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Post-Islamist Trends
in Postrevolutionary Iran

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*I*ran's Green Movement, formed and followed by the disputed presidential election of
12 June 2009, can be characterized as an epistemic shift toward the formation of a
nonviolent and civic political culture in Iran. It might be identified as a symbol of Iran's
diverse, plural, mature, and rich civil society. It can be praised for its use of novel and creative
horizontal organizational methods, leadership tactics, and communication techniques in pur-
suit of civic goals. The movement might also be congratulated for its great potential to tran-
scend constructed dichotomies such as tradition and modernity, faith and freedom, revelation
and reason, particular and universal, and sacred and secular in Iran's politico-intellectual
discourse. As such, the Green Movement represents a new era in Iran. Today's Iran is on the
brink of a "post-Islamist" turn, as the first post-Islamist civil society in the Middle East is in the
making, underneath the Islamic Republic. However, this is only a new chapter in Iran's long
history of the quest for freedom and social justice.

Over the past one and a half centuries, modern Iran has been a pioneer of progressive
political changes in the Middle East, the home to the first constitutional revolution (1906–11),
the first nationalist and parliamentary democratic movement in the post–World War II pe-
riod (1950–53), and the first antidespotic revolutionary change (1977–79). Iran is probably
home to the first civic social movement in the Middle East, known as the Green Movement
(2009–present). The past three historical democratic waves introduced Iran to the rule of law
and constitutionalism, democratic nationalism, and antidespotic revolutionary change with
elements of an Islamic discourse. The current Green Movement is marked by a new historical
era toward post-Islamism in Iran. This article examines the nature and the diversity of post-
Islamist trends in the country. I first briefly conceptualize and contextualize post-Islamist
discourses in Iran and then analyze the sociopolitical origins of three trends of post-Islamism
in postrevolutionary Iran. The conclusion problematizes the nature and future success of
post-Islamism in the country.

Iran: Conceptualizing and Contextualizing Post-Islamism

Post-Islamism is a relatively new concept that has emerged in the past two decades to describe
a new phenomenon, a stage of development, and discourse in the Muslim world.[1] The crisis
of Islamism contributed to the rise of post-Islamism in the 1990s. Post-Islamism, Olivier Roy

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The English translations are mine unless otherwise noted. The
English translation of Shariati's works from Abbas Manoochehri,
"Critical Religious Reason: Ali Shari'ati on Religion, Philosophy,
and Emancipation," *Polylog*, them.polylog.org/4/fma-en.htm
(accessed 20 July 2009) were particularly useful.

1. The historical roots of post-Islamism can be traced back to
the nineteenth century. Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888–1966) in his clas-
sic book *Islam and the Foundations of Power* (1925), argued that
the Koran does not offer any system of government and that
Muslims may choose any form of government. Prophet Muham-

argues, is a departure from a violent revolutionary discourse to a missionary Islamist agenda.[2] According to Gilles Kepel, post-Islamism attempts to deglobalize Islamism.[3] For Asef Bayat, post-Islamism "represents both a *condition* and a *project*." It refers to a *condition* where Islamism "becomes compelled, both by its own internal contradictions and by societal pressure, to reinvent itself." It is also a *project*, "a conscious attempt to conceptualize and strategize the rationale and modalities of transcending Islamism in social, political, and intellectual domains."[4] Post-Islamism signifies the impact of secular exigencies on a religious discourse in our post-secular age.

Like Islamism, post-Islamism is not monolithic. It has taken various forms in different societies. Post-Islamism has been used as historical and analytical categories in reference to diverse politico-intellectual and social trends such as the Centre Party (Hizb al-Wasat) in Egypt, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, civil Islam in Indonesia, Imran Khan's Movement for Justice (Tehreek-e-Insaf) in Pakistan, and various forms of Muslim reformist trends in postrevolutionary Iran. Post-Islamism, despite its varieties, shares the following themes: it is a radial call for a critical dialogue between sacred and secular, faith and freedom, revelation and reason, tradition and modernity, religiosity and rights, and local and global paradigms.[5] The post-Islamic discourse is neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic, nor is it a *radical* break from Islamism. It implies that Islam is neither *the* solution nor *the* problem. Post-Islamism is a combination of "Islam*ism*" and "Islam*wasm*."[6]

There is a continuity and change between Islamism and post-Islamism. Similar to Islamism, post-Islamism accepts public religion. Contrary to Islamism, it rejects the concept of *Islamic state*. While religion might play a constructive role in civil society, the state is a *secular* entity no matter who the statesman is. Islamic state in theory is an oxymoron; in practice it is no less than a clerical oligarchy, a Leviathan, which protects the interests of the ruling class. Hence the concept of Islamic state marks a distinction between post-Islamism and Islamism, including moderate Islamism.

Paradoxically, today's Iran under the first modern Islamic state represents the most complex form of post-Islamism in the Muslim world. The main features of post-Islamism in postrevolutionary Iran are twofold: first, it is more than an intellectual discourse; it is deeply rooted in the civil society. The reform movement in the late 1990s and the current Green Movement symbolize the sociopolitical features of Iran's post-Islamist *movement*. Second, post-Islamism in Iran is not monolithic; it can be divided into three main intellectual trends, with each trend subdivided into various views: (1) quasi/semi-post-Islamism; (2) liberal post-Islamism; and (3) neo-Shariati post-Islamist discourse.[7]

Post-Islamism as a Socio-intellectual Movement

Post-Islamism in postrevolutionary Iran resulted from the paradox of the Islamic state. The *unintended consequences* of the Khomeinist state empowered and enlightened the public, transformed the people from subjects to citizens, and eventually undermined the intellectual, political, and social foundations of the Islamic Republic. The 1979 revolution, the mobilization of people for a greater participation in the Islamic Republic, and the Iran-Iraq war, the first modern war

mad's authority was only spiritual and social in nature. Post-Prophet political systems had no basis in Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence); they were expedient tyrannical structures adopted by the Arabs. However, Abd al-Raziq's ideas were lost in the midst of revolutionary Islamist trends including Hasan al-Banna's and others'. Ali Abd al-Raziq, *Islam and the Fundamentals of Authority: A Study of the Caliphate and Government in Islam*, 3rd ed. (n.p., 1925).

2. Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

3. Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 362.

4. Asef Bayat, *Islam and Democracy: What Is the Real Question?* (Leiden: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 18–19.

5. Ibid., 19–20.

6. I borrow "Islam*ism*" and "Islam*wasm*" from Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Richard Tapper, "Islamism: *ism* or *wasm*?" in *Islamism: Contested Perspectives on Political Islam*, ed. Richard C. Martin and Abbas Barzegar (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 81–86.

7. The quasi/semi-post-Islamism is represented by reformists such as Mir-Hossein Mousavi, Mehdi Karoubi, Mohammad Khatami, Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, Ayatollah Yusef Saanei, Ahmad Qabel, and Mohsen Kadivar. Major scholars and activists of the liberal post-Islamism are Abdolkarim Soroush, Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari, Mostafa Malekian, Mohsen Saidzadeh, Saeed Hajarian, Akbar Ganji, and Alireza Alavitabar. Major public intellectual figures of the neo-Shariati post-Islamist discourse include Ehsan Shariati, Susan Shariati, Sara Shariati, Reza Alijani, Hassan Yusefi-Eshkevari, Taqi Rahmani, Ahmad Zeidabadi, and members of the Research Bureau of Ali Shariati in Tehran.

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fought by the Iranian state in 150 years, were instrumental in such a social transformation.[8] The end of the Iran-Iraq war with no clear victory for either side, the decline of revolutionary fever, and Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini's death brought a new chapter to the life and legacy of ruling Islamists in Iran. The main challenge after Khomeini was to institutionalize or, using Max Weber's phrase, "routinize" Khomeini's charisma. But Khomeini's charisma was not transferable to a successor. Given his lack of personal charisma and strong clerical credentials, Khomeini's successor, Sayyed Ali Khamenei, was dependent on his conservative peers. Having been concerned about the leader's lack of charismatic authority, the clerical oligarchy replaced the revolutionary charismatic legitimacy with an absolutist version of the *velayat-e faqih* (guardianship of the jurist), suggesting a complete and full obedience to the *faqih*, or "melting into the *velayat*" (*zob-e dar velayat*). However, the dominant ideology of Khomeinism was no longer able to reach the youth, even though they had been raised and educated under the Islamic Republic. They were socioculturally disenchanted, politically disappointed, and economically dissatisfied. The state had failed to create the men and women or the society that Khomeini had envisioned. Iran in the 1990s was experiencing a growing social and ideological disenchantment.

By the early 1990s Iran was grappling with the consequences of demographic changes in which 70 percent of the population was under age thirty.[9] Rapid urbanization and the expansion of higher education were two more struc-

tural factors pushing for greater social change. Likewise, the departure of many men to fight in the war brought an urgent need for the employment of women in both public and private sectors. By the mid-1980s female employment was at 30 percent, exceeding the prerevolutionary level. Women also constituted 40 percent of all graduates.[10] Moreover, the regime's cultural revolution was far from successful.[11] The clerical oligarchy failed to grasp the dialectics and dynamism of sociopolitical changes.

