ISLAM: AN IDEOLOGY

The Islamic Revolution in Iran is the latest institutional manifestation of that colossal transformative movement through which Islam has been redefined from a universal religion to a political ideology with universal claims. The corner-stone of this metamorphosis is Islamic ideology. This ideology in all its political and revolutionary dimensions, is not only a unique Iranian or Shiite phenomenon. The conceptual and semantic roots of this metamorphosis are already present in the work of architects of the revolutionary pan-Islamists such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1865-1935), Mohammad Abduh (1849-1905), Rasid Rida (1865-1935), Hasan al-Banna (1906-49), and Abd al-Hakim Khalifa. Abd al-Hakim Khalifa published a book entitled Islamic ideology.

Ayatollah Khomeini and Ali Shariati were the most articulated proponents of this concept in Persian, ideology-e Islami (Islamic ideology). However, in the Iranian modern history, the roots of this concept go back to Jalal Al-e Ahmad. The term has also been used in the literature of Mujahidin-e Khalq Organisation. But the official use of this term is extensive in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Islam is a religion which is not only for the particular purpose and aim but a total way of life. Prophet Mohammad, the founder of the Islamic Society was not only the leader of the umma,¹ but final authority vested in him in all matters of state and society. The primordial fusion of religion and politics is the matter of great concern in the history of Islam, since the emergence of Islam there was no distinction between religion and politics. After the death of the Prophet, Imams became his successor and ruled over the Muslim community, but the death of the Eleventh Imam and mysterious disappearance of the Twelfth Imam created vacuum for the leadership of Muslim community and precipitated a new crisis that who would lead the community. In the absence of Imam, the responsibility of leadership fell on the ulema, who became protector and defender of Muslim community until the reappearance of Mehdi. On the one hand, the ulema

¹ Umma: the entire Islamic community without territorial or ethnic distinction.
placed themselves the defender and protector of the Muslim community and they considered themselves the legitimate ruler of the community in the absence of the Twelfth Imam, on the other, monarchy claimed itself the legitimate ruler of the country. But the legitimacy of the monarchy was always in question because monarchy is incompatible with Islam and it is against the basic tenet of Islam as the Quran says that "affairs of the people should be conducted on the basis of mutual consultation."\(^2\)

During Safavids, Shiism\(^3\) became state religion, it was the first time when a ruling dynasty declared Shiism as a state religion in the history of Iran. Despite declaration of Shiism as a state religion, it did not get upperhand and politics preceded over religion. During Safavids, relations between the state and the clergy were cool but cooperative. But in the last days of the Safavids the process of deterioration of relations began and finally during the Qajars, relations were not only cool on both the internal or external issues, but the ulema fought against the state and questioned monarchy’s legitimacy. In the 19th century clergy enjoyed power and influence derived mainly from their control over many functions that in modern Western societies are under state administration, although they were not a formal part of executive as some of them had been under the Safavids. The semiautonomous position of Shii administrative and judicial institutions may have been more favourable to the conquest of social hegemony than their official status under the Safavids. Whenever they perceived fear of foreign domination over Iran either political or economic and erosion of their position in society, they used their social status in the form of protest and demonstration against the state as had been in the Reuter Concession in 1872 and Tobacco Concession 1892.

In the late 19th and the early 20th century, the ulema claimed greater power and influence in society, and asserted themselves in the form of protest and demonstration against the despotic rule of the Shah and the growing foreign intrusion in Iran and became de facto leaders of the country. These

\(^2\)Al-Quran, 42: 38.
\(^3\)The term “Shiism” will be used to denote Ithna Ashari “Twelver” or Jafari branch of Shiism unless otherwise noted.
demonstrations and protests finally culminated into the Constitutional Revolution in the early 20th century.

In the early 20th century, Iran passed through turmoil and confusion where the Qajar dynasty was discredited due to its own ineptness to handle the sensitive issues. Reza Khan, Commander of the Cossek Brigade, exploited the situation very sensibly; has soon buried the Qajar dynasty and became the Shah of Iran. In the early days of his reign, he forged friendly relations with the ulema’s social position. But even after his forced abdication in 1941 and accession his son to the throne did not improve relations with the ulema and soon the monarchy was at stake in 1951 on the issue of nationalisation of Iranian Oil Company in which the ulema played a major role.

The decades of 1960s and 1970s saw the growing assertion of the clergy. The Shah sought to undermine the social position of the ulema through the White Revolution and various other reforms. Imam Khomeini mobilized masses against the iron hand rule of the Shah and denigration of Islam. Ali Shariati and Murtada Mutahhari played major role in arousing sentiments of the people against the Shah. The Shah’s despotic rule and his suppression and repression policy brought diverse sections of society by sinking their differences at one platform under the banner of Islam to challenge the Shah, and ultimately the Shah was defeated in 1979 and Iran entered a new era with a new political, social and economic paradigm.

The massive redefinition of Islam from a religion promising other-worldly salvation to an ideology harbouring this-worldly is the most important feature of Muslim collective consciousness in modern times. The term ideology represents a revolution in both Islamic thought and action. Virtually it is non-existent in any classical Islamic text or context. The term has been widely used only since the turn of this century. Most recently, it has been applied to the ideological foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Islam and all its derivatives refer to the body of doctrinal beliefs that emanate from the Quran and the Prophetic traditions
(Sunna). This doctrinal apparatus constitutes the foundations of both the Islamic culture and civilization. Ideology and all its derivations refer to a set of interrelated conceptions and notions of political commitment and mobilizations that seek to (a) provide an interpretation of the existing relations of power and (b) chart the course of actions to alter them. At this conceptual level, the term ideology also encompasses utopia, defined by Karl Manheim an intellectual commitment to negate and alter existing conditions.

Ideologisation of religion refers to the act or process of deriving normative statements about social, political, and economic relationships among the people from the ethical or metaphysical commandments of religion, or, in Ali Merad's words, "to formulate the content of Islam in terms of norms and values of social-political order."

There are manifold meanings of the term ideology. According to Geirger, ideology

as system of ideas about social reality that is articulated with internal consistency and elaborated logically on the basis of initial assumptions, and that forms a well-defined written corpus, independent of people's minds to which one refer and that can form the basis of exegesis, comment and indoctrination.

The term ideology is an elusive, impalpable and abstract concept. It is a rational statement of ideas about society and politics. This rational statement of ideas about society and politics is used in day-to-day society's conduct. Thus, an ideology is needed for each and every social and political system to govern and regulate the relations of its members with/between one another. Rules of this kind are expressed in the pattern of every day conduct. These rules are manifested in the formal ways like myth, ritual, ceremony and institutional functions. As long as these are expressed implicitly and are not spelt out in formal ways, this can not be called ideology in the full sense of term.

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It can be called ideology in the full sense of term, when myth, ritual, and ceremony are expressed in the formal ways and came into action after interacting with social and political system then it becomes ideology. In this perspective, a person may ask certain type of questions about the cultural patterns, in terms of which he thinks and acts. Why do we perform this ritual? What is the purpose of this ritual and ceremony? What does it mean to the life of our society? What aspects of our life does it symbolise? These typical questions are raised only when the existing socio-political order is not satisfying their needs and aspirations then obviously people search for an alternative.

In a nutshell, ideology is a form of thought and expression that usually arises in socio-political environment that are discerned to be changing. In such situation, supporters of the existing order, put forward their arguments in its support and try to explain why it is right and legitimate. In contrast, dissenters explain how the current order and system of things is wrong and how it must be transformed so as to create a rightful society and polity.

Every ideology arises within a specific cultural setting and is intended to address the grievances of that cultural setting. Its proponents use the most powerful symbols available to that culture. These symbols are quite consciously chosen as symbols to represent the whole body of ideas which has been worked out in general language. Like ideology, Islam can also be understood in terms of language. Islam is a language defined by its subject matter while ideology is language defined by its structure and function.

The believers of Islam lead their life according to the word of God as given in the Quran and the sayings and doings of the Prophet Mohammad. The Holy Quran touches all aspects of life: theological, ethical, legal, social, political and so on. This discourse often takes place in the sphere of social and political action and then it converts into ideology. Islamic axioms only after coming into social and political action become ideology.

The ideologisation of religion is a reaction to the secularisation of society, but ironically it is also an expression of that very
process. It represents a very deliberate downplaying of the sacred, metaphysical aspect of religion in favour of a this-worldly set of a prior solutions to socio-economic problems.  

The relationship between religious symbols and socio-economic factors is one of the perennial interaction and inseparability. It is fact that "the religion can provide substance to an ideology as well as a metaphysical catalyst to its legitimacy." What is necessary in a theoretical perspective which manages to incorporate both elements. Just as religious ideology does not merely reflect social and economic pressures, in the same way, it does not in a vacuum separate social and economic realities. It is in a creative back and forth dialogue between material and ideological factors that one can search for and penetrate the reasons behind the Iranian Revolution.

In the course of Iranian Revolution (1979), Islamic ideology was an utopia in the revolutionary posture. With the passage of time, it emerged as a dominant ideology. Islamic ideology got momentum bit by bit through the use of religious symbols that were used in the transmutation of the status quo. The Islamic aspect of uprising took upperhand during the Revolution, and later on it became a vital political force, and began to shape the social and political system of Iran in the aftermath (1979).

Specifically, ideological unity is central in the struggle against the regime and should be regarded a forceful ideology against the regime that is built upon a set of images, symbols, and concepts. These symbols, images and concept are used to appeal and mobilize effectively the masses in struggle against the old regime. But it is possible that the ultimate meaning and interpretation can vary widely from revolutionary faction to revolutionary faction. According to definition, the set of images, concepts and symbols that is identify as "revolutionary ideology"; the definition of the ideology as programmes as such leads to misleading interpretations of the symbolic dynamics of revolutionary struggle because it varies from faction to faction.

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7 Ibid, p. 73
9 Ibid, p. 33.
Faction struggle over programmes is important in determining the outcome of a revolution, but the battle over programmes cannot be fully comprehended without an adequate conceptualisation of the role of ideology in uniting the revolutionary coalition that opposes the old regime. Despite their diversity, the revolutionary factions use these set of images, and concepts where all factions treat as legitimate. These images, signs, and precepts depict the weakness of the old regime (outdated, oppressive, and beyond hope) and appeal to generalised cultural images and symbols, those are not controversial within the society. The unifying ideology might also identify some consensual views of the central aspects or origins of the problems of the old regime. In the Iranian Revolution (1979), the central points of agreement of unifying the opposition to the regime were anti-imperialism, anti-monarchy and the underspecified that the Shah’s regime was an evil and beyond redemption and that Islam provided an indigenous alternative.

All diverse sections of society shared the basic tenets of Shii Islam, and derived their ideal models implicitly or explicitly from the same sources of jurisprudence, namely the Quran, Sunna, reason through *ijtehad*, and consensus. However, each adopted different options on issue relating to political philosophy, sociology, economics, and civil law. So, each appealed to one or more social groups by presenting a different kind of ideal life and society. These diverse groups repelled by one segment of society were attracted by another. Consequently, a very large majority of Iranians were attracted to one or another segment of society, all united under the umbrella of Islam.\(^{10}\)

After the collapse of the old regime, in the construction of the revolutionary state, the main ideological battle is an effort to specify the meaning of symbols, images, and concepts that is to translate an underspecified ideology into specific revolutionary state programmes. Revolutionary crisis typically manifests a legacy of ideological unity organised primarily opposition to the old regime and symbols that draw upon shared

cultural symbols; it look to the past and the present both and employees these symbols and images against the existing regime for future course of action.

The revolutionary ideology draws upon a large cultural heritage but invoking that heritage alone, is quite inadequate in explaining the pictures of revolutionary process and the dynamics of revolutionary ideology. The cultural symbols and concepts are quite flexible in practice, thus, such cultural heritages determine the range of possibilities that can be acceptable to a given revolutionary coalition but only broadly inform actual revolutionary ideology.

Conceptualizing Ideology as Programmes or "Culture"

Ideology has been defined through many approaches. Whether, ideology should be considered the specific political programmes of particular groups or should be conceptualized as a preexisting, overarching system of meaning that incorporates all significant revolutionary factions. Voluntarist approach developed in response to the Iranian Revolution emphasise conscious programmes.

Theda Skocpol’s original approach to revolution in States and Social Revolutions, encourages a voluntarists conceptualization of ideology as the conscious programmes of different factions. She rejects her previous view that ideology is irrelevant to revolutionary dynamics, but now she defines ideology as a conscious programme by which activist construct a revolution in voluntarist fashion.

But it has not been always seen that an entire revolution is guided by some conscious programmes as we have seen in the Iranian Revolution. The whole revolutionary opposition came in coalition under the banner of Islam and were typically very diverse.

There is a difference between "ideology", defined as a self-conscious articulated political and social programme and "culture", referring to the background assumptions, values etc; that inform social action but are broad enough to serve as a repertoire permitting for various applications. According to Swidler, ideologies are innovative strategies of action that are distinct from, and in competition with, existing cultural frameworks. Revolutions might include a number of ideologies, but ultimately must become part of the larger, more durable "culture" to have lasting influence.

It has also been seen that not only one programme guides a revolution from prelude to end, some approaches that define ideology as a conscious, factional programmes have also seen that ideologies draw upon larger cultural frameworks and change in the course of revolution. One of the most important among these approaches is Goldstone’s, draw from Ann Swidler’s view of culture as strategies of action that actors shape by drawing upon a large and diverse cultural "tool-kit".

According to Mansoor Moaddel, ideology influences revolutionary dynamics in the form of episodic discourses. His definition of “ideology” as “episodic discourse” is actually what the tool-kit approach calls “culture”. He refers the episodes are somewhat large historical period, as he means to refer to transnational discourses that develop and hold sway over the course of decades. Ideology as an episodic discourse refers to “a set of general principles, concept, symbols and rituals used by actors to address problems in a particular historical episode.” Thus, Moaddel seeks to explain revolutionary change by resorting to what tool-kit theorists call culture.

Farhi has been considered a functionalist, whose depiction of the working of the Shiite ideology in the process of the

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16 Ibid, p. 359
Iranian Revolution is different from other approaches. For functionalist, Shi'ite ideology guided the revolution from beginning to end, that ideology is defined as a worldview, which includes orienting frames and value systems. For example, Arjomand argues that evolving Islamic political culture overwhelmed Iranian society. The unique problems with the functionalism emerge, it is not clear exactly how this ideology overwhelmed Iranian society and the theoretical explanation largely ignored the historical reality of important factions that did not share in the theocratic vision that ultimately dominated the revolution. It is difficult to trace any revolution where the ideology of the post-Revolutionary state had been shared by all significant revolutionary factions of the country.

