Chapter III

Reconstruction of Islamic Traditionalism

I. Islamic Traditionalism

The Constitutional Movement of 1905-11 was a major political upheaval, and it marked the entrance of modern ideas and institutions in Iran. Since the majority of the Ulama challenged the absolute power of Shah, at the first stages of the Constitutional Movement they supported the movement. In particular they expressed an opposition to absolute power. Therefore, at this initial stage the Ulama did not reveal their aversion to a constitution based on people's sovereignty. Whereas, "they (the Ulama) were averse to the notion of sovereignty residing in the people; the reason for this is their long-held belief that sovereignty may be delegated only to the prophet and to imams" (Akhavi 1980: 16). However, after the victory of the Movement, culminating in the approval of a written constitution, inspired by the constitutions of the European countries, the expected clash between traditionalists on the one side, and the reformers and modernists on the other side, came to light. Indeed, the trends against constitutionalism epitomized the rejection of modernity.

Many of the Ulama who opposed constitutionalism in the early twentieth century, found that modern ideas and institutions would undermine their entire traditional authority. They were particularly concerned about the introduction of a secular based constitution and the institution of parliament in which the people's representatives, including non-clergies, would make law with reference to the constitution through the votes of the
majority of the members. Such an aversion with constitution and parliament was based on a historical opposition of the Ulama with modernity.

The Ulama conceived of Islamic tradition as a unique whole with a transcendental independent reason. Hence, for them there is no criterion for verifying the validity of tradition from the outside. In their religious view traditions had to be unquestionably obeyed. These scholars did not allow any idea from outside to enter into Islam, for, in Anthony Gidden’s term, their approach to Islamic tradition is a ‘traditional’ one. Such an approach, which is substantially past-oriented, derived its inspiration from the belief in a historically perfect tradition. It seeks the golden age and utopia in the past that is to be revived, and is antithetical to all forms of innovation. Therefore this approach sees modernity as an external single entity which confronts Islamic tradition. In the discourse of Islamic traditionalism, modernity is identified with the West which is described variously as Devil, blasphemy, atheism, idolatry, apostasy, and like things (Abadian 1996: 38-56).

Sunni Ulama tried to defend Islam against the challenge of modernity, by redefining the Ottoman Empire as the ‘abode of Islam’, and the West as the ‘abode of blasphemy’, as well as Sultan or the king as nothing but the shadow of God. A similar outlook existed among the Iranian Shia Ulama. These traditional learned clergies discarded constitutionalism as a manifestation of the West, in favor of preserving Sharia, to protect the reign of Allah through the consolidation of monarchy. Sheikh Fazlollah Nouri, the leading opponent of constitutionalism “objected to the idea that sovereignty ultimately reposed in the nation” (Akhavi 1980: 26). He was of the view that “sovereignty belonged to Allah alone, and his will, was successively relinquished to the prophet, the imams and,
finally, to those learned enough to render judgement in matters of law” (Ibid.). Nouri insisted on the idea that “for the matter of public affairs representation is not right, and this case relates to guardianship of Sharia, namely, talking of public affairs and people’s interests is only the right of Imams or their successors, and others have nothing to do with the matter” (quoted in Abadian 1996: 162). To him constitutionalism was indeed, geared to the blasphemous societies and incompatible with Islam. Since constitutional Movement was very powerful and was supported by many of the clergies, Nouri leaned towards the Shah in order to oppose constitutionalism. For this reason, Nouri and his followers drew up a petition for the rejection of constitutionalism and presented it to the Shah. It was stated in the petition that “since, by the firm order of the Creator of the World, the foundation of Islam throughout the centuries has been in the trust of the Sultan of the Age and the ulama, the issue of a rescript (rejecting constitutionalism) is requested” (qouted in Martin 1987: 47).

For the traditionalists, therefore Islam is perceived as an ideal single entity, which is not to become subject to change in modern times. These traditionalists did not believe in evaluating the validity of tradition in changing situations or by the appropriation of reason and rationality. Instead, they conceived of rationality as valid in so for as it endorses the tradition.

Such a traditionalist perception to Islam remained strong and in two episodes reached its culmination. During the 1950s, Mujtaba, Navab Safavi, a young radical clergy organized and led Fadaiyan-e Islam (devotees to Islam), “as a militant group dedicated to the enforcement of the rules of the faith and to opposing secularism” (Voll 1982: 204). Another episode was created by Ayatollah Khomeinie, during the 1960s, when he led an
anti-Shah demonstration, which ultimately brought the religious traditionalist discourse into the political realm (Milani 1988: 49-50).

What is more important is that it was only on the eve of the Islamic revolution that such a traditional vision began to be redefined and reconstructed through modern discourse by appropriating Heidegger's ideas. The founder of such a reconstruction in Iran is late Ahmad Fardid, who saw the Islamic revolution as the advent of a new age. In his views, "Islamic countries, and generally, all the oriental communities, without any exception, are at a historical stage which cannot have a traditional culture as we see in the Western societies.... The present age is the age of the crisis of traditions which gives rise to another history.... It is evident that the history of the future of man is neither the history of the religious civilization of the mediaeval age [of the Europe], nor the realist and humancentrist history of the West" (Mashreq 1996: 47). Fardid showed a strong attachment to Heidegger's ideas, though, as he himself claimed, was not consonant with him in all areas. At least, it is said that he is a Heideggerian thinker in his viewing the West and modernity. Fardid's followers are of the view that his consonance with Heidegger is to the extent that Heidegger challenges the West, humancentrism, and particularly, the 2500 years history of the Western metaphysics. However, Fardid does not just stop here. He goes further and tries to recollect Islamic theology and mysticism to establish an alternative view (see Rajabi 1994: 23). Fardid has proposed his ideas verbally, but we can glimpse at a similar perception in the written works of a thinker, such as, Reza Davari, who is a teacher of philosophy.

Davari was born in Ardakan (near Isfahan) in 1933 and finished his primary and secondary education in his place of birth. He was hired as a teacher by the Ministry of
Education in 1951. Three years later, he enrolled at Tehran University's Faculty of Literature as an undergraduate and proceeded to earn his doctorate in philosophy from the same institution in 1967. Since his graduation, Davari has been a professor of philosophy at his alma mater, where he mainly teaches courses on the history of modern philosophy. After the revolution, while maintaining his academic post, he has served in such capacities as a researcher in the Iranian Academy of Philosophy; member of the Iranian Academy of Sciences; and editor of the journal Nameh Farhang, organ of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. In addition, he has been a member of a number of scientific and academic delegations representing Iran in international conventions.

Davari, in harmony with Heidegger, traces the point of deviation back to the Greeks. Davari makes use of the term, Gharbzadegi¹ (infatuation with the West) which was initially coined by Fardid and was made popular by Al-e Ahmad², one of the most well known contemporary Iranian intellectuals. Al-e Ahmad conceptualized and employed this term while popularizing his “anti-modernization thesis in the early 1960s” (Rahnema and Behdad, 1996: 6). Davari appropriates the concept of Gharbzadegi, and labels the modern age as ‘doubled Gharbzadegi’. To Davari, being infatuated intensively by the West, is termed as Gharbzadegi, something which “is not a disease or syndrome which have appeared in science, industry, technique and literature in the course of history and the evolution of man, and it is not possible to rescue them” (Davari 1980: XIX). Doubtlessly, he regards it is a sort of relation with Being.

¹ The term Gharbzadegi is translated as ‘Westoxication’, ‘Westamation’, Weststruckness, or ‘Occidentosis’, and is conceptualized as ‘plagued by the West’, ‘a plague from the West’ and ‘infatuated by the West’.

² Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923-69) is one of the most eminent figures of contemporary Persian literature, basically a fiction writer, but nevertheless an equally important ideologue of modern
Davari, has laboriously tried to pose serious challenges to what he represents as Western essence. His ambitious aim is to reveal the invalid and declining character and features of the West, and particularly, those of modernity. He proceeds to establish, or to put precisely, reconstruct alternatively the Islamic tradition. Previously, Islamic traditionalism had defined the Western 'otherness' within a discourse that was alien to modernity, namely an Islamic discourse. Neo-traditionalist intellectual Muslims, such as Davari, redefine this 'otherness' within the discourse of modernity (See Boroujerdi 1996).