At the same time, the civil society managed to challenge the repressive intentions of the state to a certain extent. Youth and women brought the public sphere into their private lives by watching forbidden shows via foreign satellites, by meeting and communicating with one another, and by openly discussing sociopolitical taboos. More important, they even managed to create a relatively open space in the public sphere by resisting the clerical cultural code and insisting on their *social*, if not political, rights. Women continued to challenge the state's gender politics by consistently resisting clerical indoctrination and resocialization. The *hijab*, as Haideh Moghissi puts it, became "a haunting concern for the Islamic Republic" and thus "the symbol of women's defiance and resistance."[12] The independent intellectuals managed to continue publishing some journals such as *Iran-Farda*, *Goftego*, and *Kiyan*. The film industry and the arts in general, in spite of severe censorship, managed to implicitly expose ideas fundamentally foreign to the clerical cultural codes, creating a relatively active and energetic civil society.

8. The war "taught Iranians political moderation and cynicism towards authority"; that Ayatollah Khomeini "could accept the UN-inspired armistice after previously rejecting it was shocking evidence of the fallibility of man." Ali M. Ansari, *Iran, Islam, and Democracy: The Politics of Managing Change* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000), 50.

9. During the first decade after the revolution, the Islamic Republic dismantled family planning, which was perceived as the shah's legacy, and encouraged fertility by lowering the legal age of marriage to fifteen for boys and thirteen for girls. The result was that about half the country's population was born after the revolution, and to this generation Khomeini's legacy belonged to history. In the mid-1980s, the population growth rate was 3.9 percent, double the world average. From 1980 to 1990, the population grew from 39 million to 56 million, with youth numbering nearly 30 million. Ali Banuazizi, "Faltering Le-

gitimacy: The Ruling Clerics and Civil Society in Iran," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 8 (1995): 571.

10. In the mid-1980s 60 percent of the population lived in cities, and Tehran's population increased from 5 million in 1980 to 7 million in 1990. Kaveh Ehsani, "Municipal Matters: The Urbanization of Consciousness and Political Change in Tehran," *Middle East Report*, no. 212 (1999): 22–27. Men's literacy rate rose from 54 percent in 1989 to 66 percent in 1991, while women's rose from 30 percent to 54 percent in the same period. "Illiteracy Rate Dropped by 20 Percent since 1979," Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), 14 September 1993, netiran.com/, cited in Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 188.

11. A decade after the reopening of the universities in 1982, despite the regime's policy of affirmative action to secure admissions for the martyrs' family, university students were alienated from the dominant clerical culture. University instructors and the curricula remained as in the prerevolutionary period, even after the strict policy of Islamization from above. The regime had no choice but to retain many university instructors educated in the West, given the shortage of qualified university instructors.

12. Haideh Moghissi, "Troubled Relationships: Women, Nationalism, and the Left Movement in Iran," in *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran: New Perspectives on the Iranian Left*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 225.

Meanwhile, Iran's growing middle class remained economically dissatisfied.[13] Middle-class families were using their savings, selling off their assets, and engaging in the underground economy. In the mid-1990s, Iran was facing the economic consequence of an eight-year war. The return of a huge number of war veterans to the urban centers looking for jobs added to the growing number of urban poor, and an ever-increasing number of urban youth job-seekers put the state in a hard position. A sharp decline in oil prices, a rapid rise in population, ineffective economic plans, and systemic corruption "generated a host of economic problems: unemployment, inflation, foreign-exchange crises, lack of investments, shortages of schools and housing, flight of capital and professionals, and continued influx of peasants into urban slums."[14]

The reformist presidential candidate, Mohammad Khatami, unlike his conservative counterpart, acknowledged and spoke about the crisis. With some two-thirds of the population under age twenty-five, 50 percent below age twenty, and 70 percent below age thirty, with no personal memory of monarchy or revolution, women and youth overwhelmingly voted for Khatami, hoping for greater sociocultural opening and economic opportunity.[15] Paradoxically, independent religious people, equally disap-

pointed by the clerical oligarchy, also voted for Khatami. For the first time in the modern era the ulema had lost their independence under the Islamic state. Contrary to the conventional argument, under the Islamic Republic politics has triumphed over religion; religion has served politics and not the other way around.[16] In sum, Khomeini's theory and practice of absolute *velayat-e faqih* and Islamization from above disappointed both independent religious and secular forces. Khatami's discourse of the rule of law, civil society promotion, pluralism, and democracy appealed to various sections of society, making him a "Cinderella candidate" and eventually an "accidental president" of the Islamic Republic.[17] Khatami did not succeed, however, even though his reformist republic (1997–2005) was not a total failure.[18] Khatami's presidency provided a relatively free space for the development of civil society especially for women, students, and intellectual organizations.[19] Intellectuals, either in person or in press, succeeded in communicating with the civil society. They "inspired a mass reform movement linking three generations; prominent 'fathers of the revolution,' most critically Ayatollah Montazeri; 'children of the revolution,' many of whom came from the Islamic Left as well as from liberal-nationalist circles; and finally 'grandchildren of the revolution,' the new generation of high

13. The average monthly income of an Iranian family was R620,000 during 1996–97, while the poverty line was set at R1 million. Hossein Azimi, *Iran-e Emrooz*, AH 1378/1999, 15–28.

14. Ervand Abrahamian, "Empire Strikes Back: Iran in U.S. Sights," in *Inventing the Axis of Evil: The Truth about North Korea, Iran, and Syria*, ed. Bruce Cumings, Ervand Abrahamian, and Moshe Ma'oz (New York: New Press, 2004), 116–17. In the early and mid-1990s a series of demonstrations and unrest in Tehran, Shiraz, and Mashhad signaled a deep crisis in both the legitimacy and the efficiency of the Khomeinist state. On ineffective economic plans, see Iranian national TV, 18 June 1998, cited in Ansari, *Iran, Islam, and Democracy*, 174.

15. In an interview with a widely circulated reformist daily, Khatami argued that he was aware that the most critical issue was the "physical, mental and spiritual needs" of the young, who need to "enjoy the present." "Khatami Interviewed on Need to Address Youth Problems," *Hamshahri*, 6 March 1997, 8 March 1997, quoted in Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, 224. For Khatami, the youth segment was "not an enigma but an advantage." *Salam*, 27 April 1997, quoted in Mehdi Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 247.

16. Interestingly, even the young generation of *bazaari*s, unlike the formal bazaar establishment, was becoming more open to global integration and less antagonistic toward reform; they too supported Khatami. Women voted for Khatami to express their wishes for greater change in political, legal, and educational spheres to improve and expand women's rights. Given Khatami's reputation for tolerance and the limited degree of pluralism during his short ministerial tenure, some intellectuals, including middle-class civil servants, supported Khatami. For the intellectuals, he was an educated, open-minded cleric who was forced to resign from the Ministry of Culture. Moreover, a broad category of the poor saw in Khatami a desire to bring about greater social justice. Farhad Kazemi, "The Precarious Revolution: Unchanging Institutions and the Fate of Reform in Iran," *Journal of International Affairs* 57 (2003): 81–95, 90–91.

17. On Khatami as the "Cinderella candidate," see Mohsen M. Milani, "Reform and Resistance in the Islamic Republic of Iran," in *Iran at the Crossroads*, ed. John L. Esposito and R. K. Ramazani (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 29. On Khatami as the "accidental president," see Shaul Bakhash, "Iran's Remarkable Election," in *Islam and Democracy in the Middle East*, ed. Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, and Daniel Brum-

berg (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 119. It is worth mentioning that the outcome of all postrevolutionary presidential elections (1981, 1985, 1989, and 1993), except for the first one in 1980, was predetermined. The outcome of the 1997 presidential election was uncertain because of the level of the elites' factional politics, the dynamics of civil society, and the personality of Khatami himself.

18. Many factors, including the nature of the state, the structure of international politics, domestic sociopolitical structures, and the reformists' leadership style and their organizational capacity and ideological discourse contributed to this failure. See Mojtaba Mahdavi, "Rethinking Structure and Agency in Democratization: Iranian Lessons," *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory* 1, no. 2 (2008): 142–60.

19. By 1998 740 newspapers with a daily circulation of one hundred thousand were published in Iran. By 2003 more than 2 million Iranians used the Internet and "women formed 63 percent of the incoming university students, 54 percent of all college students, 45 percent of doctors, 25 percent of government employees, and 13 percent of the general labor force." Abrahamian, "Empire Strikes Back," 135–36.

school and university students who constituted the movement's mass base."[20] The same fathers, children, and grandchildren of the revolution currently participate in a post-Islamist Green Movement in Iran, which is to say that many of the active civil society organizations in the current Green Movement were developed during Khatami's presidency.

