwan ibn al-Hakam triumphed over Ammar ibn Yasir (as symbols), and at the base, 'Quraysh' triumphed over the 'Saba'iyyah.' Thus, Muawiyah ruled in the name of 'tribe' and not in the name of 'creed.' In his person, the 'prince' became separated from the 'scholar,' and this extended to the state apparatus, so that the 'princes' became one group and the 'scholars' another. This was at the top. As for the base, which was framed by the 'tribe,' it was divided during the fitna into two camps: the camp of Quraysh, and the camp of the

'Arabs' (from Yemen and Rabi'ah), headed by Ali. Between them were individuals and groups who decided to withdraw from the fitna. With Muawiyah's victory, the tribes that fought became..." With him or those who joined him were the only "soldiers," and their number reached sixty thousand. As for the groups that fought against him, they became the ones who were hesitant or abstaining, and they became subjects. Thus, the base was divided in turn into soldiers and subjects.³¹

In this context, Al-Jabri observes the emergence of the political sphere through several determinants (³²At the forefront of this is Mu'awiya's political decision to establish a conceptual and procedural separation at the highest levels of power between the ruling establishment (the princes) and the intellectual establishment (the scholars). This measure, according to al-Jabiri's argument, reflects a profound understanding of the foundations upon which his political project was built, and a firm resolve to consolidate its course and extend its reach. He cites as evidence Mu'awiya's speech upon arriving in Medina in the first year of his rule, in which he said: "As for what follows, by God, I did not assume this position out of any love I knew you had for me, nor out of any pleasure in my rule. Rather, I fought you with this sword of mine. I had inclined myself to follow the example of Ibn Abi Quhafah, and I desired it to follow the example of Umar, but it recoiled from me intensely. I wanted it to be like the passes of Uthman, but it refused me. So I chose a path that benefits both you and me: good relations and pleasant relations. If you do not find me the best among you, then I am the best ruler for you. By God, I will not draw my sword against one who has no sword, even if he is not one of you." Except for what the speaker uses to heal himself, I have placed that behind my ear and under my feet. If you do not find me fulfilling all your rights, then accept some of it from me. If good comes to you from me, accept it, for the flood, if it increases, is enough for me, and if it decreases, it is enough for me. Beware of discord, for it corrupts livelihood and disturbs blessings. Then he descended.³³) Al-Jabiri commented on this, saying: "It is clear that we are facing a completely new discourse that inaugurates a break at the level of political discourse with what was prevalent before... We are facing another completely new discourse, a discourse that does not declare, and perhaps does not even imply, a rejection of 'acting according to the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Prophet,' but it explicitly decides not to adhere to the Sunnah of Abu Bakr and Umar, nor even to the 'Sunnahs' of Uthman, not because it criticizes these or those, but because it wants to adhere only to what it can fulfill. Therefore, we find it proposing another new 'contract,' a 'political' contract based on 'benefit,' on 'good relations and pleasant drinking,' that is, on participation, but not in power, rather in its fruits: the spoils. Not only that, but Muawiyah commits in this 'political contract' to his exercise of power being based on a kind of 'liberalism.' He allows freedom of speech and is not bothered at all if those who hate him or oppose his policies say what might offend them. He puts that kind of thing under his 'foot.'" The words that the speaker "seeks healing from" are ignored, and he refrains from responding to them. Consequently, he adheres to the principle: "I do not draw my sword against those who have no sword." In all of this, he does not claim that he will be able to satisfy them completely, but rather asks them to deal with him with the same "realism" as he does.³⁴) Al-Jabiri emphasizes that the political contract established by Muawiyah is nothing but a type of liberalism at the level of freedom of expression, saying: ((What concerns us here primarily in this "political contract" that Muawiyah proposes to his opponents, after he has triumphed over them by force, is this type of "liberalism" at the level of freedom of expression, to which Muawiyah adhered: The principle that he decided upon and acted upon, and which the Umayyad caliphs generally followed, was based on the following: Say what you want, and I will not interfere except when I see that your words turn into action.))³⁵Based on this, he relied on narratives he selected to reinforce his view of Muawiyah's policy, whom he described as the third founder of the Islamic state. Among these narratives is what is called Muawiyah's hair, where he said one day: "I do not place my sword where my whip is sufficient, nor do I place my whip where my tongue is sufficient. If there were a hair between me and the people, it would not break." It was said: "How is that?" He said: "If they pulled it, I would let it go, and if they let it go, I would pull it."³⁶) And also his saying: "I will not interfere between people and their tongues as long as they do not interfere between us and our authority."³⁷

