INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 is considered as one of the most important developments of the second half of the twentieth century in Iran. The occurrence of revolution was significant because Islam has played a dominant role in restructuring and reshaping the Iranian society as a whole. This revolution, on the one hand uprooted the powerful monarchy and on the other hand established an Islamic government and thus became more fascinating.

But the revolution was not a sudden development. The beginning of the twentieth century has initiated certain changes in the social-political sphere of Iran which proved vital in the direction of introducing more powerful social, religious and political movements with radical orientation. The constitutional movement in Iran in 1905-6 proved to be a guidelines and gave impetus to all social political movements which took place in the years to come. Undoubtedly, it was a powerful step in the direction of Islamic revolution in Iran. What role the constitutional movement played by lodging protest against colonialism, imperialism in the years preceding the revolution, and how the strong Pahlavi regime under Shah of Iran reacted, are important for a true understanding of political developments in Iran. Similarly a concise background of the constitutional movement is equally important to underline the element of consciousness and political participation in the Iranian society.

The Islamic Revolution is not only a political revolution against the monarchy but a cultural revolution too, which affected the Iranian society. Why was the Shah's regime so easily defeated? What were the forces at work behind the success of revolution? Why did so many experts fail to see the coming of the Islamic Revolution? How and why did Islam become the dominant ideology of the revolution and how did the Shi'a ulama defeat their opponents and establish their rule? This thesis is designed to answer these questions about the Islamic Revolution.
Chapter I deals with socio-political condition of Iran during the 20th century and the role of ulama. It analyses the constitutional movement of 1905-1911, reasons for the creation of the Pahlavi dynasty, Mohammad Reza Shah’s successful drive towards absolute power in his reign (1941-1979), the challenges he faced from Mossadeq and Ayatollah Khomeini, Clergy-State Relations and Shah and the White Revolution.

Chapter II, The Spirit of Islamic Revolution: Revolution Ideology in Making explains how the progressive Islamic movement emerged under the ideological impact of Jamaluddin Al- Afghani, Allama Iqbal, Shadaman, Jalal al-e-Ahmad and Bazargan. And finally took a concrete shape under the dynamic leadership of Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Khomeini. It also discusses how the Shi’i fundamentalist forces defeated their rivals and prepared grounds for an Islamic theocracy.

Chapter III, Radical Thoughts of Ali Shariati analyses the extraordinary contribution of Ali Shariati in preparing the intellectual and political atmosphere for the unparalleled surge of Islamic revival in Iran. His formulation and presentation of a coherent Islamic world-view, ideology of social, political and economic change and views on Western thoughts, Understanding of Islam, Sociology of Islam, Political Theory, Marxism and Clericalism have been thoroughly discussed.

Chapter IV, Shi’ism in the Historical Perspective in Iran describes the role of the Shi’i establishment in modern Iran, political Shi’ism, religious groups and other political parties. The concept of Valayateh Faqih and how the fundamentalists shrewdly outmaneuvered their rivals, mainly the Islamic nationalists, and the leftists have been deliberated upon. It also gives a brief sketch of social-religious changes out side Iran, like Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Saudia Arabia and Sudan.

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