Requirements and Obstacles of the Seminary in the Face of the Discourse of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in the Last Century, Emphasizing the Usuli and Akhbari Ideologies[1]

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Abstract

The Islamic Revolution of Iran was a significant event that occurred in a dark world during the so-called age of enlightenment following the Renaissance. The revolution introduced a new discourse in an era of tyranny, atheism, and the opiate effects of religion against two major discourses: Liberalism and communism. The core of this discourse is shaped by the pure Islam of Muhammad (PBUH), and all the elements of this discourse stem from that foundation. On the other hand, the source of this discourse is the seminary, which, under the leadership of Imam Khomeini (RA), triumphed and established a luminous era against the prevailing humanistic and secular systems in the world. In this context, the seminary has played a fundamental role in the formation and realization of this discourse, to the extent that one could argue that the victory of the Usulis over the Akhbarism marked the beginning of this discourse's emergence. However, the question that this article addresses is the requirements and obstacles faced by the seminary in relation to the discourse of the Islamic Revolution. The author's hypothesis is that the expansion of Usuli thought and rationalism in the seminary represents the best condition, while the reproduction of Akhbarism and textualism could be the most significant obstacle in confronting this discourse. This research employs discourse analysis to substantiate the hypothesis.

Keywords: Discourse of the Islamic Revolution, Seminary, Usuli Thought, Akhbarism.

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Introduction

The characteristics of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution originate from the principles of the seminary and the Islamic thought of Imam Khomeini (A'rafi, 2015 AD/1395 SH: 283).

The Islamic Revolution, due to its religious identity and the special role and position of the Shia jurists in its emergence, made political jurisprudence more tangibly connected to the political life of the Iranian people. In this path, the juristic and political efforts in the seminary by Imam Khomeini prior to and following the revolution succeeded in elevating the status of politics based on Shari'a in the world and enhancing the legitimacy of Shari'a-based governments, particularly Islamic and Shia governance. Essentially, the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic were founded on the principles of Shia political jurisprudence, especially the theory of Vilayat-e Faqih (Motallebi, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 115).

Therefore, the discourse of the Islamic Revolution of Iran can be considered a product of the evolution of political jurisprudence in the seminary. This elevated discourse, realized by Imam Khomeini as the great source of emulation of the seminary, has found a remarkable position among humanistic and antireligious thoughts globally, capable of guiding other nations engulfed in darkness toward the streams of enlightenment. This discourse arises from the pure Islam of Muhammad, and all its grand aspirations are constructed upon this discourse.

In this context, the seminary has played a fundamental role in producing this discourse, as all of its intellectual foundations, from pure Islam to the concepts of guardianship, the establishment of government, and its laws and regulations, stem from the religion of Islam (A'rafi, ibid: 283). Furthermore, the leader of this discourse also guided the revolution from within the seminary, making the role of the seminary in the formation, realization, and victory of this discourse quite significant and undeniable (Ostadiankhani, 2023 AD/1402 AH: 133).

Given the above points, the issue that is currently of concern and must be revisited, especially after the centenary of the seminary in Qom and 43 years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, is the requirements and obstacles of the seminary in relation to the discourse of the Islamic Revolution.

The necessity of this reassessment lies in determining whether the seminary still possesses the prerequisites for the continuation of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution or if other ideologies are secretly growing within the seminary that could create the most significant obstacles to the discourse of the Islamic Revolution. Therefore, the primary issue that this research seeks to address is the requirements and

obstacles of the seminary in encountering the discourse of the Islamic Revolution.

The hypothesis the author aims to prove is that the expansion of Usuli thought, along with rationalism and the strengthening of Ijtihad, represents the best condition for the discourse of the Islamic Revolution, as this discourse, along with the principle of Vilayat-e Faqih, emerges from Usuli thought and Ijtihad.

Imam Khomeini is also regarded as one of the prominent Usuli scholars. In contrast, the expansion of Akhbarism could be the greatest obstacle to the discourse of the Islamic Revolution, as this ideology limits the sources of legal interpretation to hadith and opposes reason, ultimately leading to the rejection of Ijtihad, which plays a crucial role in the discourse of the Islamic Revolution, and thereby arrives at the notion of separating religion from politics.

In this research, after briefly examining Usuli and Akhbari thought and their intellectual foundations, an effort will be made to analyze how these two ideologies either contribute to or obstruct the discourse of the Islamic Revolution.

1. Background of the Research

In recent years, numerous studies have focused on the relationship between the seminary and the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

Hamid Rouhani, in his book "The Clergy and the Islamic Revolution," examines the historical role of the clergy in the formation and success of the revolution and notes the changes in this role after the revolution. Mohammad Hassan Rajabi, in "The Role of the Clergy in the Islamic Revolution," analyzes the activities of clerics at various stages of the revolution and highlights the importance of religious leadership in mobilizing the people. Rasool Jafariyan, in "Seminaries and the Islamic Revolution," explores the reciprocal influence of the revolution and the seminaries and discusses the structural and content changes within the seminaries following the revolution.

Mohsen Alviri, in "Transformation in Shia Seminaries," examines the evolution of seminaries from the traditional era to the contemporary age and discusses the challenges of modernizing these institutions. Ali Davani, in a book titled "The Islamic Revolution and the Seminaries," analyzes the impact of the revolution on the structure and functions of seminaries and emphasizes the necessity for them to adapt to the needs of the revolutionary society.

In addition to the aforementioned books, various articles have also been written in this area. Mohammad Reza Zaeri, in the article "The Role of the Seminary in the Victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran,"

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explores the role of the seminary in the revolution's success and highlights its importance in mobilizing the public and shaping the ideology of the revolution.

Hossein Rouhani, in an article titled "Transformation in the Seminary after the Islamic Revolution," studies the changes in the seminary following the revolution and points out structural, educational, and quantitative developments within these institutions. Ali Shirkhani, in the article "The Role of the Clergy and the Seminary in the Continuation of the Islamic Revolution," examines the clergy's and seminary's role in sustaining the Islamic Revolution and highlights the significance of leadership, popular mobilization, and preserving the revolution's values by the clergy.

