

## THE CONCEPT OF CAUSE AND ITS FUNCTIONS ACCORDING TO AL-AMEDI



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### Abstract

In this research, the concept of cause was discussed. This concept is central in jurisprudential studies. Attempts were made to throw light on the concept and its common literal and jurisprudential aspects. A special part was dedicated to the approach of the author of the book Precision of Principles of Judgements, which is specialized in developing the principles of jurisprudence. The latter effort was made to explain Al-Amedi's point of view regarding the concept of cause and the relevant Sharia and rational orders and purposes.

**Keywords:** Cause; Sharia Order; Principles of Jurisprudence; Al-Amedi.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sharia is the primary source by which a Muslim can recognize Halal (lawful) and Haram (taboo). Moreover, Sharia regulates people's lives so they can live in peace and tranquility, because it does not commit outrage upon anyone nor does it invade their rights. Fields of Sharia are multiple, including Islamic sciences such as the science of principles of jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh) which discusses, among other concepts, the concept of "cause".

The priest and jurist employ the science of principles of jurisprudence to reach a judgement, and are guided by it in inferring what is unknown for the public. For this purpose, the jurist makes a comparison between similarities in things, relates causation to the causes, and compares texts and judgements. He does all this to find out the accurate judgement which is in line with Sharia. In doing so, he considers the benefits and, in order to prevent wrong deeds, warns against the causes of those deeds.

Considering the wide domain of the science of principles of jurisprudence, and the scientific terms it comprises, this research has been limited to a scientific term with a lofty position in this science: **cause**. This term plays an important role in the organization of judgements and in relating the causes to the determinants.

"Cause" is the means by which many Sharia judgements are made, explained and inferred. This is because "cause" manifests the contexts of expressions, and shows the relations between things, regardless of whether they are legal, ordinary or logical.

"Cause" is so important that it has been specified, described, and likened by every jurist, for it contains secrets in Sharia texts. In this research, however, cause has been dealt with based on the approach of Al-Amedi where, in his interesting book, "Judgements of the Principles of Judgements," he offered his knowledge and reasoning. Al-Amedi has brought together the scientific and logical tools, such that his research has been systematic and clearly explained. He has a unique ideation, and accurate guidance, interpretation and interference.

## 2. THE COMMON APPROACH TO CAUSE

### • The literal meaning

The literal meaning of the concept of cause has been offered by dictionaries. These dictionaries have mentioned the common definition of the term. In Mokhtar Al-Sahah, cause has been mentioned to be "like a rope by which everything is connected to something else."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, cause is mainly known

as a rope. However, a central signification has emerged out of cause where everyone can find his purpose through it. Al-Mesbah took a similar stance as compared to Al-Razi, with the former being more accurate in eliciting the meaning, because it related cause to the concepts of reality and virtuality. Both of these concepts are used in Arabic expressions and thus cannot be ignored. Moreover, Al-Fayumi purports: "Cause is like a rope through which a higher level can be reached. It has also been used to relate everything to something else, such that we may say this is the cause of that, or this caused that." In relation to cause, Al-Fayumi pointed out two meanings:

1. Cause is like a rope that leads to transcendence, meaning that it is something adopted by human to satisfy some of his needs, such as irrigation.
2. It is something linking to something else. It relates something to something else, for example this is the cause of that, and this is caused by that. The second meaning has nothing to do with the first one, for the former concerns spiritual issues.

### • Definition of cause according to jurists

No definition of this concept has been agreed on by jurists. Although these definitions share similar secondary aspects, they disagree on the core element of it. For this reason, their definitions were various. Yet those differences do not concern the effects resulting from considering the cause in Sharia judgements. In order to show the manifestations of this concept, below I will mention several definitions in order to discover the similarities between them:

1. There is wisdom underlying any order made by Sharia. To exemplify, Zakat requires the possession of a minimum amount of money, death is a cause of the obligatory prayer, stealing is a cause of mandatory amputation, and contracts are a cause of the permission to benefitting from, or transferring, a property.
2. Cause is a way through which to make a proper judgement.
3. Cause is something whose existence mandates existence and whose non-existence, even if not certainly non-existence, mandates non-existence.

These definitions concern the real cause not the virtual cause. Al-Fanari explained the virtual cause as follows: "The virtual cause does not manifest itself in the present but in the future." The difference between the two forms of cause is obvious. In essence, as we pointed out, the real cause concerns something occurring in the present whereas the virtual cause is likely to happen (it happens if an action takes place). That is because this cause is not predetermined but likely. Therefore, should the

proposed possibilities come true, the cause will be real. Perhaps there are also other terms for cause. For example, cause has also been referred to by others as determinant, demand, definer, and impactful. No doubt these concepts are related to the concept of cause, both in terms of their literal meaning or in sequence. In other words, each concept implies the relation between two things, with one being the cause and the other the effect, one being the determinant and the other the outcome, etc.