Almost all Davari’s main works are a sort of philosophical enterprise. In comparison with those of Shariati and even Soroush, Davari’s writings have not been so popular. However, his works have been contributory to deep discussions about the essence of the West (including modernity and postmodernity) as well as the situation of tradition in the modern times. His main works which show the foundation of his thought and indicate his social and political ideas are as follows:

**What is Philosophy:**

A book written between 1978-9. This book consists of three sections. In the first section, the meaning of philosophy in view of the classics and the moderns, the relationships between philosophy and historical conditions, philosophy and practice, and philosophy and reason are discussed. In the second section Davari concentrates on the ideas of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. And in the third section he explores the trajectory of theological science in Islam by addressing particularly the ideas generated by two powerful theological schools; that is, *Mutazila* and *Ashari*.

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Iran. He was famous in the literary circles for his new style of prose and for choosing critical and social subjects.
One of the important features of this book is introducing and posing the ideas of Heidegger which had not been well known before the Islamic revolution. In this article Davari introduces Heidegger as the wise man of our epoch and as the teacher of the future thought. Addressing themes of Heidegger's *Being and Time*¹, Davari also tries to feature the difference between Heidegger's existentialism and that of Sartre.

However the most important part of this book is a 24 pages introduction. It is through this introduction that Davari poses the core of his ideas concerning the West, Islam, and the Islamic revolution. In this section Davari highlights the role of thinking, against ideology, in unraveling the path to a true revolution. He also tries to explain the concept of *Gharbzadegi* (infatuation with the West) by mentioning that doing imitation of the West and feeling subject to the West is but the consequences of *Gharbzadegi*. While, the West is a moment through which man has conceived of himself as truth and rightness. The West is an historical stage, a whole, and one cannot select part of it. Here he interprets imperialism in relation to the expansion of western philosophy. In his view, the West inevitably culminates in imperialism, and at present the history of the West is at an end. Then he raises the question of *Gharbzadegi* in Iran and maintains that our *Gharbzadegi* is a passive, rather than an active one. For we did not penetrate into the truth and spirit of western philosophy, art, and science. Now he conceives of the Islamic revolution as a reaction to our passive *Gharbzadegi*. It is only through a religious revolution that we can share the destiny of the world.

**The Present Moment of Thinking in Iran:**

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A book published in 1979, containing articles written in 1974-1978. The other title of this book is ‘A Short Account of the History of Our Garbzadegi’, which shows the content of the book. The main part of this book is about the way Iranians contacted the West, the earlier image of the West in their mind, and what the Iranians learned from the West. The article also probes into Orientalism and concludes that while Orientalism has provided the Iranians with scientific method, it has distanced them from both the truth of the West and that of their own past. The rest of the book is a critical analysis of the contemporary Persian poetry, and Persian language. What is more important in this book is a nineteen pages introduction that Davari has added in 1984. In this introduction Davari focuses upon ‘thinking’. He argues that civilization is the appearance of culture and culture, in turn, is the appearance of thinking. In his view in the modern age thinking is substituted for civilization through the relation that modern man has established with science. However, he adds that the man who comes out of the Islamic revolution will have a different relationship with science and technology. Here he analyzes critically the nature of modern science and its methodology and raises the issue of truth vis-à-vis profit. Eventually he focuses upon the question of the West and modernity. For him the West is a unique whole, which has a comprehensive domination over the non-Western world. For this reason he claims that no revolution will occur unless the foundation of the West radically changes.

**Farabi (870-950), the Founder of Islamic philosophy:**

Davari’s Ph.D. thesis published in 1976. In this book Davari tries to show that Islamic philosophy is a particular phase in the history of philosophy and that Islamic philosophy culminated in Farabi ideas. Davari ceases to recognize this famous view that Islamic
philosophy emanated from the ideas of Greek philosophers. He maintains that Farabi was not a mere translator of Plato and Aristotle's philosophy, and he did not accept unquestionably their philosophy. Rather, according to Davari, Farabi raises serious questions and eventually laid the principles and foundations of Islamic philosophy. Davari argues that Farabi is a founder for he did not began from the point that the Greek philosopher had begun. Rather he introduced new bases and principles. Here, Davari raises questions in Islamic philosophy, which have been unprecedented in Greeks philosophy. Particularly, Davari points out the distinct feature of Farabi's civic philosophy with Plato and Aristotle's political ideas, as well as the difference of Farabi's notion of utopia with modern utopian thinkers. One of the main issues in Farabi's philosophy, as Davari puts it, is the relationship between religion and philosophy. To Davari, by his contemplation about this relationship, indeed, Farabi gained a high status in the history of Islamic philosophy. In Farabi's, if philosophy reconciles with religion it would be no more a set of abstract topics and questions. Farabi believed that the head of the utopia must be a philosopher who gains his knowledge from revelation. In fact the philosopher king of Farabi's utopia is a prophet and for Farabi, the right religion is nothing but philosophy. For Farabi the order of the utopia is in conformity with that of the universe. Davari maintains that Farabi sought a rational order, and imagined a utopia in which the head of the utopia is the most rational and the most just. Here Davari mentioned that rationality in Farabi's philosophy is fairly different to the modern positive notion of rationality.

In the forth edition of this book published in 1999, Davari's long introduction is of importance. In this introduction he poses the idea that only the one who understands
Western philosophy can share it otherwise he/she can only translate and accept it unquestionably. Here not only does Davari write about the relationship between Islamic philosophy and Greeks one, but he enters into the modern age and writes about the West, as well as Orientalism and its relationship with imperialism.

Nationalism, National Sovereignty, and Independence:
A book compiled of five articles concerning the question of nationalism written between 1978-185. This book contains the most explicit views of Davari on crucial issues of political theory, such as freedom, sovereignty, and government, under the rubric of nationalism. The first article, 'The Nature and Forms of Nationalism' begins with a historical account of the genesis and growth of nationalism in Western Europe. In this article Davari sees 'nation' and 'nationalism' as modern notions which emanate from conditions, such as, change in the way of thinking in Renaissance, separation of state from the Church, and transference of sovereignty from the king to the people. He also casts a glance at Islamic ideas and addresses Farabi's notion of umma (community) comparing it with the modern notion of nation. In continuation nationalism in the third world, with regard to anti colonial movements, as well as contemporary history of Iranian nationalism which took form under the influence of Western ideas are studied.

The second Article, 'A Glance at Nationalism and Sovereignty' is a discussion on two conceptions of sovereignty: the modern conception of sovereignty based on peoples will and the religious conception of sovereignty based of God's will. Bearing in mind these two concepts, Davari focuses on the first constitution of Iran written in the early 20th century. He conceives of this constitution as incompatible with Sharia. For, the source of this constitution is the will of the people and the people themselves are lawmaker and
have sovereignty, however, in religion sovereignty belongs to God. Drawing a
demarcating line between the government by the Church, as occurred in the Europe, and
a genuine religious government, Davari poses a challenge to the notion of popular
sovereignty and instead confirms the role of Sharia and guardianship of religion. Then
Davari shifts his focus of attention to the advent of nationalism in the contemporary
history of Iran. He traces modern Iranian nationalism to the early 19th century when the
Iranian students were sent to the West and concludes that the modern Iranian nationalism
is a Western construction.

In the third article, ‘Nationalism and the question of Unity and Disintegration’, Davari
analyzes the relationship between nationalism and notions such as sovereignty, freedom,
religion, and Garbazedegi. Here he views modern notion of nationalism as an ideology
and traces it in the Western Europe and tries to show the contradiction between the
ideology of modern nationalism with religion.

The fourth article, ‘Our Garbazedegi and Nationalism’ Davri focuses on the way Iranians
were infatuated by the West. He tries to analyze the fact that Iranian intellectuals felt the
advantages of law, freedom, discipline, and science and technology in Europe, but failed
to understand the disadvantages of discarding religion, favoring power and
humancentrism by Europeans, which culminated in colonialism and imperialism. Now
Davari argues that it was a wrong claim that European had law and Iranian had not.
Whereas, he continues, Iranian had law but it was abandoned. In Davari’s view, however,
the Iranians were alien with the constitution, which had been borrowed from the West.