Three Trends of Post-Islamism
Quasi/Semi-Post-Islamism

The first trend of post-Islamism is a complex phenomenon. Some individuals within this trend are still committed to the doctrine of *velayat-e faqih*, the political legacy of Khomeini, but are disenchanted with the absolutist version of the doctrine.[21] The rule of the *vali-ye faqih* (the jurist/leader), it is argued, is not divine and must be subject to democratic procedures. Others, such as Mohsen Kadivar and Ahmad Qabel, prominent disciples of Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, and Mustafa Tajzadeh, a well-known reformist, reject Khomeini's theory but remain committed to the concept of Islamic Republic.[22]

Montazeri first criticized the absolute *velayat-e faqih* when Khomeini was alive (in November 1987, July 1988, and early 1989), because he objected to the mass execution of political prisoners of various opposition groups. In the post-Khomeini era he explicitly challenged the absolute *velayat-e faqih* and advocated the notion of an elected, constitutional, and accountable *velayat-e faqih* (*velayat-e entekhabi-e moghayadeh*). He also advocated the *faqih*'s supervisory rule

(*nezarat-e faqih*), instead of his guardianship and leadership (*velayat-e faqih*). For Montazeri, *velayat-e faqih* did not mean that "the leader is free to do whatever he wants without accountability."[23] The *vali-ye faqih* "we envisaged in the constitution," he argued, "has his duties and responsibilities clearly defined. His main responsibility is to *supervise* [and] stop dealing with religious matters and content [himself] to supervise."[24]

As well, Montazeri in his four-volume work in Arabic titled *Dirasat fi vilayat al faqih al-dawlah al-Islamiyah* (*On* Velayat-e Faqih *in the Islamic State*), published in 1964, offered a sophisticated theological justification of the theory of *velayat-e faqih*. However, later on, in his work, *Resaleh-ye hoqouq* (*Treaties on Law*), Montazeri explicitly challenged the absolute *velayat-e faqih* and advocated people's rights.[25] According to Montazeri, since the Prophet and the imams never claimed to operate beyond the law, they were also held accountable and subject to criticism by members of the early Muslim community. Hence the *vali-ye faqih*'s authority is limited to the will of the people, and he does not have absolute power to rule over the community.

Montazeri remained a fearless voice in support of the Green Movement's reformist opposition until he passed away. "This movement," he argued, "is the accurate reflection and representation of the justified demands of the majority that have surfaced over many years." He praised the "tolerant culture" of the movement and condemned the regime's "despotism, violence, [and] illegitimate and un-Islamic trials

20. Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, 234.

21. They include Ayatollah Montazeri (d. 2010) and the public figures of the Green Movement, Mousavi, Karoubi, Khatami, and members of the two major reformist parties (Iran's Islamic Participation Party and the Organization of Mujahideen of the Islamic Revolution).

22. It is worth noting that after the revolution the first draft of the constitution presented by the Revolutionary Council—modeled on the 1958 constitution of the French Fifth Republic—envisioned a democratic government with no superior position reserved for the clergy (*velayat-e faqih*). Kadivar and Tajzadeh, among other advocates of this view, believe in an Islamic republic exclusive of the office of *velayat-e faqih*. See Tajzadeh's recent statement, a letter from prison titled "Pedar, madar ma baz ham motahamim" ("Father, Mother, We Are Still Accused"), Mizan Press,

mizankhabar.net/index.php/2010–01–09–16–06–34 /1068–l——-r.html (June 2010). Mohsen Kadivar, "Chahar rah-e jomhori" ("Republic's Intersections"), Jaras (Rahesabz online), January 2010, www.rahesabz .net/story/8260. Kadivar has recently suggested that he believes in secular democracy as the last stage of Iran's quest for democracy. However, this is not an option at this point, given the current constraints facing the Green Movement. See "Interview with Mohsen Kadivar: I Think of a Secular Democracy," *Tehran Review*. tehranreview.net/articles/7425 (accessed 11 February 2011).

23. "Montazeri on State's Road to Destruction," *Keyhan* (London), 10 October 1994, quoted in Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, 215.

24. "Montazeri's Speech in Keyhan," 4 December 1997, reported in eurasianews.com/iran/montadres.html, quoted in Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, 238.

25. Hossein Ali Montazeri, *Resaleh-ye hoqouq* (Tehran: Saraie, 2004). See also Hossein Ali Montazeri, "Jaigah-e ghanon asasi dar Islam va didghah olama va karsh-enasan" ("The Status of the Constitution in Islam and the Views of Religious Scholars and Specialists"), *Cheshm Andaz Iran* 50 (2008). Moreover, although not a radical departure from orthodoxy, Montazeri's new religious rulings on *hijab*, apostasy, and the Islamic penal code (*hudud*) challenged the conservative rulings. Accordingly, neither death for apostasy nor the exact form of *hijab* is mentioned in the Koran. By virtue of their humanity, God has granted dignity to all human beings. For this reason, Montazeri argued, all members of the nation deserve equal citizenship. He was the first Shiite ayatollah to declare that the Bahai community must enjoy equal rights. Montazeri, "Human Rights or the Rights of the Faithful," www .amontazeri.com/farsi/default.asp (accessd 30 August 2010).

of political activists."[26] In his last public speech, Montazeri boldly argued that one is not obliged to defend the Islamic Republic at any cost; the survival of the Islamic state in itself is not religiously sanctioned. The Islamic state exists to implement and materialize Islamic values. If it violates such values it has lost its legitimacy.[27]

For Kadivar, Montazeri's outspoken disciple, Islamic rules must always be compatible with reason, the requirements of justice, the people's preference, and the exigencies of the time.[28] Following this rationale, he challenges "historical Islam" (*Islam-e tarikhi*) and advocates "spiritual Islam" (*Islam-e manavi*).[29] Accordingly, spiritual Islam supports equal rights for men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims. The logical consequence of his reasoning is that Islam and democracy are compatible, whereas democracy and the guardianship of the jurist have neither religious nor rational bases. Kadivar cites various Shiite theological debates to nullify the dominant theory of *velayat-e faqih*. He boldly argues that Khomeini's political version of the *velayat-e faqih* did not exist in the Koran or in the Prophet's or the Shiite imam's traditions.[30]

Mir-Hossein Mousavi, Khomeini's favorite prime minister in the 1980s and an advocate of Khomeini's political legacy in 2010, is another example of quasi/semi-post-Islamism. While he is critical of the current *vali-ye faqih*, he tends to believe in the doctrine itself. However, Mousavi has gradually moved toward a greater recognition of pluralism, stressing that his position is one among many other secular and Islamic voices in the Green Movement.[31] In one of Mousavi's latest statements, known as a working draft of the Green Movement's covenant, a semi-post-Islamist trend is evident. He clearly advocates the separation of "religious institutions and clergymen from the state," even though he acknowledges the "presence" of religion in the future in Iran.[32] He "oppose[s] the use of religion as an instrument" and the "coercing of people into an ideology, sect or clique." People want nothing short of "national sovereignty." He also explicitly argues that "neither our laws nor our Constitution are eternal. Every nation has the right to reform its current laws." Similarly, Mehdi Karoubi, another symbolic figure of the Green Movement, clearly questions the authority of Khamenei as *vali-ye faqih*: "Why has the authority of the Velayat-e Faqih been so greatly extended? I doubt that so much authority and power were given to the Prophets themselves, or the infallible [Shi'a] Imams. I even doubt that God considers himself to have the right to deal with his servants in the same way."[33]

Liberal Post-Islamism

Liberal post-Islamism includes diverse dissident religious intellectuals who gradually became disenchanted with ideological revolutionary Islam in general and the intellectual foundations of the Islamic state in Iran. The influential religious reformist Abdolkarim Soroush, leading liberal cleric Mohammad Mojtahed Shabe-

26. Hossein Ali Montazeri, "Response to Questions on the Green Movement," 1 December 2009, khordaad88.com/?p=809#more-809.

27. Montazeri's last public statement, Jaras (Rahesabz online), February 2010, www.rahesabz.net/story/8775/.

28. Mohsen Kadivar, *Noandishi-e dini va hoghoghe zanan* (*Religious Reformism and Women's Rights*), www.kadivar.com/ (accessed 20 June 2008).

29. Mohsen Kadivar, *As Islam-e tarikhi be Islam-e manavi* (*From Historical Islam to Spiritual Islam*), www.kadivar.com/ (accessed 3 August 2008).

30. He argues that the central question facing the clergy today is whether it can preserve its independence in the face of an Islamic state. It does not want to fall victim to the fate of the Marxist parties of the former communist states. See Mohsen Kadivar, *Andisheh-ye siyasi dar Islam* (*Political Thought in Islam*) (Tehran: Nay, 1998), vols. 1–2. Similarly, Mehdi Haeri-Yazdi, the respected son of the highly influential late Grand Ayatollah Abdul Karim Haeri-Yazdi,

challenges the dominant version of the absolute *velayat-e faqih*. "Governance [*hokumat*]," he argues, "is not more than deputyship [*vekalat*] and any time you feel that your deputy has committed treachery, you replace him. . . . The kind of true democratic Islamic government that I construe is deputyship. . . . After the Hijra of the Prophet from Mecca to Madina, the people of Madina 'elected' him as the head of the state." *Hamshahri*, 6 July 1995, quoted in Moslem, *Factional Polities*, 229.

31. Mousavi has issued eighteen statements since June 2009. His statements are available at khordaad 88.com/?cat=1 (accessed 29 June). It is worth noting that Zahra Rahnavard, Mousavi's wife and companion, also signals some changes in her position. She states that the Green Movement is indebted to the women's movement in Iran and praises the contribution of both secular and religious activists against unjust rules and regulations over the past three decades. See Zahrah Rahnavard, www.kaleme.com/1389/03/25/klm-22861; and www.kaleme.com/1389/04/06/klm-24194 (accessed 10 July 2010).