In reality, what is conveyed in the narratives in this context is merely statements and pronouncements attributed to Mu'awiya, and does not necessarily reflect his actual conduct and political practices unless compared with the actions recorded in historical sources. If we examine the historical accounts that documented Mu'awiya's practices toward his opponents, we find a clear contradiction between his words and deeds. This contradiction is not surprising given his political character, as historical facts indicate his failure to abide by the covenants and agreements he made, and his failure to fulfill the commitments he undertook. This is clearly demonstrated in his breaking of the covenant he made with Imam al-Hasan.(v)In a sermon he delivered to the people of Kufa when he assumed power, he said»By God, I did not fight you so that you would pray, fast, perform Hajj, or pay Zakat. You already do all of that. Rather, I fought you so that I might rule over you, and God

has granted me that, though you are averse to it. Indeed, I made promises to Al-Hasan and gave him things, and all of them are now beneath my feet; I will not fulfill any of them for him.³⁸

Al-Jabiri's characterization of Muawiyah as the "third founder of the Islamic state" raises a number of methodological problems, especially when compared with the historical facts related to the beginnings of his political era. If historical sources indicate that his era was associated with a number of practices that were considered violations of some covenants and agreements, then this necessitates a reconsideration of the extent to which this characterization is consistent with historical reality. Moreover, al-Jabiri's reading of Muawiyah's politics seems closer to highlighting the theoretical image of the political sphere whose establishment is attributed to him, and to focusing on what he considers manifestations of political flexibility and freedom of expression, citing the saying "Muawiyah's hair" as an expression of his shrewdness in managing power. However, this reading does not give the same degree of attention to analyzing actual political practice, nor to comparing the political discourse attributed to Muawiyah with his actions as conveyed by historical narratives. Hence, a methodological question arises: To what extent was al-Jabiri, as a critic of the Arab political mind, able to maintain the necessary critical distance when dealing with the character of Muawiyah? Did his reading align with his critical approach based on examining the relationship between discourse and practice, or did it tend to prioritize words over actions, thus presenting a picture that does not encompass all dimensions of Muawiyah's political experience?

Most historical accounts indicate that Muawiyah adopted a policy in managing his state that relied on employing murder and intimidation as means to consolidate political control and eliminate opponents. Historical sources tell us that he killed a number of prominent political figures who opposed his authority, and among the most prominent of these was the great companion Hujr ibn Adi al-Kindi.³⁹ His killing, which was considered one of the most prominent events that provoked violent reactions from Muslims, was condemned by Imam Hussein. (u) His killing is mentioned in one of the letters he sent to Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan: "...Are you not the one who killed Hujr bin Adi, my brother of Kindah, and his righteous, obedient, and devout companions? They used to denounce injustice, consider wrongdoing and innovations to be grave, prefer the rule of the Book, and do not fear the blame of any critic in the cause of God. You killed them unjustly and aggressively, after you had given them solemn oaths and confirmed covenants.)"⁴⁰ And also the saying of Lady Aisha to Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan: ((O Muawiyah! You killed Hujr and his companions, so where did your forbearance go from them? I heard the Messenger of God say: A group of people will be killed in Marj Adhra' for which the inhabitants of the heavens will be angry. He said: No wise man came to me, O Mother of the Believers))⁴¹ One researcher states: "The killing of Hujr was a major event that none of the good people who lived during Muawiyah's time doubted was a rift in Islam, and even Muawiyah himself did not doubt that it was."⁴² The killings during Muawiyah's reign were not limited to Hujr ibn Adi, but extended to include a group of opposition figures who had rallied with him and were led to their deaths alongside him, as well as a number of political figures and prominent personalities known for their loyalty to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib. (u) And his sons ⁽⁴³⁾ As part of a policy aimed at limiting the influence of the opposition and weakening the forces supporting the line of the Ahl al-Bayt, Mu'awiya, the proponent of liberal policies – according to al-Jabiri – instructed his governors to kill anyone suspected of wrongdoing, even without proof. He wrote to his governors, inciting them: "Kill everyone who follows the religion and opinion of Ali." So they killed them and mutilated their bodies. **He wrote another book: "Look among your Shi'a followers and accuse them of loving Ali, then kill them. And if no proof is established against them, then kill them based on accusation, suspicion, and doubt, under every stone."** ⁽⁴⁴⁾

