

# **New Reflection on the History of Iranian and Islamic Political Thought "An Attempt to Understand the Cause of Progress"**

**Mohammad Mahdi Esmaeili\***

Assistant professor, Department of Political science, Tehran University, Tehran, IRAN.

(Received: 8 December 2019 Accepted: 18 December 2019)

## **Abstract**

With an emphasis on its prominent historical points, this article attempts to take a fresh look at the evolution of political thought in Islam and Iran. This review attempts to identify the milestones of the history of political thought in Iran and in particular, in the Islamic world. By identifying them, the impact of each of the ideas of urban Iran, Sunni Islam, Shiite Islam, the Greek and the new West on the formation and continuation of political thought in Iran can be understood and the contribution of each of these sources to various historical stages and in different ways that, have produced political power in Islamic Iran can be investigated. This essay seeks to show, through a historical approach, the stages of the rupture and the connection between the course of political thought and historical developments. An examination of the history of thought, scholars, and the political system in Iran and Islam reveals that an important and influential component in the development of post-Islamic Iranian society is the supremacy of the Shi'a intellectual tradition, which has had a significant impact on the growth, and excellence of the Islamic world and Islamic civilization. The golden age of Islamic civilization during the third to fifth centuries, and the political, economic, and cultural flourishing of Iran in the tenth and eleventh centuries, were the product of the rule of Shiite political thought. Accordingly, the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran based on Shiite rationality can lead to a new period of civilization in Iran and the Islamic world.

**Keywords:** Iran, Islam, Islamic Revolution, Progress, Shiite Rationality.

---

\*. Corresponding author: m.m.esmaeli@ut.ac.ir

### **Introduction**

The collapse of the last Iranian dynasty, the Sassanid, by Islamist troops and the acceptance of Islam by the Iranians is the most important event that the new cultural, social and political history of Iran begun and followed by it. Iran became Islamic, but unlike most other areas that have said farewell to their entire historical heritage since the arrival of Islam, Iranians embraced Islam while still maintaining a large part of their heritage that was not in conflict with the new religion and they dedicated themselves to the advancement of Islam. Morteza Motahhari (1298-1358) believes that Iran and Iranians are between the two most prominent nations in which Islam has emerged: First, the Iranians, more than any other nations, have given their forces to Islam and second, they were more sincere and devoted in this way than any other nation.

The first service to be mentioned is the service of the ancient Iranian civilization to the young Islamic civilization. In addition, Motahhari mentions the services of Muslim Iranians that have taken place in various ways: in the form of publicity and invitations to other nations, in the form of military services, in industry, arts and so on. In this section, he first gives a brief account of the Iranian civilization and its features and describes it as a civilization with a glorious history. In this regard, he also points out two important points, cited by experts on the features of art, industry, politics and military affairs of Iranian brilliant civilization: One is that pre-Islamic Iran was a civilization and this civilization is one of the themes and bases for Islamic civilization. In return, Islam has given Iran a renewed vitality, and the declining civilization of Iran has gained new life and a new form of Islam (Motahhari, 1390: 332).

Therefore, Iran is opening up its arms to Islam at a time when there are various crises and problems and when Iran and Iranians are in a period of segregation and discrimination. In fact, the first thing Islam took away from Iran was the segregation of religious beliefs and the establishment of a unity of belief (Ibid: 307). Islam prevented the development and influence of Christianity in Iran and in the East in general.

Generally speaking, Islam had two positive consequences for Iran by opening the gates of other lands to this country and opening the gates of Iran to other nations: 1- Iranians were able to put their intelligence, talents and virtues into practice and prove their capabilities to other nations 2. Having become familiar with other cultures and civilizations, they were able to make a huge contribution to the completion and development of a great global civilization (Ibid: 308).

With this introduction, we try to identify the secret of progress and degeneration in this long path by explaining the historical stages of thought and political system in post-Islamic Iran. The history of Iranian political thought in the Islamic era dates back to the third century. This does not mean, of course, the absence of Iranian individuals and movements in the first two centuries of Islam, but rather it goes back to the beginning of this period as the formation of the first local governments in Iran and the crisis of caliphate. Examination of the trajectory that exists from this century to the fifteenth century reveals tangible and clear fluctuations. If you are to clearly identify the stages of this 15th century, you can trace it to three general stages: -from the arrival of Islam to Iran until the coming of the Safavid government in the tenth century; 2- from the Safavid period to the arrival of modernity and formation of Constitutional Movement and the change of political system from authoritarian rule to democratic and popular government; 3- from this point to the present era.