**Architect of Islamic Ideology in Iran**

Jalal Al-e Ahmad - In the Iranian modern history, one of the principal figures who articulated the shift from the secular to the Islamic symbolic context is Jalal Al-e Ahmad, who started his political activity as a deeply religious man. His religious commitment had a lasting effect on his entire life, especially in his early political consciousness. In the early of his life, he was attracted to two major ideas: nationalism and socialism. The first attraction was reflected both in Jalal Al-e Ahmad’s interest in the ideas of Ahmad Kasravi and his deeply nationalist orientation. Al-e Ahmad’s political engagement, namely socialism, was institutionalised in the Tudeh Party, under the ideological banner of which Al-e Ahmad pursued his political concerns. Later on he became disenchanted with the Tudeh party and quit. Gharb-Zadigi (Westoxication), a product of this period, was the most articulate foundation of the Islamic ideology.

There was fundamental problem of Western secular ideologies in mobilizing a Muslim nation for political purposes, Al-e Ahmad tried to demonstrate how the same political ends could be

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17 Farideh Farhi. "State Disintegration and Urban-based Revolutionary Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of Iran and Nicaragua." *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 21, 1988, PP. 231-256; Farhi in this article is only mildly functionalist, her view of ideology is somewhat developed. Despite explicitly conceptualizing ideology as a general world view, she also implicitly treats ideology as purposive revolutionary plans.


19 Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Gharb-Zadigi (Westoxication)* (Tehran, 1341 [1962])
formulated and achieved by utilising the Islamic source of revolutionary symbols. He recognised that primary task of a revolutionary ideology was to communicate its political concerns to its constituency. To accomplish this end, the most important element is the orchestration of a set of common symbols (i.e., indications of collective mythologies), that cover the messenger, the message, and those who are addressed. However, the European ideologies were an alien ideologies for Muslims and incapable of striking a chord in the minds and souls of their recipient. To bring revolution, there was the Shiite collective memory. In this connection, the supreme symbols of suffering, injustice, perseverance, rebellion and the final establishment of the peace of rightly guided, constituted the marrow of public piety.

_Gharb-Zadigi_ represents a turning point in the Iranian political culture. Though primarily a seething attack against the Westernisation of Iranian culture, the book has also a cryptic agenda: return to common (i.e. Islamic) thought. It begins with a diagnosis of a "disease" called "Westoxification" and concludes with returning to the _Quran_.

Jalal Al-e Ahmad saw himself as a visionary of the coming apocalypse, the sign of apocalypse, in Jalal Al-e Ahmad's reading, was the "machine." Rejected the imported Western symbols which could best be described as identified with the machine, he put forth his argument for a complete reversal of the common Islamic frame of reference and, hence, for his concluding return to the _Quran_. But this return was intended for a specific purpose politics. As "Westoxication" was a byproduct of political hegemony, its rejection was the manifesto of a political Programme—the Islamic ideology.

**Ali Shariati:** Ali Shariati is the most articulate proponent of the Islamic ideology. He sought to equate specific Quranic terms with "ideology". The Quranic term _Al-millah_, is used for "People" or "nation" is closest in meaning to "ideology" he believed; it expressed the same "common school of all Prophets." The Book (_Quran_) could also be taken for the Islamic

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*Ali Shariati, Shia (Shiism) (Tehran: Husayniyah-i Irshad, 1357 [1978]), P. 91*
ideology.  But equally applicable are the highest symbols of authority in Islam: faith (al-din), Prophethood (nubuwah) and messengership (risaleh).

Shariati sought to make distinction between maktab (school) and ideology. The maktab refers to the school of philosophy articulated by al-Farabi or ibn Sina, and ideology represents a doctrinal movement. Ali Shariati claimed that Mohammad established an ideology. If this ideology propagated, would bring forth the revolutionary figures such as Ali and Husein. The maktab engages the mind, whereas ideology directs the action.

Through comparing and contrasting "Science and Philosophy" with "ideology", Shariati put forth what is meant by the Islamic ideology: philosophy and science are concerned with "phenomenology"; whereas ideology evaluates what is right and wrong. Philosophy and science do not go further than "understanding"; ideology "leads". Philosophy and science justify "the values"; ideology annihilates or creates values. Philosophy and science bring forth philosophers and scientists, ideology brings forth revolutionary intellectuals.

After contrasting the active ideology with the passive knowledge, Shariati articulated a series of conceptual categories that constitute the "common language" (Zaban-e mushtaraka) of Islam and ideology: "Armed struggle" is Jehad; "the people" are nas; collective ownership is divine ownership; leadership is imamah; the demeaning life of the bourgeoisie is this worldliness; and "the government of the people" is ijma.

Shariati contended that without rooting their identity within their religion and culture, non-Western peoples could not fight Western imperialism; it is a prerequisite for Islamic struggle. For Shariati, the term returning to one's roots did not mean returning to the Aryan (racial) roots of Iranians but to their cultural roots. Islamic

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid; pp. 93-94.
culture had completely cut Iran off from its pre-Islamic culture and as such, return to our roots means not a discovery of pre-Islamic Iran, but a return to our Islamic roots. 27

Shariati provided a dynamic interpretation of Islamic concepts. Such elements as *umma, imamate, adle, shahadat, hijira, entezar, shirk* and *nezam-e tawhidi* became action-oriented concept. The methodology which Shariati employed in transforming Islamic concepts into a dynamic ideology was uniquely Islamic.

Shariati set forth to provide that Islam is an ideology, capable of providing solutions to all problems. The centerpiece of his ideologisation of Shiism in his formulation of an idea “Alavi” Shiism, which he contrast with the actual “Safavid” Shiism. The former is dynamic, liberating, and embodied by Imam Ali, where as the latter is sterile, exploitative and represented by the ulema ever since Shiism became Iran’s state religion under the Safavids. 28 The most important point was his rejection of the traditional view that ordinary Muslims should be passive politically as they waited for the Hidden Imam; instead they should be ready to follow the guidance of conscientious, responsible, pure men representing the leadership of the Imam, and to work for an attainment of social justice and other reforms. No longer was he merely the Intercessor, who could help one to endure suffering, he was the great exemplar, fighting and sacrificing his life not merely for the restoration of the rule of the Prophets, but for cause of social justice to oppressed peoples throughout the world. 29 According to Shariati, Safavid Shiism is polytheistic Islam. This brand of Shiism claims the mantle of Islam since it invites the people to engage in individual religious practices (*ebadat*), and invoking the cause of Islam, it undermined the essential social, political and economic message of the faith. Reducing Islam to the practice of prayers, fasting, going on pilgrimage, and even waging holy war,

 depoliticised the people and diverted their energy from establishing the new Islamic social order.  

Shariati, thus, self-consciously set out to create an ideology, which he regarded an indispensable for struggle. Amir Arjomand has argued that he was above all influenced by Durkheim, and that what he called “ideology” corresponded to Durkheim’s collective consciousness.

The ideal leader is the Imam, whose intrinsic qualities distinguish him from the masses and who has to lead them not necessarily in a manner that would maximize their happiness, but rather with their reform and improvement in mind. It is the Imam’s task to lead people from “what they are” to “what they should be.”

After the Islamic Republic’s repression of Islamic opposition, parties and groups that looked up to Shariati as their spiritual ideology become suspect. In 1983, the Association of the Instructors of the Qum Seminary Schools, which is a powerful religio-political organization, published a book on Mutahhari’s defense of Islam against Shariati’s conspiracy against the faith. Shariati was portrayed as “a poisonous deviationist whose ideas, according to Mutahhari, were based more on socialism, communism, historical materialism and existentialism than Islam.” The condemnation of Shariati’s view through the words of no less than Mutahhari, came to be considered the Islamic Republic’s official line on Shariati.

Khomeini had referred to Ali Shariati as a divisive phenomenon, the introduction of whose ideas is alluded to as a pre-planned satanic plot aimed at breaking up the unity and common cause of the Muslims, thus sapping their energy.

Murtada Mutahhari:- Where as Jalal Al-e Ahmad envisioned the Islamic ideology as a rebellion against the West and Shariati

articulated it in comprehensive political terms, Mutahhari tried to extend it to the very heart of Islamic jurisprudence and philosophy so as to give it an intellectual legitimacy. Mutahhari argued the Islamic ideology, nothing less than Sharia.

Mutahhari's definition of ideology reflects his effort to mobilize public pieties:

what will give unity, direction, and shared aspirations to the man of today, and a fortiori to the man of tomorrow, what will serve as touchstone of good and evil, of musts and must nots, is an elective conscious, inspirational philosophy of life armed with logic-in other words a comprehensive, perfect ideology.34

Mutahhari's binary purpose was to attack and restrict the manifestations of the secular ideology. His Llal-i Girayish bi Maddigari (The Causes of Attraction to Materialism) as well as his substantive notions to Allamah Sayyid Mohammad Husein Tabatabai's Usul-i Falsafah va Ravish-e Realism (The principle of philosophy and the Realistic Method) were directed specifically against the total secular ideology at both its political and philosophical levels.35 The formulation of Islamic ideology was concomitant with Mutahhari's rejection of any mode of secular ideology.

Mutahhari's gist was to give the Islamic ideology a philosophical (i.e. rational) grounding, but it is absolutely in this respect he differed from Shariati. By categorising human actions as "pleasure oriented" and goal oriented, Mutahhari argued that insufficiency of reason directs the course of human conduct.36 He argued that the ideology is the suprarational legitimacy of "a comprehensive, harmonious, and concrete design whose central objective is to perfect man and secure universal happiness."37 This grand design is ideology. There are two types of ideologies:

Human and corporate: human ideologies are addressed to the human species, not to some special nationality, race or class, and have for their motive the salvation of the whole human species. Corporate ideologies are addressed to a certain group, class or

36 Mutahhari. n. 34. pp. 46-50.
37 Ibid: p. 50.
stratum and have for their motive the liberation, or the hegemony of that group.\footnote{Ibid; p. 52.} Beyond all doubts, Islamic ideology is human and arises from the primordial nature of man.\footnote{Ibid; p. 53.}

Mutahhari has laid down the theoretical and philosophical aspects of the Islamic ideology which arises from the primordial nature of man.

Mutahhari’s juristic notion of Islam is an attempt to revive Islam as a potent ideology capable of redressing the social, political, economic and cultural ills of Iran. To attract youth, Mutahhari’s approach was through invitation and intellectual persuasion. As such, his thought was reformist rather than revolutionary. He did not accept the notion of radical Muslims that piety and righteousness were the monopoly of the oppressed and the disinherited.\footnote{Murtada Mutahhari, \textit{Naqdi bar Marxism} (Tehran: Entesharat-e Sadra, 1984), p. 124.} He thought that believers and the pious could be found among all classes. Thus, Mutahhari sought to demonstrate that the essentially Marxist notion of social polarization on the basis of the exploited and the exploiters was alien to Islam. Mutuhhari thought that Islam did not conceive of the disinherited as the sole class of the believer and pious that actively participated in social movements, and their condition did not constitute the only concern of the revolution as Shariati thought.

Mutahhari rejects the radical position of Shariati that Islamic social justice expresses equality in income or wealth. In his view, Islam assures equal opportunity for all, but differences in human capability, effort, aptitude, dexterity, and work habit should be rewarded accordingly, and consequently they should be different. While Shariati expressed that there should be equality in income or wealth since a large portion of society should not be deprived.

Mutahhari was very much close to the modern notions of freedom of thought and expression. Mutahhari stressed that freedom of thought and expression are prerequisite for the development and evolution of mankind. He persistently reminded
that "in the Islamic Republic there will be no limitation on the freedom of thought and all should be free to present their authentic ideas."\textsuperscript{41} At the same time, he warned against conspiracy, wrong ideas and opinions harmful to both the individual and society, but he was not in favour of as Khomeini restricted the flow of right ideas and opinions.\textsuperscript{42}

Mutahhari was critical of political democracy, since it elevated the will of the majority to a position above that of God. He argued the replacement of divine law by man-made laws as a modern-day aberration which he believed to have disastrous consequences for the Islamic community. According to Mutahhari, the position of leadership and decision-making is reserved for the clergy. He argues that only those who are thoroughly familiar with the Quran, the Sunna, the Islamic Jurisprudence and Islamic epistemology can occupy position of leadership. Mutahhari’s emphasis on the role and significance of the clergy is a response to Shariati’s anti-clerical notion.

\textbf{S. Hassan Modarres:-} Modarres has provided an exemplary model for religion inspired political action. As a young cleric, he had been a leading constitutionalist activist during the revolution of 1906 in his native town of Isfahan.

Modarres constantly opposed foreign intervention in Iranian affairs. He used Islam as an instrument against the foreign penetration in Iran. During World War I, he became a member of the nationalist and pro-central powers provisional government. After the war, his house became one of the main meeting places for opponents of the (1919) treaty. All this brought him the hatred of Western diplomats stationed in Tehran, who were weary of his influence on the populace.

At the domestic level, he opposed Reza Shah’s nomination as Prime Minister, the abolition of the monarchy, and Reza Shah’s accession to the throne because he did not see Islam’s compatibility with monarchy. Modarres’s opposition to Reza Shah

\textsuperscript{41} Murtada Mutahhari, \textit{Piramun-e Enqulab-e Eslami} (Tehran: Entesharat-e Sadra, n.d.), p. 11.

\textsuperscript{42} Rahnema and Nomani, n. 10, p. 43.
finally cost him his life, as the new Shah arrested him in 1929, then assassinated in 1938.

He was a devoted religious person who took political action in defense of Iran and Islam. He stated, "our religion is the same as our politics, and our politics is the same as our religion... The source of our politics is our religion."43 He put forward Islam as an ideology by combining religion with politics.

Mehdi Bazargan:— Bazargan was one of the leading revolutionary leaders during the Revolution (1979), who headed the first provisional government after dethroning the Shah. He was a religious scholar and a nationalist. According to Bazargan, "Islam is insolubly linked with Iran, and is the major, albeit not the only ingredient of Iranian society."44 For Bazargan, the main source of Muslim plight is that very early in their history, religion withdrew from public affairs; pious people concentrated on practicing their religion and left the conduct of social and political affairs to those not committed to Islamic values. The result of this divorce was the emergence of a class of religious men totally oblivious to practical concerns. So, religion should not be withdrawn from public spheres because it is the religion which provides correct direction.

The combination of religious modernisation and moderate nationalism is not peculiar to Iran, as earlier Arab Islamic modernist such as Mohammad Abduh in Egypt and al-Kawakibi in Syria also combined both elements.45 In all cases, this nationalism is justified by the hadith "hub al-vatan min al-iman" (the love of the motherland is part of religion).

Bazargan points out, if Muslim want to improve their lot, they must take their destiny in their own hands. At this juncture, he calls for the revolutionary action to accomplish goals. He repeatedly quotes a Quranic verse dear to all Islamic

44 Chehabi, n. 6. p. 53
activist: "God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves". 46

He also called for less quietism on the part of the ulema. He repeatedly urged the ulema to lend their support to the nationalists and become politically active. Ultimately, the necessity of a Muslim presence in politics led to the founding of the Liberation Movement in Iran, until its opposition to the Shah.