Despite these valuable studies, a comprehensive examination specifically addressing the requirements and obstacles of the seminary in relation to the discourse of the Islamic Revolution of Iran has not yet been conducted. The present study aims to fill this research gap and provide a deeper analysis of the challenges and opportunities facing the seminary concerning the discourse of the Islamic Revolution. This research could offer a new perspective on the role of the seminary in the continuation and deepening of the Islamic Revolution's discourse and propose solutions for overcoming existing obstacles and leveraging available prerequisites. It may also present new insights on the interaction between the seminary and the Islamic Revolution discourse and serve as guidance for future policymaking in this area.

2. Theoretical Framework

Given the article's subject, which seeks to examine the role of the seminary in the discourse of the Islamic Revolution, it is essential to analyze the Islamic Revolution discourse to better understand the seminary's impacts on it. By identifying the components of this discourse, the effects of the seminary on it can be thoroughly analyzed. Various methods and tools can be employed for discourse analysis of the Islamic Revolution. In this regard, the "Discourse Analysis Method of Laclau and Mouffe" is a highly effective tool for analyzing contemporary discourses.

2.1. Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Analysis

The discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe is essentially an extension of Foucault's discourse theory within the realm of political-social philosophy. In fact, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory is indebted to Foucault's discourse analysis theory. At the same time, they have developed a very effective theory by employing the ideas of thinkers such as Saussure, Derrida, Barthes, Lacan, Gramsci, and Althusser,

which is coherent and has great explanatory potential, making it one of the richest theories in the field of discourse analysis (Razaei, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 85).

2.2. Basic Concepts in Discourse Analysis Theory

Discourse analysis theory is composed of thirteen fundamental concepts (Hosseinizadeh, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 18), of which the most important concepts are analyzed in this article:

1) Central Signifier

The two concepts of signifier and signified play a key role in discourse analysis theory; signifiers are abstract or real persons, concepts, phrases, and symbols that indicate specific meanings within particular discursive frameworks. The meaning and example that they refer to is called the "Signified." The signified is the sign that, upon seeing it, the corresponding signifier makes sense to us. The central signifier forms the core of the discursive system, and the attraction of this core pulls in other signs (Alipour Gorji, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 11).

The importance of the central signifier comes from this: It acts like the central pole of a tent that, if removed, causes the tent to collapse. In fact, the central signifier constitutes the central core of the discursive system (Khalaji, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 38).

2) Dislocation

The concept of dislocation plays an important role in discourse theory. According to Laclau's discourse theory, dislocation refers to a combination of elements that acquire a new identity when placed in a new context. Dislocation represents the formulation of a set of codes, objects, individuals, and concepts that are positioned around a key signifier and thus gain their identity in relation to a set of otherness. Dislocation produces a semantic system.

In other words, any action that establishes a relationship between elements in such a way that the identity of those elements is modified as a result of this action is called dislocation. Therefore, the overall structured formation resulting from the act of dislocation is termed discourse (Tajik, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 62).

3) Floating Signifiers

A floating signifier is one whose signified is fluid and unstable. In other words, a floating signifier has multiple signified, and discourses, based on their semantic systems, seek to attach their own signified to these floating signifiers while marginalizing others.

In the process of dislocation, discourses arrange floating signifiers in the social realm like pieces of a puzzle, collectively constructing a comprehensible and universally accepted image of their desired socio-political system (Moghaddami, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 99).

4) Hostility and Othering

Hostility and otherness are other concepts mentioned in this theory. Hostility in discourse analysis refers to the contingent and temporary nature of discourses. If hostility constantly threatens the existence of a discourse and puts it at risk of collapse, then all discourses have a "Contingent and Temporary Quality" and are never fully stabilized. On the other hand, this conflict does not always have destructive characteristics; it can also be generative.

The "Other," on one hand, prevents the complete formation or stabilization of discourses, exposing them to collapse, and on the other hand, plays a fundamental role in their formation. Therefore, hostility has a dual functionality: On one side, it obstructs the objectivity and stabilization of discourses and identities, while on the other; it is generative of identity and a factor of discursive coherence.

Therefore, each discourse is shaped in the shadow of the other or the "Other" and transforms under its influence, potentially leading to decline. In fact, othering is a struggle over the creation of meaning; each discourse is in conflict with other discourses and attempts to define reality as it desires (Azodanlou, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 24).

5) Hegemony

If a discourse temporarily stabilizes its desired meaning system in the collective consciousness of society and secures general approval, it becomes hegemonic (Laclau, Mouffe, 1985: 44). In essence, if a discourse can capture the minds and thoughts of social agents and thus influence their identity, behavior, and social activities, it transforms into a hegemonic discourse and dominates other discourses.

Therefore, the discourse of the Islamic Revolution will be analyzed based on discourse analysis theory to clarify the seminary's confrontation with the components of this discourse. In the section regarding the nature of the Islamic Revolution discourse, the formulation of this discourse will be analyzed.

3. Conceptology

3.1. Usuli Thought: This refers to a thought process that relies on the science of Usul al-Fiqh and is based on the four sources: The Quran, tradition and reports, consensus, and reason, seeking to discover commandments, where Ijtihad is the most important function for understanding these commandments.

3.2. Akhbarism: The term "Akhbari" refers to a group that believes in following reports and hadiths, rejecting Ijtihad and the principles of jurisprudence. This group primarily considers the reports of the Ahl al-Bayt as the source and foundation of religious beliefs and

commandments, referring to other sources only insofar as they are confirmed by the hadiths of the Imams (AS). In cases of uncertainty, they mandate caution (A group of writers, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 96).

3.3. Discourse: In a general definition, discourse is a structured whole that results from the act of dislocation. Discourses consist of a set of terms that are meaningfully interconnected. In fact, discourses are formulations of a collection of codes, objects, individuals, etc., positioned around a key signifier, and they acquire their identity in relation to a set of others.

Discourses shape our perception and understanding of the realities of the world. Therefore, human meaning and understanding of reality is always discursive and, thus, relative. Therefore, discourse encompasses the entirety of social life (Alipour Gorji, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 10).