And on this path Muawiyah's agents proceeded, killing on suspicion and conjecture anyone who opposed their policies. It was reported about Ziyad ibn Abihi, Muawiyah's agent in Iraq, that: ((...he drew the sword, seized on suspicion, punished on mere conjecture, and the people feared him greatly in his rule...))⁴⁵ It was reported that he gave a sermon in Basra, saying: ((...And I swear by God that I will hold the guardian accountable for the guardian, the resident for the traveler, the one who comes forward for the one who turns away, and the healthy among you for the sick, until one of you meets his brother and says, "Saad has escaped, for Saeed has perished," or until your affairs are set right for me...))⁴⁶ Muawiyah's policy was directed against all those who supported Imam Ali. (u) By killing and displacing ((...and Ziyad had gathered the people of Kufa at the gate of his palace, inciting them to curse Ali, and whoever refused to do so, he put him to the sword))⁽⁴⁷⁾ Then the affliction intensified in all the cities against the Shia of Ali and his family, peace be upon them. The people of Kufa suffered the most due to the large number of Shia there. He appointed his brother Ziyad as governor over them and placed Basra, Kufa, and all of Iraq under his authority. Ziyad was very knowledgeable about the Shia, as he had been one of them and had heard their

words from the very beginning. **He killed them under every star, stone, and clod of earth, drove them out, terrified them, cut off their hands and feet, crucified them on palm trunks, gouged out their eyes, and expelled and scattered them until they were driven out of Iraq. No one of any renown remained in Iraq who was not killed, crucified, exiled, or a fugitive.** ⁽⁴⁸⁾All of this was by order of Muawiyah, which reflects the policy of killing and intimidation against anyone who opposed his government, whether in word or deed. ((...And Muawiyah wrote to his judges and governors in all the lands and cities: Do not allow anyone from the Shiites of Ali ibn Abi Talib, nor from his family, nor from his people of authority who see his virtue and speak of his merits, to give testimony.))⁴⁹

From the above, we observe that this practice was clearly directed towards targeting those who were followers of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib. (v) Muawiyah treated his supporters and followers as political opponents and enemies of his rule. The matter was not limited to political oppression of them, but extended to practices characterized by killing, displacement and exclusion. Therefore, invoking these practices in the context of analyzing the nature of Umayyad power raises a clear problem with what Al-Jabiri went to in describing Muawiyah's political experience with liberal characteristics. In light of these practices towards political opponents, it is difficult to find clear manifestations of that liberalism in the political field, which calls for reconsidering the extent to which this description applies to the nature of the actual political practice in that stage.

One researcher went so far as to say that Muawiyah, in his policies, established a practice that introduced heresy, permitted what is forbidden, shed blood, and disregarded rights, saying: "Muawiyah introduced a new heresy among the Muslims, which they had long rejected, namely the inheritance of the caliphate. The consequences of this heresy were disastrous for the Muslims, a truly disastrous consequence. How many forbidden things did the kings permit! How much blood did they shed, how many rights did they disregard, and how much did they sacrifice the interests of the nation for the sake of the crown prince position! How many princes, sons of kings, plotted against each other for the sake of this inheritance, which was not permitted to them by the Book, the Sunnah, or any established custom among the righteous Muslims!"⁵⁰