The fifth and last article, ‘Seyyed Jamal Addin Asadabadi and the question of nation and
nationalism’ is about the views offered by Seyyed Jamal about nationalism. Davari
maintains that Seyyed Jamal is one of the first Muslim thinkers to discuss about such a question in contemporary Islamic societies. According to Davary, while seyyed Jamal advocated Islamic unity, his views on nationalism is close to the modernists.

**Tradition, Modernity, and Postmodernity:**

A book compiled of four interviews with four thinkers, including Davari, arranged by Akbar Ganji¹. In his interview Davari gave a clear account of he means by the essence of modernity, his image of postmodemity, and the situation of religion

He identifies the West with philosophy and prophetically acknowledges that in the future thought there is no room for philosophy, for the West is at an end. He says that he is not able to fix a time for this end which is also the end of modernity, but he can see the signs.

Davari argues that the changes occurred in the ancient world were not of the sort which based on science and theory. For this reason, a change may occur in the future that is not based on a ready-made, formulated theory. Then he adds that this does not mean that the future change is necessarily one without theory. However, among the existing theories Davari sees none of them as the one which belongs to the future. He maintains that a 'waiting philosopher' has no affiliation to the existing theories, such as, democracy or socialism. Here he emphasizes that the future is of another thinking. Then he proceeds to claim that it is religion that belongs to the future. He believes that religion is an inborn human trait. However, the spirit of the modern age is not that of religion, in this age man was distanced from the truth of religion. Now, Davari does not rule out the possibility of the occurrence of a religious revolution which may disturb the existing order of the world and invent a new one. In another effort, Davari analyzes the essence of modernity by

¹ Akbar Ganji is the most well-known journalist at present time, who is know in jail. He was the editor of the journal. *Rah-e no* (New Path), published in 1999.
discussing self-centeredness of man. He also raises the question of morality and the good in the modern age which have both become self-oriented.

For Davari postmodernity is a phase of modernity, the phase of self-criticism. In his view the origin and inception of the modern society consists of purposive reason and social contract. He sees postmodernity as a moment which is characterized by the crisis of humanism, reason, and freedom. Here he refers to the indirect, but positive impact of postmodernity for the third world countries. According to him, postmodernity, at least, can prepare the third world countries for the future.

II. The Foundations

Davari’s main aim is to redefine the religious, the relation between man and God, and to formulate a sort of Islamic social and political theory in the light of a harsh criticism of the West, particularly that of modernity. His anti-modernist ideas have provided him enough basis to justify the entire Islamic tradition. Such traditionalism, however, is considerably different to what has existed for long in Iran as, it is involved philosophically in the discourse of the modernity.

Davari sets out to establish his system of thought through projecting the otherness of what may be placed under the rubric of modernity, and on the whole, the West. All his works is pervaded with the image of the absolute “otherness” of the West, Davari tries to establish Islam as a unified essence in its entirety. Even when he reproaches Europeans for the manner in which they treat non-Europeans, in fact, he refers to the otherness of Europeans, by making the point that the people having a Western training and education all over the world “are regarded by the Europeans as the ones who are affiliated with themselves” (Davari 1986: 19). “To the Europeans”, Davari continues, “the one who has
no European training is a stranger" (Ibid.). Davari also proceeds to reveal how the Orientalist views conceal the Orient. He conceives of Orientalism as an obstacle to understanding the Orient, and argues, “Orientalism has nothing to do with the substance of the Orient, and the Orientalist does not understand the Orient, but conceals it” (Davari 1985: 58). Such a challenge to the Orientalism, indeed, propels him to a kind of occidentalism, or in Al-Azmeh’s words, ‘reversed Orientalism’ (Al-Azmeh 1984: 355). Here Davari designates “the Occident not as a civilization vis-a-vis the Orient, but as a veil for it” (Davari 1985: 60).

Davari is aware that his enterprise is, in a sense, a response to the challenge of modernity or generally, to that of the West. To define the distinct character of his response, he gives an account of three categorical forms of contemporary intellectual reactions to the West: According to him, the first form of reaction culminated in an internalist arrogance, relying upon the glorious past and “being proud of cultural heritage, which caused no disturbance for the colonial powers” (Davari 1986: 29). The second one, he continues, brought about “the subjection of the entire previous indigenous learning and culture to the Western cultural politics” (Ibid.). To him, the third form of reaction to Western culture, was to debate and raise questions about the cultural issues, without challenging the foundations, so as to approve some features and reject some others as undesirable and deficient” (Ibid.: 29-30). Then he presents his own reaction as the fourth form which is beginning at present. This form, as Davari puts it “does not raise questions about various issues, but brings into question the inception, end, and the being of the West” (Ibid.). Of course the categories of ‘the West’ and ‘the Occident’, implying otherness, are not geographical ones. Rather these categories are indicative of what he sees as “a way of
thinking that appeared geographically in the West, the occident of the ancient world, and from there it spread all over the world" (Davari 1980: 16-17). Davari conceives of the West as a ‘totality’, and a ‘unified whole’. Therefore, he advances the argument that “the impact of the West should not be divided into good and evil, useful and harmful. The West is not a collection of independent atoms or elements, juxtaposed with each other. Rather it is a unique whole, impossible to introduce its parts willfully in a new combination” (Davari 1985: 22). On this basis, he proceeds to condemn those who “make distinction between science, technology, and literature of the West, on the one hand, and its forceful politics of domination, corruption and prostitution, on the other hand. In their view domination and the lust for aggression and deception in the West are not part of the Western essence.... Their ideal society is the one in which science, technology and literature of the West are integrated with ethics and Sharia” (Ibid.: 22). The main concern of Davari is to lay bare the declining essence of the West, and particularly, that of modernity, and to seek a way out of the Western all-encompassing domination.

The terms of modernity and the West in Davari’s writings overlap, and in many cases, connote the same thing. However, becoming more familiar with his writings, one can discern that methodologically the notion of modernity is a part as well as a consequence of what he means by the West. Conceptually, Davari defines the notion of the West through a great deal of focus on metaphysics and philosophy. He traces philosophical thinking to the ancient Greek, particularly Plato’s thought which “has the seeds of technological science”, and he adds, “philosophy took the path towards logical precision and mathematical form” (Ibid.: 104). In his view, Modernity—the new age in the Western history—“is a way of thinking and a historical practice which started in Europe more than
400 years ago, and has since expanded more or less universally" (Davari 1995: 73-78).

His challenge to modernity is mainly focused upon humanism (that is humancentrism), and the other tenets of modernity, including rationality and science receive a subsequent challenge. Indeed his challenge is directed towards central themes of the paradigm of the Enlightenment, namely, an autonomous subject, reason and science (see Hamilton 1992: 23). In Davari’s view, modernity “is a rational order in which man is the center, man creates everything, and man creates everything to possess it” (Davari 1994).

Associating modernity primarily with humanism, Davari argues, “the West portrays the demise of the holy truth, and the rise of a humanity, which views itself as the sole possessor, and focus of the universe. Its accomplishment is to possess everything in the celestial cosmos. Even if it were to prove the existence of God, it will be done not with the intention of obedience and submission, but in order to prove itself” (Davari 1980: 18). His conception of humanism connotes two interrelated definitions which have been prevalent since the nineteenth century, that is, “a non-religious or anti-religious worldview, usually based on the belief in man’s capacity for self-cultivation and self-improvement”, as well as “the conception of man as an autonomous being” (Mautner 1997: 256). To Davari, among the tenets of modernity, more fundamental than reason and freedom “is humanism, namely, the centrality and relevance of human being” (Ganji 1996: 103). Humanism for Davari is not one sort of philosophy, but a sort of being of man upon which the concept of man has become the mere substance of the West. Accordingly, all the philosophies, theories, logic, and new sciences must be subordinated to man (Davari 1983, 59). Here he delineates the main characteristics of modern man by designating him as “a unique whole having no ultimate aim outside himself, and anger,
lust, logos, and any other forces or attributions, are oriented towards and merged into this aim, namely, self-centeredness" (Davari 1985: 11).