According to Bazargan, religious affairs and sociopolitical matters are separate, but that their separation is asymmetrical, while politics must never interfere with religion, religion should inspire and inform all acts - social and political.

Bazargan’s notion of Islam is unique in the sense that it tries to present Islam as a non-coercive and tolerant religion compatible with liberalism and political democracy. It is non-coercive and accommodating in which the “other” - anti-clerical intellectuals, the capitalists or the unveiled women - are neither castigated nor viewed as “corrupters on earth”. By including the “other” in God’s family, Bazargan singles out tolerance as the cornerstone of Islam. 47

Bazargan argues that the observation and implementation of Islamic ordinances are considered to be private matters left to the discretion of individuals. God has willed individual to be free in their judgments and decisions, once God has given individuals the freedom of choice, forced compliance with Islamic edicts becomes meaningless, and coercion as a mechanism to ensure Islamisation loses validity and justification, Sharia constitutes the main objective for Islamic Society. According to Bazargan’s nation of Islam, God does not wish to impose his view of what is good on individual, since coercion would negate their God-given freedom of choice. Even individuals does not perform their obligatory religious duties, such as fasting and prayers, they may still be considered as Muslims. As long as monotheism is not

46 Al-Quran, 13:12.
47 Rahnema and Nomani, n. 10, p. 105.
negated, individuals cannot be branded as apostates since the Quran says that "there can be no coercion in religion." 

Bazargan says that as soon as the Prophet was appointed to govern society, God ordered him to “consult with the people on illness and policies” that concerned their lives. Islamic government necessitates consultation with the people, and political democracy is organised to constitute the cornerstone of Islamic political thought. By using the practice of the Prophet as his model of Islamic government, Bazargan argues that “one thousand years before the emergence of the concept of democracy in the West, the government of the people by the people was practiced in the days of the Prophet.” 

For Bazargan, blind obedience and the imposition of a religio-political monolith is a clear violation of Islamic precepts. He rejects the forced imposition of religious or political instructions, even by a marja-e taqlid, since it tampers with the principle of man’s freedom and responsibility.

For Bazargan, there is no Islamic justification for the government of the Jurisconsult (Velayat-e Faqih) if it is understood as a position of unlimited power with unaccountability to the people. Khomeini’s edict of 6 January, 1988, involved the absolutist government of the Jurisconsult (Velayat-e Motlaq-e Faqib) and gave an absolute legal power to the Jurisconsult. Bazargan’s political organisation, Freedom Movement of Iran (FMI), reacted sharply on this edict which declared, “from a sociopolitical point of view, the absolutist government of the Jurisconsult is nothing other than religious and state despotism and dictatorship, resulting in the disappearance of freedom, independence and identity.” Khomeini’s thesis is entirely different from Bazargan, where Khomeini assigns an absolute power to the Valayat-e Faqih.

Ayatollah Khomeini:- Khomeini was a devout religious man, he sought that Iran should be governed under the Islamic Sharia. In

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50 Ibid, vol. 1, p. 117.  
the early stage of his life did not overtly oppose the Shah and monarchical system but only covertly and subtly attacked on the monarchy. Khomeini’s work’s central theme was the urgency of reestablishing Islam as a way of life and a method of government, the illegitimacy of the monarchy, and the ulema’s proper role in the politics. These three interrelated issues underwent major transformations. He began as a reformer, operating within the parameters of orthodox Shiism and went on to become a revolutionary interpreter of Islam and the founder of a new form of Islamic government. He employed Islam as ideology for overthrowing the monarchy. He mobilised people on the basis of Islam.

Khomeini’s first major overtly political treaties was Kashful Asrar (Secrets Unraveled) was published in 1941 immediately after Reza Shah’s forced abdication. In Kashful Asrar, he looked as a reformer, the defender of the Persian constitution and the monarchy, who was mainly concerned about Iranian politics. The book was a straight attack on Reza Shah’s policies and a response to Secrets of a Thousand Years, a book written by a member of Ahmad Kasravi’s Pak Dini Movement, which denigrated the ulema as champions of superstition, and main cause of Iran’s backwardness. Khomeini lambasted the propagation of Pak Dini Movement, and praised the ulema as defenders of Iran’s national identity and independence. The first half of the book is devoted to theological exegesis but the second half presents the first programmatic assertion of the clergy’s political role advanced since the days of the Constitutional Movement.

According to Khomeini, the first principle of the Islamic government is that only God is legislator. “No one but God has the right to govern over any one or to legislate, and reason suggests that God himself must form a government for people and must legislate. The laws are but the laws of Islam.”52 His second principle is that a Muslim should only “obey God, His Prophet and those in authority among you.”53 He stressed that Islam is a religion which should be total way of life, and society must be governed according to Sharia.

53 Al-Quran, 4:62.
After explaining the orthodox Shii doctrine that Imams were the legitimate authorities from Prophet Mohammad to 874, he stated that in the contemporary world, the most legitimate authority should be that of the mujtahids, the fuqaha and those most knowledgeable in the laws of Islam.

Khomeini's political activity increased due to deep and widespread moral corruption and cultural decadence that he perceived from these policies,

the clergy insist that this shameful unveiling (of women), this "Movement of Bayonets", 54 has wracked both spiritual and material damage upon our country in gross violation of the laws of God and his Prophet. The clergy insist that this melon-shaped (men's) hat, a foreign left over, is a disgrace to the notion of Islam, forbidden by God and damaging to our independence. The clergy insist that these co-educational schools, mixing young girls and lustful young boys, destroy chastity and manliness. They insist that these shops selling wines and these factories making alcoholic drinks erode the minds of our youth, debasing reason, health, chastity and courage amongst the people, by God's decree the drinking and selling of wine are forbidden, and these places should be shutdown. They also insist that music creates a mood of fornication and lust, undermining chastity, manliness, and courage- it is forbidden by religious law and should not be taught in schools lest it promote vice. 55

He stressed for the mobilization of the people for the religions causes, and he approved the establishment of a special ministry for this specific purposes. It would seek not only to inspire each citizen, but also to train him to proselytize others. 56

He opposed the existing Ministry of Justice and its judicial procedures. He thought that Islamic law would simplify trial procedures and eliminate costly lawyer's fees and parasitic judicial personnel. 57 He claimed that full implementation of Islamic panel code would eliminate injustice, theft and corruption within a year.

If you want to eradicate theft from the world, you must cut the hands off thieves, otherwise your prison sentences will only help thieves and perpetuate theft. Human life can only be made secure through the guarantee of punishment, and only the death penalty ensures society's survival. Since prison sentences do not solve any

54 The Shah's policies regarding dress was so that the soldiers were ordered to tear apart women's veils on the street with their bayonets.
57 Ibid; pp. 296-301.
problem. If adulterous men and women were promptly given a hundred lashes each, venereal disease would disappear in this country. 58

In the later stage, he became politically active and started to mobilize the people against the Shah. When the Shah saw Khomeini’s active participation in politics, the Shah forced him to be exiled in 1963. First he went to Turkey and then Iraq. He openly opposed monarchy and declared, “Islam is fundamentally opposed to the pillar of monarchy...” 59

In the early spring of 1972, he issued a fatawa, requiring that financial assistance be extended to the families of political prisoners. He argued on the basis of two furu of the faith: Jehad, and al-amr bi al-maruf. 60 He argued that these two principles had provided the justification that “from the beginning of the mankind Prophets and the clergy were charged... with rebelling against despotic government...” 61 This view is forcefully argued in his book Hukumat-e Islami (Islamic Government) which was published in 1971, was actually his class presentation in Najaf. During his the course of lectures, he boldly attacked both monarchy and dynastic succession as alien to Islam. The ulema must not confine themselves to the routine of churning out regulations for the faith. Having an obligation to tend to political issues, they consequently commit themselves to oust corrupt officials and overthrow tyrannical regimes. 62

The Islamic government will differ from representative and/ constitutional monarchies because all necessary laws have already been promulgated and revealed by the Prophet and the Imams. Certainly there will be parliament but it will not engage in enactment of laws; instead it will be an “agenda setting” institution to clarify for the ministries the best means for administrating social services throughout the country. Furthermore, sovereignty shall repose in God alone. There is no question of royal rule in Islamic government, much less a

58 Ibid; pp. 274-75.
59 Khomeini’s Statement of 28 Rabi al-Thani 1391 H.Q./1971. He states furthermore, any one who looks at the biography of the Prophet in the matter of government will see that Islam has come to destroy all these places of monarchical oppression.
government that is based on Kingship or Empire. He argued that the government must be Islamic government and such a government would by Velayat-e Faqih (Guardianship of Jurisconsult).

Khomeini stated, “Islam is the religion of militant individuals who are committed to truth and justice. It is the religion of those who desire independence. It is the school of those who struggle against imperialism.” At length, Khomeini became rebellious against the monarchy and aroused passions of the people in the name of Islam to overthrow the monarchy. He used Islam very cleverly by denoting the Shah anti-Islam and anti-Iran. So, people should actively involve in politics since Islam is a political religion. For Khomeini, even such rituals as the Friday prayers, festival prayers, the hajj (Pilgrimage) and “demonstrations of solidarity at Mecca, Arafat and Mina are all of great political significance.”

He stressed resistance to a despotic regime must be of all kinds, the ulema must use the mosques and religious occasions to mobilize the people; there must be unity between the people and the leaders. The people must be aware of the legal and politico-economic solutions that Islam offers to their problems. Propaganda must be widespread and must reach the university students because they are the “stauncest opponents of repression, despotism, treachery, agents of imperialism and plunders of national wealth.”

Struggle against imperialism can be of both types, violent and non-violent. Violence is essential because “life is a lesson and struggle... death is better than a life of humiliation; no other way out but continuation of the war by every means... to achieve honour and glory.” On the other hand, there must be passive resistance in the form of boycotts, non-cooperation with government institutions, and avoidance of any activity that would

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63 Ibid. P. 55-56.
aid the government. And at the same time, there should be established alternative structures to govern society.

Ali Shariati’s notion of Islam was very much different from Khomeini’s notion of Islam. He believed that the Islamic rule would be representative, democratic and welfare oriented and was against the religious despotism since he attracted the Western ideas such as anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, anti-despotism, humanism, social democracy and social justice. Basically his concept of the government was non-clerical and non-theocratic concept which was entirely contrary to Khomeini’s concept of the Islamic government.

Mehdi Bazargan was critical of the notion of the government of Khomeini, and he projected the liberal face of Islam as accommodating, tolerant and non-coercive. He did not justify Khomeini’s concept of the Velayat-e Faqih in any way as Khomeini projected his Islamic form of government. He castigated the religious despotism of Khomeini, who monopolised the state power in the name of Islam.

**Institutionalization of Islamic ideology and use of symbols**

The conceptual elaboration and institutional propagation of the Islamic ideology were influenced by a number of organisations. Anjuman-e Mahanay-yi Dini (Monthly Religious Society), an ephemeral institution was led by Mutahhari was one of the most influential of these organisations. This organisation organised series of lectures. From 1960 to 1963, the society disseminated its ideas through its organ, Guftar-e Mah (Monthly lectures). These lectures excited the minds of the clerics and students and created troubles for the regime, then the regime shut down the organisation and its lecture series in mid March 1963. Other eminent personalities who became associated with the Islamic Revolution, such as Mohammed Ibrahim Ayati and Sayiad Mohammad Beheshti were also active in this organisation.

The most successful institutional expression of the Islamic ideology was the Husayniyah Irshad. It came into operation in 1965, as the institutional expression and elaboration of the
Monthly Religious Society. It had the nation-wide impact that the lectures and deliberations of the antecedent Monthly Religious Society never enjoyed. The very choice of the name indicated that its name would adopt the role model of martyrdom for the sake of cause of social justice. Organisation apparently revolved around Husayniah (in that sense it was devoted to the commemoration of Husein, the martyr third Imam of Shi'i), the adjective Irshad (guidance) reflected its pragmatists purpose. Among original members of the managing board of Husayniyah Irshad were Ayatollah Mutahhari, Sayyed Hussein Nasr Sahabi, Husein Mazini, and Ali Shariati. Shariati’s lectures made the organisation much more famous and attracted the students from every corner of the country. Shariati’s message was that Husayniyah Irshad ought to be a model for the hawzahs (seminaries) of Iran. Mutahhari articulated the purpose of this organisation.

The Husayniyah Irshad knows it task to be to introduce Islamic ideology (to the youth) such as it is. This institution deems it sufficient to unveil the beautiful face of the beloved martyr of Islam (Imam Husein) in order to transform the love-seekers into restless lovers.68

The most militant organisation to proclaim successfully the institutional legitimacy of the Islamic ideology was the guerilla movement of the Mujahidin-e Khalq Organization. Its militancy demonstrates the most essential component of the Islamic ideology - physical force. This force took the form of massive mobilization, along with legitimate use of violence.

In addition to these organisations, mosques (the established institutions of public sermons for religious ceremonies, especially in the months of Muharram, Safar, and Ramadan) provided momentum to the revolutionary appeal of the Islamic ideology. The prestige and fame of the organisers of these institutions encouraged the religious community to respond favourably to the call for an Islamic ideology. The intellectual dimensions of this ideology were elaborated in other institutional settings, including the department of theology at Tehran University (where Mutahhari taught) and the madarsssa-e Fayziah (theological school) at Qum.

68 Akhavi, n. 28, p. 183.
From ideal to the real, the Islamic Republic, and the Islamic Republican Party are the highest institutional achievements of the Islamic ideology in the post-Revolutionary Iran.

**Martyrdom in Iranian political culture and its significance**

Throughout the history of Iran, martyrdom has been a recurring phenomenon to celebrate and safeguard the sacred boundaries, sublime values and exalted rituals by which culture is sanctioned. The question of the persistent of martyrdom in the Shiite culture of Iran is a socio-historical one.

Martyrdom is the struggle against social justice and oppression is called to be the noblest of all causes. A Muslim's sincerity and devotion to the faith are measured by his/her readiness to sacrifice his/her life for it. Throughout the Iranian history, martyrdom has played crucial role in the fighting against the state oppression.

The never-ending impact of Imam Husein’s martyrdom on the Shiite psyche and his exaltation as the lord of martyrs has a great significance. The martyrdom of Imam Husein and the events associated with it have a significant place in the consciousness of the Shiite Muslims. The martyrdom of Imam Husein is perceived as an event to restore the truth against the falsehood and justice against oppression. Imam Husein became a role model for political action and militancy for all suffering souls.

The martyrdom of Imam Husein and the popular reference to him as a Mazlum (oppressed) has two connotations. First, it characterises as an individual who has been oppressed or sinned against. Second, it signifies an unwillingness, derived from a sense of noble generosity and forebearance to act against others. The glorification of noble suffering and the defiant embracing of death, the deliberate and conscious approbation of martyrdom has profoundly influenced the Shiite collective consciousness throughout history.