### The Concept of Cause as Defined by Al-Amedi

As a unique jurist imam, Al-Amedi's effort was beyond repeating phrases from his preceding figures. He instead offered efforts and readings which at times were similar to those of those figures and at other times were different. Thus, he elaborated on jurisprudential terms with high precision, which in turn reflected his sound knowledge about the aspects of scientific definitions that produce conceptual facts. This means he was highly aware of the concept of cause. He first interpreted the literal definition of the term, then turned to the terminological definition. This approach is interconnected, because the literal definition is the key to terminological definition. The literal definition also supports the terminological definition as it makes it more conceivable for the reader. To illustrate the concept of cause as proposed by Al-Amedi, I will discuss it in the following order: cause, language, term.

Al-Amedi's literal definition of cause is as follows: "Cause is something through which to reach a purpose. **Accordingly, a rope is a cause, so is a road because both help reach a destination.**" Therefore, cause links something to the purpose of that thing. This point does not contradict what we said before on the literal definition of the concept of cause.

The common definition of cause has been given by Al-Amedi as follows: "Some jurists defined this term based on its literal meaning. Cause is about an explicit, systematic description which, as evidenced by the Quran and Sunnah, implies a Sharia judgement." It is clear for the reader how well Al-Amedi has limited this definition. In his definition, he adopted a descriptive, clear, and precise language. That is, he summarized the primary components of the reality of cause. In order to make the definition more understandable, we will analyze each of these components on its own.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE DEFINITION

**A description:** Description concerns the meaning of two connected things: cause and determinant.

**Explicit:** Something explicit does not require an indication, as opposed to something implicit which goes beyond the jurisprudential cause, because it

forms a barrier in relation to the viewer. This is because something implicit is subject to contemplation and multiple interpretations. No doubt the cause is beneficial for a Sharia judgement, and assumes a right for the creator such as in observations, or for the creature such as in transactions and contracts, making it necessary for the meaning to be explicit.

**Systematic:** What is meant by systematic is something continuous in all circumstances and not limited only to some occasions. "Conversely, wisdom is a motive to making judgements that are to the advantage of the servants, whether it gives them benefits or protects them against damage."

**Evidenced by the Quran and Sunnah:** These two sources are adopted to make Sharia judgements. Through them, limits can be set and justice can be spread out among people, for the Quran, as representing the words of Allah, is accurate and Sunnah represents the speech of his prophet who says nothing out of his own desire, but only according to a revelation and inspiration from his Lord. These two sources support and legitimize the concept of cause. Therefore, these two sources are used in making a Sharia judgement, as Al-Amedi also pointed out.

Al-Qarafi adopted this definition and, given the multiplicity of the purposes of cause, added the following: "Cause is an explicit, systematic description which was evidenced by the Quran and Sunnah as representing a Sharia judgement. It is something devotional and has a reasonable purpose, as in the case of drunkenness as a reason for prohibiting liqueur." Therefore, the effects of a cause are devotional and we have no understanding about the truth behind its causality. For this reason, we resort to the Sharia text and observe its effects in the outside world. As an example, drinking liqueur breeds drunkenness and it was for this reason (breeding great sins) that drinking liqueur has been banned.

### 4. FORMS OF CAUSE BY AL-AMEDI

No consensus has been reached by jurists over the forms of cause. Therefore, different forms, various opinions, and multiple categories were proposed by jurists. "The variation of forms is due to the variation of accounts, though all forms have similarity in essence."

Having performed an in-depth, exhaustive investigation of the concept of cause, Al-Amedi explained the related affairs in Sharia such as observation of duties, and bringing about justice between people in their contracts and transactions. Al-Amedi offered two forms of cause with two different accounts.

**First: Presence versus absence of wisdom**

In this form, Al-Amedi views cause as either having wisdom, as a prerequisite for cause, or lacking thereof. Al-Amedi offers two descriptions here:

1. A form that does not require the understanding of wisdom: "This form needs not have an understandable wisdom as a prerequisite." In other words, the motive behind this form is not clear for us, nor do we have to discover it, because a judgement is an order that has to be performed. To explicate this form and illustrate its essence, Al-Amedi offered several examples. One example concerns sundown, which indicates the obligation of prayer. All powerful Allah says: "Observe the prayer from the decline of the sun" (Surah Al-Isra 17:78). Another statement by the prophet is the following: "Observe the prayer if the sun declines." Thus, the decline of the sun from the center of the sky is an indicator of the midday, at which time the Muslim is to observe the prayer imposed on him. This temporal cause is devotional. We do not ratiocinate this cause but only conform to what has been mentioned in the texts. Another example is the appearance of the Crescent of Ramadan which indicates the obligation to fast. Allah says: "So whoever is present this month, let them fast" (Al-Baqarah: 185). Another saying by the prophet is as follows: "Fast and break your fast upon your observation of it" (Al-Bukhari, 4/ 106; Muslim, 3 / 124). Therefore, observation of the Crescent obliges the capable Muslim, who is not in a trip, to fast. If he ignores this obligation, he shall invade the order of Allah. We are not to understand the relation between the appearance of Crescent and the obligation to fast. The only thing to consider is that Allah ordered us and this order has to be adhered.

2. A form that requires the understanding of wisdom: "This form requires a wisdom behind the judgement, as in the case of prohibiting the drinking of wine should one drink a minimum amount of it. Yet the amount of alcohol drunken is not important, since it has been already prohibited in texts and by all experts."

**Second: Presence versus absence of repetition**

There are two cases in relation to the presence versus absence of the repetition of judgment:

1. Literally, repetition is about reference. Al-Laith argued: "Repetition means referring to something." In common language, repetition is about redoing something whenever the motive is present. Regarding the repeating cause upon which the order repeats, Al-Amedi argued: "The cause repeats with the repetition of judgement. Examples include the decline of sun, appearance of Crescent, and other forms of guarantees, punishments, and transactions."

2. In regard to non-repetition, Al-Amedi argues: "Or non-repeating as in the case of Haj." Haj must be performed by the capable person only once.

Thus, the cause here does not require the repetition of an act.

Cause can also be categorized based on other accounts which were touched upon by Al-Amedi. "These categories concern either the existence or non-existence of something, and can be legitimate or illegitimate."

**5. THE BENEFIT OF CAUSE FOR THE SHARIA JUDGEMENT**

Cause is an important element in a text, making the reader mindful. In other words, through the literal contexts of the text, cause allows for the connection of meanings to their purposes. The themes of the purposes may be legal, social, or verbal, because the relation of causes to their determinants goes beyond the text.

If the interconnection of things be evident as a result of cause, should we through it determine a Sharia order concerning a certain problem? Al-Amedi mentioned the sources of cause which we can adopt in explaining a Sharia judgement. He discussed the problem and analyzed its aspects diligently, which proved he is knowledgeable about the reasons of the principles of jurisprudence and the purposes of Islamic law.

In response to the above question, Al-Amedi shows why it is possible for the Sharia order to adopt cause, which is not evidenced by the Quran or Sunnah. "Accordingly, for any event there is a made based on a cause not a reason derived from the Quran or Sunnah. Such an order has two manifestations for Allah: "1. An order made based on a cause; and 2. An order based on the description of that judgement." Therefore, judgements were inferred from causes, in order to maintain the purposes of Sharia that require considering the benefits of the servants, and preventing them from misconducts. The ignorance of causes will perhaps lead to evil, in which case one's nature retrogrades and oppression rises. As a result, religion will lose its power. For this reason, it is important for experts to consider causes in Sharia judgements.

Should the cause be evident in a judgement, would not that mean the cause is something different from the Sharia evidence? Al-Amedi offered a description on the fact that cause is mandatory for a judgement: "The fact that cause is mandatory for an order does not mean it is the cause alone that makes an order mandatory. Otherwise, a cause would make an order mandatory even if Sharia is absent. Instead, a cause only serves to define an order and nothing else."

Because we are discussing the relation between cause and judgement, it is necessary to throw light on the source of cause, for many have the false belief that a cause can only be legitimate. On the contrary, the source of cause can be illegitimate also: "The cause of an order is not necessarily legitimate, where the causes of

punishments are not only illegitimate but also taboo. Yet these causes are still mandatory for their judgments. Take, for example, adultery which is taboo and yet mandates whipping or stoning; murdering which is taboo and yet mandates retribution; ejaculation is taboo and still mandates whipping; stealing is taboo and still mandates cutting off and payment of fine; and highway robbery is taboo and still mandates murdering, crucifixion, or cutting off. Although these acts are basically banned, this does not mean there should be no severe preventive punishments. For this reason, hideousness does not exist in the punishment, since the effect is not seen like the cause, even if both have commonality. Take murdering for example, where the first murdering is an invasion to something banned while the second one (i.e., the punishment) is a response to a misconduct. It also prevents others from cravings to perform such misconduct.