By humanism he also tries to announce the reign of the Cartesian subject in a philosophical fashion. In this respect Davari refers to the moment in which “in the modern philosophy the substance of things has been replaced by object and objectivity, and reason and understanding have been replaced by self-subjectivity” (Davari 1980: 141). The notion of Cartesian ‘subject’, by which, in Tylor’s view, the moral sources were situated within us (Taylor 1985: 143), along with the notion of humanism, helps Davari to deal with the question of value system. In this respect Davari refers to the baselessness of moral systems in the West. He raises the problem that, as we read in Kant, “the self-centredness of man, entails only man to be the source of morality. But on the other side, the source and criteria of the good is the good itself, and man is not regarded as the good. In fact the problem of morality in the West lies in humanism and subjectivity, that is, when man becomes the criterion for good and evil, and right and wrong, the problem comes to the fore” (Ganji 1996: 127). He conceives of modernity’s crisis of values as its end, and argues, “the history [of the West], that its elites and intellectuals do not believe in its tenets and foundations can not continue (Ibid.: 112). He continues to refer to the conception of humanism, as the basis of social contract and attaches a distinguished character to the people of ancient (traditional) societies as the ones who “never claimed that the authority of law was dependent on their understanding and will” (Ibid.:118). He sees, thus, a religious society as the one to which social contract has no centrality, for man is not regarded as the focus of the universe (Ibid.: 123).
It is in the light of his notion of humanism that Davari sets out to challenge reason and rationality. He sees a conspicuous difference between what Descartes meant by reason and what Plato did (Davari 1980: 128). In ancient times, he maintains, “active reason and the rational world was the criteria for realizing whether an assertion is in conformity with the real or not; however, in modern times, the criteria for conformity of objectivity with subjectivity is man. In modern philosophy man is the center of the world and truth, and he is the one to approve and reject, the measure and criterion for everything” (Ibid.: 142). He reproves modern reason plaintively, for it “is no more sacred and has no link with the sacred world, rather it has been descended from the holly planes, transformed to a power that guides the domination of man over things” (Davari 1985: 15). Davari observes that reason does not any more have two faces: theoretical and practical. It asserts “the authority of human being and proves the calculable and logical scheme of conquering the universe” (Ibid.). His critique of modern rationality is indeed a critique of ‘reason’ based on the Cartesian paradigm. As we read in ‘Discourse on the Method’, Decartes claims, “that it is possible to attain knowledge which is very useful in life, and that, instead of that speculative philosophy by means of which, knowing the force and the action of fire, water, air, the stars, heavens and all other bodies that environ us, as distinctly as we know the different crafts of our artisans, we can in the same way employ them in all those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature.” (quoted in C. Taylor 1989: 148-9, emphasis added). Accordingly, Davari characterizes the main distinctive feature of rationality in modern thinking with instrumentality, and poses the idea that “the origin of instrumental rationality lies at the root of the Western philosophy” (Ganji 1996: 143). In respect of instrumental rationality,
he conceives of communicative rationality, or what he calls “the Spinosian desire of Habermas” (Ibid.:163) as baseless.

In this journey, Davari conceives of modern science as the consequence of modern rationality (Davari 1980: 12). He continues to view modern science as “the effect and a feature of modern history, lying at the root of the Western thought” (Davari 1985: 9), which is vital in shaping modern man. “Through the relation established by modern science”, he announces, “modern man has not only forgotten thinking and regarded science as perfect, but has been addicted to an arrogance that is destructive” (Ibid). He refers to a change in the relation between man and Being as the condition of genesis and growth of modern science. Such a science, he puts it, “has been produced through the enhancement of human knowledge, rather it has appeared through a fundamental change in Being and thinking of man, and wherever such a change has not occurred modern science and technology can not expand in a required fashion (Davari 1985: 10).

Moreover, he tries to reveal the human-centered base of science and technology by announcing that “the Western thinking as has actualized in the science and technology, is a subjective thinking, and in such thinking every thing becomes ‘object’” (Ibid.: 62).

Of course Davari is not going to oppose modern science and technology, as did the early traditionalists in their confrontation with modernity. Although he is aware of the fact that making use of the modern science and technology is inevitable, he feels it is essential “to mention repeatedly that modern science is not perfect, it is not to be worshiped, and particularly, it is not proper to apply utterly its research method to philosophy, religion, and other knowledge” (Ibid.:13). “If they do so”, he concludes, “they must be aware that it is detrimental to thinking, religion, religious knowledge, and probably science” (Ibid.).
In fact he mentions that while we have no choice to make use of science and technology, we must be conscious of the implications and always prepared for its alternation. “The underdeveloped societies”, he maintains, “have no choice, but to limp towards modernity... At the present situation it is not possible to abandon development.... But the problem is that the underdeveloped societies have to take the path for which they are not prepared” (Ganji 1996: 134). Finally he proceeds to find an alternative path to that of modernity, and heralds, “the path of history is not a prepared one, but it is to be opened up” (Ibid).

To show the comprehensive expansion of modernity and the extent to which our society is under its domination, he portrays modernity as “a tree which was planted in the West and has spread everywhere. For many years we have been living under one of the dying and faded branches of this tree, and its dried shadow which is still hanging over our heads. While we have taken refuge in Islam, the shadow of this branch has still not yet totally disappeared from over our heads. In fact, neither it nor we have left each other alone” (Davari 1983: 83). Next he asks the question, “What can be done with this dried branch” (Ibid.)? His answer to this question revolves around the advent of a new relation between man and Being. Such relation would signify reaching the ‘renewed covenant’ as well as the ‘renewed age’, or in Davari’s own word, a ‘renewed Ahd’. “Once” Davari maintains, “the time will come that through excessive absorption in calculation man confronts something incalculable” (Davari 1980: 227). In this confrontation men reach the possibility for thinking. It is through thinking and overcoming metaphysics, Davari maintains, “that the relation between man and the universe undergoes change and man

1 In Persian as well as Arabic language, both age and covenant are signified by the word Ahd
would enter into a new covenant with Being (Davari 1980: 227). The category of the “renewed covenant/age” in Davari’s ideas contains the establishment of an entirely different, self-conscious relationship with Being, actualized in the past. “In the past”, he believes, “prophets, poets, philosophers, and in the whole, thinkers renewed this covenant/age; in the future also the thinkers undertake the task” (Davari 1985: 164). Here, Davari refers to Heidegger’s view that thinking of the future is no more philosophy and in such an age, “language is the language of Beings, as clouds are the clouds of the sky” (Heidegger 1978: 242).

Now he refers to overcoming metaphysics as the path to enter the renewed covenant/age. “If a new history is to begin”, he puts forward, “the future thinkers, also, have to raise one more time the question of metaphysics and the question of Being” (Davari 1980: 238). Of course Davari does not reject metaphysics per se, however, following Heidegger, he takes metaphysics as identical to philosophy. It is, for Davari, the substance of the Western civilization, which is the main obstacle to the change of the relation between man and Being. Davari takes the view that “philosophy does not belong to the future anymore, and if man is to take another path it is not that of philosophy; philosophy is not clearing the path at all” (Davari 1985: 161).

To him, the Western civilization is nothing but “the fruit, as well as the compartment of philosophy” (Ibid.: 159). He continues, “not only the West can not be understood without referring to its philosophy and, in the whole, to its thought, but I say, if the Western thought did not exist, then the present civilization did not come into existence either” (Ibid.). Now he sees the way of becoming emancipated from the Western civilization through thinking. However, he mentions that such emancipation “is not the condition for
thinking, but it is the result of thinking, and this end is achieved, only through thinking (Ibid.: 29). "Thinking" as Davari observes, "should not be confused with particular plans and calculations. For these plans and calculations, whatever they are, have no ground out of the frame of the Western civilization" (Ibid.). In his endeavor to conceptualize thinking, he refers to "love of rightness, kindness and suffering" as "the signs of thinking, which stands in contrast to selfishness, unkindness and unsuffering" (Ibid.). To put the import of thinking, he "maintain[s] that when thinking does not exists all the aspects undergo agitation and disturbance.... When thinking does not exists, whatever exists is error" (Ibid.). Our very situation, Davari envisages, is that of sleepiness and being ensnared in everyday customs. Thinking for Davari has a peculiar characteristic which "disturbs the sleepiness and customs' obedience" (Davari 1980: VII). He sets forth that while those who belong to thinking clear the path of the future, and thus are supposed to be the pioneers among the people, they are, he continues, "alone and do not care for reputation and celebrity. There is neither profit nor loss for them. Their life is in the service of thinking, and not their thinking in the service of expediences and self-interests. The thinkers are in harmony with each other, but they do not learn merely from each other; they hear from somewhere else and such hearing separates them from the ordinary people (Davari 1985: 29). However, he mentions, "I am not able to say how and when thinking comes, but I realize, more or less, its signs" (Ibid.). Nonetheless, he proceeds to infer that people would come close to thinking when they "get rid of their everyday customs and come to the new path" (Davari 1980: IX).