Since all cultures develop elaborate rituals to deal with the existing social reality, the cult of martyrdom in the Iranian
culture reflects the pervading atmosphere of political and cultural repression throughout its history.

The gala of Ashura rituals of lamentation and self-flagellation increasingly became an outlet for the expression of the pervading oppression in their own lives. Identification with Imam Husein and his tragic fate enabled the Shiites to withstand their own suffering. The Ashura rituals were also used throughout history as instrument of cultural assimilation and mass mobilization. It is not new, the rituals of Ashura were present in Iran as early as the tenth century under the Shiite Buiyd dynasty.

Shah Ismail (1501-1524), the Safavid King, effectively used the incident of the martyrdom of Imam Husein, the Lord of martyrs to incite his soldiers against the Ottoman Turks in the sixteenth century, "we are Husein's men, and this is our epoch, in devotion, we are the slaves of the Imam, our name is zealot and our title martyr." The introductions of the Taziyyah (a passion play) by the Shiite Safavid dynasty in the 16th century combined with Rawzeh Khani (recitation of the suffering of holy martyrs) throughout history symbolized a "submissive observance of pain and suffering as the hallmark of all worthy souls." The significance of martyrdom was not only confined to the Safavid dynasty but it was also used by the later dynasties who ruled over Iran. Taziyyah gave wide popularity during the reign of Nasir ud-Din Shah. It was the powerful instrument for arousing of religious emotions at the hand of clerics. The people had deep and widespread attachment to Taziyyah, it was a means to express loyalty to Shiism. The ritual of Taziyyah was used by both the Safavid and Qajar dynasties to ensure their hold over the masses.

The ritual of Ashura has also a functional value: to infuse a deeper Shiite identity among Iranians and to strengthen the communal bonds of solidarity and cultural loyalty.

71 Ibid., pp. 183-184.
Historically, martyrs have been sacred symbols, confronting the sorrow and pains of the community. With the increasing politicization of Iranian polity after world war II, martyrdom assumed a political significance calling on the faithful to sacrifice themselves for the cause. In the fast changing political culture of Iran, the term was used in new and highly politicized way.

In the later half of the twentieth century it became popular conviction among Iranian intelligentsia that the ineffable felicity of the future is possible only through the massive self-sacrifice of the present. The Political eschatology portrayed martyrdom as a small but necessary step on the path to the realisation of the grand ideal of liberating humanity. Since autocracy was the symbol of inequality and oppression, it was intrinsically evil and had to be destroyed. The reformist and gradualist tactics were a deliberate treacherous betrayal and deception of the masses. Only a full-fledge social revolution could provide a viable remedy to the misery of the masses. In realising this goal, the intelligentsia had to self-efface. Their faith in revolutionary change became the basis of their new political religion.

Ali and Husein, two paradigmatic figures of authority in Shiite Islam to accept and even glorify death, has a direct influence on the Shiite attitude toward death in general and martyrdom in particular. To fight against autocracy and for social justice, the populist intelligentsia sought to regenerate the society morally and to create a new social order. They must awake the people.

The Iranian political culture of the 1960s and 1970s provided the fertile ground for the use of religious symbols. Self-denial and an austere life style, forebearance and self-sacrifice were among the constituent element of this political culture. The Shah’s autocracy created a forceful opposition which was unified in the name of religion. Martyrdom became a political symbol. In this context, the politicization and exaltation of martyrdom permeated in the political sphere of Iran.
While rituals, rites and symbols have social functions, once practiced they develop a dynamism and a life of their own which binds the continued existence of the community to the vitality of traditions. Commenting on the political significance of the rituals of Ashura in Iran, Sheikholeslami asserts,

the commemoration of the deceased emphasised the historical continuity of the community, and the social sentiment which the rituals arouse in more than sufficient to compensate for the death, i.e. the breach of solidarity. All these mourning rituals are associated with the commensolity which brings the community together and the partaking of the food in particular brings life, contrasted with death, into a clearer focus. 72

The martyr may die, but martyrdom is eternal.

Martyrdom has been used not only to sanction certain political ends but also to maintain communal solidarity and loyalty. Historically, the integrative power of such symbols and signs have been significant in inculcating a sense of identity and culturally assimilating and politically mobilizing the populace. The remarkable resonance of this tradition in secular political culture is indicative of the vitality of religious symbols in post-traditional society.

According to Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari,

the blood of a martyr is not wasted. It does not flow into the ground... And is transfused into the body of his society... Shahadat means the transfusion of blood into a society... It is the Shahid who infuses fresh blood into the veins of the society. 73 These two references of grand Shiite martyrs, Ali, and Husein, are made to legitimise their call on martyrdom. He asserted, "the sacred cause that leads to Shahadat or the giving of one's life has become a law in Islam. It is called Jehad." 74

In the same way Khomeini asserts that "the martyr is the heart of history and the blood of each martyr is like a bell which awakens the thousands." 75 Through martyrdom a society strengthens its ties and revive itself spiritually.

74 Ibid. P. 129
75 Tehran Times. 16 November, 1982.
The most politicized and systematic exposition of martyrdom was articulated by Ali Shariati, the intellectual forerunner of the (1979) Revolution and the hero of Muslim youth. For Shariati, one of the greatest and most revolutionary contributions of Islam to society has been to infuse a sense of devotion and sacrifice in the pursuit of justice. Through martyrdom a society refines itself. Shariati utilised the deep tradition of martyrdom in the Iranian culture to evaluate the level of commitment and generate the spirit of militancy and self-sacrifice necessary in any successful political struggle.

Martyrdom is a recalcitrant gesture renouncing the present order. It is a self actualization through negations. It is an act of self-aggrandisement that enables individuals to transcend time and be placed on the highest summit of history. Since political sincerity is measured by the degree of self-sacrifice, martyrs become political capital and an asset for legitimacy and credibility. No organization can grow substantially without any previous accumulation of martyrs.

Throughout the Revolution of 1979, the clergy as custodians of the Shiite faith used the tradition of martyrdom to mobilize millions against the Shah’s regime. When some demonstrators were shot by the security forces, the clerics effectively employed the tradition of commemorating the deceased on the seventh and the fortieth days after their death to mobilize even larger members of people. Thus, as the number of martyrs rose, so did the number of anti-Shah demonstrators. Since its ascendance, the Islamic Republic has used the post-Revolutionary systematic martyrdom that occurred during its eight years war with Iraq to maintain a permanent state of mass mobilization and to ward off criticism by presenting itself as the guardian of the honour and blood of martyrs.

In the aftermath of the Revolution, a Foundation of martyrs was established. The families of martyrs were given preferential

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77 It is parallel here with Lebanese Shiite increasing bid for political power in that country. As the Israeli invasion of Lebanon led to their concomitant confrontation with the hitherto subdued and submissive Shiite community in the south and as the number of Shiite grew, so did their involvement in politics and their political power.
treatment in receiving coupons for food subsidies, entrance to universities and job placement in governmental bureaucracies. Large number of urban poor, peasantry, and lower middle classes volunteered for the war with Iraq, thinking if they died, heaven awaited them and financial security and honour awaited the family members they had left behind. The worldly inducement was so prevalent during the war years that the governmental officials on its part made an attempt to maintain religious sanctity historically associated with the aura of martyrs and martyrdom.

Islam in historical perspective and its fusion with politics

The founder of the Islamic state Prophet Mohammad was both the spiritual and temporal ruler of the Muslim community in Mecca and Medina. Upon his death, the community gathered to choose a successor, and in this choice the learned men played a decisive role. The sources of the knowledge were Quran, Sunna and Hadith. These three elements were compiled, aggregated and codified in Arabic language in years of following Mohammad’s death. The early days of Islam has been reflecting that the ulema had played major role in determining the whole spheres of society and they derived their status in the early Islamic community from their participation in the selection of the caliph and from their codification and interpretation of the religious law. In the historical context, the ulema may be seen as having a corporate status and interests to advance and defend Islam. The Quran explicitly refers to the ula al-amr (those who are in authority), meaning spiritual leaders of the community.

From the time of the hijra, the Muslims constituted not merely a religious community but also a body politics. Muslims consider the state and community formed by Prophet Mohammad as distinctively Islamic. So, in the early days of Islam the religion and politics was not separated but amalgamated and Prophet Mohammad had both the spiritual and temporal powers and was the ruler of the Muslim community. Even after his death, the Caliphs and Imams enjoyed the same power and authority as the Prophet Mohammad had. But the difference between the Prophet

78 Hijra: the emigration of Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Medina in 622AD.
Mohammad and the Caliphs and Imams was only in the enjoyment of the spiritual status and rank and not in the enjoyment of power and authority. So, religion and politics was not separated in two different compartment but coalesced.

In Shii Islam these two conditions existed: the situation existed before 874 a period when Imams were visibly present on earth, so, the question of delegation of authority did not arise; second, the period after 874 in which Imam went into hiding, the question of delegation authority became problematic.

It is the period between 874 and 920 that Imami Shiism took definite shape. The notion of Shiism which developed during this period cannot be called an Imami or "Twelver" from of Shiism before the death of the Eleventh Imam and the disappearance of the Twelfth Imam. The "Twelver" or Imami form of Shiism can be called only after the mysterious disappearance of the Twelfth Imam. The early development of the Shiism was at the two levels: proto-Shiism under the Umayyad; and proto-Shiism under the Abbasids.

During Abbasid, Imami Shiism had an ambivalent attitude to de facto authority. The Abbasid rule had derived its legitimacy on the basis of the assertion that Mohammad transferred the Imamate to his uncle al-Abbas, who had handed it on to his descendents the Abbasids on the other hand, those who were sympathisers of proto-Shii came to be more and more exclusively concerned with the descendents of Ali. It is well know that the Abbasid heavily invoked Imami themes in their movement to overthrow the Umayyads, and many of the latter Abbasids also harboured a certain sympathy toward Imami Shiism.

Shiism is based on the concept of Imamate, it is a institution of a succession of a charismatic figures who dispense true guidance in comprehending the esoteric sense of Prophetic revelation. The Shii notion of Imami theory is based on fundamentally three things, the most important and distinctive feature of Shiism in general is the cult of the charismatic leader; second, the notion of the Mehdi; the third, is the conception of the transmission of authority by designation.
The Twelver Imami Shii theory of the Imamate has made the Imam the practical equal of the Prophet, even though Shiism accepts that the holy law in theory forbade the status of prophecy to the Imam. The Shia insists that the Imams are the replacement (quim maqam) of the Prophet and vested the temporal power with divine sanction. Imam is the infallible, omniscient agent of the God who carries the news of his commandments to men. Without the Imam men could not know what God wants of them.

Abu Sahl Ali bin Ismail, played an important role in theorising the doctrine of ghaybat, the occultation of the Imam. The rotation of the Twelve Imam came to an end in 874 when the Eleventh Imam, Hasan al-Askari died in 874 and his infant son the Twelfth Imam disappeared mysteriously probably in 878. After the mysterious disappearance of the son of the Eleventh Imam, a period of nearly seventy years was represented by a succession of four agents (wakil), which the Hidden Imam was visible only to a succession of four agents, which is known as “Lesser Occultation” (Ghaybat-e Sughra). The last agent in this succession, Ali bin Mohammad as-Samarri died in 940 that ended the communication with the Hidden Imam. After his death the period is known as “Greater Occultation” (Ghaybat-e Kubra), the absence of a human intermediatory, which shall continue until the Imam’s return on earth as the Mehdi.

The concept of the occultation of Imam has attributed a distinct character to the Ithna Ashari Shiism, and elaboration of concept has been a constant preoccupation of Shii philosophers, particularly in the Safavid and post-Safavid Iran. The concept of taqiya is itself combined with the Ithna Ashari Shiism and its essentially projects, the quietest position of Imami Shiism in respect to worldly authority.

It is evident, after the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, Shiism became even more quietist in its attitude toward worldly power. This passive, although denial of legitimacy and not excluding repeated clashes with regimes and dynasties, prohibited

79 On the Naubakhti family, see Abbas Iqbal. Khondan-i Naubakhti. (Tehran, 1933).
80 Taqiya: The Principle of prudential dissimulation of belief for the purpose of safeguarding the Shii community, particularly in time of danger. This concept was used by the Shii leaders at various occasions.
the advocacy of total overthrow of the existing order in the name of legitimate alternative. While the Imam remained in occultation, a shadow of illegitimacy was bound to cover all worldly strivings and activities above all those related to government. There was no true authority nor the possibility there of: only power.

The conceptualization of Shii theory began soon after the beginning of the Greater Occultation when the Buwayhids, a dynasty with Shia loyalties, gained control of the centre of the Abbasid caliphate. But in fact the Buwayhids did not replace it with an Imami caliphate. Like the Buwayhids, the Hamdanids, another dynasty of Shii affiliation gave formal allegiance to the Abbasid caliphate. This dynasty did not pay much attention to the Shii theme.

With the establishment of the Safavid dynasty in 1501, the first Safavid ruler Shah Ismail, elevated Shiism to the status of state religion which was a turning point in its history, as became finally and inalienably associated with Iran as its homeland and stronghold.

With the establishment and the consolidation of the Safavid hegemony in the early sixteenth century, Shiism was adopted as a national religion. The creation of an elaborate Shii clerical apparatus with a differentiated hierarchy and specific judicial and administrative strata was an integral part of the construction of a centralised Safavid state. During the Safavid period, "clerical and state power had become so intertwined that it was customary for Safavid Shahs to marry the daughters of the supreme Shii clergy." 81

Under the Safavids, "the ruler was assumed to be the representative of the Hidden Imam and even attributes to the Imams tended to be transferred to him." 82 The rulers also assumed themselves the "shadow of God". The reason behind to be regarded as the representative of God was that they acknowledged themselves as descendants of Musa al-Kazim, the Seventh Imam. So,

at that time there was no separation of religious and temporal body rather they commingled.

With the development of the Safavid state, the close relationship between the state and its established religion implied a domination of the ulema by the kingly power. "The ascendancy of the political power of the Safavid state over religion was typified in the position of Sadr, the official who controlled religious affairs and institutions on behalf of the state appointed the Shaykhul Islam, the chief dignitary of the religions classes."\(^{83}\) Shar courts and their judges were subordinate to Urf courts and to the divanbigi (the supreme official in secular jurisdiction).

Henri Corbin, an eminent scholar of Shiism, has indicated the significant consequences of the establishment of Shiism as the state religion by the Safavids. Their Shiism gave birth "to something like an official clergy, extensively concerned with legality and jurisprudence, to such a point that original Shiism in its essence gnostic and theosophic, has so to speak, to hide itself."\(^{84}\) The ulema emerged in the Safavid period and came into effect to take part of charisma and authority of the Imams, but as Shiism denies legitimate authority to worldly power, so, too, no authority in the strict sense of the term resided in the ulema. Rather they fulfilled a practical function of considerable importance to the community as a result of which they have had de facto authority. In narrow sense, the ulema were intermediaries between the community and the Imams, which some of the authorities of Imams reflected upon them: they are "proofs" of the Imams. Similarly, the Imams were intermediaries between the source of divine guidance and the community. But this cannot be concluded from this comparison that the ulema have had any authority similar to that of the Imams, or that they could legitimately lay claim to infallibility. The mujtahids came to personify the leadership of the community, and this was one of the chief sources of their political and social influence in Qajar Iran.