## 6. CONCEPTS RELEVANT TO CAUSE

The concept of cause has been associated with scientific terms. The high frequency of this term in speech proves how important this term is in knowledge. This is because the diversity of a term shows that that term is common. Conversely, the low frequency of a term shows that that term is insignificant and does not engage the reader. In the book *Precision of Principles of Judgements*, multiple pronouns have been found, the following are the prettiest:

**Counter-cause:** Counter-cause neutralizes the action to be taken as a result of cause. Al-Amedi purports: “Counter-cause is anything whose presence definitely violates the wisdom behind a cause. For example, not being in debt is a condition for Zakat to be obligatory. That is, possession of a minimum amount of money is a cause which obliges the person in question to pay Zakat, as the right of the poor, in the year that follows. One determinant, however, forfeits this order which is when the person in question is in debt. This countereffect manifests the forgiveness of Islam and its consideration of people’s circumstances. In other words, the person in debt is not obliged to pay Zakat, which is to reduce his pressures. In fact, it is as if he has no money, considering his debt. That is, should an order be passed on him, his possessions shall be taken and become among the poor. Thus, he shall be treated like those having no money, which in turn forfeits the obligation of Zakat.

**Meaning of cause:** This term refers to what is common among experts. In this regard, Al-Amedi argues: “Should the meaning of cause be known, the judgement will follow it in a certain form.”

**Wisdom of cause:** It refers to the Sharia effect resulting from the concept of cause. Al-Amedi

points out: “The wisdom of a cause should remain present, for it is the condition of a judgement, as in the case of impurity in prayer despite the act of performing the prayer.”

**Condition of cause:** It concerns the reason why the purposes of an order (e.g., observation, transaction) should be present. Al-Amedi, clarifying some characteristics of condition and the degree to which it is related to cause, argues: “Condition is something whose absence disturbs the wisdom of cause. It is the prerequisite for cause, such as in the case of delivering products in selling.” Thus, the salesperson’s ability to deliver the product is the cause of proper selling, in which case the customer can gain benefits. Moreover, selling what cannot be delivered has been banned, for else the purposes of selling cannot be achieved.

**Mentioning of cause:** It is about why something should be accepted or rejected. In relation to the problem of correcting and injuring, Al-Amedi argued: “They disagreed upon the acceptance of injuring and correcting without mentioning the causes. Therefore, some people said: The cause of them should be mentioned.” Hence, mentioning of the cause will make the problem more understandable by people, because this is a convincing way which makes the speaker seem more important. In fact, a speech is a message through which to grab the attention of the reader and walk him through achieving the purposes of the text. For this reason, causes have been frequently related to determinants in religious texts. Relevant to this term is the clarification of cause. In this regard, Al-Amedi argues: “There is no condition for mandating the clarification of cause with that.”

**Prohibited cause:** It is something adopted for a temporary benefit: “Permission of something prohibited for a certain excuse.”

**Absence of cause:** It refers to the absence of cause in a text. This point has been explained by Al-Amedi as follows: “This concept is common for its expression not for the absence of cause, since the absence of cause has no room in verbal significations.”

**Presence of cause:** It concerns the causal relation between two things. Al-Amedi, in his speech on the specification of sciences, argued: “Absence of cause has no room in verbal expressions.”

**Cause of cause:** It is about the indirect impact in inferring something. In this respect, Al-Amedi carefully argued: “It is neither the cause of cause nor part of it.” For the cause of cause is related to cause, it has been related to the latter and ascribed the characteristics of it. In this regard, Al-Mardawi

argued: "Cause of cause undermines the position of cause, because what is dependent upon something else is dependent. To exemplify, expiation is the cause of forgiving a sin." "Therefore, cause of cause is having an indirect, and thus a less important, impact on cause."

**Transfer of cause:** It is about changing the position of cause based on the context. Al-Amedi, mentioning the cause of transferring the cause, argues:

"Transferring the cause serves to prohibit introducing the cause to the public through Ijtihad and **understanding the causes of revelation.**"

These concepts have shown the centrality of the concept of cause in the dictionary of jurisprudential terms, which shows the concept of cause is of high importance. This is an independent concept based on which an order is inferred. This concept is related to a cause.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The study of jurisprudential concepts is of much importance, and becomes even more interesting when studied through the terminology study in which the concept is specified and its main dimensions are manifest. As a result, it can be understood and its peripheral issues can be learned. In this research, the concept of cause, as discussed by Al-Amedi, and the related scientific issues were investigated. Al-Amedi has a unique character in the principles of jurisprudence, where he, thanks to his knowledge about texts, stroked a balance between the theoretical and practical aspects of the study of concepts. He was also knowledgeable about inferring the topics, and applying the cause to the order theoretically and practically. For this reason, his thoughts and summaries were sequential, and accurate in terms of reasoning and inferring.

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