3.4. Islamic Revolution of Iran: The Islamic Revolution refers to the movement of the Muslim community toward changing the existing non-Islamic regime and replacing it with a comprehensive and complete Islamic system; it also entails efforts to implement Islamic regulations, laws, and programs in all aspects of their lives (Sadeghi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 49).

3.5. Discourse of the Islamic Revolution: The discourse of the Islamic Revolution of Iran is an independent and authentic discourse, with its concepts and signifiers framed around the central signifier of "Shia Islam." Fundamental concepts such as justice, desirable governance, freedom, legitimacy, human rights, etc., are articulated within the discourse of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, or Shia Islam.

The discourse of the Islamic Revolution of Iran utilizes concepts such as the people, republicanism, democracy, law, freedom, equality, and human rights, and has sought to give them meaning within its own discourse. In contrast, it has rejected the secular aspects of Western civilization.

Ultimately, this discourse possesses the potential to gain power and become hegemonic by constructing an identity distinct from other presented models of Islamic thought and even liberal democracy as the dominant discourse in the age of globalization (Rezaei Jafari, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 85).

4. Section One: Sources and Methods of Deriving Commandments in Usuli and Akhbarism

To understand how the Akhbari and Usuli thoughts serve as barriers or facilitators in confronting the discourse of the Islamic Revolution, it is essential to briefly examine the sources and methods for deriving Shari'a

laws in both schools of thought, to clarify the reasons behind the minimal or maximal approach to religion based on their fundamentals:

4.1. Sources and Methods of Deriving Shari'a Commandments in Akhbarism

4.1.1. Sources for Deriving Commandments

Akhbarism is a view within Shia jurisprudence that defines the sources and methods for deriving Shari'a commandments as follows:

1) Quran: Its outward meanings are not binding, and its interpretation must refer to the hadiths of the Imams (Istarabadi, 2003 AD/1424 AH: 94).

2) Hadiths: All hadiths in reliable books, especially the Four Books, are correct and valid. Istarabadi rejects the classification of hadiths into different types (ibid: 272–273).

3) Consensus (Ijmā'): Its principled definition is not binding; only the consensus of the early Akhbari scholars is considered valid (Istarabadi, ibid: 13).

4) Reason (Aql): It is excluded from the domain of deriving Shari'a commandments. Istarabadi, a prominent Akhbari figure, does not consider reason a source of knowledge in any domain (ibid: 299; Sharifi, 2004 AD/1383 SH). This view emphasizes the absolute authority of hadiths and rejects the use of reason and Ijtihad in deriving Commandments.

4.1.2. Method of Deriving Commandments

The method of deriving commandments in Akhbarism is based on two fundamental principles:

1) Opposition to Ijtihad and Taqlid: Akhbaris consider Ijtihad to be derived from Sunnism or even ancient Greece (Abul Qasim ibn Karim, n.d.: 9). Istarabadi believes that early Shia scholars like Saduq, Ibn Babawayh, and Kulayni deemed Ijtihad and Taqlid as forbidden and considered adhering to the narrations of the Imams obligatory (Istarabadi, ibid: 40). Some Akhbaris, such as Abul Qasim ibn Zayn al-Abidin ibn Karim, argue that Ijtihad is incompatible with Islam and servitude to God (Abul Qasim ibn Karim, ibid: 9).

2) Precautionism: In general, the Akhbaris prefer to rely on suspicion over definitive rulings in cases of uncertainty (Karaki, 1893 AD/1313 AH: 223). They do not accept the principle of permissibility advanced by the Usulis (Jazayeri, 2022 AD/1401 SH: 58). In cases of uncertainty regarding prohibition, they consider precaution obligatory (Bahrani, ibid). They refer to the verses of the Quran and hadiths for the obligation of precaution (Istarabadi, ibid: 91). They utilize the *Maqbulah* of *Umar ibn Hanzalah* to emphasize the avoidance of ambiguities (Hurr Amili,

ibid: 75). This approach highlights the emphasis on the direct use of narrations and the avoidance of rational inference in jurisprudence.

4.1.3. Trends Among the Akhbaris

After the onset of the Minor Occultation in the year 260 AH, two main approaches emerged in deriving Shari'a commandments:

1) Hadith Scholars (Ahl al-Hadith): Focused on transmitting and collecting narrations, represented by figures such as Kulayni and Shaykh Saduq.

2) Ijtihad: Involves deriving commandments from the four sources (the Book, Tradition, Consensus, and Reason), emphasizing "Reason in the service of religious teachings."

The Akhbari thought began to decline following the efforts of Shaykh Mufid; however, it was revived in the early 11th century AH by Mulla Muhammad Amin Istarabadi. Istarabadi officially established the Akhbari School with his writing "al-Fawaid al-Madaniyyah" in 1031 AH. This current is divided into two groups:

- Extreme Akhbarism: Strong emphasis on hadiths while opposing reason and Ijtihad;

- Moderate Akhbarism: After Istarabadi, scholars like Allamah Majlisi and Fayd Kashani moderated the approach and accepted some aspects of rationalism (Beheshti, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 145).

This intellectual current has had a significant impact on the history of Shiism and the method of deriving Shari'a commandments, although it has varied along a spectrum from extremism to moderation.

4.1.4. Reproduction and Continuity of Akhbarism

By examining the historical background of Akhbarism, it is evident that this ideology did not dissolve in its past trajectory. Although this thought was not the dominant or prevalent one at certain times in history, evidence suggests that it has never completely disappeared; rather, it has continued to exist subtly and imperceptibly. Martyr Motahhari also warns of this in his works:

"All the Akhbarism thoughts that rapidly and intensely infiltrated minds after the emergence of Mulla Amin, and reined for around two hundred years, have not left those minds; you still see that many do not consider Quranic interpretation permissible without a hadith being involved. The rigidity of Akhbarism still governs many ethical and social issues and even some jurisprudential matters." (Motahhari, 1978 AD/1357 SH: 72)

4.2. Sources and Methods of Deriving Shari'a Commandments in Usuli Thought

4.2.1. Sources for Deriving Commandments

1) The sources for deriving Shariʻa commandments in the Usuli thought have four main sources:

- The Holy Quran: The most important source, with the belief in the validity of the apparent meanings of the verses (Mufid, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 137).