### **1. First Period: from the Beginning to the Tenth Century**

During this long period, with the collapse of the last Iranian dynasty at the hands of Islamist troops, no unified political government under the name of Iran would be formed until the establishment of the Safavid National Government. Of course, this ten-century period does not mean lethargy and stagnation in the field of Iranian political thought, since it was at this time that the most glorious period of Islamic civilization with the Iranian color in the third to fifth centuries formed. Even in the first two centuries, Iranian thoughts gradually consolidated and disciplined the newly formed Islamic state organization, which was acknowledged by scholars (Fry, 1362: 5). In the Seventh to tenth centuries, in spite of the violent and suffocating appearance of the Ilkhanids, a new identity was emerging within Iranian society. Thus, this period can also be divided into three sections:

#### **1.1. First Century to Third Century**

Because of the caliphate's thoughts conquest and consequently its conversion to the rule of Umayyad dynasty and Abbasid Caliphate, Iranian elements often sought to oppose the Umayyad dynasty, which pursued the ignorant sense of racial supremacy. Ultimately, they led the most important movement to change the government and transferred it to Banū Hāshim. The strong and influential Iranian presence at the end of the second century culminated in the transfer of the government seat from Baghdad to Marv in Khorasan, Iran. The event was also accompanied by an important event in Iranian religious and political history. Enforcing the

eighth Shiite Imam, Ali ibn Musa al-Reza (P.B.U.H) to live in Iran, and his martyrdom and burial in Khorasan, reinforced the Shiite mindset in Iran.

### **1.2. Third to Seventh Centuries**

The formation of the Taherian government by Amir who appointed by Ma'mun when he left Khorasan entered a new era to the political history of Iran and Islam. In this part, with the gradual weakening of the caliphate and the strengthening of local and regional authority, the political bureaucracy of the Islamic world is virtually out of the hands of the caliphs of Baghdad. Along with this political transformation, with the formation of the Samanid government, a new Persian language and script was formed in Iran, and gradually promoted great poets and literates such as Ferdowsi (329-411). Consequently, the Persian language gradually found an artistic association with Islamic-Shiite thoughts too.

During the third and fourth centuries, the golden age of Islamic civilization begins with the rise and reign of the three Shiite Buyid dynasty in Iran and central Iraq, the Hamdanid dynasty in northern Iraq and Syria, and the Fatimid Ismaili Caliphate in Cairo and North Africa. The golden age lasted until the end of the fifth century in Iran and Iraq and until the middle of the sixth century in Egypt. The largest Shiite political philosophers and political scholars, along with several prominent Sunni figures as well as the flourishing of other intellectual, mathematical, astronomical, and medical sciences, are the fruits of the rule of Shi'a rational thoughts inspired by the Shi'a theological, Jurisprudence and philosophical thoughts.

As an instance, one of the rulers of Buyids was Azad al-Dawlah who was conversant in various sciences including mathematics and geometry, astronomy, politics, and political governing. Azad al-Dawlah had set a wage for jurists, physicians, engineers, mathematicians, and so on and devoted part of his palace to philosophers and wise people. He also set up a library in his grand palace in Shiraz and when he went to Baghdad, he moved that library with him, and it is said that any book ever written it could be find in his library (Moghadasi, 1361, Vol. 2: 668).

Establishing Dar al-elm in various regions of Iran and Iraq (ibid: 684), which, alongside the seminary schools, became centers of free thoughts and scientific discussions, was one of the most important services of Buyids to people and shaped the golden age of Islamic civilization.

In the field of rational thinking, Iranians also played a significant role in the Islamic world. Although Abū Rayḥān Bīrūnī (362-440), named Khalid ibn Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah (d. 102) the first Islamic philosopher

(Abū Rayḥān Bīrūnī, 1923AD, c. 1: 302) or AbuYūsuf Ya‘qūb ibn ‘Ishāq aṣ-Ṣabbāḥ al-Kindī (181-258), was named as the pioneers of philosophy in the Arab world, the Iranian thinkers who have expressed their ideas as philosophers and theologians were pioneers of this field too. Ibn Khaldun (732-808) in his book, Preface called this group of Iranian philosophers "a very small and rare" people and wrote: "The Persians (Iranians) had such great mental sciences and their scope is wide" (Al-Esfarayeni, 1383: 12). The beginning of this golden age is with Farabi (260- 339 AH) who is a Shiite lived in the third century and lived in the era of Minor Occultation. He is in many ways the most important philosopher of the Islamic period. The end of the golden age is with a prominent thinker in the western Islamic world, Ibn Rushd (520-595) who re-read and translated the Greek philosophers' theories with an Islamic perspective under Shiite perspective. The transfer of Ibn Rushd's scientific heritage to Europe also followed by the early steps of the Renaissance. The great Shiite scholars such as the Koleini (258-328 A.H.), Sheikh Saduq (381- 0305), Sheikh Mufid (336-413), Sayyed Morteza (355-436), Sayyed Razi (359-406) And Sheikh Tusi (Founder of Najaf Ashraf seminary, 385-460) were engaged in scientific activities during this golden age. The Four Principles<sup>1</sup> and Nahj al-Balagha were gathered and edited by them. The interesting point is that the Sunni's Kutub al-Sittah<sup>2</sup> are also collected in this historical age.