\(^{83}\) Ibid: p. 27.
\(^{84}\) Ibid: p. 5.
The effective end of the Safavid dynasty at the hands of the Afghans marked the beginning of a period of danger for Shiism in Iran during which its learning declined, its shrines were treated with disrespect, its ulema neglected and oppressed, and it was almost reduced from that position of pre-eminence in Islam its regards as its own, to the status of a mere equal of the four Sunni’s schools. However ultimately Shiism was to emerge from the interregnum between Safavid and Qajar rule with increased strength, and with the role of its guardians, the ulema, more clearly and consciously defined.

Afghan invaders entirely disrupted the cultural and religious life of Iran. Isfahan, the Safavid capital was completely devastated and plundered. While political unity of Iran was temporarily re-established by Nadir Shah in 1736, it was no longer on the basis of Shiism. In fact, he considered the religion of Shah Ismail (founder of the Safavid dynasty) to be bid'at (reprehensible innovation), and himself called upon to remove it. His actions against the ulema were well known: the confiscation of waqf property, the abolition of the post of Sadr, the restriction of all jurisdiction to Urf courts, and the strangling of the Shaykhul Islam.

The Afghan invasion in the early 1720s brought about the collapse of Safavid power. The next seventy years or so witnessed a time of trouble. With the advent of the Qajar dynasty (1779-1925), the ulema began in practical terms to reassert their independence from the state. Lambton argues that the Qajar Shah continued to be called “the shadow of God on earth”, but they did not pretend to be the descendants of the Prophet and the Imams. She says that the Imam’s “mantle... developed upon the mujtahids”. 85

In Shiism fundamental duty of the believer, after belief in God and the Prophet is Velayat (the supervisionship of the ulema), complete loyalty and obedience to the Hidden Imam. “He who dies without, recognizing the Imam dies an unbeliever.” 86

Since the withdrawal of the Imam from the control and guidance of

85 Ann K.S. Lambton. “Quis Custodiet Custodes?” II. Studia Islamica 1/1, 1956. as cited in Akhavi. n. 28, p. 15.
the community is only apparent, and not actual, this primary duty remains intact. At the same time, the mujtahid is needed to provide immediate guidance in matters of practice. Mujtahids are those whose judgments are accepted, the most important Shia ulema. Their eminence depends essentially on the acquisition of the rank of ijtihad. Literally, mujtahid is one who exercises ijtihad, that is, searching for a correct opinion (ray-i savab) particularly in "the deducing of the specific provisions of the religious law (furū) from its principles (usul) and ordinances". The principles upon which ijtihad may be exercised are the Quran, the Sunnat (practice) of the Prophet, the traditions of the Imams, and the consensus, ijma of the learned science the beginning of the Greater Occultation. In a society there may be many mujtahids. Thus, to accept pronouncement of any one mujtahid is not, per se, obligatory, for the mujtahid may claim no infallibility and mujtahids will vary in their opinion and rulings. Moreover, the institution of mujtahid has had an important merit of ensuring a continuous leadership of the community and providing a source of immediate authority. The prime task of the mujtahid is providing leadership and guidance to the community.

One of the most important function of the ulema is the dispensation of justice. The dual nature of the judicial system was not amended until the introduction of the first civil code in 1911. The courts presided over by the ulema were known as the Shar courts, and the system of laws controlled by the state was called Urf courts. Urf had been called common law or law of precedent, but no records of proceedings were kept, and verdicts delivered were not necessarily committed to writing. Urf jurisdiction was dispensed by the state without reference to established principles, according to the needs of the state at a given time through the medium of the governors of towns.

Urf courts deal with primarily offenses directed against the state or public security, such as rebellion, embezzlement, forgery of coins, spreading false rumor, theft, banditry and drunkenness, the Shar courts are concerned more with disputes and

litigations of a personal or commercial nature. The Shar courts were powerless in those matters because it did not have ability for the most part, to enforce their decisions, the execution of verdicts was in the hands of the darugh or kadkhuda (the town or village head man), so the implementation of the decisions were not certain.

Throughout the 19th century, this interaction of the two types of courts, combined with the lack of any formal demarcation of their jurisdictions, was a major source of conflict between the state and the ulema. The State's attempts to assert its judicial power inevitably meant a lessening of the prerogatives of the ulema who on their part would not accept the validity of Urf jurisdiction.

By the end of the interregnum, relation between the ulema and the state had been changed by two factors. First, an evolution in Shii fiqh took place that asserted the role of mujtahid in directing the community and even in ruling it. Second, with the establishment of the Qajar rule, the ulema expected the same position as had in the Safavids but was itself, deprived of the semi-legitimacy provided by alleged descent from the Imam. The Qajar called themselves "shadow of God on earth", but the claim to divine appointment was only formal.

However, in this situation, a political theory to accommodate the State within the system of belief was still not developed. Such a theory was probably impossible: the ulema having established their position as de facto regents of the Imams, monarchy could not get that position till now. Without such position, monarchy was bound to be regarded as illegitimate.

According to Quran, those in authority should command the good and forbid the bad (al-amr bi-al- maruf va al nahi an al-munkar) form the masterpiece of the Shii theory of government. It has been asserted far and wide that "opposition to tyranny is a fundamental and pervasive characteristic of Shii Islam". Because of the legitimisation of power through religion, its values and

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norms were of great importance for the political structure of Iran. The religious systems provided most of the formal legal structure. It means the religious leaders, with their broad legal, social and educational function influenced the limits of powers of the ruling class. Judicial functions were dominated and education monopolised by the religious class.

The State was opposed by the clergy in the nineteenth century on two grounds, anti-imperialist and the other anti-Qajar. The anti-imperialist opposition resulted from encroachment of foreign, non-Muslim states upon Iran, Muslim territory. Basically this opposition was intended against "infidel" foreign political and economic penetration of Iran. Iran's government increasingly came under the influence of infidel foreign powers, Russian and Great Britain. Here the ulema acted as upholders of traditional values, promoting the territorial integrity of the Dar al-Islam against the Dar al-Harb.⁹⁰

The second ground of opposition, the tyrannical opposition of the ulema, is less traditional. This type of opposition surfaced at the minor level in the late Safavid period. The anti-government opposition by the ulema during the Qajar period was opposed by two factors. First, this opposition was usually local (but not always local as Reuter Concession in 1872 and Tobacco Concession in 1891-92), aimed at acquiring more political influence or political control on the local scene (but not always local scene, they represented national feeling at national level). Second, the ulema opposed the state in the nineteenth century because it encroached upon the ulema's position, but socio-economically and politically. The state tirelessly tried to restrict the role of the religious courts and to cut down state pensions to the ulema, the equipping of new knowledge as a result of Europeans contacts which threatened the ulema's monopoly on education.

During the whole Qajar period relationship between the state and the ulema was uneasy because the state did not want interference of religion in the administration of the country.

⁹⁰ For an analysis of this conflict in the nineteenth century see Algar, n. 83.
The ulama sought that the state should not pursue its policy against them because they are the custodians of religion and their service was the service of Islam. But the state had its own difficulties, so, during the whole Qajar period there was uneasy relationship between the state and the ulama. Particularly, during reign of Nasir ud-Din Shah, the relation between the ulama and the State was deteriorating rapidly and in turmoil which culminated in the Constitutional Revolution at the dawn of the twentieth century.

The relation between the ulama and the State led towards deterioration due to many factors. When the State policy failed to satisfy the needs of the ruler, and his government, they encouraged increasing penetrations of the nation’s life by foreign powers and individuals, securing ready cash in return. This penetration was secured in the form of economic and commercial activity unfamiliar to the Perso-Muslim mind. Thus, the ulama who had already in the second Perso-Russian war undertook themselves the duty of defending the national honour against infidel aggression, found this function now joined with their other traditional occupation - opposition to the assertion by the State of its claims. The internal and external enemy represented two aspects of the same danger, namely the disappearance of Iran as a Muslim country. The primary duty of the ulama was seen to deter this danger, and throughout the reign of Nasir ud-Din Shah direct clashes between the ulama and the Shah, primarily in Tehran but also in provinces increased frequently. As the scope and importance of the ulama increased, so was their involvement in affairs, and the composition of the clerical power under modification as a result. The power they enjoyed, political and economic, despite the tyranny of Nasir ud-Din Shah, increased rather than decreased.

Muzaffar ud-Din Shah enthroned in June 1896. When he took royal power, the State was in much confusion due to many factors. Now the relation between the ulama and the State was in uneasy state and the ulama had placed themselves as national leaders.

91 Iran adopted its cultural and religious traditions overwhelming the Islamic traditions. Iran during Qajar times was never an Islamic State in any sense of the term, no consistent effort being made to enforce the Shoria.
The State was in acute financial crises. The chief source of unrest and discontent in the reign of Muzaffar ud-Din Shah was the financial problem that resulted from the extravagance of Nasir ud-Din Shah and the mismanagement of Aminus Sultan. Which derived toward the necessity of foreign loans and then in turn to the encroachment of Russian economic influence. On the issue of foreign penetration in Iran, the ulama every time opposed vigorously any type of foreign activity on the territory of Iran. During the Russian Concession to Iran, Iran plunged into another crisis which was basically led by the ulama because they were representing the national feeling and it culminated in the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1906).

The ulama's opposition against the foreign encroachment

After the first Perso-Russian war, the Treaty of Gulistan (1813) was concluded, that left certain areas ill-defined, and it was ultimately the Russian occupation of Gokcha in the Khenate of Erivan and refusal to negotiate withdrawal which gave birth to the hostilities. The hostility was used by the ulama at the highest point and it culminated into the second Perso-Russian war. The second Perso-Russian war was not created by the State since it knew its limitations but was the product of the ulama. This war was imposed by the ulama through arousing national feeling against the Russian occupation. Main leader of the war was Abbas Mirza. The clergy declared war against Russia in the religious content because it was in occupation of the Muslim territory, so, they declared war against the Russians as a holy war (Jehad). The Shah, Fath Ali Shah, was reluctant to declare war on the Russians as a Jehad because he was very much aware of his country's constrains but was forced to do so since national feelings were in favour of war against the Russians in which he himself felt alienated from his own men, so, he declared holy war in compulsion that was created by the ulama.

The direct interference of the ulama brought the agitation to a new stage of zeal, which no longer required stimulation, and absorbing all lesser motives which showed the ulama as the de facto leaders of the nation. The effective leadership of the people was still in the hands of the ulama. "Affairs reached such
a point that the rulings of the ulema were given precedence over the commands of the king.... Were he to have opposed their policy, the people of Iran would have destroyed the monarchy."^92 However, the current of enthusiasm was temporary but significant, it was strong enough to determine State policy and it portrayed explicitly the close alliance between religious and national feeling. The director and organ of this feeling was ulema, their directives were regarded as the best designed to defend Islam. It was conviction that the survival of Iran as a nation was similar to its survival as an Islamic nation. This conviction was voiced with great lucidity and insistence in the later part of the century. The agitation also reflected the primary alienation between the State and the nation, and the difference of interest between the two. In this alienation the ulema embodied the aspirations of the people. The strength of the religious appeal was such as to overcome other considerations, and the ulema's strength was clearly visible in this agitation. Unfortunately, in the second Perso-Russian war in 1827, Iran was defeated. Thus, disastrously ended the second Perso-Russian war. At the outset, the ulema had used religious emotions, as an instrument for the arousing the people but their success in arousing these emotions revealed their political strength as leaders of the nation. The contradiction between the State and the nation affected the course of war; the ever-increasing foreign influence that followed its unfavourable result gave a new dimension to their role of leading the nation against the State.

The events came to surface as a confrontation between the people and government, in which ulema acted as inspirers and leaders of popular feeling and defenders of the national honour. The mass was not following the government orders but they followed the orders of the clergy. The closing of the bazaar, the gathering in the Masjid-i Shah, the use of martyrs' corpses to inspire violent anger, the resentment of the people when threatened with the removal of their leaders - all these are elements of Iranian history which recur in later, more serious situations. The episode of Griboyedov's murder produced the first clear confrontation between the government and the people; that

92 Algar. n. 82. P. 90.
confrontation was religiously motivated and centred on the person of a mujtahid was not coincidental. The government became increasingly suspected of treason and cooperation with foreign, non-Muslim powers; the ulema were the national leaders of opposition to it. The events connected with the murder of Griboyedov did not have immediate consequences of any importance, but it had impact on many later developments.

The long reign of Nasir ud-Din Shah brought contact with the Europeans. During his reign modernisation and industrialisation was introduced in Iran. Mirza Husayn Khan accompanied Nasir ud-Din Shah on his first excursion to Europe in 1873. His aim was to visit to Europe to start administrative reforms in the course of modernising Iran. This visit led indirectly to a strengthening of European influence, and became closely associated with the granting of the Reuter Concession. The precedent established by this journey led to growing lavish expenses, necessitating in turn the negotiation of foreign loans, and the further penetration of the nation’s economic life by foreigners.

The ulema brought about a spate of protest against Mirza Husayn Khan while the Shah and Mirza Husayn Khan in Europe. This protest centred on the granting of a Concession, in 1872, to Julias Reuter, a British financier, for the exploitation of all minerals and forest in Iran, and for the construction of railways. The surrender of a major chunk of the economic resources of the country into foreign hands was bound to be resisted by the de facto leaders of the nation - the ulema. The importance of the Reuter Concession was more than economic. The British was seeking to maintain Iran as a buffer state against Russia’s southward expansion, and was planning to strengthen it by economic regeneration like the Reuter Concession. The government hailed foreign entrenchment in the country for hastening reforms which was explicitly the most effective basis for any political influence. For the ulema, the entrenching of such foreign influence was unpleasant because the close alliance with the State, would have strengthened their traditional enemy and thereby endangered their own influence and function.

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The construction of the railways was vigorously opposed by the ulema. For the people, railway was a symbol easily understood by the popular imagination, featured as a noisy intrusion of the mechanised West and bringing about an undesired intimacy with the outside world. This close relation would have been produced by the railway with the Europe was strongly opposed by the ulema.

When Nasir ud-Din Shah was on his return from Europe, the ulema placed him their demand for the dismissal of the Sipahsalar, Mirza Husayn Khan and the cancellation of the Reuter Concession. It is noteworthy that the coalition against Mirza Husayn Khan was led by the ulema, and that the objections to him were stated mainly in religious terms. The ulema threatened to leave Iran if their demand were not accepted.