32. According to Mousavi, the people's resistance has torn "the curtain of hypocrisies and duplicity" of the current regime, which has "institutionalized corruption behind a pretense of piety." While Iran currently "experiences the greatest number of executions per population on the whole planet," the Green Movement "respects human dignity and human rights" and believes in equality before the law, "irrespective of ideology, religion, gender, ethnicity and social statutes." Interestingly enough, Mousavi borrows a secular tone and terms from an Iranian poet, Mohammad Reza Shafiei Kadkani, to express the depth of people's disappointment and demands: "A child by the name of joy / Eyes bright and glistening / Hair long as the heights of hope / Is lost of late / Whoever has news of her / Let us know / Here between the Persian Gulf / And the Caspian Sea." "Mir Hossein Mousavi's Eighteenth Statement," 15 June 2010, khordaad88.com/?p=1691#more-1691.

33. Mehdi Karoubi, "Complete Statement for the Anniversary of the Green Movement," 10 June 2010, khordaad88.com/?p=1696#more-1696.

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stari, Mostafa Malekian, Saeed Hajarian, Akbar Ganji, and Alireza Alavi-Tabar, among others, posed serious and substantial philosophical challenges to the ideological foundations of the ruling Islamists.[34]

Soroush first served as Khomeini's representative at the Cultural Revolution Institute but he resigned in 1984. Given his close connection with the revolutionary Islamists, Soroush was relatively successful in making his journal *Kiyan* a platform for the future reformists in the late 1990s.[35] In his series of articles on the contraction and expansion of religious knowledge (*qabz va baste te'urik-e Shari'at*), Soroush laid out a foundation of an epistemic pluralism in the postrevolutionary religious discourse. Any understanding of religion, he argued, is humane and time-bound; it is neither sacred nor absolute. Religion is defined by its human "religious experience." For Soroush, clerics, like other "professional groups," hold a corporate identity, "a collective identity and shared interest," and thus possess no divine authority.[36] Soroush's new theology (*kalam-e jadeed*) was in effect a theological challenge to the official religious discourse and the clerical class, meaning the theory of *velayat-e faqih*.

Soroush also challenged the notion of "religious government" by suggesting that anything "that has its own prior essence . . . can no longer be considered intrinsically religious, because one thing cannot have two intrinsic natures. . . . for example, 'water' has its own structure. . . . For this reason, we do not have religious water and non-religious water . . . or religious and non-religious wine. The same ap-

plies to justice . . . knowledge . . . and the like. Similarly, we cannot have an intrinsically religious government."[37] Put simply, because religion and politics are positively correlated, "the least we can say in this respect is that religiosity or the lack thereof does not enter the essence of government. However, as an external reality, government is subordinated to society and constitutes one of its forms of organization. If a society is religious, its government too will take on a religious hue."[38]

Soroush made it clear that religion is not confined to its formal interpreters. Islam is larger than the ulema's clerical Islam and richer than the *fiqh*, or jurisprudence. For Soroush, "the idea of democratic religious government" would shift the center of power from the *velayat-e faqih* to civil society and would transform the religious oligarchy into a democratic, and yet religious, politics.[39] For Soroush, "religious despotism is most intransigent because a religious despot views his rule as not only his right but his duty. Only a religious democracy that secures and shelters faith can be secure and sheltered from such self-righteous and anti-religious rule."[40] Furthermore, in his *Loftier than Ideology* (*Farbehtar az ideoogy*), Soroush argued that religion is not an ideology. He offered a minimalist understanding of religion vis-à-vis a maximalist discourse of the ideologized religion. In his words, "the greatest pathology of religion I have noticed after the revolution is that it has become plump, even swollen. . . . It is neither possible nor desirable for religion, given its ultimate mission, to carry such a burden. This means purifying religion, making it lighter and more buoyant."[41]

34. For further information on Mostafa Malekian's works, see his *Rahi be Rahaei: Goftogohaei ar bareye aghlaniyat va manaviyat* (*A Path to Freedom: Reflections on Rationality and Spirituality*) (Tehran: Nashre Negahe Moaser, AH 1380/2001).

35. Soroush was born in 1945 in southern Tehran, studied at the Islamic Alavi school, and pursued the study of Islamic law after he met Khomeini in 1963. He received a master's degree in analytical chemistry and a doctoral degree in history and philosophy of science at the University of London and returned to Iran after the revolution. After the closure of the universities Soroush was appointed by Khomeini to the Cultural Revolution Institute. The so-called cultural revolution sought to purge the dissident scholars and revise the university curriculum. Paradoxically, however, Soroush, who defended the notion of an "open society" against communism, was involved, in one way or another, in the cultural revolution. Yet

he claims that he was only a member of the Advisory Council of the Cultural Revolution, whose "main task was reopening universities." Mahmoud Sadri and Ahmad Sadri, eds. and trans., *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy in Islam: Essential Writings of Abdolkarim Soroush* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 12.

36. "Soroush on Freedom of Clergy," *Kiyan*, April–May 1995, quoted in Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, 205.

37. Soroush, "On Meaning and Foundation of Secularism," *Kiyan*, August–September 1995, quoted in Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, 209.

38. Abdolkarim Soroush, "The Sense and Essence of Secularism," in Sadri and Sadri, *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy*, 61.

39. Abdolkarim Soroush, "The Idea of Democratic Religious Government," in Sadri and Sadri, *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy*, 127–28.

40. Abdolkarim Soroush, "Tolerance and Governance," in Sadri and Sadri, *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy*, 155.

41. Abdolkarim Soroush, "Intellectual Autobiography: An Interview," in Sadri and Sadri, *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy*, 21. For further study, see Abdolkarim Soroush, *Mudara va mudiriyat* (*Tolerance and Administration*) (Tehran: Serat, 1997); Soroush, *Bast-e tajrubeh-e nabavi* (*Expansion of Prophetic Experience*) (Tehran: Serat, 1999); Soroush, "Qara'at-e fashisti az din" ("The Fascist Reading of Religion"), in *Rawshanfekriva dindari* (*Intellectualism and Religiosity*) (Tehran: Serat, 1997); and Soroush, "Religious Discourses in Contemporary Iran," in *A'in-e shahriyari va dindari* (*The Etiquette of Ruling and Religiosity*) (Tehran: Serat, 2000). See also Forough Jahanbakhsh, "Religious and Political Discourse in Iran: Moving toward Post-fundamentalism," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 9 (2003): 243–54.

Soroush's liberal Rawlsian approach to Islam implies that both the meaning and social implications of religion should be understood only through the free exercise of public reason. This approach can be interpreted in two ways. First, Soroush does not advocate the privatization of Islam, as is evident in his theory of the "religious democratic state."[42] Second, in fact, like other liberals, he believes in the privatization of Islam. In the past few years, echoing the liberal theory, Soroush more explicitly relegated religion to the private sphere. As such, religion is understood as a personal interpretation of spirituality devoid of a meaningful constructive *political* dimension. He has even humanized and secularized Prophet Muhammad's revelation (*vahy*) by linking it to a mystical and poetic inspiration. As such, the Koran contains Muhammad's feelings and thoughts, not the words of God.[43] Furthermore, Soroush in his 2005 speech "Shiism and the Challenge of Democracy" argues that Shiite messianism is not conducive to democracy.[44]

Similarly, Mojtahed Shabestari is a liberal reformist trained in theology and Western philosophy, particularly religious hermeneutics. He examines the possibility of multiple understandings of Islam and the rationalization of religious discourse, and he questions the legitimacy and usefulness of the jurisprudential reading of Islam. He argues that the idea that the Koran and the Sunna are the sources of all legal and sociopolitical systems among Muslims does not correspond to historical reality because such systems have constantly reflected the particular sociohistorical contexts of each Muslim society.[45] As such, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the concept of *velayat-e faqih* are political exercises and are not inspired by the sacred text.

Unlike the *fiqh*-based reading of Islam (*Islam-e feqahati*), Mojtahed Shabestari's hermeneutical, historicist, and rationalist reading of Islam believes in democracy as the only viable political system. He makes a clear distinction between "Islamic democracy" and "Muslim democracy." A democratic interpretation of Islam may concur with democracy, yet democracy is never built on the principles of Islam. Muslims can be democrats; they can also come up with a democratic reading of Islam. However, such democratic versions of Islam do not make their state an Islamic democracy. Muslims ruling democratically become democrats; they do not make the state Islamic. For this reason, *Muslim democracy* is a more appropriate term than *Islamic democracy*. Democracy is about power, and power remains a worldly political concept. Islam, like other religions, recognizes this same secular, not sacred, power on earth. Political authority has no religious essence, Islamic or otherwise.[46]

Liberal post-Islamists, in sum, argue that religious knowledge is a branch of human knowledge; it is culturally and historically contingent and corresponds to other forms of secular human knowledge. Religion and the Sharia are silent; social agents and social contexts give voices to religious texts. One's commitment to religion should be measured by its commitment to the intrinsic, core, and transcendent of religion, not to the contingent and historical aspects of religion. Islam is not an ideology; it does not offer a particular form of political system. Religion is a spiritual experience and mostly, if not fully, belongs to the private sphere.[47]

42. Abdolkarim Soroush, *Loftier than Ideology* (Tehran: Serat, 1994), 217–83.

43. Michel Hoebink, "The Word of Mohammad," an interview with Soroush, www.drsoroush.com/English/Interviews/E-INT-The%20Word%20of%20Mohammad.html.44. Abdolkarim Soroush, "Democracy and Rationality," interview with Soroush by *Shargh* newspaper, December 2003, www.drsoroush.com/English/Interviews/E-INT-20031200–1.htm

45. See Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari, *Hermenutik, kitab va Sunnat* (*Hermeneutics, the Book and Tradition*) (Tehran: Tarh-e Naw, 1996); Mojtahed Shabestari, *Iman va Azadi* (*Faith and Freedom*) (Tehran: Tarh-e Naw, 1997); Mojtahed Shabestari, *Naqdi bar qara'at-e rasmi-e din* (*A Critique of the Official Reading of Islam*) (Tehran: Tarh-e Naw, 2000).

46. Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari, "Rah-e doshvar-e mardom-salari" ("The Difficult Path to Democracy"), *Aftab* (Tehran), Bahman AH 1381/January 2001, 30–37.

47. For an excellent collection of the debates on Islamic tradition and secularism among the Muslim reformists, see Serat, ed., *Sunna and Secularism: Works of A. Soroush, M. Mojtahed-Shabestari, M. Malekian, and M. Kadivar* (*Sunnat va secularism: Goftarhaei as A. Soroush, M. Mojtahed-Shabestari, M. Malekian, and M. Kadivar*) (Tehran: Serat, AH 1381/2002).

Individuals such as Mehdi Bazargan, Mahmoud Taleqani, Habibollah Peyman, and Ezzatollah Sahabi and intellectual trends such as Iran's Freedom Movement, the journal *Iran-e Farda*, and the coalition of Melli-Mazhabi are much closer to neo-Shariati post-Islamist discourse than to semi-post-Islamists and liberal post-Islamists. However, they are not formally part of this trend. See, for example, the recent statement of Abdolali Bazargan, Mehdi Bazargan's son, where he challenges Kadivar's argument on Khomeini's legacy in the Green Movement. Abdolali Bazargan, mizankhabar.net/index.php/2010–01–09–16–05–16/1167–1389–04–08–16–33–28.html (accessed 10 July 2010).

Neo-Shariati's Post-Islamist Discourse

The ideas of Ali Shariati (1933–77), one of the most controversial and influential public intellectuals in modern Iran, still contribute to academic and political debates.[48] Shariati's ideological leanings are still debated among his passionate disciples, his relentless antagonists, and academic analysts. Was he a totalitarian ideologue who rejected democracy or a radical democrat with egalitarian leanings? Was he a Marxist who used religious idioms to please the religious masses or an original intellectual who developed novel critical synthetic theories suited to the Iranian context? Was he an anti-West fanatic or a radical critic of the imperialist West and Westernization? More important, was he a modern theorist of Khomeini's doctrine of *velayat-e faqih* or a radical critic of clericalism and organized religion?[49] Answers to these questions vary, depending on which aspects of his works are examined. According to neo-Shariatists, such as Ehsan Shariati, Shariati shifted his positions during different stages of his life and there are significant differences between the earlier Shariati and the later Shariati.[50] Shariati's thought, they argue, must be historicized and contextualized. As such, they challenge the conventional reading of Shariati's Islamist revolutionary discourse on two levels.

First, a clear distinction is made between Shariati's *intrinsic* and *contingent* ideas. While Shariati's contingent ideas are no longer relevant to postrevolutionary Iran, some of his others require new interpretations. However, his core ideas are still relevant to the current issues and contribute to the post-Islamist discourse. Moreover, like other thinkers, Shariati's ideas were in the making and developed over time; he shifted his positions on a number of issues.

As such, a clear distinction is made between the mature Shariati, especially in his post-prison period, and the young Shariati, especially before and during the Ershad period.[51]

Second, Shariati died in London, just before the revolution in June 1977. Whether Shariati, the ideologue of the revolution, anticipated a revolution under the banner of religion that would bring clerics to power is a question that warrants further examination. However, what is clear is that Shariati's thought developed before the 1979 revolution. The postrevolutionary context requires new thinking, and Shariati's *intrinsic* ideas might contribute to such a new context. Shariati is an *unfinished project* and there is much *unthought* in Shariati's thought.[52]

Shariati's Thought: Intrinsic and Contingent

According to Ehsan Shariati and Reza Alijani, in Shariati's absence, the intrinsic meaning of his ideas based on a radical "deconstruction" of Islamic thought was lost in the midst of the revolutionary waves.[53] One of Shariati's intrinsic/core ideas is the concept, nature, and function of religion, which deserves a closer examination. For Shariati, "*social objectivity creates religious subjectivity,*" not the other way around. *This is how the sociopolitical hierarchy creates polytheism. The struggle between monotheism (towhid) and polytheism (shirk) is a social and not a theological struggle between two social forces in history. Polytheism is a religion of polytheistic social formation, such as unjust, racist, and patriarchal forms of domination; it aims to justify the status quo. Monotheism, in its sociohistorical terms, is the struggle for human emancipation*; it aims at self- and social awareness (*khod agaahi*)/responsibility.[54] In *Religion against Religion* he argues that organized/institutionalized religion has always undermined the eman-

48. Ali Shariati, born into a religious family, received his doctorate in 1963 from the Sorbonne's Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines.

49. See Shireen T. Hunter, ed., *Reformist Voices of Islam: Mediating Islam and Modernity* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2009), 50.

50. Ehsan Shariati, "Nayandishideh mandeh haye falsafi andishe ye Mo'alem Shariati" ("Unthought in Shariati's Philosophical Thought"), in *Dar hashiye ye matan* (*On the Margin of the Text*), ed. Bonyad Shariati (Tehran: Shahre Aftab, AH 1379/2000), 7–35; E. Shariati, "Shariati after Thirty-three Years," 30 Khurdad 1389/18 June 2010, ehsanshariati.blogfa .com/post-42.aspx.

51. Young Shariati delivered his lectures at Mashhad University and Hosseinieh Ershad (1969–73). After the latter's closure, he was imprisoned and later banned for life from giving public lectures (1973–77). The younger Shariati and the mature Shariati are attributed to these periods, respectively. See Ali Shariati's official Web site, drshariati.org/list.asp?G=1.

52. E. Shariati, "Nayandishideh mandeh haye falsafi andishe ye Mo'alem Shariati."

53. See, e.g., ibid. 9–13; and Reza Alijani, *Shariati shenasi* (*Shariatiology*) (Tehran: Qasideh Sara, AH 1376/1996).

54. Ali Shariati, *Collected Works* (*CW*) (Tehran: Ershad, 1971), 16:30. According to Shariati: "If I speak of religion, it is not the religion which has prevailed in human history, but a religion whose prophets rose for the elimination of *social* polytheism. I speak of a religion, which is not realized yet. Thus our reliance on religion is not a return to the past, but a continuation of history." Ali Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Chapakhsh, 1998), 22:18.

cipatory aspect of religion. Religion is "human awareness," a "source of existential and social responsibility" against the structures of domination.[55] According to this formulation, structures of domination rest on a triangle of economic power, political oppression, and inner ideological/cultural justification. Shariati provided a critique of the three pillars of the "trinity of oppression": z*ar–zur–tazvir* (gold–coercion–deception) or *tala-tigh–tasbih* (gold-sword–rosary), meaning material injustice (*estesmar*); political dictatorship (*esetbdad*); and religious alienation (*estehmar*). He offers a three-dimensional ideal type—a trinity of freedom, equality, and spirituality (*azadi*, *barabari*, and *erfan*)—in opposition to the trinity of oppression and in recognition of both existential and social responsibility, self- and social awareness. Each of these ideals emerged in response to human problems. However, they soon created a new set of problems as they were disassociated with each of the other two.[56] The unity of three ideals would free human beings from the bond of divine and materialistic determinism. It "frees mankind from the captivity of heaven and earth alike and arrives at true humanism."[57]

More specifically, the core of Shariati's discourse is about freedom and democracy without capitalism, social justice and socialism without authoritarianism, and modern spirituality without organized religion and clericalism. For Shariati, the existing democracies offer only a minimum requirement of an ideal radical democracy. A maximalist Shariati tends to agree with an anarchist model of democracy without an organized state in power.[58] Similarly, Shariati's strong egalitarian leanings and constant

critique of class inequality make him a socialist thinker; however, for him socialism is not merely a mode of production but a way of life. He is critical of state socialism, *worshipping personality, party, and state; he* advocates humanist socialism.[59] For Shariati, freedom and social justice must be complemented with modern spirituality. Shariati is well aware that the shortcomings of mysticism become "*a shackle on the foot of the spiritual and material evolution of mankind*" and "*separates man from his own humanity. It makes him into an importunate beggar, a slave of unseen forces beyond his power; it deposes him and alienates him from his own will. It is this established religion that today we are familiar with.*"[60] However, he favors modern critical *erfan* and spirituality, as it offers a critical dialogue with other religious traditions and modern concepts. It is, in fact, a *post-religious spirituality.*[61] For Shariati, the trinity of freedom, equality, and spirituality is not a mechanical marriage of three distinct concepts. Rather, it is a dialectical approach toward self- and social emancipation; it puts together three inseparable dimensions of man and society.