In the same period, Maverdi (400-364), the supreme religious judge in Albuquerque's government, who believed in Shafei religion, reconstructs the theory of the caliphate by writing an important book, "The Sultanate Laws." Following the arrival of the Ghaznavy Turks into Iran, as well as the Seljuks' rule in Iran and Iraq and other important parts of the Islamic world, Shiite intellectual thinking is gradually became isolated<sup>3</sup> and the clashes between jurisprudential, theological and philosophical religions provoked by Ghaznavites and the Seljuks. Imam Mohammed al-Ghazali (450-505), wrote The Incoherence of the Philosophers, and practically

١. The Four Principles are a collection of four valid Shi'a narrative books, which include the principles of the Koleini's Al-Kafi, al-Shaykh al-Saduq's Man Lā Yahḍuruhū al-Faqīh, Al-Istibṣar and Tahdhib al-Ahkam, both of them by Sheikh Tusi.

٢. Kutub al-Sittah includes Sahih Bukhari, collected by Imam Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, collected by Muslim b. al-Hajjaj, Sunan Abu Dawood, collected by Abu Dawood, ami al-Tirmidhi, collected by al-Tirmidhi, Sunan al-Sughra, collected by al-Nasa'I. But they are not all of the same degree of validity; hence, they consider al-Bukhari and Muslim as superior to the rest, and all the hadiths of these two books are valid and accepted.

٣. Sultan Mahmud Ghaznawi arrived in Ray in 420 AH and captured the precious treasures there and set fire to the great library of Majd al-Dawlah and overthrew the Buyid's government in Rey (Iqbal Ashtiani And the Agheli, 2004AD: 231).

infringed the Islamic intellectual and philosophical realm. On the other hand the presence of Nizam al-Mulk (408-485) in this historical period stabilized the practical policymaking in Iranian political history. His most famous book is "Siyasatnama" or The Book of Government. Khaje Nizam al-Mulk's "Siyasatnama" is considered a masterpiece in political and policy-making books because of its specific and rich content. Nizam al-Mulk wrote The Book of Government at the request of King Seljuk and talks about the way that Persians govern and make policies. Referring to the importance of the book, he writes, "There is no other way for a king but to have this book, especially in these days when the more they read, the more they awaken in religious and secular works, and the better he can manage his friends and foes. This book opens the way for them to do goods, and make clear to them the ordinance of the court, the port, the bureau, the council, the battlefield, the transactions, and the status of vassals. In addition, nothing in all parts of the earth and their state from far and near shall be not unseen. God will choose one of the creatures of every age and make him adorned with the royal arts and make the materials of the world and the servants of the people so that people can live in justice" (Nizam al-Mulk al-Tusi, 1334: 12-11).

With this book, Nizam al-Mulk intends to create a government that is capable of running the country. Nizam al-Mulk's *Siyasatnama* can be considered as the most powerful political thought in Iran and has a number of useful and valuable contents. However, the *Siyasatnama* is not only well-known in the field of politics and governing, but also in the literary field. In his book *Stylistics*, Malek o-Sho'arā Bahār writes: "The style of this book is a mixture of *Tarikh-iBal'ami* and *Tārīkh-I Bayhaqī*, in terms of psychology and ease, it's prose is similar to *Balami's* prose, but in terms of new words and expressions and having metaphors and irony and enlightenment is similar to *Tārīkh-I Bayhaqī*".

### **1.3. Seventh to Tenth Century**

The Mongol invasion and abolition of the Abbasid caliphate in much of the Muslim world, including Iran, constitutes the last three centuries of the first period. These three centuries marked the transition period of Iranian political history from the Sunni caliphate to the Shiite Safavid state. Although the beginning of this period with the occupation of Iran by Genghis Khan led to bitter days for the people of this country, the Halakokhan attack, with the support of prominent Shi'ite intellectual Nasiruddin Tusi (597-672 A.H.), two major internal and external rivals to developing the Twelver Shiite were diminished. Initially, the Ismailis as an internal rival, who had many followers, were gradually eliminated and the

ground for the promotion of a Twelver Shiite were increasingly provided in Iran and Iraq. In the second step, with the conquest of Baghdad, the idea of a caliphate, as an external competitor, was formally removed from the field of Iranian political thought, and as a result, the opportunity of "religious unity" centered on the Shiite Imamate in Iran.