From another angle Davari prophetically claims, "modernity would come to an end, but I can not fix the time for it. In fact, I am not talking of an end but of its signs, which is
evident (Ganji 1996: 112). For Davari the replacement of rightness (God)\(^1\) by man is the main symbol of the modern age. In his view, the West, is thus, “an occurrence, in which man has become the veil for rightness (God) and truth, and he himself has appeared as rightness (God) and truth” (Ibid.: XVI-XVII). He sees the new selfishness and self-centeredness of man in the nature of the philosophy in the way expanded in the West (Ibid.: XV). Considering Western philosophy, as the main foundation of Western civilization, Davari concludes, “the West with its philosophy is at an end, neither the history of the future is the history of the West nor the future thought is philosophy” (Davari 1980: XXII).

Davari turns towards critiques of modernity that have come from within the Western world. In particular he refers to the postmodern challenge to modernity and expresses a conditional agreement with some aspects of postmodernism. Here, he makes a distinction between two senses of postmodernity: a civilizational situation, and a mood or intellectual moment. He embraces the latter and refers to the warning that is given by some postmodern philosophers that the principles of modernity “are on the verge of instability, and perhaps, breaking up” (Ganji 1996: 102). Davari endorses this warning and he shares the belief that the future of modernity is quite bleak. In his view, postmodernity represents the consciousness of the West about its own declining future. Therefore, to him, his involvement in the postmodern debate means, “to share in the consciousness acquired by the West” (Ibid.: 105-6). He is aware of the anti foundational character of postmodern challenge, and for him, “postmodernity implies the sense that humanism has reached a crisis, and consequently, freedom and rationality also have come

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\(^1\) The word \textit{Hagh} in Persian means Rightness. The same word in the tradition of Islamic mysticism means God.
to crisis” (Ibid.: 103). Now he tries to indicate the affinity of Heidegger to postmodernity
and states that although “no postmodern philosopher may be Heideggerian, but they all
have followed him” (Mashregh 1997: 13). Since his guru, Ahmad Fardid, was a self-
professed Heideggerian, Davari maintains that Fardid has been postmodern since the last
forty years” (Ibid.).

Davari defines postmodernity as “a phase of modernity in which the essence of modernity
is brought into question” (Ganji 1996: 119). Not only Davari maintains that
postmodernity is not detrimental to the societies like that of Iran, but he sees some hope
in postmodernity. Thus, he poses cautiously, “if we know the path, be aware of its
difficulties, and set out with the necessary provisions for travelling, then it seems
postmodernity, although has no apparent positive achievement for the third world
countries, but has no negative implications as well, and probably it would prepare us for
the future” (Ibid.: 110).

III. Social Theory

Although Davari is not essentially a social theorist, but his ideas, inevitably find
expression in the realm of social theory. When Davari tries to explain the declining
character of modernity and the nature of the modern man, in fact, he is formulating a sort
of social theory. For, Social theorists generally address the reality which “is not as
seems” (Cashmore and Mullan 1983: VIII). Since they take appearances as superficial,
they believe that “a real understanding of the nature of man and his relations to his
environment and other men must probe beneath the surface of appearances” (Ibid). In
this respect, when Davari begins with the assessment that Western civilizations is moving
towards its own destination, and that the essence of modernity, its notion of instrumental
erationality and understanding of man, need to be questioned, indeed, he sets out to seek
for an alternative Islamic social theory.

Among the fundamental ideas of social theory freedom is for Davari’s the central
concern. He does not indicate any particular kind of freedom, such as freedom of thought,
expression, practice... For him, “insofar as civilization draws upon inner truth, it is not an
obstacle to freedom and thinking” (Davari 1985: 9). What is clear to him is “that thinking
is free wherever it exists, and freedom exists there as well. It makes no sense to say
thinking is antithetical to freedom.... What is antithetical to freedom and confused with
thinking is lust and not thinking” (Davari 1980: XVI). Now he proceeds to lay bare the
substance of modern freedom. He points out that modern freedom is the freedom of
individual egos and “is confined to the conditions and circumstance of an ego that has
appeared in the name of the West and spread all over the world. In other words, the West
is the universal evil and ego, penetrating into individual egos. The modern freedom is
also a sort of harmony between individual egos and the universal ego. A human right is
also a set of formalities with which, both universal ego and individual ego are justified”
(Davari 1986: 94). Now he points out the relation between freedom and constraint and
restraint and argues, “the illusive status of [modern] freedom appears when it is set forth
against constraint and restraint” (Ibid.). Then he continues, “if the ego does not accept
constraint and restraint, it would itself impose constraint and restraint”(Ibid.). In fact, he
interprets modern freedom, as the freedom of the lusts of egos which, in turn, puts
constraints and restraints on freedom. Such an interpretation of modern freedom may
draw our attention to the negative notion of liberty, “which involves in the answer to the
question what is the area within which the subject—a person or group of persons—is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons?” (Berlin, 1969). In fact, theories based on this notion “want to define freedom in terms of individual independence from others” (Taylor 1985: 213), as well as the positive theories which “want to identify freedom with collective self-government” (Ibid.).

Negative freedom in Berlin’s view connotes “the preservation of an area within which an individual may do as he chooses without interference” (Ryan 1979: 4), and the positive one refers to “the freedom which consists in our behavior being under the control of our true or real or higher selves” (Ibid.: 5). In line with the negative theories of freedom, Davari stipulates that “lusts of egos are limited in two moments: One in contact with lusts of other egos, and the other under the protection of God” (Davari 1980: XVIII). It is obvious that Berlin’s negative notion of freedom is extremely different than that of Davari. While the liberals use the idea of freedom in association with the notion of individual autonomy, Davari’s notion of freedom itself is not an individual-centered one. He takes the notion of freedom and gives a whole new meaning where freedom lies in accepting the laws/norms dictated by religion rather than those that are dictated by individual reason or choice. However, Davari goes beyond the positive and negative theories in viewing modern freedom. In fact, Davari analyzes modern freedom in the context of the relation between man and Being, and on the basis of such relation he designates modern freedom as the one which “is to discard righteousness in favor of becoming subject to egocentrism” (Davari 1985: 95). He conceives of modern freedom as nothing, but subjection to passion in taking action or ceasing to take action, and designates it as “rebellion and not freedom” (Ibid.: 94).
Davari proceeds to refine and redefine the conception of freedom through his own religious account of freedom with respect of the Islamic revolution of Iran. He specifies that “Iran’s revolution is not a bourgeois democratic revolution, therefore, it would not reach the freedom which is the consequence of such a revolution” (Davari 1986: 67). However, he continues emphatically that he does not mean “Iran’s revolution opposes freedom” (Ibid.). Asserting that freedom must be free from individual lust, Davari concludes that a true freedom is realized when the people opt to follow laws of Sharia. “Freedom in Islam” he maintains, “must be emancipated from the restrains and constrains of egocentric lust, as well as from the rule of other’s lust” (Ibid.: 68). This is possible only when people willingly accept and endorse the laws of Sharia. When this happens, “there would be no despotism, and the execution of rules and laws of Sharia will amount to people’s satisfaction” (Ibid.).

Davari’s account of justice, as an important notion in social theory, is a negative one. In fact, he criticizes the prevailing notions of justice, rather than giving his own definition. What needs to be noted here is that Davari does not define justice as a matter of distribution of material resources. In his view, gaining shares of the world for material advantage of an individual self is no warrant for the realization of a just world in the modern history. For, “the power and authority [of man] is at the service of egoism” (Davari 1980: XVIII). Not providing a definition for justice, he only gives an ambiguous account of the conditions, which bring about justice. In this relation he maintains that in order “to establish a utopian and just order, it is necessary that all or a group of the people become familiar with justice, and embody justice in their own life, and [it is necessary that] their deed and belief become identical” (Davari 1999: 13). He also rejects the idea
that social contract is the source and foundation of justice founded in Islam. In turn he maintains that justice guaranteed by an Islamic government, must be defined by Islamic values which, in his views, guarantees people's satisfaction (Davari 1986: 42). However he does not mention the Islamic values that defines justice.