- Tradition (Sayings and Actions): The second and most extensive source, having a significant influence on Usuli discussions (Kalantari, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 184).

- Consensus (*Ijmaʻ*): The agreement of jurists, conditioned by the inclusion of the sayings of the Impeccable Imam (AS) (Mufid, ibid: 87).

- Reason (*Aql*): Considered the fourth proof, encompassing rationally independent and dependent matters (Mirza Qomi, 1958 AD/1337 SH: 2).

2) Method of Derivation: The method of the Usuli School for reaching religious rulings is "Ijtihad." Accordingly, according to Usul science, people during the period of occultation are divided into two categories: The minority of jurists (Mujtahids) and the majority of followers (Muqallid). Ijtihad means "Exerting effort to obtain evidence of a religious ruling." (Ansari, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 422)

This perspective holds that in practical rulings, it is permissible to follow an individual jurist. They provide four reasons for the permissibility and obligation of Taqlid: reason, the Quran (Tabatabai, 1984 AD/1363 SH: 259), hadith (Gharavi Tabrizi, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 184), and consensus (Mirza Qomi, ibid: 2, 161).

5. The Nature of the Discourse of the Islamic Revolution

With the sources and methods of deriving laws clarified in both Usuli and Akhbari thought, it is essential to briefly examine the construction of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution based on discourse analysis theory.

5.1. Central Signifier

According to discourse analysis methodology, every discourse has a central signifier from which other concepts and signifiers derive their meaning. A central signifier is a sign that other signs find meaning in relation to it (Alipour Gorji, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 11).

Various formulations of the dominant discourse governing the Islamic Republic, the Islamic Revolution, and especially the views of Imam Khomeini have been presented. However, the correct interpretation regarding the central signifier of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution is that different elements and signs within this discourse have meanings based on the central signifier "Islam," specifically the Islam referred to as "Pure Muhammadan Islam." In this

regard, Imam Khomeini states: "The only thing you should think about is the firm foundations of pure Muhammadan Islam." (Khomeini, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 21, 204)

In this context, given that the central signifier of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution is "Pure Muhammadan Islam," a question arises: 'What characteristics does pure Muhammadan Islam (PBUH) possess?' Answering this question can illustrate the nature of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution and thereby facilitate understanding the necessities and barriers that the seminary faces in confronting this discourse.

The term "Pure Muhammadan Islam" (PBUH) refers to the true and original Islam that was conveyed from its prophet, the Holy Messenger (PBUH), without any embellishments or alterations, to Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS), and then from him to the subsequent Imams (AS).

This pure form of Islam has been adhered to in both belief and practice, passed down from generation to generation through those great figures until it has reached us.

The most important characteristic of pure Muhammadan Islam in the thought of the leaders of the Islamic Revolution is the denial of the separation between religion and politics, or in other words, a maximalist view of religion. Imam Khomeini draws upon reasons such as the comprehensiveness of Islam (ibid, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 11), the unity of the goals of religion and politics (ibid: 13, 422), the inseparability of this world from the hereafter, the political nature of many Islamic rulings (ibid: 6, 43), and the connection between religion and politics in the teachings of the Quran and the practices of the Prophet and the Imams (ibid, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 23), to argue for the necessity of establishing an Islamic government.

In pure Muhammadan Islam, after establishing the political nature of this Islam and the necessity of forming an Islamic government, the concept of the guardianship of the jurists (Vilayat-e Faqih) is introduced, 'Which Imam Khomeini articulated within a defined framework?' In fact, in this discourse, the rulers of the Islamic government are the jurists, whose authority is seen as an extension of the divine authority of Prophethood and Imamate.

In the discourse of Islam, the system of Vilayat-e Faqih is the governing system that realizes divine authority during the period of occultation. Imam Khomeini uses both rational and textual arguments (ibid, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 17) to substantiate the guardianship of the jurists and their right to establish a government.

5.2. Floating Signifiers

The discourse of the Islamic Revolution utilized various concepts and institutions such as religion, guardianship, the people, republicanism, law, freedom, and so on, and contextualized them within the framework of pure Islam (Behrouz Lak, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 147).

5.2.1. Independence

Regarding the dependence of the Pahlavism discourse on the West, independence emerged as one of the empty signifiers of the Pahlavi discourse and was contextualized within the discourse of political Islam.

This is particularly evident in the rhetorical order of Imam Khomeini. By incorporating independence into his discourse, he presents an aspect of enmity and a confrontation with the other: "I appeal to all classes for the preservation of Islamic laws and the independence of Islamic countries, and I am confident that with the unity of the Muslim word... the ranks of foreigners and opponents will be shattered, and they will never think of invading Islamic countries." (Dehshiri, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 183)

5.2.2. Unity

The "Signifier of Unity" is another floating signifier that connects to the discursive system of Islam based on jurisprudence and is frequently employed in the speeches of Imam Khomeini to create the myth of the "One Islamic Ummah." This signifier serves a reproducing function for the "Identity of the Islamic Ummah," a process of identity formation for the actors in the Islamic world who, in the face of colonialism and tyranny, have been belittled and disheartened, needing a new discursive identity that grants them a place. The speeches of Imam Khomeini provide ample evidence of this claim (Khomeini, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 336).

In Imam Khomeini's discourse, unity, in conjunction with independence, strengthens the theoretical framework of the Imam. As such, the unity of the statements of the esteemed religious scholars and the prevailing authorities, according to his discourse, led to the preservation of the country's independence and the expulsion of foreign influence (ibid.).

5.2.3. Freedom, Law, and the People

There were other elements that exited the discursive field and connected to Imam Khomeini's discourse. The connection of these signifiers to his discourse established a consensus and bond among revolutionary actors with varied ideas and perspectives around Imam Khomeini's discourse, transforming it into a revolutionary discourse (ibid: 3, 74).