The ulema projected themselves the protector and defender of the national interests against a treacherous government and foreign influence. Like the Tobacco Monopoly later, the Reuter Concession was primarily a focal point for many elements of unrest and discontent. Sectional grievances subsumed under a single protest voiced in religious terms and led by the ulema. On this occasion, the few involved in number, with the Tobacco Monopoly the whole nation felt itself affronted, and the role of the ulema as national leaders received unequivocal expression. The Shah bowed before the ulema.

Nasir ud-Din Shah left for Europe third time in 1889. This journey like the first one, was associated with the grant of economic concessions and monopolies in which Tobacco Concession was one of the important Concessions to the British.

The protest against the Tobacco Concession represented on the one hand, a iteration of the ulema's traditional role in opposing the State, and on the other paved the way for the Constitutional Revolution. On numerous occasions, the ulema acted against the State in order to defend national interest. On the issue of Tobacco Concession virtually the whole nation was united under the leadership of the ulema. The agitation was not merely a

94 Abdullah Mustavfi, Tarikh-i Idari, va Ijtima-i - yi Daura-yi Qajariya va Shahr-i Zindagani-yi Man, vol.1, (Tehran, 1321 Sh/1942-43), pp-127-129
protest against a specific measure taken by the government rather centred on the question of the Tobacco Monopoly, which was essentially a direct confrontation between the people and the State, in which the leadership was exercised by the ulema. It clearly showed a new determination and sense of direction. Moreover, the agitation took place in the context of increasing foreign interference in Iran, and above all inspired it with a sense of urgency, that concerned for the very survival of Iran. Thus, the traditional dual role of the ulema—opposition to the State and resistance to foreign penetration found its greatest expression. This duality was passed on by the ulema to the Constitutional Movement.

"The preliminary negotiations were completed in London during Nasir ud-din Shah's third visit to Europe in 1889" 95, and in the spring 1891, the agents of British Company to which the monopoly had been granted, started to arrive in Iran. All rights regarding sale and distribution of tobacco inside Iran, and the export of all tobacco produced in Iran, were vested in the Imperial Tobacco Corporation, "which in return was to pay the Iranian government £ 15 million a year." 96 Furthermore, the regulation of the early crop was the prerogative of the company. Under these circumstances, popular unrest and discontent was bound to arise as soon as the agents of the monopoly started their activities. One unique feature of the Tobacco Monopoly was that the basis of protest and resistance was widespread discontent.

At the outset, disturbances began in the capital in March 1891, and very soon agitation extended to the other provincial cities. In May 1891, one of the leading tobacco merchants of Fars, Hajji Abbas Urdubadi, called the bazaar of the Shiraz to be closed in protest against the monopoly, and at the same Hajji Sayyid Ali Akbar Falsiri mounted the pulpit (minber) in the Masjid-I Vakil to preach against the government policy in general, and the granting of the Tobacco Monopoly in particular. He called for Jehad, if the agents of company did not deter from entering into Shiraz. Falsiri's expulsion order issued from

95 Ibid; p. 470.
96 Ahmad Kasravi, (Tarikh-i Mashruva-yi Iran (History of Constitutional Movement in Iran), (Tehran, 1340 Sh/1961), p. 15.
Tehran, the governor of Shiraz expelled him from Shiraz. When Falsiri's expulsion order was known in Shiraz, the merchants of Shiraz gathered in the Shrine of Shah Chiragh, where they were fired upon by the Governor, Qavam ul-Mulk's troops and compelled to disperse. The following day, the agents of the monopoly entered Shiraz.

It is noteworthy that from the beginning of the agitation cooperation between the merchants and the ulema took place. This cooperation was based not only on common interests in opposing the Tobacco Monopoly, but also on the position of each group in Iranian society. They represented two power largely independent of the State: that of the economic enterprises and that of religious direction. The influence of the state, either in the capital or large cities like Tabriz, Isfahan, and Shiraz, was likely to be exercised at the expense of both ulema and merchants, excessive taxation and other forms of extortion would harm commercial interests, while Urf jurisdiction meant a reduction of clerical power. The ulema called the closure of bazaar that paralysed urban life, provided the ulema a powerful instrument of pressure.

"Shaykh Murtada Ansari had declined to make political use of his power and initially Mirza Hasan Shirazi showed a similar reluctance." Initially, Mirza Hasan Shirazi did not want to involve in the political matter but he was forced to intervene and his intervention began with a telegram to Nasir ud-Din Shah on 26 July 1891, protesting against the disrespect shown to Sayyid Ali Akbar, and also against the granting of the Tobacco Monopoly. The Shah did not reply to his first telegram, and Mirza Hasan Shirazi wrote to him again in September 1891, setting forth in detail his objections to the Tobacco Concession. But again he did not get satisfactory reply, then he empowered Mirza Hasan Ashtiani to act on his behalf in combating the monopoly.

Early in December 1891, there appeared a fatawa in Tehran declaring "the use of tobacco in any form to be a tantamount to war against the Hidden Imam, i.e., haram". Its effect was

98 Mustavfi, n. 94, p. 12.
immediate and total, all over country the use of tobacco was jettisoned.

The government decided to threaten Mirza Hasan Ashtiani with banishment from Tehran unless he contradicted the pro-hibiting fatawa. Nasir ud-Din Shah wrote a harsh letter to him. Due to it, he decided to leave Iran but his followers did not allow him to leave, and mob gathered around his house and they were ready for Jehad. The troops fired upon the mob, and the demonstrators withdrew. Finally, Nasir ud-Din Shah convinced that it is impossible for further upholding the Tobacco Monopoly. He communicated with Mirza Hasan Ashtiani on the issue of Tobacco Concession. After clearly knowing intention of the government, Mirza Hasan Shirazi asked to end the boycott. Ultimately, the government rescinded the Tobacco Concession to the British Company.

The agitation against the Tobacco Concession, however, was far more than the expression of personal or sectional discontent in religious terms through the medium of the ulema. It surpassed, not only this, but all precedents of clerical intervention in national affairs. It was a watershed in Iranian history, a demonstration of the power and strength of the ulema that mobilized the masses against the State in the name of Islam.

The alliance between the ulema and merchants became more pronounced and effective from the time of the agitation against the Tobacco Monopoly onward and finding its greatest expression in the events of 1905-06 Constitutional Revolution. The chief reason of the agitation was conceived of as the increasing foreign danger to Iranian independence. The Tobacco merchants resented having to sell and buy at prices arbitrarily fixed by a foreign company. The foreigners penetration caused economic and commercial problems for the ulema. The appearance of large number of non-Muslim foreigners, working to Tobacco Corporation, was one of the most important reasons for the agitation, their dominating presence was resented by the ulema. To consign the economic affairs of the country to the foreigners endangered Iran's existence as was perceived by the ulema: a national-religious community under their guidance.
In the late nineteenth century, Iran was very much in acute financial crisis, so, to avert crisis, Amin-us Sultan negotiated a loan of 2.5 million rubles from the Russian government in 1900, with interest at 5 percent, to be paid within seventy five years. Among the conditions attached to the loan was one that Iran should not contract debt to any other government until it was repaid. The threat of foreign financial domination came closer to Iran, that aroused combined hostility of the ulema and the merchants again.

A Concession was to be granted to Russian company to construct a road from the border at Julfa to Tabriz, the ulema of Tabriz raised their voice in protest.

An agreement was signed between Iran and Russia on the exploitation of fishery in Gilan in order that of awarding loan to Iran. The condition was attached to the grant of the loan was the establishment of Russian controlled fisheries monopoly in Gilan, this aroused the immediate opposition of the ulema, particularly Hajji Mohammad Rafi Shariatmadari, the chief mujtahid of Gilan. The protest was directed against certain symbols of foreign influence in the town, schools, hostels, and wineshops which directly effected the Islamic culture and values.

The ulema were searching an opportunity to gather against the government which they got in the Russian Concession. The traditional role of the ulema the development, expression, and direction of popular protest was fulfilled with remarkable ease and effectiveness. Thus, it is clear that the ulema by now were fully aware of their power in situation produced by Amin-us Sultan’s involvement with the Russians and having since long jettisoned the restraint shown by Murtada Ansari and Mirza Hasan Shirazi, “were prepared to work for the overthrow of the monarchy”.\(^99\) Earlier their power had been exercised for particular purposes against specific targets, although the basic contradiction between religious and secular powers had always been existed. Now it was to be used against the monarchy. In this condition too, the Constitutional Revolution is the culmination

\(^{99}\) Algar, n. 82, p. 234
of a process: the doctrinally based acrimony of the ulema to the monarchy was intensified in practice as the danger of foreign dominance increased. The policies of Amin-us Sultan helped to increase that danger, and with it the depth and awareness of clerical opposition to the State.

The Constitutional Revolution was the result of all previous events that occurred at various occasions. The ulema and merchants forged alliance against the State. Their demand was to curb not only the unfettered tyranny of the monarchy and its agents, but also to ever-increasing entrenchment of the nation’s economic life by foreign interests. The existence of religio-national community was felt to be in danger, and as before, the ulema led and expressed the reaction to that danger.

The agitation was began just before Muzzafar ud-Din Shah left on his third journey to Europe in June-July 1905, the merchants of Tehran closed down the bazaar and took refuge in the Shrine of Shah Abdul Azim in protest against the Belgo-Russian economic influence. The Crown Prince, Mohammad Ali Mirza, who was assigned with the government of the capital during his father’s journey to Europe, enabled to thwart the scope of the disturbances with the help of Sayyid Abdullah Bihbihani. This use of Bihbihani’s influence makes it clear that tacit cooperation now existed between the ulema and the merchants in their opposition to the government.

The close relationship between Sayyid Abdullah Bihbihani and Sayyid Mohammad Tabatabai and a conscious alliance between the ulema and the merchants is discernable that had far-reaching impact. The noted historian Kasravi considers it to mark the prelude of the Constitutional Revolution. The leadership of the movement was provided by these two men outwardly.

During their protest, the ulema demanded for the foundation of a “house of justice” (adalat khaneh). Initially the government was not in mood in accept it, but when pressure was mounted, the government accepted it. Ayn-ud-Daula promised solemnly to Tabatabai that he would, as soon as possible, establish the adalat khaneh, but when Tabatabai saw no sign of the pledge being
kept, he started to demand openly the establishment of a Majlis, a Consultative Assembly.

By and large, the ulema used Islamic idiom to arouse the popular feeling against the government whenever they found that people are being oppressed by the State apparatus and foreign domination increased. The agitation leading to the granting of the constitution was largely inspired and directed by the ulema. They assumed the legitimate enforcer of Islamic law, hence an expansion and penetration of their function.

The Constitutional Revolution (1905-1909), led to the enactment of the new constitution. The accomplishment of the constitution was a climax to a century of friction and conflict between the State and the ulema. The new constitution defined the clergy’s power as may be seen in the I Article of the constitution stated that Imami Shiism was the religion of the State. Moreover, the ulema prevailed in their wish to create a five-member board (Article 2) to review parliamentary legislation. The membership of the board would compose of individuals appointed from among the top religious leaders themselves. This was never materialised even in the remaining Qajar dynasty’s period and throughout Pahlavi dynasty. But the constitution of the Islamic Republic has created such body, the Council of Guardians (Article 142-147).

Pahlavi Dynasty and the Revolution in the name of Islam

Reza Khan sought to make close relationship with the ulema to get their support for his government. He got their support, from Najaf but not from Qum. In order to get their support he played a significant role in facilitating their return, although it is true that the British and the Iraqi government authorities were predisposed to their resumption of residence in the holy city. Naini sent a letter to the Prime Minister of Iran thanking him for the military escort he had provided the exiled ulema for their safe return journey. Reza Khan moved to follow up this advantages in his relationship with Naini by paying a visit to Najaf in January in 1925.

Reza Khan after becoming the Shah of Iran, began modernisation, the reform in administration on the European model, firstly started by Mirza Taqi Amir Kabir during the reign of Nasir-ud-Din Shah that was vigorously opposed by the ulema, and again reform was started by Mirza Husayn Khan Sipahsalar. In the process of modernisation, the ulema’s powers were striped off, so, they opposed tooth and nail. Now Reza Shah paved on the same way and limited the power of the clergy. He brought major changes in the educational and legal system of the country. Urf courts were guarded with heavy powers that were under the government control and Shar courts came under the control of the clergy, they had no much more functions. Only limited hearings were entertained by the Shar courts. Judges were to be appointed those who got degree in law from government colleges or universities as recognised the government. The regime limited the jurisdictions of the Shar courts in the law of 30 November 1931. This statute prescribed that

only the state courts and the office of the Attorney-General could approve the referral of a case to a religious tribunal. The latter could only take up matters related to marriage, divorce and the appointment of trustees and guardians. The activity of the Shar courts came under the supervision of the Attorney-General. Neither could the Shar courts pronounce sentence, being limited only to the determination of innocence and guilt in the narrow range of issues that served as their field of competence. Only state courts could pass sentences. Too, they were permitted the right of review of decisions made by Shar courts. 101

In the course of gradual encroaching upon the ulema’s status and power, the government pursued the broad strategy to give the state administration the authority to define the jurisdictions of the religious institution. Avery mentioned the position of the ulema that sharply changed from 1925 to 1928:

Early in that year the Queen, his Consort and mother of the Crown Prince, inadvertently let her veil slip to show part of her face during a ceremony in the Shrine Mosque at Qum. The officiating preacher denounced her for it. The Shah was in the Qum the next day with two armoured cars and a party of troops on call. He entered the mosque without taking his boots off and thrashed the mullah. He also ordered the arrest and removal of three criminals who in accordance with ancient procedure, had taken sanctuary in the mosque of precincts. 102

101 Akhavi, n. 28, p. 40.
102 Avery, n. 100, p. 288.
The Uniformity Dress Law of December 1928 was also in the way of attack on the religious institutions. Article 2 of this law specified the strata of society eligible for exemption from its provisions viz., the mandatory abandonment of traditional garb for Western dress for men; and the removal of the veil for women. Despite mandatory dress code to all, some people were exempted from the law.

The Shah brought many changes in the educational system of the country to lessen the religious hold over from the madarssa. The schools and madarssa were run and administered by clergy on their own wishes. The government sought to secularise the educational system in order to hold centralise authority. In January-February 1934, the Ministry of Education announced its permanent curriculum of studies for the intermediate and higher cycles in the theological colleges. The reforms in the educational system were brought not only at the lower level but at the higher level also. There was absence of various prayer and sermon books from the government curriculum.