One of Davari's main standpoints is to defend a social order based on religious values. While outlining this perspective he emphasizes the baselessness of the Western value system, and laments that religion is "an inborn human trait, but man has become far from the truth of religion by embracing the modern world" (Ganji 1996: 123). However, he is hopeful about the future and remind us the very situation which "would cause a reaction that appears in the history" (Ibid.). "As we witnessed", he heralds, "when the Western society failed to realize its ideals, and the hope of the eighteenth century were not fulfilled, there appeared sorts of historical and religious awakening, and now religion has captured more attention" (Ibid.). In the context of this understanding of justice and freedom, Davari sets about sketching the nature of a religious society. For him "the self-founded reason of man is not the pillar and foundation of a religious society" (Ibid.: 125) Such a society is something in which "the people breathe religious air.... There is a religious world in which religious language is comprehended easily. The pillar and foundation of this world is the relation we establish with God's names (traits), and all other things are determined and actualized in the light of this relation—not a literally but an ontological relation" (Ibid.). Of course his emphasis upon thinking and relation between man and Being does not provide him with enough impetus to move further and give a detailed account of such a society. Indeed he did not define the social relations and
institutions which may come to existence in a religious society, in the light of thinking and new relation between man and Being.

For Davari, finding a way out of the existing, absolute domination of the West, and achieving a religious society is by no means a simple, easy task. He regards the existing ideologies as almost “a set of molded remarks and a means for justification of nihilism. Therefore, even though the bearers of these ideologies talk too much about freedom, human rights, change, and revolution, they would not be effective enough.... But the philosophers and thinkers hardly offer instruction; nevertheless they are the teachers and trainers of the community” (Davari 1980: X). Davari, as a philosopher, thus claims to distance himself from ideologies, and essentially relies upon thinking. He suggests that we “wait till the revolution [initiated by thinking] emancipates us from the domination of axioms and allegedly global values of civilization” (Davari 1985: 19). “Such an emancipation [at one level] seems as being identical to thinking”, and for Davari, “it will occur through thinking” (Ibid.: 19). “No revolution”, he believes, “would occur unless the foundation of the West changes enormously” (Ibid.: 15), and at present, he maintains, “we are at the end of the Western history and there is no more hope for its future; although it is not easily comprehended, but acceptance of this fact does not amount to desperation, rather it is a sign of waiting and having hope to the future revolution” (Ibid.: 17). Here, by revolution he means a religious revolution. Distinguishing between a religious revolution from other social revolutions, such as the French or even Marxist revolutions, Davari believes that the former “may disturb the existing order of the world and invent a new one, in which many of the modern things, sciences, and devices may be preserved, while its ruling law is not the modern one (Ganji 1996: 137).
Informed with this worldview, Davari casts a glance at Iran’s revolution and stresses that it “is not merely an anti-despotic revolution, rather it has a religious essence...and perhaps we come out from the abyss of the incomplete, passive, and declining Gharbzadegi in order to find an opportunity for thinking. This is our alternative path” (Davari 1986: 77). To show his belief in a global mission for the revolution, he points out that Islamic revolution should “call for returning to the early Islam and renewing the covenant. Such a renewing entails breaking the covenant with Gharbzadegi. If this covenant is broken, the people all over the world would become aware of it and their covenant also would be broken, and this means the spread of Islamic revolution to all over the world” (Ibid).

Pondering on the way out of the existing situation, the situation of absolute domination of the West, Davari presents a way of life, which becomes feasible through thinking. At first stage a few people can take the way to formation of religious society; for metaphysics has yet concealed thinking, and indeed “neither can we rescue philosophy, nor can it rescue us. If man knows this and recognize his limitation, he can hope that at first a few people hear the call of invitation to thinking and renewing the covenant with old age” (Davari 1980: XIV). However, he claims that he does not mean that we have to retrogress into the old condition of life, rather he means that we have “to devote attention to and recollect our covenant in the past” (Ganji 1996: 170). He believes that if man forgets the covenants he has entered into or broken, he would become futureless (Ibid.). Thus, in Davari’s view, we have “to renew our covenant with early Islam and not to revivify the formalities and etiquette of that era” (Davari 1980: XVII).

According to Davari reaching such an ‘authentic’ life amounts to surmounting homelessness. Here he lays stress upon the implications of oblivion of being, and defines
homelessness as “the disconnection of links of harmony between people and the rightness (God) and truth, as well as among the people. To be aware of homelessness is the preparation for recollection and perhaps is the outset of a re-harmony” (Davari 1985: 164). Davari develops his religious narrative of home and indicates that man “would return to his real home and homeland, which is under the protection of rightness (God)” provided man “recollects the sense[that he is not rightness, but needs rightness to seek refuge in it]” (Davari 1980: XXII).

IV. Political Theory

As is the case with his social theory, Davari’s political theory also relies upon his critique of the ‘essence of the West’ and his unique notion of ‘thinking’. He throws an ontological light on politics and attaches it to thinking and realization of a religious society. While developing on the notion of ‘thinking’ to pass over the Western civilization and move towards a religious society, Davari assumes that the ability to ‘think’ is the hallmark of a few, chosen or select persons. Althuogh he does not identify such persons, but one can infer that the Islamic jurists should be among them. “Thinking”, as he defines it “is being recalled by rightness (God), and when one or ones are recalled towards rightness, the capacity for hearing [the voice of] rightness more or less appears everywhere, and on such basis, the foundation for a civilization, in the whole, and politics, as one of its features, would be laid. Particularly, when politics is a religious one, thinking would support directly politics” (Ibid.: p.6). What he calls religious politics, then has nothing to do with power politics. As Davari mentions,
Religious politics does not accompany "power" in the sense understood in formal politics. Perhaps Plato was the first thinker who had noticed that power gives rise to corruption. For him, the way to prevent or immunize [the individual against corruption] was to familiarize him with the ideal world and eternal truths. Many of the political analysts of the modern era say that one should monitor the activities of the politicians. They add that through supervision of politicians one can prevent them from deviation and corruption. The point here is that if corruption permeates the society and the world, mere monitoring cannot do anything. The uprightness of one’s actions and correctness of one’s decisions can be assured through having self-control and fearing God (Davari 1998).

In involving religion in politics, Davari challenges the liberal view that locates political authority and sovereignty in social contract and utilitarianism. Instead he aims to derive legitimate authority from religious rules and defines public good and happiness in the light of religion. On the issue of sovereignty, Davari argues that “the main principle of all modern laws is that sovereignty emanates from the will of nation, [that is,] it is nation that makes law” (Davari 1986: 43). In sharp contrast to this he argues that “in religion, sovereignty belongs to God and the rulers performing God’s rules” (Ibid.). “In our religion”, he believes, “the substance of the government is guardianship [of the divine]” (Ibid.).

Of course he does not rule out “the supervision by the people” in a religious government. To compare people’s sovereignty with that of God, Davari refers to “two circumstances [within which] the desires of man may become limited. First, in confrontation with other desires, and second, in the protection of the guardianship of rightness (God). He maintains that in the modern history of the West the private desires of rulers were limited to some extent, but the lust of the ego did not diminish. In this line Davari shows the
emergence of a type of man which is himself lawmaker (Davari 1980: XVIII). Therefore, to Davari, laws, as other aspects of human life, take a human form. Such an authority to make law, in Davari’s view, is subject to ego’s lust (Ibid.).