5.2.4. Republic

The concept signified by the term "Republic" in the discourse of the Islamic Revolution is articulated through the notion of religious

democracy. It is said that religious democracy is the new model of governance that was born with the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This term, composed of the two words "People" and "Democracy," means that the people govern their own destiny within the framework of religion. Religion determines the foundational principles and the essence of the regulations and laws governing the state, and the people exercise authority over their destiny within the religious framework (Khaje Saravi, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 243).

This concept is also evident in the words of the founder of the Islamic Republic, who stated:

"We want to implement Islam, at least its governance, in a way that resembles the governance of Islam in the early days; so that you may truly understand the correct meaning of democracy and know that the democracy in Islam is very different from the well-known democracy that governments, presidents, and monarchs claim." (Khomeini, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 4, 418)

Thus, the floating signifier of democracy is contextualized and given meaning through the central signifier of pure Muhammadan Islam.

5.2.5. Othering Process

The formation of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution can be traced in two dimensions: Othering in both domestic and foreign arenas.

A) Domestic Dimension

1. Rejection of the Pahlavi Monarchy

By positioning the Islamic discourse against the dominant Pahlavi discourse in Iran's political arena and initiating a direct struggle against the Pahlavi regime, this discourse rejected all Western-oriented movements within the country, along with the Pahlavi discourse itself.

2. Rejection of Certain Traditional Islamic Discourses

These movements included the reactionary, eclectic, and American Islam factions that were dismissed from the very beginning of the struggle. Considering Imam Khomeini's lament about the reactionaries, one can also argue that the rejection of Akhbari ideology fits within this framework.

B) Foreign Dimension

In the foreign and international arena, the Islamic discourse also negated intellectually dependent internal forces, as well as Eastern and Western discourses. Imam Khomeini, in his speeches, rejected both East and West and emphasized adherence to the straight Islamic path, which became one of the key slogans of the Islamic Revolution.

From the very onset of the revolution and even before the revolution, as the foundation was being laid, the path was that of the prophets-a

direct path that is neither Eastern nor Western but aligns with the Islamic Republic. To this day, the nation remains steadfast on that path (Khomeini, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 15, 147).

In the first decade of the Islamic Revolution, the principle of negating both East and West became one of the fundamental principles of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

6. Section Three: Comparative Study of Usuli and Akhbarism in Relation to the Discourse of the Islamic Revolution

After examining the concepts and foundations of deriving religious rulings in both Akhbari and Usuli thought, as well as their approaches to rulings and issues, it is essential to clarify the views of these two schools toward the foundational principles of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution. This clarification will determine their potential as either obstacles or facilitators in relation to the discourse of the Islamic Revolution:

6.1. The Relationship Between Religion and Politics

As mentioned, Usuli thought, for various reasons, believes in the connection between religion and politics and provides rational arguments to support this relationship. However, there is no clear and independent interpretation of this relationship evident in the works of the Akhbari scholars.

It can be said that Akhbari thought, due to its textualism with an emphasis on Hadith and the belief in the non-authoritativeness of reason, restricts religion to personal matters. The intrinsic perception of the relationship between jurisprudence and individual matters, alongside its distinction from political and social issues, leads to the promotion of the idea of separation between religion and politics. This idea is accepted by the Akhbarism for various reasons.

It appears that one of the main reasons for the lack of connection between religion and politics is the "Non-authenticity of Reason" in the derivation of religious rulings among Akhbari scholars. Since the outcome depends on the weakest premises, and Akhbaris rely on a limited number of sources to reach a religious ruling, they cannot utilize all available resources.

On the other hand, most political discussions are framed by the role and authority of reason, and by opposing reason, they are unable to address matters in the realm of political systems and the connection between religion and politics, thus failing to respond to societies needs in this regard (Izdehi, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 242).

In contrast, in Usuli thought, reason is considered one of the fundamental tools of Shia political life. Many issues that are left

unaddressed in the Shari'ah are entrusted to reason, considering the wisdom behind them and the satisfaction of the legal authority. The term "Reason" in the Shia perspective refers to reason as the understanding of rational necessities or independent rational principles, recognized through the rule of "The correlation of reason and Shari'ah."

In such cases, reason issues a definitive and certain ruling, and its rulings hold authority and validity. Therefore, whenever certainty is reached via rational evidence, it cannot be opposed by transmitted evidence; if apparent opposition arises, one must necessarily interpret that narrative evidence rather than dismiss it (Khorasani, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 1, 29).

Undoubtedly, understanding the discourse of the Islamic Revolution and the Usuli School in Shia jurisprudence is possible through the use of reason. Rationalism in Shia political jurisprudence has the greatest impact. The authority of the Quran and Sunnah, alongside Shia political jurisprudence, on one hand, and the necessity of rational contemplation to understand the implications of the arguments and the Quranic and Hadith texts, on the other hand, along with the formation of new needs resulting from contemporary social and political developments, highlight the importance of reason, especially in terms of interpretation.

This characteristic facilitates the extension of jurisprudence into the political realm, enabling contemporary jurists to derive necessary political rulings for life and to theorize in the current political field (Mirahmadi, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 127).

With the expansion of Akhbarism and considering the perspective of Akhbari scholars towards reason and its authority in deriving rulings, all rational arguments to prove the relationship between religion and politics become invalid.

Furthermore, the lack of explicit Hadiths linking religion and politics serves as an additional factor in denying this relationship. Below are some brief evidence demonstrating the rejection of the relationship between religion and politics in Akhbarism thought:

6.1.1. Minimalist View of Religion

As stated, one of the main characteristics of Akhbaris scholars is their cautiousness and hesitation regarding matters lacking explicit textual evidence in the Hadith. Consequently, the Akhbaris, by adopting a cautious approach to various issues, become incapable of opening many new pathways and spaces in the field of jurisprudence, and they can only resort to caution (Izdehi, ibid: 243).

To transcend the narrow and limited frameworks of religion, it is essential to set aside caution and go beyond the apparent teachings of Hadith, utilizing rational and textual evidence to grasp the depth and

objectives of religion. However, the Akhbaris possess all the characteristics that lead to a minimalist view of religion.