Shariati's position on democracy and the role of intellectuals in the state and the Islamic state is among the most controversial issues. Shariati was a man of his time; his thought developed in the context of prerevolutionary Iran. He thought that Iran still remained in the age of faith, as Europe had in the late feudal era, on the eve of the European Renaissance. The *rushanfekran* (intellectuals), Shariati argued, were the critical conscience of society and obliged to launch a "renaissance" and "reformation." As such, a young Shariati favored the concept of "committed/guided" democracy.[62] However,

55. Ali Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Ershad, 1978), 12:16; A. Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Elham, 1991), 24:221–23.

56. Freedom without equality degenerated into a freedom of markets, not of human beings; equality without freedom undermined human dignity; and spirituality without freedom and equality created the worst form of polity. They all turned into regressive forces, new means of domination, and served the status quo. See Ali Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Ershad, 1982), 2:37.

57. Ali Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Chapakhsh, 1987), 32:85, see also 90. See Abbas Manoochehri, "Critical Religious Reason."

58. As for the third pillar of his ideals, freedom, he is critical of both existentialism and liberalism. Freedom of choice is the main essence of existentialism;

it rejects all gods, earthly (state) and heavenly (God) alike. But existentialism lacks *an ethical ground that would justify altruistic action*. According to Shariati, "Existentialism lacks a basis on which to answer my questions. Now I am bent on a course of action where I may either sacrifice myself to the people or sacrifice the people to myself." A. Shariati, *CW*, 2:111. See Manoochehri, "Critical Religious Reason."

59. As for the ideal of equality, Shariati is well aware of the shortcomings of socialism: socialism reduces human beings into merely a social entity. "We see that socialism removes from man all limbs and branches except one; but it so encourages that one to spread out that it outgrows root and trunk. Thus, it makes man one-dimensional, however lofty and sublime that one dimension may be." A. Shariati, *CW*, 2:117. Moreover, the "socialist system was to free peo-

ple, but brought worshipping personality, party, and the state." A. Shariati, *CW*, 2:107. See Manoochehri, "Critical Religious Reason."

60. A. Shariati, *CW*, 2: 52–53, 59–60.

61. E. Shariati, "Shariati after Thirty-three Years." According to Ali Shariati, "By pursuing values that do not exist in nature, [the] human being is lifted above nature and the spiritual and essential development of the species is secured. *Erfan* is thus a lantern shining within humanity." A. Shariati, *CW*, 2:64.

62. See Ali Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Azmon, 1989), vol. 26. In *Community and Leadership* (*Ummat va imamat*) he advocates the idea of "committed/guided democracy," meaning the *rushanfekran* are obliged to raise public consciences and guide public opinion in a transitional period after the revolution. Such a revolution-

he changed his earlier position and explicitly rejected dictatorship of any form or of any social class.[63] According to Shariati, the principal agents of change in history and society are the people, not political or religious elites. In the social context, he explicitly argued, the notion of God in the religious text/Koran can be equated with the people: "We can always substitute the people for God."[64] As such, the theory of committed/guided democracy, Alijani argues, does not capture the core of Shariati's political theory.[65]

Did Shariati advocate a religious state? According to Ehsan Shariati, Shariati articulated a humanist Islamic discourse in that people are the only true representative of God on earth.[66] In *Religion against Religion* Shariati accused the clergy of monopolistic control over the interpretation of Islam in order to set up a clerical despotism (*estebdade ruhani*); in his words, it would be the worst and the most oppressive form of despotism possible in human history, the "mother of all despotism and dictatorship."[67] The religious state, he argued, is a clerical oligarchy. It is a clerical despotism. It is not accountable to people because it projects itself as God's representative on earth. The basic rights of the opposition groups, nonreligious and religious other, are denied because they are God's enemy. Brutal injustice is justified in the name of God's mercy and justice.[68] However, neo-Shariatisti discourse suggests that modern spirituality, not organized religion, can still play a constructive role in the public sphere.[69]

In sum, a scientific methodology of inquiry requires that we historicize Shariati's thought.

First, a clear distinction is made between different periods of Shariati's intellectual life: a young and revolutionary Shariati in Mashhad and Ershad and a mature Shariati in his post-prison period.[70] Second, a clear distinction is made between Shariati's core and marginal ideas, his relevant and outdated ideas. While the trinity of freedom, equality, and spirituality, some argue, remains the most relevant and intrinsic part of Shariati's thought, some significant *unthought* in Shariati's thought exists.

Unthought in Shariati's Thought

According to Ehsan Shariati, Shariati's disciples should take Shariati's advice seriously and love truth more than their teacher. Instead of artificially systematizing his thought, they should first deconstruct and then reconstruct his thought to make his thought relevant and responsive to new contexts. They should also explicitly and critically speak of *unthoughts* (*nayandishideh ha*) in Shariati's thought.[71]

Revolutionary Islamism was the first unthought in Shariati's thought. Clerical authority and organized religion (*ruhaniyyat*), Shariati argued, represented Safavid Shiism: a passive, apolitical, and distorted version of revolutionary Alavid Shiism. Clerical Islam, he argued, served as a sociocultural base of political despotism by withdrawing religion from its public responsibilities, depoliticizing it except for legitimizing the current social order, and transforming it into individual piety and asceticism.[72] The solution, he thought, was an Islamic reformation. But an Islamic reformation, Ervand Abrahamian argues, remained a difficult task, since the ulema

ary leadership would transform the ignorant masses (*ra's*) to informed citizens (*ra'y*), a procedural formal democracy to a substantial democracy. Shariati's position should be examined in the context of the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Bandung, 1954), where the revolutionary leaders advocated "committed/guided democracy" to stop the manipulation of public opinion in the electoral process in postcolonial new democracies.

63. Ali Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Ershad, 1979), 4:257, 258, 342; A. Shariati, *CW*, 26:500; A. Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Agah, 1983), vol. 33, pt. 1:1274.

64. Ali Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Elham, 1994), 3:153.

65. Reza Alijani, *Inquiry into the Theory of* Ummat va imamat (Tehran, n.p., n.d.). According to Alijani, on the first page of the *Ummat va imamat,* Shariati ad-

mits that the theory of committed/guided democracy is a new idea subject to critical examinations. See also the collection of essays in Bonyad Shariati, ed., *Ghoghnoos usyan* (*Rebellion Phoenix*) (Tehran: Ghasideh Sara, AH 1381/2002).

66. Ehsan Shariati, "Interview with *Shahrvand*," *Sharhvand* 12, no. 714 (2002), 3–5.

67. A. Shariati, *CW*, 22:206.

68. Ibid.

69. Ehsan Shariati, for example, refers to Mohammad Iqbal Lahouri's concept of "spiritual democracy." See ehsanshariati.blogfa.com/post-42.aspx (accessed 30 July 2010).

70. As for the young and revolutionary Shariati, it is worth noting that even his ideas during his time at Mashhad University and Hosseinieh Ershad were not identical. As for a mature Shariati, his new ideas were developed before and during his imprisonment (after the closure of the Ershad) but were clearly manifested in his post-prison writings. For research on Shariati's life, see drshariati.org.

71. E. Shariati, "Nayandishideh mandeh haye falsafi andishe ye Mo'alem Shariati," 31.

72. A. Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Ershad, 1971), 9:111. See Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, "Contentious Public Religion: Two Conceptions of Islam in Revolutionary Iran, Ali Shari'ati and Abdolkarim Soroush," *International Sociology* 19 (2004): 504–23.

have provided the dominant interpretation of Islam over the centuries.[73] Abrahamian's argument echoes that of Jazani, Iran's prominent revolutionary Marxist in the 1970s. Similarly, some of Shariati's disciples argue that Shariati underestimated the socio-organizational power of the clergy and the rise of radical Islamism in postrevolutionary Iran. He never anticipated, some argue, the return and reincarnation of the same conservative clerical Islam of Safavid Shiism but masked with a revolutionary Alavid Shiism: Islamism. Islamism was unthought in Shariati's thought. Hence the postrevolutionary context requires rethinking about the nature and methods of Islamic reformation.[74]

The question of the "Return to the Self" (*Bazgasht be Khish*) remains another critical point in Shariati's intellectual legacy. Shariati's discourse of "the Return" to our cultural roots challenged assimilation by imitation of Western models of development and offered an alternative, local, authentic model. The failure and crisis of the so-called local model in postrevolutionary Iran requires new thinking about the value and implication of the Return discourse.[75] Was the Return discourse an Islamist account of cultural essentialism, regressive nativism, and primordial particularism, or was it a critical account of Iran's hybrid national, religious, and modern identity? While Shariati's answer to the question of the Return is, some argue, misrepresented, the question of the Return still needs new answers.[76]

The question of ideal types and utopia in Shariati's thought is probably the most significant aspect of Shariati's unthought. How should one translate ideal types and utopic elements into some concrete concepts to be tested and/or nullified?[77] Shariati's trinity of freedom, equality, and spirituality is a case in point. While it masterfully problematizes the current trends and provides an alternative ideal type, it offers neither a clear alternative theory nor a comprehensible practical road map. For example, is this a new contribution to the idea of an "alternative modernity" or "multiple modernities"? What is the contribution of *erfan* in the public sphere, and how does this shape or inform the other two pillars, *azadi* and *barabari*? How does such a critical constructive *erfan* translate into a workable progressive sociopolitical project? More specifically, the question is whether and how the "trinity theory" translates into a workable synthetic political model of *spiritual social democracy*.