The clergy-state relations were uneasy during Reza Shah because he stripped off their numerous powers and consequently the influence of the ulema was tended to decline. Their presence in the Majlis had been declined, "whereas the ulema constituted forty percent of deputies in the Sixth Majlis (1926-28), and around thirty percent in the Seventh (1930-32), the Eleventh Majlis which met in 1937 did not include even a single well-known and important figure from the ulema." ¹⁰³

During the reign of Reza Shah, the ulema had been marginalised in the realm of the politics due to numerous negative policies of the Shah towards the religious organisations. But after the abdication of the Reza Shah in September 1941 in favour of his son, the political atmosphere of the country changed, and again the religious leaders began to assert themselves in the political sphere of the country. Politicisation of ulema ranks derived in large measure from the ideas and actions of Sayyid Abu al-Qasim Kashani in that period.

This quintessential political activist and agitator, who had studied with the constitutionalist ulema of Najaf in the early part of the century—namely Mulla Mohammad Kazim Khurasani and Shaykh Husein Khalil Tehrani—he saw his role as guardian of national and Shi'i interest against British imperialism. But his political manoeuvrings became politically significant only after the end of world war II. He played major role in the early 1950s.

The initial signs of comeback of the ulema can be traced in the form of assertion of Shi'i public morality and culture. The religious leaders demanded to rescind the ban which was imposed by Reza Shah on public held passion plays (Taziyah) and narratives (Rawzeh Khani). This was accompanied by a return of the veil in city streets. Their agitation was success in causing the dismissal of the Governor of Khurasan province, who had been from the very beginning condemned by the ulema as the instigator of the 1935 Mashhad incidents.

The issue of enfranchisement of female united the ulema and opposed it. The Shah sought to grant voting right to women in the way of process of modernisation. When Musaddiq became Prime Minister in 1951 sought to grant voting right to women but was unsuccess. Clergy pressure under the leadership of Burujirdi and Bihbihani, forced the Prime Minister Musaddiq to withdraw the bill on the women's vote which he had mooted in the Assembly in late 1952.

The ulema's influence grew in this period especially due to dramatic rise of foreign influence in the forms of Western culture and communism. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) was perceived by the ulema as the British imperialism over Iran which since long time had been exploiting Iran. In 1951, the ulema intervened in politics in major way and issued fatawa, the nationalisation of Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. There may be no doubt that this development marked the highest point of manifestation of politicisation of the clergy's role in Iranian society since the Constitutional Revolution. Fatawas were issued from all sides including the atabat, Tehran, and the provinces. Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Musavi Khuansari, was a mujtahid, who came out in favour of Ayatollah Kashani's idea of nationalisation
and cited the hadith attributed to Mohammad, "he who, upon waking without concerning himself with the affairs of Muslims is not himself a Muslim. The faithful had no choice but to unite and cleave to the position advanced by Kashani as to nationalisation of the AIOC".\textsuperscript{104} The fatawas of nationalisation of AIOC was issued from the various corners of the country.

The relationship between the clergy and the State was moved to fast deterioration in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. This fast deterioration's final expression came in the form of exile of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1963 to Turkey and later on he went to Iraq. The Shah's autocracy was increased and determined to contain the influence of the ulema society, so, he brought major structural changes by reforming society, that was called "White Revolution". The sole purpose of this White Revolution was to contain and minimize the influence of the clergy in society by introducing the new Land Act which deprived the religious institutions and clergy to have limited hold over their land which was the backbone of their financial sources. Now the ulema confronted with the regime on four main issues, (1) the growing autocracy of the Shah (2) the Land Law; (3) Women's right; (4) the corruption of the regime.

Ayatollah Burujirdi, marja-i taqlid, penned a letter to Jafar Bihbihani on 13 February 1960 complaining about the land reform bill drafted by the government in late 1959 and submitted it to the Majlis for its approval. Burujirdi declared that this bill was ill-advised against the Sharia. This land bill did not only contravene the holy law of Islam but constitution as well. Burujirdi asked Bihbihani to moot the matter in Majlis, in response, Bihbihani sent the Burujirdi directive to the speaker of the Majlis together with a covering letter stating his own objections to the bill.

Burujirdi-Bihbihani's this adverse reaction to the government's land reform bill marked a clear break in the cooperation between the ulema and state on public policy. Yet, although it was the first truely public manifestation of clergy

\textsuperscript{104} Akhavi, n. 28, P.64.
displeasure, signs of dissatisfaction had lain underneath the surface for last three years prior to this time. The ulema were worried about the State's encroachment in their affairs. The ulema dominated the social spheres since it is a question of the structure of political power in society.\(^{105}\) The unrest among the clerics was seen. The government did not want to engender unrest among the ulema, so, conceded the ulema demand: religious instructions in the secular schools; closing down places of public entertainment on days of religious observances; reaffirming of the Shah's commitment to uphold the faith; assisting in the construction of new mosques; permitting greater numbers of pilgrims to participate in the annual pilgrimages to Mecca as organised by the Endowments Organisation etc.

The land bill of December 1959, ratified on 17 May 1960, was not in operation due to many internal loopholes. The death of Burujirdi, the marja-i taqlid in March 1961, precipitated a new situation in the country. On 11 November 1961, the Shah promulgated an edict ordering the government to implement the May 1960 land laws.

The protest of the high ranking clergy to the land reform bill of December 1959 was natural. However, the bill endangered the vital interests of the Shii institution and the corporate requirements of the ulema. The ulema wanted to retain both religious and social roles and sought to establish the financial autonomy of the religious institutions. Historically, the sources of revenue of the ulema had consisted of, income from legal and clerical duties, such as registration of titles, notarisation of affidavits, court fees etc; annual revenues from endowed properties; contributions by the faithful in the form of religious taxes (khums).

One of the unique features of the Iranian society that the ulema were not dependent on the state assistance. It was an independent unique source of financial support for that stratum: voluntarily contributions by the people. Reliance on the people's largesse rendered the Iranian ulema independent of the state, a

\(^{105}\) The questions of social justice are addressed within the framework of the configurations and levels of power should be clear, given the fact that arrangements for the resolution of questions of social justice are formed by these possessing such power.
situation that was unique in the Middle East, over most of which
the State had coopted the clergy through its subsidisation. The
main contributor of the ulema's income were masses, so, any
attempt to reform to structure of religious institution must
receive their approval.

In addition to the financial dependence on the population at
large, another feature of the financial organisation of the
Iranian clergy was its extreme decentralisation. As the system
was then constituted (1962), the various marja-i taqlid sent
their agents out to the provinces to collect the Khums from the
faithful. Among all these sources, the land was the main source
of income for the ulema.

The clergy opposed the land law on two grounds: (1) the
impact of the reform upon land held by the clergy as waqf, the
revenues of which supported mosques, madarssa, ceremonials, and
clergy/religious student salaries, stipends, emoluments and
pensions; (2) the Sharia stress on the sanctity of private
property.106 So, the ulema's opposition to the land reform bill
was natural since it was the main source of their revenues.

Under White Revolution, the Shah started education in remote
areas through the creation of Literacy Corps which was
monopolised by the ulema since long time. The educational system
of the country was basically run and administered by the ulema in
which the religious education were given to the students
according to their own will. The head of the institutions
determined that what should be taught to the students. The
educational institution was an instrument through which they
disseminated their ideas in the matter of religion and maintained
their hold over society. So the educational institution was the
powerful means to inject the idea in the blood of the new
generation for carrying out their ideas.

On the other side, the government was also determined to
grant voting right to the women. In 1959, Burujirdi received
prime Minister, Iqbal, in Qum and effectively vetoed the regime's

106 See Talqani, " Nazre Islam dar Barah-yi Malikiyat" Guftar-i Mah dar Nameyandan-i Rafi Rastii Din, vol. III (Tehran :
Kitabkhannah-yi Sadaq, 1341 Sh/1962), in which he argued that principle of private property ownership is protected under
Islamic law.
plan for a women’s day parade in Tehran. The female enfranchisement was the long issue upon which the ulema reacted sharply.

The political reason for the opposition of the clergy were equally fundamental: arbitrary rule; the granting of the extraterritoriality, and more generally, foreign control of the certain aspects of the economy; the nation’s policy in the Arab-Israel conflict, according to which oil was sold to Israel and cooperation between the two countries intelligence took place.

There was repression, suppression, corruption, and lack of justice that provided opportunity for Iran’s religious community to oppose the Pahlavi state. Conflict between the Iran’s religious sector and Pahlavi dynasty began during the reign of Reza Shah. This conflict continued under Mohammad Reza Shah and in 1963 erupted into the major religious opposition to his reign and policies. Khomieini first appeared on political scene, being arrested in 1963 and exiled first in Turkey and later to Iraq.

There was anxiety of the regime over the revival of deep-seated anti-foreign sentiment in religious circles. It had been Ayatollah Kashani who had successfully stoked the fires of anti-British emotions in the late forties and early fifties. Relations with Israel were later to become a powerful source of conflict between the Shah and Ayatollah Khomeini in mid-sixties.

These developments hastened the effort at coordinated efforts in the late 1960s to penetrate in religious institution by the instruments available to the bureaucratic state. In such efforts, the Endowment Organisation which was created in 1965, was supposed to play a key role. In the mid 1960s, the organisation began the publication of a journal which attempted to glorify the culture as mystical aspect of Islam. The image it wished to convey was of Islam as a State religion.

The ideal situation for the State was the creation of the Endowment Organisation increasingly to take over madarssa administration while tightening its allocations to students and teachers there in the hopes that dwindling clergy revenues from
Awqaf and khums would stimulate the exodus of students from madarssa to vocational and/or other educational training. Increasingly dependence on the Sazman-e Awqaf and rapid reduction of financial assistance by it could not immediately, nor perhaps even in the medium run, have adverse consequences for Qum.

The endowments organisations also provided financial support to students in dabistan (primary schools), dabiristan (secondary schools,) and danishgah (universities). These secondary schools included certain programmes for religious education in which some candidates could specialise. This was specially the case for the higher levels of learning.

In 1960s and 1970s the Pahlavi regime increased its pressure on the clergy. It continued its nationalization of religious institutions, took over mosques, shrines, religious schools, and transferred them to the State’s Organistional endowments. As the clergy’s freedom of action was more and more restricted, increasing numbers of the ulema became hostile to the Shah.

The clergy-State relation was severely deteriorated in the 1970s. In 1972, the regime was increasingly seeking ways of actions against the ulema. The government sought to contain the spread of religion, so, it created a Religious Corps and shut down the Husayniyah Irshad which had become the threat of government. This was shortly after the commemoration of the 2500\textsuperscript{th} year of monarchy in Iran. The celebration of the 2500\textsuperscript{th} year of monarchy brought furore among the ulema, they thought that the Shah is interested in exalting the monarchy which is incompatible with Islam.

By keeping the basic structure of policy, the Shah issued an imperial edict for the creation of the Religion Corps in August 1971. The reason for the creation of this Sipah-e Din was called for to propagate the ordinances of Islam and place spirituality at an equal level with desire for material progress under the banner of the White Revolution. Religion Corps fell under the state bureaucratic jurisdiction. The regime also created within the Endowment Organisation a Department for Religion Propaganda.

\footnote{For detail see Akhavi. n. 28. P. 132.}
The department was accountable for the training of religious propagandists. The Religious Corps and the Religious Propagandists ostensibly constituted the regimes, vanguard of loyalists.

As a result of modernisation of the industry, the higher number of jobs available in the urban areas led to massive migration to the cities, especially Tehran. A city had no slums until the late 1960s suddenly had millions of recently migrated slum-dwellers who lived under extremely precarious conditions. Among these masses new forms of religious organisations sprung up, creating a fertile ground for the spread of fundamentalist ideas. Most of these organisations were founded after 1965 and associated with the groupings of humbler occupations or of poor city quarters. Their very names, such as Religious Associations of Shoemakers, of Workers of Public Baths of the Guild of Fruit-Juicers, of Tailors, of the Desperate of (Imam) Husein. One must not forget that while these organisations were expanding, all forms of independent political activities were banned. Religion become the only outlet for oppositional leanings in the country.

The complex structure of the organised opposition was not clearly defined of mass unprivileged and unsophisticated people, some educated for whom every thing about the Shah's political system and the Western culture, it had introduced was both meaningless and oppressive. This category was consisted of newly urbanised but discontented persons who had been uprooted from the rural areas by the land reform programme of the White Revolution; some of the lower middle classes in the cities; and a large segment of the youth who had been divested of sense of cultural identity and alienated by the old socio-political structure. The opposition forces composed of a broad coalition of modern as well as of pre-capitalist or pre-industrial sectors, Islam had come to play a major and growing mobilisational role in the process. Islam was the only force within the civil society that the Shah

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could not manage to crush, and it was thus able to provide the organisation of ideology that all revolutions need.\textsuperscript{109}

The causes of Revolution may be said that clergy rationalisation, ideological statements, organisational activity and mobilisation of resources proved absolutely critical in the unfolding developments. Those issues which the ulema had been responding were the issues which also affected other social forces in society. The intellectuals had long been sharply attacking censorship. The regime’s was modernisation expenditures from the numerous revenues obtained through its petroleum industry had accelerated inflation and spawned widespread corruption. This had created discontent among the bureaucrats. The entrepreneurs and industrialists, who had entered into massive business from their former position as landowners faced a deteriorating credit and cash-flow problem in the year 1979-78 as the country found itself borrowing on the international financial markets. Agriculturists suffered from highly irrational and chaotic agrarian policies of the regime. The breakneck pace of industrialisation had entirely destroyed the balance between the industrial and agricultural sectors. Peasant were becoming alienated because of the economic weakness in the cooperating institutions in the rural areas. All these sectors had complaints about the phenomenal rise in the cost of living produced by weapons purchases, the growth of a substantial middle-men stratum and by the purchase of high technologies in the West.

The Shah’s regime could be classified as a neopatrimonial dictatorship, a type of regime in which came to be focused on the person of the despot.\textsuperscript{110} A great variety of discontents against the Shah emerged in the 1970s. A troublesome world oil market led to wild domestic economic fluctuation, and the Shah responded with policies that often weakened his political support, for instance, an anti-profiteering campaign in which thousands of business-men were arrested. Economic insecurity and the Shah’s own policies helped to alienate sectors of society, such as


middle-class, government workers and other well-off oil workers, who could not normally have been rebellious.\textsuperscript{111}

The middle-class intellectuals who had suffered since long from the Shah’s repression that already existed. The bazaaris, that is the traditional merchant class, and the ulema, resented the fact that the Shah’s policies appeared aimed to undermine their social and economic positions. Bazaar is the central market place in the Middle East. The urban domination of Middle Eastern societies confers great importance on the commercial hearts of the cities. Thus, a bazaar is not only a place where goods are bought and sold but, “a multifaceted entity comprising religious, commercial, political, and broadly social elements... and religion is the cement that binds this structure together.”\textsuperscript{112} The bazaar occupied the centres or cities, an area that also includes the mosques and madarssa. Thus, merchants and the ulema are in daily contact. This close contact helps them in their relations with the government: the ulema needed the bazaaris - as a mass basis to put pressure on the government; while the bazaaris needed the ulema’s support and their protection against the arbitrary government. Moreover, merchants were also a prominent source of financial support for the religious institution and their activities.