Thus, the cautious nature of the Akhbaris results in their minimalistic approach to religion, yielding a tendency toward the individualization of religion. In contrast, with the validity of reason and Ijtihad in Usuli thought, religion enters the social and political domains, with the principle of Vilayat-e Faqih and the right to form government being among the most important manifestations of this engagement.

6.1.2. Dogmatism and Rigidity in Religion

Another piece of evidence for the separation of religion from politics in the Akhbaris perspective is the characteristic of dogmatism found among them. The limitation of resources available to the Akhbaris, textualism, and, most importantly, the opposition to reason in deriving rulings place the Akhbaris among the dogmatists-a point acknowledged by many writers and thinkers. Ayatollah Javadi Amoli also perceives the Akhbaris viewpoint on religion as dogmatic: "The Akhbaris view religion through the narrow, dim lens of dogmatism and rigidity."(Javadi Amoli, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 22)

Martyr Motahhari also identifies the Khawarij and Akhbaris as two ideologically similar rigid currents. He states: "The Akhbari and Khawarij movements are two intellectual currents that emerged in Islam, both characterized by rigidity and, indeed, very similar to one another. The essence of the Akhbarism movement consists of rigidity. According to them, Ijtihad, which encompasses expression, thought, experience, and analysis-essentially involving the application of reason in religion-is incorrect?" (Motahhari, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 21, 111)

By "Dogmatism" and "Rigidity," it is meant the practice of adhering to the apparent meanings of Hadith without contemplating the deeper meanings and intents of the narrations. The issuance of various fatwas based solely on the apparent meanings of Hadith supports this notion; for example, the prohibition on wearing any type of clothing other than that which the Imams (AS) wore, or the writing of the phrase "Ismail bears witness that there is no deity but God" because Imam Sadiq (AS) had written this phrase on the shroud of his son (Esfandiari, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 91) can be counted among such claims.

6.2. Formation of Government

One important topic is the examination of the idea of establishing a government from the perspective of Akhbari and Usuli thought. The necessity of establishing a government is one of the fundamental components of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution.

In contrast, the Akhbarism perspective believes in the suspension of Islamic government during the era of occultation. Regarding this issue, it

can be said that the Akhbaris have not presented a fixed and specific theory in the form or name of the theory of government suspension; however, it seems that considering the nature of their sources, method of inference, and their perspective on religion, they found no alternative but to submit to the suspension of the Islamic government according to Shia teachings (Izdehi, ibid).

Within this context, three major obstacles in the Akhbari thought can be identified regarding the denial of establishing an Islamic government during the era of occultation:

6.2.1. Hadith-Centeredness

The hadith-centered characteristic of the Akhbaris leads them to believe in the suspension of the Islamic government during the era of occultation concerning the establishment of an Islamic government, as they rely solely on the narrated traditions regarding jihad (for instance, "Every banner raised before the emergence of the Mahdi is that of tyranny") and considering their lack of a reasonable and comprehensive view toward other verses, narrations, and rational proofs, along with their superficial and non-rational interpreting of the jihad narratives, they maintain a stance of silence and lack of effort to rise against tyrannical rulers and establish a government during the occultation (Hurr Amili, 1989 AD/1409 AH: 15, 52).

6.2.2. Belief in the Non-Establishment of Government

The Akhbaris claim their belief in the non-establishment of government by referencing the apparent meanings of narrations that indicate the absence of a government, even though these narrations have not provided a basis for the prohibition against an Islamic government during the era of occultation.

However, in the eyes of the Akhbaris, at least in contrast to the narrations and evidence supporting the legitimacy of Vilayat-e Faqih in government formation, those who have questioned the proof of Vilayat-e Faqih have often encountered these narrations, deterring them from engaging in governmental matters. At the very least, these narrations made them indifferent, if not skeptical, towards the notion of a religious government during the era of occultation.

6.2.3. Non-Authority of Reason in Government Formation

From the perspective of the Akhbaris, reason lacks any authority in deriving religious rulings. This issue carries significant implications for political jurisprudence and the establishment of government because the essence of political jurisprudence relies on the role of reason in the derivation of rulings (Sayyid Bagheri, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 159).

Without the authority of reason, the rationale and logic supporting the establishment of government become difficult or even impossible. In

contrast, in Usuli thought, Imam Khomeini references rational arguments more than anything else to transition from monarchy to the necessity of establishing an Islamic government.

6.3. The Position and Powers of the Vali-e Faqih

After establishing the connection between religion and politics, one of the most vital discussions in this area is that of Vilayat-e Faqih. The Vali-e Faqih and the qualified mujtahid, based on their special position and legitimacy granted by God, possess the right to form a government and exercise authority in this manner.

The primary factor that qualifies the Vali-e Faqih for such a position, in addition to their justice, is their qualification in Ijtihad. The principle of Vilayat provides the necessary authority for the mujtahid to lead politically and establish a government. Furthermore, through that, the mujtahid gains the authority necessary to issue fatwas and political rulings. Therefore, one of the most important issues that should be examined and analyzed regarding the implications of Akhbarism thought on the status of the Vali-e Faqih is the threat posed to the position of Ijtihad.

6.3.1. Threat to the Position of the Vali-e Faqih Based on the Rejection of Ijtihad

Akhbaris, especially the extremist Akhbaris, emphasize the direct use of narrations, refrain from relying solely on the apparent meanings of Quranic verses, and reject the authority of rational proof, altering the relationship between mujtahid and Muqallid (follower) emphasized by the Usuli thinkers to that of a narrator and an audience. Hence, in this view, the jurist lacks the right to derive religious rulings through principles inferred from the Quran, Sunnah, and reason. For the Akhbari scholar, there exists only the right to translate and explain the narrations.

With this approach, people act independently after hearing the meanings of the hadiths. Therefore, the relationship between jurisprudence (Fiqh) and the people is not one of intellectual and Ijtihadi connection or guardianship but rather a mere transmittal and sensory relationship between the two (Jawadi Ameli, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 233).

Thus, in the domain of the social or political system, the guardianship and oversight of a jurist (Faqih) over the affairs of the people will never be accepted, and there is no obligation for the public to comply with the recommendations of scholars.