Davari formulates one of his most basic political ideas by categorizing ‘people’s satisfaction’. In this connection Davari makes a distinction between two conceptions of popular will. The first is articulated in a democratic system in which ‘people’s satisfaction’ is the source of justice, and a religious one in which ‘people’s satisfaction’ is the consequence of justice. In other word, in a democratic system ‘people’s satisfaction’ is regarded as the input of the system, and in a religious one as the output. At one level the people are satisfied with whatever they may choose. In Davari’s view, such a satisfaction is articulated in a democratic system. At another level, the just life which is to be provided by the government for the people brings about their satisfaction. Here he advances his argument by referring to the meaning of the government Ayatollah Khomeini had in his mind, and stipulates that “this government must guarantee the justice which people’s satisfaction is not its source and foundation, but its necessary consequence and achievement. In other words, the Imamat (leadership) of the Ummat (religious community), as the embodiment of a religious government, implies the status of man, as the vice-regent of God, being antithetical to violence and imperialist domination” (Davari 1986: 42). Accordingly, Davari ceases to formulate any democratic theory. Meanwhile, he is reluctant to justify any political despotism. Instead, he tries “to say that Western societies are not oriented towards freedom, and irrespective of the despotism dominated through formation of the universal suffrage, it seems democracy has entered a crisis, or at least, it may be said that it has no stable situation” (Ganji 1996: 99).
Here Davari does not mention the nature of the crisis and instability that democracy undergoes. However, one can infer that his account of the crisis which prevails the West and is expressed through postmodern thinkers, may be the basis of his image of modern democracy.

Davari mentions that existing ideologies can not clear the path of the future, and thus, thinkers must go beyond the existing ideologies. For him, "the 'waiting philosopher' has no attachment to existing political system, namely he is neither democrat nor socialist (Ibid.: 152). He has no doubt that defense of, as well as contesting, liberalism and modernity is nothing but ideology (Ibid.: 139). However, when he sets about posing an alternative to democracy, he gets involved in ideology, the ideology of 'guardianship'. Davari takes the view "that the realization of an Islamic republic depends on guardianship... Guardianship is the truth (substance) of Iran’s government. All in all, guardianship is the guarantor of Islam, but this does not mean clergies’ rule in post-revolution era" (Davari 1986: 67-8). Although he is explicit in stating that guardianship does not entail the government of the clergies, but what he means by guardianship of religion is, indeed, the guardianship of Jursisconsult, for the one who has the authority to establish, interpret, and apply Islamic laws is no one but the Islamic jurist. In this connection he maintains that "contrary to the perception of the majority of the intellectuals, religion and Sharia are not confined to prayer, but imply rules and laws in politics, as well as in arrangements and regulations for the issues of the country and community" (Ibid.: 45-6). To justify the application of religious rules and laws, Davari contrasts them against the application of the will of the rulers in the past and the will of the nation in the modern times (Ibid).
As a thinker in a semi-colonialized society, Davari is also sensitive to the notion of imperialism. Again, in this realm also, his outlook on this notion is a philosophical one. Davari maintains that the West will inevitably end in imperialism. As he sees, “in an historical age, philosophy, poetry, politics, law, economics, customs, ways of life, rules, beliefs, and rituals are not so independent parts as to isolate one from the others and maintain it as it has been. The West is a whole, and the way to the West ends in imperialism which did not come to existence by accident” (Davari 1980: XVI). He proceeds, then, to point out the intellectual foundations of the imperialist nature of the West by designating “Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Sartre” as “the great thinkers whose greatness is their being the philosophers of imperialism” (Ibid.). To Davari, “without referring to their works and just with recourse to collecting economic statistics and expressing its social and political characteristics it [imperialism] may not be comprehended.... The domination of imperialism took place in the way that a micro-imperialism has penetrated in the Western man guaranteed by philosophy. It is through the Western philosophy, say, Cartesian subject and Bacon’s view on exerting power over nature that man has become the center of the world and seen itself as the sole possessor of the universe. Bacon and Descartes said that philosophy intends to make man dominant over the cosmos and nature. This philosophy is based on domination. Philosophy gives ample elbow room to man in all affairs. Had philosophy not expanded in this way in the West, modern imperialism, selfishness, and egoism would not come into existence” (Ibid.: XVI). In Davari’s view, imperialism may be the termination of the West (Ganji 1996: 112).
V. Appropriation of Heidegger

It seems Davari has been involved in a paradoxical undertaking: the modern is to be discarded in favor of a renewed religious tradition. Such an undertaking is accomplished by appropriating Heidegger’s ideas, the ones which, to Davari, have affinities with postmodernity. Davari frequently expresses his proximity to Heidegger, and at the surface Heidegger’s critique of instrumental rationality, modern science, and technology and his stress on a renewed thinking are echoed in the writings of Davari. With rejecting modernity and alluding to the ‘new covenant’, Davari tries to express a sense of ‘repeating’ to which Heidegger indicates. ‘Repeating’ in Heidegger’s word means, “going back into the possibilities of the Dasien\(^1\) that has been there (Heidegger 1995: 437). In Heidegger’s view “the repeating of that which is possible does not bring again \([\text{Wiederbringen}]\) something that is ‘past’, nor does it bind the ‘Present’ to that which has already been ‘outstripped’” (Ibid.). This is important for in affirming tradition, Davari emphatically rules out regression into the old condition of life. Instead he emphasizes recollection of the covenant into which we had entered in the past without revivifying the exact form of the life that existed in the past. Davari also replies to those who may accuse him of being a fanatic and a reactionary. He asserts that “Heidegger is the symbol of the future thinking” (Davari 1980: 238). He also forecasts about the possibility that “the thinkers of the future might be Heideggerian: as philosophers, from Plato to Nitzsche, are in a sense, Platonic and Aristotelian”(Ibid.: 225). In asserting the importance of Heidegger’s ideas he claims that “no ideas are as hard to penetrate as that of Heidegger’s,

\(^{1}\) Human Existence
and only a few people has comprehended their depth” (Ibid.: 18). It is so becase Heidegger “is retelling the future destiny of man.” (Ibid.). Davari conceives of Heidegger as “a revolutionary, gentle, and tranquil thinker, who teaches [us] the prepared thinking to overcome the West, and renew the covenant” (Gangi 1996: 149). To him “Heidegger is not a metaphysician, or a mere critic of metaphysics. He has understood and expressed the origin and foundation of the essence of the Western history” (Ibid.). However, Davari shows his selective appropriation of Heidegger by claiming that he is not the follower of Heidegger, rather what is important to him in Heidegger's “ideas is that which received the animosity of proponents of the West” (Ibid.). According to Davari, the main themes he has borrowed from Heidegger are an ontological outlook to the relation between man and Being embracing both thinking and metaphysics, and a harsh criticism of the West as an essence which culminates to its denial.

Davari's view that modernity demonstrates a change in relation between man and Being (Davari 1985: 10), and that it is through thinking that man can renew the covenant and establish a distinct type of relation with Being (Davari 1980: 227), closely reflects a Heideggerian outlook. For, Heidegger maintains, “thinking accomplishes the relation of Being to the essence of man. It does not make or cause the relation. Thinking brings this relation to Being solely as something handed over to it from Being” (Heidegger 1978: 193).

Part of Davari's challenge to the West and modernity depends on his image of philosophy and metaphysics. He states that philosophy does not belong to the future (Davari 1985: 161), and instead, it is through thinking that we can enter into the future (Davari 1980: 9).
This view too is based on Heidegger’s forecast that thinking is to come and that it “is no longer philosophy, because it thinks more originally than metaphysics—a name identical to philosophy” (Heidegger 1978: 242). For Heidegger “a task of thinking which—so it seems—includes the assertion that philosophy has not been up to the matter of thinking and has thus become the history of mere decline” (Ibid.: 378). In addition to it, Davari’s contest for humanism can gain support from Heidegger’s standpoint against humanism. For, Heidegger asserts that “the highest determinations of the essence of man in humanism is still do not realize the proper dignity of man” (Heidegger 1978: 210). Then Heidegger explicitly states that to the extent that this dignity is not realized, “the thinking in Being and Time is against humanism” (Ibid.). Similar to Heidegger, Davari characterizes modernity with the notion of subjectivity and objectivity. The description Heidegger offers us of modernity is that, “modernity is characterized by a distanced subjectivity that stands over against objects, judging and manipulating them for its own chosen goals” (Kolb 1986: 119-20). Following Heidegger, Davari refers to the moment in which “in the modern philosophy the substance of things has been replaced by object and objectivity, and reason and understanding have been replaced by self-subjectivity” (Davari 1980: 141). Then Davari diagnosed the problem of morality in the modern times by analyzing subjectivity as a moment in which “man becomes the criterion for good and evil, and right and wrong” (Ganj 1996: 127).