In order to apply the parameters of the Arab political mind that al-Jabiri assumed to Muawiyah's policy, he argues that Muawiyah based the establishment of his state and the consolidation of his rule on three fundamental constants, which he considered to be governing pillars in his political experience: fighting, mutual support, and Quraysh legitimacy. These constants were not limited to the stage of state-building during Muawiyah's era, but rather, in his view, they became an inherited political framework upon which the Umayyad caliphs after him relied in managing the affairs of government and exercising power, which reveals the continuity of these pillars in the structure of the Umayyad political system.⁵¹ Regarding the practice of "mujahada" (battles), Al-Jabiri states: The method of "mujahada" adopted by Muawiyah as a political practice within the "tribe," and followed by the Umayyad caliphs and governors, was a policy of "playing" on the conflict between the Yemeni and Qaysi tribes, a conflict they would incite when needed through various means: gifts and privileges, stirring up tribalism, poets...etc.)⁵² As for good food and pleasant drinking, Al-Jabiri mentions, saying: ((...Muawiyah used money to corrupt the people of Iraq against Ali, and his son Yazid used the same method to make the people of Iraq abandon Al-Hussein after they had asked for him, and he also used it to gain the loyalty of tribal leaders and prominent people, and the Umayyad caliphs followed this, so "political giving" was their preferred method for practicing politics in the "tribe" to silence their opponents and paralyze their opposition ⁽⁵³⁾Regarding the legitimacy of the Quraysh, Al-Jabiri states: "We must look at the ideology of predestination that the Umayyads established not as a lie or hypocrisy, but as a real alienation, as a manifestation of alienated consciousness in the imagination of the tribe."⁵⁴

It is clear from the foregoing that al-Jabiri's treatment of Mu'awiya's political constants—namely, military might, gracious hospitality, and Quraysh legitimacy—reveals a distinct tendency to interpret Mu'awiya's policies through the lens of political realism and utilitarianism. He views the use of tribalism, wealth, and ideological rhetoric as tools imposed by the nature of the political and tribal sphere, and as successful means of managing conflict and maintaining power. However, the problem with this perspective lies in its occasional shift from explaining political action to attributing to it a kind of necessity and pragmatic inevitability, as if the demands of tribal reality did not afford Mu'awiya other political options. Hence, the success of these tools in consolidating power does not necessarily imply their political or moral legitimacy. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the means in achieving the end is insufficient to judge the soundness of the resulting political model. Therefore, reading Mu'awiya's policies solely from a realist perspective may obscure the possibility of other political alternatives, a point underscored by comparison with the political model represented by Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib. (v) Thus, Al-Jabiri's vision, in this aspect, seems closer to explaining the continuation of the Umayyad monarchy by the logic of political necessity than to

questioning the foundations upon which it was based, which makes it in need of a critical review that balances the requirements of reality on the one hand, and the standards of legitimacy and political justice on the other.

CONCLUSION

- 1- The study clarified the political vision adopted by Mohammed Abed Al-Jabiri towards the political monarchy established by Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, whom he considered the third founder of the Islamic state after the Prophet Muhammad. Abu Bakr, as he described him, was the first to create the political sphere in the Islamic state. Moreover, Al-Jabiri saw that the policy pursued by Muawiyah was characterized by a liberal nature, which, in his view, reflected the transition of the Islamic political experience from the caliphate model to the political monarchy model.
- 2- The study showed that the critic of Arab political thought, when dealing with the politics of Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, was unable to maintain the critical distance required by his method of analyzing the political phenomenon. His reading did not come in complete harmony with his critical method based on examining the relationship between political discourse and political practice. Rather, in some places in his analysis, he tended to give precedence to declared statements and perceptions over actual actions and practices, which led to presenting a picture of Muawiyah's political experience that does not encompass its various dimensions and components.
- 3- The study concluded that Al-Jabiri interpreted Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan's policy in light of the logic of political realism and utilitarianism, focusing on what his political practices led to in terms of consolidating power and the continuation of the Umayyad state. However, reading this policy from the perspective of political realism alone may obscure the possibility of other political alternatives that the Islamic experience could have taken, which makes Al-Jabiri's interpretation, in this aspect, closer to looking at the logic of political necessity that dictated the continuation of the Umayyad monarchy, than to questioning the political foundations and principles on which this transformation was based, and what it entailed in terms of a shift in the nature of the Islamic political system.

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