While Shariati never explicitly supported a secular democracy, neo-Shariati discourse explicitly rejects the concept of an Islamic state and advocates a secular, or *urfi*, democracy. For Ehsan Shariati, for example, the state is a neutral secular entity and must remain neutral to all religions and ideologies. The state's legitimacy derives from public reason and the free collective will of people. As such, Ali Shariati and neo-Shariati discourse believe in secularism.[78] Yet to use Mohammad Iqbal Lahouri's concept, they advocate "spiritual democracy," not religious democracy.[79] In the same way, Hassan Yusefi-Eshkevari argues that from a purely Islamic perspective, it may be argued that political power is an *urfi* and worldly question. He explicitly challenges two pillars of the Islamic

73. According to Abrahamian, Shariati's project for an Islamic rebirth required answers to difficult questions: If Shiism is a revolutionary ideology, then why is it burdened by reactionary clerical establishments? If revolutionary ideologies are capable of changing society, then why did Shiism fail? And, if it had failed in the past, how could it be prevented from failing in the future? Ervand Abrahamian, *Radical Islam: The Iranian Mojahedin* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1989), 119–24.

74. S. A. (a neo-Shariatist), interview by the author, Tehran, July 2008. For another critical account of neo-Shariati discourse in this context, see Taqi Rahmani, "Reflections on Shariati's Trinity" ("Ta'amoli ba seganeh haye Shariati"), Roozonline, www.roozonline .com/persian/opinion/opinion-article/article/2010/ june/28//-f2374ed01b.html (accessed 28 June 2010).

75. E. Shariati, "Shariati after Thirty-three Years." For an excellent critical study of neo-Shariatists' argu-

ments on the Return discourse and national identity, see Bonyad Shariati, ed., *Khodkaviye melli dar asre jahani shodan* (*National Self-Discovery in the Age of Globalization*) (Tehran: Ghasidehsara, AH 1381/2002). See particularly Ehsan Shariati, "Dar bareye hoviyate melli" ("On National Identity"), 99–126, and Hossein Rahyab, "Mahiyat, mavane, and emkanate nosaziye hoviyate irani" ("Nature, Obstacles, and Resources for the Renewal of Iranian Identity"), 54–98, both in B. Shariati, *Khodkaviye melli dar asre jahani shodan*.

76. E. Shariati, "Shariati after Thirty-three Years." Shariati's arguments on identity can be examined in Ali Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Elham, AH 1371/1999), vol. 27. Moreover, in the final years of his life, Shariati himself sought to deepen and develop his philosophical and methodological approaches. Neo-Shariati discourse aims to strengthen and develop the weakest part of Shariati's thought including Shariati's unthought in

scientific epistemology, philosophy, law and political economy, post-Kantian metaphysics, and post-Machiavelli politics, and, more specifically, in theorizing a humanist modern spiritual social democracy. E. Shariati, "Nayandishideh mandeh haye falsafi andishe ye Mo'alem Shariati," 31; Ehsan Shariati, interview by the author, Tehran, July 2008.

77. E. Shariati, "Nayandishideh mandeh haye falsafi andishe ye Mo'alem Shariati," 31.

78. He adds that neither Shariati nor the neo-Shariati discourse believe in philosophical secularism. They are critical of secular modernity and positivist rationalism. See Ehsan Shariati, "Interview with *Shahrvand*."

79. Ehsan Shariati, "Iqbal Lahouri and the Question of State," 2/AH Tir 1389/May 2010, ehsanshariati.blogfa .com/post-33.aspx.

state, namely, "divine legitimacy of power" and "full implementation of Sharia." Political power including "the Prophet's rule in Medina was the result of a social contract." If the state is not divine "then Sharia, too, . . . cannot be divine."[80] An Islamic state is an Islamist human construction. Similarly, Alijani advocates democratic secularism. He identifies two types of religiosity and two types of secularism. While the Sharia-based religion and fundamentalist secularism are not compatible, the human-based religion and democratic secularism are compatible. Democratic secularization separates the religious and political institutions but does not ignore the normative value of religion in the individual, social, and political spheres.[81]

It is worth noting that the contribution of neo-Shariati discourse to post-Islamist thinking is not confined to intellectual debates; advocates of this discourse are sociopolitically active in civil society and human rights organizations. Some of the public figures of this discourse include Narges Mohammadi, a female civil activist and deputy director and spokesperson for the Defenders of Human Rights Center; Ahmad Zeidabadi, a well-known journalist, who was charged with inciting public opinion and suffered imprisonment; Taqi Rahmani, a writer and journalist, who since 1981 has spent five thousand days in prison; and Alijani, Hoda Saber, Yusefi-Eshkevari, and Shariati's family, who are all politically and intellectually contributing toward a post-Islamist era in Iran.[82]

Conclusion

Post-Islamism in postrevolutionary Iran is a deep-rooted and diverse intellectual, social, and political movement. From quasi/semi-

post-Islamism to liberal post-Islamism to neo-Shariati post-Islamist discourse, post-Islamism represents Muslims' disenchantment with the Islamic state. The Green Movement symbolizes and signifies such a socio-intellectual shift in contemporary Iran. Post-Islamism is an attempt to make our modernity while we critically reinvent and reform our tradition. Such a modern vision of tradition remains in a critical dialogue with "tradition" but rejects "traditionalism." "The notion of tradition," as Chantal Mouffe argues, "has to be distinguished from that of traditionalism." A modern vision of tradition remains in a critical dialogue with "tradition" but rejects "traditionalism." It is through articulation and de-articulation, development and deconstruction of tradition that we actively participate in the making of our modernity and democracy.[83]

According to Jürgen Habermas, modernity is an "incomplete project."[84] Similarly, some social theories suggest that "'tradition' is likewise a perpetually unfinished project—that is, how people understand their traditions and apply them to practical situation."[85] The notion of the *unfinished project of tradition* implies that tradition and change are not mutually exclusive; there is a constant and critical dialogue between tradition and modernity and between religion and democracy. The significance and relevance of such a grassroots and bottom-up approach is twofold: theoretically, it suggests that categories such as tradition and modernity, religion and democracy, and sacred and secular are not mutually exclusive. Traditions change. A critical dialogue with culture and tradition confirms that modern values such as freedom, democracy, and social justice are universal and

80. See Hassan Yusefi-Eshkevari, "Faithful Life in an *Urfi* State" in this issue.

81. Reza Alijani, "Pre-secular Iranians in a Post-secular Age: The Death of God, the Resurrection of God," in this issue. Similarly, on the question of women there are important differences between our time and Shariati's. According to Alijani, we have advanced to a new stage and face new questions and challenges. In a series of works, he argues that Shariati's contribution to the women question and gender issues requires a careful revision. Alijani examines the strengths and weaknesses of his approach in the context of postrevolutionary Iran. See Reza Alijani, *Zan dar motone moghaddas* (*Women in Sacred Texts*) (Tehran, AH 1386/2008), www.zdmm.blogfa.com.

82. According to Alijani, for example, the Green Movement is a plural phenomenon, and yet its dominant mode is secular. See Reza Alijani, Mizan Press, mizankhabar.net/index.php/2010–01–09–16–05–16/997–1389–03–12–01–44–43.html (accessed 1 September 2010). Another active member of this trend is Narges Mohammadi. She is the president of the executive committee of National Peace and a winner of the Alexander Langer International Foundation Award; she suffered imprisonment after being charged with actions against the Islamic republic and was released on Friday, 2 July 2009.

83. Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 2005), 16.

84. Jürgen Habermas, "'Modernity—an Incomplete Project'," in *The Anti-aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay, 1983).

85. Roy Anderson, Robert F. Seibert, and Jon G. Wagner, eds., *Politics and Change in the Middle East: Sources of Conflict and Accommodation*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 122.

have native roots in the intellectual soil of every society. This is *universalism from below.* Practically, it suggests that democratization will not be achieved against the will of *demos.* It will be accomplished with them or not at all. A dialogue with the traditions and cultures of the people empowers civil society, facilitates active and deliberative engagement, and provides the most effective path to challenge the status quo. It brings change from *within.* Democratic ideas are ineffective if they are not reached by the common people. Both Karl Marx and Weber remind us that ideas are powerless unless fused with material forces. To this end, post-Islamism in Iran symbolizes a critical negotiation between tradition and modernity, religion and reason, faith and freedom, sacred and secular, and particular and universal. The goal of a critical dialogue with culture and mining the tradition is not to reclaim "traditionalism" or to claim that all universal values derive from our culture; the goal instead is to show that values such as democracy and human rights have deep native roots in our intellectual soil. By uncovering the native roots of such ideas, democracy, human rights, and social justice will be seen as an idea that is at once deeply local and global; they are genuinely *glocal.*

The challenge is to make a clear distinction between an alternative modernity and an alternative to modernity. While the former is conducive to the development of a critical glocal third way, the latter, Ernesto Laclau argues, is no less than "self-defeating." In other words, "this is the route to self-apartheid."[86] Nostalgic traditionalism is narcissistic retirement within oneself, which can only lead to a suicide exile and self-marginalization.