Davari’s ideas sound like those of Heidegger when he talks of the “calculative and logical scheme of conquering the universe (Davari 1985: 15), or when he characterizes the distinctive feature of modern rationality with instrumentality (Ganji 1996: 143). Heidegger also “speaks of the ‘calculative thinking’ that dominates our life and attributes
to it the same basic structure as Weber's formal rationality" (Kolb 1986: 120). Science and logic representing technical interpretation of thinking are for Heidegger, one type of limited thinking, giving one type of limited knowledge. He shows that their self-privileged thinking excludes philosophical thinking; and that, simultaneously, they depend upon it, and are secondary to it. Thus, as Heidegger prescribes, “...we must free ourselves from the technical interpretation of thinking. The beginnings of that interpretation reaches back to Plato and Aristotle” (Heidegger 1978: 194). Davari takes up this account by mentioning that “although nobody can refuse [to apply] modern science, it is necessary to mention repeatedly that modern science is not perfect, it is not to be worshiped, and particularly, it is not proper to apply utterly its research method to philosophy, religion, and other knowledge. If they do so, they must be aware that it is detrimental to thinking, religion, religious knowledge, and probably science” (Davari 1985: 13).

Davari endeavors to surmount the existing ideologies on the basis of Heidegger’s view of ideological turn. For Heidegger the ideological turn in modern world is “the decay of genuine philosophical thought”, and ideology in his view is “an overgrowth of modern metaphysics” (Dallmayer 1993: 100). Following Heidegger, Davari regards the existing ideologies as almost “a set of molded remarks and a means for justification of nihilism” (Davari 1980: X). “Therefore”, Davari continues, “even though the bearers of these ideologies talk too much about freedom, human rights, change, and revolution, they would not be effective enough (Ibid.). Davari mentions that he takes ideology in its narrow sense, which is in contrast to thinking. Therefor, he reaches the conclusion that
defense of liberalism and modernity is nothing but ideology. Then he adds that even to reject liberalism and modernity leads to ideology (Ganji 1996: 139).

Davari also devotes a great deal of his attention to Heidegger's concept of homelessness and authenticity. The characteristics Davari attaches to the thinkers, those who are alien and separate from ordinary people, is similar to Heidegger's notion of authenticity, which "is supposed to point to a way of life that is higher than that of average everydayness" (Guignon 1993: 228). For Heidegger, "authentic existence' is to be developed from its common background of the averaged and leveled kind of life of the 'one like many'" (Heidegger 1968: 55). Moreover, it may be interpreted that in Davari's notion of guardianship, which is analogous to Plato's philosopher king, the thread of Heidegger's view on authenticity is visible. Heidegger's division between 'authentic existence' and 'inauthentic existence' implies a sort of relationship between the leaders who reach authenticity and the subjects who are "deemed incapable of meaningful self-determination" (Wolin 1990: 46). In this respect, Davari assigns authenticity to the thinkers who, according to his own experience of revolution, "regard themselves as alien" to other people (Davari 1980: VII).

Also, Davari throws focus on the implication of being aware of our homelessness, that is the possibility of returning to our real homeland, under the protection of God. While, in Heidegger's view, homelessness "consists in the abandonment of Being by beings", and thus, through thinking of the history of Being we come to realize our essential homelessness (Heidegger 1978: 218-21).

It seems obvious that Davari interprets Heidegger as a theist philosopher, and such an interpretation to some extent is legitimate. For, thinkers such as Gadamer, at least tend to
reject an atheistic interpretation of Heidegger. Gadamer shows his dissatisfaction with Sartre’s presenting “Heidegger as one of the representatives of atheistic thinkers of our epoch” (Gadamer 1994: 167). He continues, “in spite of this I would show that an understanding of Heidegger can be based on only a superficial appropriation of his philosophy” (Ibid.).

However Davari takes another step and tries to construct an Islamic society on a Heideggerian foundation. Now Davari’s appropriation of Heidegger becomes extremely selective, and immediately a crucial question comes to the fore: What is the relationship between Heidegger’s negative criticism of the West and Davari’s positive construction of an Islamic system? In so far as Davari appropriates Heidegger’s ideas about thinking and the relation of man with Being to criticize and show the decline of Western metaphysical system of thought, his appropriation is legitimate. But, when he comes to interpret traditional Islamic ethos in the light of Heideggerian conceptualization, it seems he distances from Heidegger. However, in this respect, Davari mentions that “essentially no body can be a Heideggerian philosopher, for he has not provided a philosophical system; even he has not confirmed principles on which bases we can establish a philosophy” (Davari 1994: 12).

This, in Davari’s view, justifies his reading of Heidegger. The reliance on Heideggerian language is important because Islamic traditionalism today is not based on traditional discourse, which postulates the realization of same golden era of the past. Instead, through the discourse of postmodernity it justifies the search for an alternative to Western modernity. In doing this, Davari does not follow Heidegger’s ideas as a European thinker may do. He uses Heidegger’s ideas to reconstruct a new religious society and politics. It
is an instrument of restructuring the discourse of Islamic traditionalism. The appropriation of the postmodern critique of modernity, particularly Heideggerian notion of 'authentic being', to affirm a reconstructed traditionalism is not unique to Iran. In many post-colonial societies, national sentiments borrow from Heidegger's critique of Western rationality. In Iran, Davari uses it skillfully, to lend support to the need for affirming a theory of religious guardianship which helps clergies to justify even through an intellectual argumentation the superiority of a jurisconsult to govern the society. The point upon which clergies stress is Davari's criticism of humancentrism. This point enables the clergies to challenge democracy and defend Ayatollah Khomeinie's view of 'guardianship of Jurisconsult' 1.

Davari's ideas emerged as a philosophical base for a theory of religious guardianship, and this brought him close to the clergies. However his point of departure, namely his Heideggerian interpretation of the West and modernity is fairly different from that of the clergies. His terminology is expressive of discourse of modernity containing terms such as subject and object, instrumental rationality, thinking, humancentrism, and loss of meaning. While the image of the clergies of the notions of the West and modernity is defined through Sharia-bound keywords such as blaspheme, polytheism, lawful and permissible, unlawful and prohibited. Seeing Davari as both an ally and a rival, the ruling clergies have taken a dual position against his ideas. In so far as Davari's criticism of modernity and defense of tradition serve traditional Islam to stand straight, the ruling clergies make him provisions to express his ideas. In the meantime, they carefully

1 in Ayatollah Komeinie's view "Telavat-e Faghih--the guardianship of Islamic jurist--is the same as the appointment of a tutor for minors. The tutelage of the nation regarding responsibility and authority does not differ at all from the tutelage of the under-aged (Khomeini 1978: 65).
monitor his ideas to make sure that he does not codify and formulate a different version of Islamic traditionalism.

Among Davari's ideas, his image of the West was mainly the target of critiques, particularly posed by modernist Muslim intellectuals. As we read, Davari saw the West not just a political entity, but a totality, a way of thinking and a historical practice started more than 400 years ago in Europe. For him, it was this way of thinking and historical practice that brought about the demise of holly truth, and the rise of humancentrism. Davari's critics, maintained that imaging the West as a unified and totalizing entity, is a Hegelian construct that left no room for a constructive dialogue (Sorush 1988: 236).

Davari was also criticized for seeing the West as the expansion of the way of thinking and historical practice originally came to existence in Western Europe. It was said that since intellect is unfettered, philosophy cosmopolitan, and knowledge without boundaries, the date and place of birth of Davari's image of modern ideas cannot serve as valuative criteria for measuring the accuracy and legitimacy of them (Ibid.). Moreover, argued that the question is not how the West is defined, rather the question is what is the criteria and reason to realizing right and wrong, correct and incorrect of Western ideas and institutions (Ibid.: 243).

Davari is identified generally with his defense of tradition and his contribution to the anti-democratic views. Particularly his advocacy of the guardianship of religion has brought him close to the defenders of 'guardianship of jurisconsult'. However, despite Davarie's defense of tradition, his ideas have been to a great deal of extent contributory to understanding the tenets of modernity. In fact his harsh challenge to rationality, science, and progress has problematize the unquestionable acceptance of modern ideas and
situations among the Iranian intellectuals. He has discussed deeply the essence of the
West (including modernity and postmodernity) as well as the situation of tradition in the
modern times. Following Heidegger he has initiated a shift from epistemological
concerns to ontological ones, and such a shift has been received by many intellectuals.