The Akhbaris, given their perspective on the status and role of the impeccable Imam (AS) in political life, permanently close off the path of Ijtihad and rational reasoning. According to the Akhbaris, first, Ijtihad is based on speculative matters, which do not bring certainty to the truth. Second, since the hadiths of the Imams are accessible to the general

intellects, the preconceptions and mental frameworks of the jurists may lead to incorrect understandings of the meanings of these hadiths.

Consequently, not only do Ijtihad and the jurists have no place in the political life of the Shia, but also, since the simple intellects of the general populace are more prepared to understand the hadiths correctly than the scholars, all reasoning is considered forbidden, as all the crises and wars in the Islamic world stem from the negative consequences of this speculative Ijtihad (Ali Sayyid Ghafour, 2007 AD/1386 SH). Istarabadi writes:

"Among the ancients, our companions, the Akhbaris, including the Saduqayn and Kulayni, explicitly stated the prohibition of Ijtihad and Taqlid (following) and the obligation of adhering to the narrations of the pure lineage. They do not consider any evidence other than the authentic hadiths of the Imams to be valid". (Istarabadi, ibid: 40).

According to Istarabadi, Ijtihad is a destruction of religion, and the references in Shia narrations concerning the people's recourse to scholars are confined solely to the realm of reporting news, not to obeying speculative Ijtihad derived from Quranic texts or rational proofs (ibid: 153).

In contrast, the discourse of the Islamic Revolution, which is based on Usuli thought, believes that during the era of occultation, the Ijtihad of the jurists to uncover and derive religious rulings is legitimate, and the Holy Quran, narrations, reason, and consensus are presented as sources for Ijtihad.

Therefore, in this discourse, based on the principle of Ijtihad, the Shia community is divided into two categories: the scholar capable of understanding the rulings and the layperson who is unable to comprehend them.

Just as it is necessary for the learned to undertake Ijtihad and assume responsibility for the public life of the Shia, it is also obligatory for the general Shia populace to follow the Ijtihad of the jurists in all matters, including political issues (ibid: 295).

For this reason, the role of the jurist in the social and political life of the Shia during the era of occultation is considered to be the same as that of the impeccable Imam (AS) during the era of presence, thus the Ijtihad can be seen as a continuation of the responsibilities of imamate under differing conditions from those of the impeccable.

Usuli thinkers, with such reasoning, regard Islamic jurisprudence as akin to prophethood and imamate, being among the factors and causes that establish guardianship over public affairs in the Islamic community, and the evidence and limits of the powers of religious scholars are

subjects of extensive research in jurisprudence and political jurisprudence. Ayatollah Jawadi Amoli believes in this regard:

"The issue of Vilayat-e Faqih is the succession of the impeccable Imam (AS). Accordingly, the qualified jurist during the occultation is the representative of the impeccable Imam, and just as the impeccable Imam (AS) articulated God's rulings, he also managed governmental issues, establishing a relationship between him and the people akin to that of Imam and community. Therefore, the relationship of the representatives of the impeccable Imam (AS), who are qualified jurists in knowledge and justice, with the people will also be a relationship of Imam and community". (Jawadi Amoli, ibid: 244)

Opposition to the principle of Ijtihad by the Akhbaris will have two political consequences:

1) Lack of Credibility for the Political Authority of the Jurist

One of the areas where Akhbarism thought can have significant impacts and consequences is the status and powers of the Vali-e Faqih. This consequence arises from the stance and prohibition of Ijtihad by this ideology. They emphasize the unique status of the impeccable Imams (AS) and consider only them superior to all others, asserting that among the Shia, there is no superiority or distinction in understanding and issuing religious rulings for religious scholars during the period of occultation. Istarabadi, while believing in the division of intellects into complete and incomplete, explains a point that directly contradicts the claims of Usuli religious scholars.

He argues that it is precisely the jurists who lose the ability to understand the hadiths, as the narrations issued by the holders of complete intellects, namely the impeccable Imams, are suitable for the level of incomplete intellects or the general populace.

Meanwhile, the Usuli jurists, by acquiring what they label as Ijtihad, disturb their own incomplete intellects to the point of losing the capacity to understand hadiths and rulings, thereby giving the common people a special advantage over the jurists and followers of Usuli thought in this regard (Izdehi, 2013 AD/1392 SH).

Opposition to the position of Vali-e Faqih is evident in the writings of some Akhbari scholars. For instance, Shaykh Yusuf Bahrani, known as the author of "Hada'iq," despite being a moderate Akhbari, explicitly opposes the theory of Vilayat-e Faqih. In his book "al-Durar al-Najafiyyah," he relates to some narratives cited in support of Vilayat-e Faqih, such as the *Maqbulah* of *Umar ibn Hanzalah*, *Abu Khadijah*, the noble *Tuqi'*, and the hadith "O! Allah, have mercy on my successors."

He accepts their implications solely regarding the deputies of the jurists in resolving disputes and issuing fatwas while denying their

delegation in administrative matters or payment of the Imam's share. According to him, the guardianship over funds that are hidden and in the treasury and similar matters do not belong solely to the impeccable Imam (AS) or the qualified jurist; rather, the Vilayat in administrative matters extends to all believers (Bahrani: 1986 AD/1405 AH: 12, 470).

This is while one of the important principles of the Islamic Revolution discourse emphasizes the special political status of the scholar and jurist compared to other individuals (*Muqallidin*).

The jurist, in addition to inferring and extracting religious rulings using the four sources, has the necessary qualifications for issuing political rulings and fatwas due to the political position that Usuli thought has afforded him, placing him in the position of a religious authority and obliging the people to follow him.

The revival of Ijtihad and Taqlid is the result of the failure of the Akhbari School and the victory of Usuli thought in Shia jurisprudence, which brought about specific social and political consequences. This event significantly expanded the political dimensions of the religious scholar. Ultimately, this expansion led to the concept of the political guardianship of the jurist, or Vilayat-e Faqih. Ayatollah Jawadi Amoli also believes that the defeat of the Akhbaris contributed to the acceptance of the principle of Vilayat-e Faqih:

"With the dismantling of the Akhbari system, Vilayat-e Faqih became an almost universally accepted principle among the jurists, with the only difference being in the concept of guardianship and its scope." (Jawadi Amoli, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 50)

Opposition to Ijtihad also affects the political authority of the jurists, as political guardianship is the final stage of revealing and the peak of the Ijtihad theory that extends over all matters and aspects of the lives of Shia Muslims, influencing all social phenomena, especially their "Religious Language." In this thought, the jurist stands above all ordinary believers and Shia followers.