As the movement to remove the Shah gather momentum in the 1970s, the Islamic approach to opposition gained popularity. As James Bill points out “the Iranian people took refuge in religion and flocked to the mujtahids for social and political shelter. When these centres themselves became the targets of regime attack, the ulema decided to fight back to the end.”\textsuperscript{113} Each step the Shah took to contain the influence of the Shiite establishment, albeit, further ensured the Islamic character of the revolutionary trend.

The fervour of the anti-Shah sentiment and the intensity of the demand for dramatic change, enabled Khomeini to use Islam as

\textsuperscript{113} James A. Bill, “Power and Religion in Revolutionary Iran”, \textit{Middle East Journal}. Winter, 1982, P. 27.
ideology as an effective tool to oust the Shah. Khomeini's ultimate successful gambit was facilitated not only by the trend in the 1970s toward an Islamic expression of the opposition movement but also by the popularisation of the eclectic doctrines, which articulated an ideology in the language of Shiite symbolism.

No doubt the organised opposition to the Shah was fragmented but it had the organisational and financial potential to challenge the government at proper moment. The liberalisation policy of the Shah provided this opportunity, since the liberalisation coincided with the economic reversal of the 1976-79 period, which had created acrimony between the State and the merchants, shopkeepers, and industrialists, it allowed the organised opposition to channel the peoples deep-seated grievances into collective action.

The opposition capitalised the opportunity of liberalisation and started protest against the Shah. On the eve of 1978, the president of the United States, Jimmy Carter visited Tehran and applauded the Shah for creating an oasis of stability in a troubled area. Soon after Carter’s visit, Tehran’s upheaval entered into a new phase. The poorly organised, reformist, non-violent, and decentralised movement that was confined within Tehran gradually transformed into a more coordinated, radical, violent, and centralized movement that was spreading to the major urban centres of the country. It is noteworthy that the ulema captured the leadership of the movement, Khomeini in Iraq and Kazim Shariatmadari in Iran. "Shiism became the umbrella under which divergent groups came together and destabilised the government."114

Since the last two decades, the revival of Shiism as an ideology of protest had been alarming visible. The religious literature spreaded in the masses. Religious periodicals gained wider circulation and religious books became ever more popular. In the period 1954-63, religious books had constituted about 10 per cent of the total published books, by 1975 their share had

risen to 35.5 percent. From 1965 to 1975, "twenty-six exclusively religious publishing houses were established in Tehran alone, and religious books, considered innocuous by state censors, had the highest circulation of any category".\(^{115}\) In the universities there was visible increased in the number of veiled women and Islamic student associations. The hundreds of student rioted against co-education at Tehran University in 1976 was symbol of the resurgence of Islam.

The peculiar features of Iranian society strived a rapid mobilisation of the opposition; Iran was a society with a number of significant urban centres in which opponents of the Shah-clerics, bazaaris, students, workers, professionals, urban poor, and so on were highly concentrated. The protest that started in 1977 greatly accelerated in 1978 and came to be massive in size. Some of the agitations were scheduled according to the Islamic practice of commemorating deaths (i.e.: previous protesters killed by agents of the Shah) at specified intervals. During this time 'religious' and 'other' opponents of the Shah protested together. The unity of hatred for the Shah greatly overwhelmed their differences and diverse factions came closer to fight against the Shah's autocracy. Educational establishments often closed in acts of protests, and students some of whom had become radicalised through the Mujahidin, actively participated in demonstrations.

Islam became not only the language of political opposition for the socially and economically disenfranchised groups but on the other hand, the manifestation of this discontent became mythified through the use of Shi' symbols, which came to embody these grievances and in doing so, carried them into a different plane. When the grievances of rural migrants to urban areas became entangled in sacred religious symbols and myths, these grievances with great intensity could connect to the Iranian political community in a successful way. Such as Shi'ism was not only an instrument for these deeper grievances, but essential to

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instilling these grievances with the mythic force which they could motivate others to revolutionary solidarity and action.116

In early January 1978 in Tehran’s two newspapers, Khomeini was presented as an agent of colonialism and traitor of non-Persian descent. This news aroused forour among the masses. In support of Khomeini, the ulema organised a peaceful rally in Qum on January 9. In support of the protest, bazaarsis closed down their shops. After arriving the police, rally turned into violent and more than a dozen people were killed. Soon after the Qum episode, riots broke out in seven other cities. The bazaars in these cities closed in sympathy with the ulema, marked the entry of the shopkeepers and merchants into the revolutionary movement and their historic alliance with the ulema. This episode has manifested that the religion had gained ground for thwarting any type of the Shah’s move that perceived anti-Islam and anti-people.

The use of Shi'i symbols and rituals and the bombing of government buildings, all these manifested in February 1978 in an uprising in Tabriz. The ulema planned to commemorate the fortieth day of the death of the martyrs of Qum, an Islamic tradition, in the mosques of Tabriz, the home of Shariatmadari. But the government determined to prevent the escalation of riots to Tabriz, ordered the police to block people from entering mosques. The angry mourner mob went on rampage in which the police fired upon the people and killed. The pulpits were used by the ulema to attack the Shah. The ulema relied on thousands of mosques, heyat, Islamic associations, and the bazaar to mobilise the masses against the Shah. The massive network of mobilisation proved

116 See Hamid Dabashi, The Theology of Discontent (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1993), which deals with ideologies and ideologue of the Iranian Revolution. Ayatollah Khomeini was the dominant leader of the revolution in so far as he came to incarnate a Shi'ism which incorporated themes of nationalism and social justice within the symbolics confines of a putatively indigenous, traditional discourse. However, other leaders were also extremely important in forming a Shi'a ideology which was a compelling alternative to the political authority of the Shah. The interesting points about these other ideological leaders is that, though quite different and appealing to different sections of Iranian society, came to work basically, within a religious idiom. Even the Tudeh, eventually, accepted the leadership of Khomeini. As Shi'ism became the symbol of absolute rejection of both the Shah and the West, a Paris educated, Sharifi looked to, Shi'ism and, more particularly, a radically politicised Shi'ism such as Khomeini's, as the troublebearer of an emphatic rejection of the Shah and the West. Each of these various leaders were important in their own right and each had an appeal to certain sections of Iranian society. Sharifi to students, and Bazargan to the middle-class. These leaders had very different agendas and followings, but they each helped to create ideological climate which looked to Shi'ism as the alternative to the Shah. Eventually, it was Khomeini who embodied this alternative.
effective, and became extremely difficult for the authorities to contain it.

The monarchy as an institution and the Pahlavi Dynasty as the Royal house of Iran became completely unacceptable to Khomeini. During his long exiled, he had rebuked the regime and the Shah for having failed to defend Islam, for promoting despotism, insulted the clergy and permitted foreigners to exercise control over the country’s resources. In his strong opposition to the Shah’s imperial traditions, he stated that Islam opposed the system of monarchy.

However, he declared in his proclamation of January 1978, "Mohammad Reza Khan (Shah) is a traitor and rebel whose overthrow is ordained by law". In November 1978, he called for the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran and asserted, "our Islamic objective is the toppling of the monarchical regime and the overthrow of the Pahlavi Dynast." In support of his position, the Iranian people favoured year long through demonstrations against the policies of the regime. To put pressure on the government, he adopted various tactics like the vast demonstrations within the context of the general strike, recompensing striking workers, peasants, functionaries, artisans, desertion by members of the armed forces and fraternisation with civilians.

As Muharram came closer, banks went on strike, on 26 November 1978 general strike was announced. Most bazaars, stores and government offices closed down. Such processions were central to the observance of the particularly holy days in this period, and the government’s restriction was perceived not only as a political gesture but as a form of religious repression. As a result, large numbers of Iranians defied the ban, and in Tehran alone almost 100 people killed by martial law authorities. Khomeini called for "rivers of blood" to flow on the 10th Muharram (Ashura), or the 11th of the December 1978, in order to topple the monarchy.  

117 Akhavi, n. 28, p. 167
118 Ibid, p. 167
On the first day of Muharram all was calm until late in the evening when worshipers were on their way to home from mosques, broke up into groups and rampaged through the streets shouting anti-Shah slogans. The slogans were *Marg-bar Shah* (Kill the Shah), *Allah-o Akbar* (God is Great), and *Khomeini-ra baz arid* (Bring back Khomeini).

"Death to the Shah!" was a central slogan and theme of demonstrations in 1978. The Shah was widely represented with the deaths of prominent opposition figures and his troops killed demonstrators helped to shed light the rebellion on the evil nature of the regime, especially the Shah himself. After the slogan "Death to the Shah!" first emerged in February 1978, and used throughout the Revolution, Khomeini referred to the protests that included closures of bazaars and universities, stated in a speech while he was in Iraq:

> These closings represent a form of active protest against the person of the Shah... The people have identified the true criminal. Bearing to the themes of the demonstrations, a week later he congratulated those who have risen up...with the crises of "Death to the Shah!"

During the first day of Muharram, shooting continued throughout the country in which a large member of people being killed. The government rescinded its ban on processions for Tausha and Ashura, the two holiest days in the important month of Muharram. The government was compelled to lift its ban on processions in the month of Muharram because people had defied the imposition of ban for the processions. "At the same time it banned the use of motorcycles and vans, ostensibly to keep traffic down, although automobiles were not banned."

Tausha came finally with major processions throughout the country. In Tehran alone, between one and two million people marched through the streets. On the following day came Ashura, when large processions took place. As was the case on the previous day, most formal activity was absent. In Tehran march was less organised and a little bit rowdier. People openly shouted "Death to the Shah!" but there was no apparent tension.

The Ashura demonstration in Tehran included more than two million people. Similar demonstrations that took place throughout the rest of the country.

This formalised national amalgamation of the politics and the religion set the tone for the Revolution's final days. Events of Tausha and Ashura firmly established Khomeini and his supporters as the leaders of the popular revolution against the Pahlavi Dynasty. Recognition of the character of above events, the conversion of an extremely serious religious observance into a political event, devoid of a corresponding decline in popular religiosity, attested the emerging nature of the Iranian Revolution.

As early as 1972, Hamid Algar pointed out that in Iran "protests in religious terms will continue to be voiced and the appeals of men such as Ayatollah Khomeini to be widely heeded".122 This anticipation of Hamid Algar was proved in 1979 when Khomeini mobilised people in the name of religion and all factions of society came together under the banner of Islam to fight against the Shah, and ultimately dethroned the Shah. "The Iranian Revolution was both a religious Islamic Revolution and a political revolution cloaked in a religious idiom".123

It was commonly acceptable that discontent should be voiced in the symbols and language of Islam, and not in terms of other possible universal ideologies because Islam was the unifying force among the different factions of society. One of the most important reasons for the use of religious idioms in the course of Revolution is that the Shah had swept away many secular centres of power, such as political parties. The Shah also tried to outstrip the ulema, but had been unable to effect their power, which was seemingly beyond his reach. It is also important that hostility to the Shah was generalised into a hatred for all things Western - the Shah was identified by virtue of his US ally with a poisonous secular Westernism. The opposite of the myth evil of the West was identified with Shiism, one of the

122 Algar, n. 89 P. 225.
123 Green, n. 121, p. 130.
centerpieces of Iranian identity from which the Shah had distanced himself.

Shii religious symbols were used in the course of the Revolution in discrete ways by these different leaders which provided a space on which the Iranian political community could most easily form the consensus necessary for a united revolutionary front to work against the Shah. These symbols were employed to unite the people of the different factions to oppose the Shah. These symbols were being invested with the cultural myths of a collective and in which those symbols took on a structural power which deeply affected the self-articulation of such a collectivity.

Religion became a medium to spread message, it was essential as the locus of an ideological legitimacy and mythical power which brought closer and united the diverse discontents of Iran and provided them a metaphysical, religious sense of community which was very intense and strong basis for community. This unity rejected and dethroned the Shah in favour of a broad Islamic ideology, a broadness which allowed it to represent and structure the economic pressures, social anxieties, and political anger of Iranians. Public emotion was aroused and used by Khomeini under the banner of religion and united this diverse community that could forge a revolutionary consensus to overthrow an entire political order. It is in this sense that religious ideology is the key and the corner-stone to the Iranian Revolution, a sense which does not preclude the importance of social, economic, and political factors.

Khomeini was victorious in this Revolution. Theocracy emerged because Khomeini and his followers so successfully built an institutional apparatus while avoiding political division over the meaning of Islam and anti-imperialism until they had the means to enforce their interpretations.

"In a revolution, ideology takes over politics, transcends social differences among participants moving them in a communitarian relation and orienting them to act directly against
the Shah. It is ideology that distinguishes revolution from routine contentious for power."\textsuperscript{124}

The collapse of the political system culminating in the departure of the Shah (16 January 1979), the resignation of the caretaker government of Shahpur Bakhtiyar (11 February 1979) and the referendum in favour of the Islamic Republic was however, directed by the ulema. Their participation, providing centuries of ulema quietism and aversion to overthrow regime, was an unprecedented act in Iranian history.

In the aftermath of the Revolution, Islam has been institutionalised with the expression of Velayat-e Faqih (Guardianship of Jurisconsult) and the entire system has been woven in the thread of Islamic tenets. The political culture of Iran has been completely changed after the Revolution. At the social level, un-Islamic norms and mores have been divorced and Islamic culture has been introduced; and at the economic level, Islam which has been committed to its social justice, the economic policies have been made in favour of the socially and economically deprived people of society who were participants in the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic principles have been employed in this field.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution is a unique shiite phenomenon in itself because throughout Revolution Islam was used as ideology. In the long history of Iran, Islam has been used by the ulema as an instrument of protector and defender of the masses against the suppression and repression policy of the monarch and foreign encroachment in Iran. As has been seen in the Rueter Concession in 1872 and Tobacco concession in 1892, the ulema directly confronted with the state against the granting concessions to the foreigners. But during the Safavids, situation was very different. The Safavid Shahs managed to maintain good relations with the ulema in one way or other even through making matrimonial relations in the families of the ulema but the Qajars were failed to do like this and confrontations became natural and eminent which led to raise the question of legitimacy of the

monarchy. The constitutional movement was the culmination of the previous developments which brought monarchy's foundation at stake.

The volatile condition of the Qajar was exploited by the Reza Shah, buried the Qajar dynasty and became King of Iran. Initially, relation between the ulema and Reza Shah were good but not at later stages. Even his son, Mohammad Shah, sought to maintain good and healthy relations with the ulema but did not materialise, and in 1951 during the agitation over nationalisation of Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, monarchy was in shaky position. The decades of 1960s and 1970s were the decades of the ulema because they successfully mobilised the masses against the Shah in the name of Islam and diverse factions of society came under the general umbrella of Islam to oppose the Shah, and ultimately under the leadership of Imam Khomeini uprooted the monarchy and Iran entered into a new phase and became a theocratic state.