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Post-Islamism in Iran is a big step forward; it symbolizes the beginning of a new era in the intellectual and political domains of contemporary Iran. However, it suffers from its shortcomings. Quasi-/semi-post-Islamist discourse in Iran

vacillates between Islamism and post-Islamism. The lasting legacy of Khomeini and the adherence to Sharia-based religiosity create some conceptual confusion about the nature, scope, and meaning of modern democracy. While Mousavi clearly advocates the separation of "religious institutions and clergymen from the state," he still supports Khomeini's doctrine of *velayat-e faqih.* The impact of such conceptual confusion on the political strategies of the Green Movement is evident.

Liberal post-Islamism in Iran has contributed immensely to the evolution of new theological debates on Islam and democracy and contributed to the rise of the reformist movement in the 1990s. However, it suffers from a "vacillation between allowing and denying citizenship rights."[87] The discourse is a mishmash of concepts such as "religious democratic government," "Muslim democracy," "minimalist versus maximalist religion," "normative versus political secularism," and "spiritual religiosity." The vacillation between liberal thought and Islamism, privatization of religion and religious democratic government, has resulted in a "contraction and expansion" of liberal post-Islamist discourse in Iran. Moreover, while liberal post-Islamist thinkers and activists contributed to the rise of the reformist movement in the 1990s, they also contributed to the crisis of the movement. Liberal post-Islamists are more concerned about modern *theological* debates and less concerned about the *social* elements of democracy.[88] They adhere to a theological, not a social, approach to the question of democracy and democratization. The discourse is particularly weak on the question of social justice, class struggle, and egalitarianism.

A new generation—disenchanted with Khomeini's Islamist ideology, disappointed with Khatami's reformist politics, unsatisfied with liberal reformist trends, and frustrated with regressive trends under Iran's neoconservative rule—is again looking to Shariati's discourse for change.[89] Neo-Shariati post-Islamist discourse is a response to this demand. The discourse's

86. Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)* (New York: Verso, 1996), 26, 32.

87. Farzin Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut: Iran's Intellectual Encounter with Modernity* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 213–14.

88. See, e.g., Akbar Ganji, *Quran Mohammadi* (*Muhammad's Koran*), radiozamaaneh.com/ (accessed 20 August 2008).

89. Hunter, *Reformist Voices of Islam*, 56.

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critical stance toward tradition and modernity, clericalism and neoliberalism, shallow reformism and militant revolutionary approach, together with the admiration of "radical reform" both in religious thought and in sociopolitical structure, appeals to segments of the new generation in Iran.[90] The discourse is particularly appealing to its supporters because of its *social*, not theological, approach to democratization and its *egalitarian* leanings toward sociopolitical change. As such, neo-Shariatists' emphasis on societal empowerment, self- and social awareness, and people's political agency aims at bringing sustainable change from within. Therefore they have organized and worked with civil society including women, youth, students, and labor organizations. However, there exists much *unthought* in this thought, which requires some serious intellectual endeavors.

The discourse rightly suggests that privatization of religion is not a solution to Islamism. The liberal minimalist-maximalist discourse has consistently been unsuccessful and has resulted in the rise of religious fundamentalism. Should the private sphere be left to historical Islam it would return to the public sphere sooner or later.[91] Sharia-based Islam, historical clerical Islam, must be contested in both the private and public spheres. When the state appeals to religious doctrines and the religion still plays a significant role in society, a private and isolated religion will not serve democratization. In such a condition, Abdullahi An-Na'im reminds us, democrats must not "abandon" the public field to the autocrats, who manipulate religion for their own political purpose.[92] Islamic tradition must be historicized and deconstructed. For such a thin progressive humanist religion serves human beings, whereby religion is a source of vision, value, and orientation in the private and public spheres.

Neo-Shariati discourse also clearly rejects organized/institutionalized religion and the concept of Islamic state.[93] For both Shariati and neo-Shariati discourse, organized religion serves as a social, and now political, tool of repression. Shariati succeeded in producing a radical local discourse that disassociated itself from organized clerical Islam and associated itself with the secular trinity of freedom, social justice, and self-awareness. However, it is not clear whether and how Shariati's trinity of *azadi*, *barabari*, and *erfan*, the most relevant core of his discourse, translates into a new polity of "spiritual social democracy." The meaning, nature, scope, and function of such spirituality in the public sphere, in general, and state, in particular, are unclear. The same applies to the concept of "spiritual republic and/or democracy," borrowed from Iqbal Lahouri. Moreover, as a result of the revolution and, paradoxically, three decades of Islamist politics, Iran, which Shariati thought had remained in the age of faith, as Europe had in the late feudal era, has changed. Does Iran still remain in the age of faith, or is it in a post-Islamist era? How does this shift, if any, affect the strategy of Islamic reform and sociopolitical reforms?

The success of the post-Islamist turn in Iran depends in part on a critical dialogue and mutual understanding between various forms of religious and secular citizens. Citizens of the faith should learn from their fellow secular citizens that the institutional separation of religion and politics is a necessary condition for a modern democracy. The secularists need to learn that the normative separation of religion and politics is neither possible nor desirable. In a "post-metaphysical" or "post-secular" era, as Habermas reminds us, secularists might "open their minds to the possible truth content" of religious discourses and enter into

90. For a progressive critique of hegemonic globalism, see Sara Shariati, "Chehreye jahanigar, chehreye jahanizadeh: Negahi be siyaste jahani kardan va ravande tarikhiye jahani shodan" ("The Colonizer and the Colonized: On the Politics of Globalization and the Historical Trend of Globalization"), in B. Shariati, *Khodkaviye melli dar asre jahani shodan*, 127–75.

91. Sara Shariati, "Dar bareyeh sharayete modernitiye dini" ("On the Conditions of Religious Modernity"), in B. Shariati, *Dar hashiye ye matan*, 131–66.

92. Abdullahi An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), xii.

93. Shariati never directly referred to Antonio Gramsci's notions of hegemony and ideology. However, "his insistence on the cultural/ideological basis of domination could be regarded as a Gramscian moment in contemporary Iranian politics." In his view, "so long as religion remains disengaged with public issues of justice, it would remain as another repressive institution of civil society. Gramsci drew a dialectical relation between 'the ethical-political aspect of politics or theory of hegemony and consent' and 'the aspect of force and economics.' In the same vein, Shariati's 'trinity of oppression' depicted how the institutionalized religion ideologically justified the political order and economic power of dominant classes." See Ghamari-Tabrizi, "Contentious Public Religion," 512.

"dialogues" with their fellow religious citizens. "Post-metaphysical thought" according to Habermas, "draws, with no polemical intention, a strict line between faith and knowledge. But it rejects a narrow scientific conception of reason and the exclusion of religious doctrines from the genealogy of reason"; in other words, it "is prepared to learn from religion while remaining strictly agnostic." Secular citizens should distance themselves from the post-Enlightenment cliché that suggests that religious traditions are "archaic relics of pre-modern societies that continue to exist in the present." The "ethics of citizenship," Habermas argues, requires that both religious and secular citizens stop behaving in an uncivil and "paternalistic" way and step into a "*complementary* learning process."[94] Both secularists and religious citizens must avoid cultural essentialism. Secular citizens need to understand that their fellow religious citizens can appreciate freedom, democracy, and social justice and even extract these ideals from their religious soils. Religious citizens should know that extracting ideals such as democracy and social justice from religious texts does not make them religious concepts; they are neither religious nor antireligious notions.

Likewise, secularists should stop essentializing such concepts by suggesting that religious traditions and modern democracy are mutually exclusive. Instead, they need to support a progressive, democratic Islam. In the Muslim world, the vitality of religious reform is less a religious obligation than a civic responsibility. According to Shariati, religious reform "makes the weapon of religion inaccessible to those who have undeservedly armed themselves with it . . . eliminates the spirit of imitation . . . extracts and refines the enormous resources of the society and converts the jamming agents into energy, . . . and bridges the ever-widening gap between the 'island of the intelligentsia' and the 'shore of the masses.'"[95] Religious reform can contribute to sociopolitical reform; democrati-

zation of religious discourse can serve political democratization.

Religious and secular citizens need to challenge the political version of clericalism on behalf of either divine duty or civil responsibility. "Anti-clericalism," as Richard Rorty observes, "is a political view, not an epistemological or metaphysical one. It is the view that *ecclesiastical institutions*, despite all the good they do—despite all the comfort they provide to those in need or in despair—*are dangerous to the health of democratic societies.*[96]

Last but not least, the future success of post-Islamism in Iran depends in part on its critical synthetic approach toward local and global paradigms. Post-Islamists need to synthesize "the cultural and political traditions of the east and the west"; they need to look at "the east through western eyes and at the west through eastern eyes."[97] ᔕ

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94. Jürgen Habermas, "Religion in the Public Sphere" (lecture presented at the Holberg Prize Seminar, 29 November 2005), www.sandiego.edu/pdf/pdf_library/habermaslecture031105c939cceb2ab087bdfc6df291ec0fc3fa.pdf, 11–13.

95. See Ali Shariati, *CW* (Tehran: Ghalam, 1989), vol. 20, 120–21.

96. Richard Rorty, "Anticlericalism and Atheism," in *The Future of Religion*, ed. Santiago Zabala (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 33; italics added.

97. Ali Rahnema uses these words to describe Shariati. See Ali Rahnema, *An Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shari'ati* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), 370.