While not an impeccable Imam (AS), he serves as the Imam's representative. He is the jurist in authority, who possesses power and legitimacy to govern due to his scholarly knowledge.

Emphasizing the status of jurists, especially the necessity of following a living jurist, can undoubtedly help alleviate intellectual paralysis and, at least to some extent, relieve the constraints and rigidities that bind thought and reason. Furthermore, principles such as conjecture and the permissibility of actions that are not explicitly prohibited lead to a more flexible interpretation of jurisprudence in addressing contemporary social and political issues (Enayat, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 288).

Requirements and Obstacles of the Seminary in the Face of the Discourse of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in the Last Century, Emphasizing the Usuli and Akhbari Ideologies

The ideas of the Usuli proponents have shifted the connection between the domain of jurisprudence and the people from a stage of sensory perception and transmission to a stage of reason, thought, and intuition.

Therefore, with the Akhbaris' stance against Ijtihad and their denial of its superiority over others, one of the most important outcomes of Ijtihad, namely political authority, will also become meaningless, as in this ideology, the jurist has no superiority over others that would allow him to govern them.

2) Lack of Credibility and Influence of Political Rulings and Fatwas

A political ruling is a religious decree issued by a qualified jurist concerning the obligation or prohibition of a specific subject, which, in addition to its political aspect, also has social and political consequences (Ali Ghafour, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 205).

Among the Akhbari School, things and matters of life are categorized into three types: they classify objects as permissible (*Halal*), prohibited (*Haram*), and those that are ambiguous (*Shubha*) between the two. Regarding the third category, they generally advocate for caution and suspension, which results in an expansion of prohibitions and a limitation of what is permissible and freedom of action in the lives of Shia.

In this context, the Akhbari scholar cannot take any action in managing his political community due to his stance on caution and suspension regarding various political issues; he must refrain from issuing any political rulings or fatwas because there is no explicit textual basis for the subject in the hadiths.

This stands in contrast to the discourse of the Islamic Revolution, where the principle of Ijtihad has gained credibility, granting religious scholars a significant position in issuing political rulings.

The revival of Ijtihad, along with the jurist's competence and special status, placing him as a reference for imitation among the people, provided the necessary grounds for important political actions and movements. One of the most important functions of Ijtihad has been related to the "Issuance of Political Rulings."

Therefore, with the expansion of Akhbari thought and considering the relationship and extent of the reproduced discourse, the position of Ijtihad is put at risk; this is because one of the main characteristics of the Akhbari current is opposition to Ijtihad. With the disappearance or weakening of Ijtihad, firstly, the jurist will not possess the status and superiority over others that would enable him to hold the authority of governance, and secondly, the jurist will lack the standing to issue political rulings, which play a crucial role in political developments.

Conclusion

By analyzing the Akhbarism and Usuli thought, as well as framing the discourse of the Islamic Revolution and identifying its central signifier, floating signifiers, and other components, it can be concluded that Akhbari thought, due to its confrontation with the central signifier of the Islamic Revolution discourse, could pose the most significant obstacle to engaging with this discourse.

This is because pure Islam, as the central signifier of the revolution discourse, has a maximalist view of religion, while Akhbari thought has a minimalist approach. Therefore, from the perspective of this article, the most significant obstacle in the religious seminary is the Akhbari thought. The expansion of Akhbari thought, for various reasons, such as the abandonment of reason in inferring religious rulings-upon which political jurisprudence is based-its rigidity and fundamentalism, and their cautious stance, will promote the idea of separating or weakening the relationship between religion and politics.

Additionally, considering the primary components of the Akhbari mindset, such as the centrality of hadith, the belief in the exclusive formation of government by the impeccable Imam (AS), and the denial of the role of reason in establishing governance, the thought of "Suspension of Islamic government during the era of occultation" will expand, which will ultimately call into question the idea of establishing an Islamic Republic.

On the other hand, given the Akhbari stance against Ijtihad and the equal treatment of all people, they do not attribute any political status or superiority to the jurist or religious scholar, and thus, in Akhbari thought, the arguments for establishing the guardianship of the jurist and his position are put into doubt. Conversely, Usuli thought within the religious seminaries is considered the most essential condition and driving force for the Islamic Revolution discourse, as this thought strengthens and expands the central signifier of the Islamic Revolution.

The revival of Ijtihad and Taqlid through the expansion of Usuli thought has significantly provided political dimensions for the religious scholar. This expansion eventually led to the "Political guardianship of the jurist," which was pursued by Shia jurists in theory and practice, resulting in tangible changes in contemporary Iranian society, the most notable being the fatwa of Jihad against Russia, the tobacco prohibition fatwa, the Constitutional Movement, and ultimately leading to the formation and victory of the Islamic Revolution discourse.

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The Islamic Revolution triumphed under the leadership of a Usuli scholar, and the discourse of the Islamic Revolution is the product of the dominance of Shia rationality and the revival of Ijtihad and the maturation of Shia political jurisprudence. The core of the Islamic Revolution discourse is "Pure Muhammadan Islam," whose most crucial component is the comprehensiveness of religion and the deep connection between religion and politics.

This discourse emphasizes the necessity of establishing an Islamic government led by a qualified jurist, utilizing Shia rationality and the belief in the profound relationship between religion and politics, adopting an Ijtihad approach, and extending the guardianship of the impeccable Imams (AS).

Therefore, the discourse of the Islamic Revolution is regarded as a product of Usuli thought in religious seminaries. Consequently, in Usuli thought, due to the expansion of resources and the use of reason and Ijtihad, there is a comprehensive view of religion, and belief in the relationship between religion and politics is upheld. Hence, the expansion of Usuli thought is considered the "Best condition for engaging with the Islamic Revolution discourse."

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