During this period, the expansion of Khanqahs and the growth of various branches of Sufism attracted much of the Sunni community to Ahl al-Bayt, and twelve Imams in the western and eastern parts of Iran. Meanwhile, the efforts of Shia jurists and scholars began with Mohagheq Hali (602-676) and Khawaja Nasir al-Din Tusi, and continued with Allameh Helli (648-726 A.H.), Martyr I (734-786) and Ibn Fahd al-Hali (4-5), providing grounds for promoting Shiism among the Ilkhanid system and other parts of society.

Therefore, at the beginning of the eighth century, under the command of Aljaito, Sultan Muhammad Khodabandeh, coins multiplied in the name of the Twelve Imams (Ibn Fahd, 1388, 5: 426) Ibn Fahd al-Hali's efforts in the ninth century led to the conversion of the Qara Qoyunlus in western Iran and northern Iraq to Shiite.

In the meantime, Sayyed Haidar Amoli (720-792) the mystic jurist of the eighth and ninth centuries, combining the mystical views of Ibn al-Arabi and the Shi'i theological and philosophical thought of Khaje Nasir, based his political theory on order and rule and tried to reconcile Sufism and Shia. Sayyed writes in the comprehensive book of *al-Asrar*: "The purpose of writing this book was to become Shiite Sufis and Shiite Sufis" (Amoli, 1368: 5). Timor and his successors' fascination in Ahlul-Bayt's, were manifested in particular through the esoteric teachings of Sufism in his fascination with Khajeh Ali Ardebili, the great-grandfather of Shah Ismail Safavi, (Torkaman, 1382, vol. 1: 1-4) The religious atmosphere of the ninth century prepared Iran for the formation of a national and inclusive Shiite state in the tenth century. For example, one of the hallmarks of space change is the replacement of Karbala's epic poem with the one read by Abu Muslama in that period, with the publication of the Kashefi's *Roza al-Shohada's* book.

It is necessary to note in this section that the scientific formulation of the rule of grace, especially on the subject of Shiite Imams, by Khwaja Nasir al-Tusi in the theological book of *Extraction of Al-Aqa'idah* and its expansion by Allameh Halley in the description of this book, will undoubtedly play the most important role in the development of Shiite Imamate thought.

**New Reflection on the History of Iranian and Islamic Political Thought**  
**"An Attempt to Understand the Cause of Progress"**

114

Meanwhile, in the west of the Islamic world, with the end of the Crusades at the end of the seventh century and the victory of the Ayyubis, the remaining Turks in Asia Minor gradually began to develop their rule. After some time, with the addition of power and territory, from the tenth century onwards, and since the reign of Sultan Salim, they have gradually replaced themselves as Sunni caliphates. (Spagnaqchi Pashazadeh, 1378: 211) Most Sunni scholars in the seventh and eighth centuries, such as Ibn Jamaah, Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qaim<sup>4</sup> focused their efforts to acceptance of the idea of transformation in the legitimacy of the government, emphasizing the return to the golden age of caliphate and Salafism<sup>5</sup> and the elimination of the Quraysh condition from the conditions of the caliphate, as well as increased inter-religious violence.

Between the seventh and the tenth centuries, another prominent and distinguished clergyman in North Africa has had a significant impact on the field of political thought. Mohiuddin ibn Arabi (560-635), as the greatest mystic and Sufi in the Islamic world, published two mystical works entitled "The Conquests of Mecca" and "Fosous al-Hekam" into mystical thought and so on. It was noted that it had a significant impact on

---

۴. See Book: Ghaderi, Hatam, (1378) Political Thoughts in Islam in Iran, Publications on pages 120 to 135.

۵. In the literal sense, Salafism means imitating the past, worshipping the old, or blindly imitating the dead, but in its idiomatic sense, Salafi (the companions of the al-Salaf-salih) is a sect name that adheres to the religion of Islam, adhering to its rightful predecessor. They know, and in their actions, behaviors and beliefs, they strive for citizenship of the Companions and their subjects. They believe that Islamic beliefs should be expressed in the same way as they were in the age of the Companions, that is to say, Islamic beliefs should be learned from books and traditions, and scholars should not come up with arguments other than the Qur'an, to pay. In Salafist thought, there is no place for rational and logical modes, and only the Qur'anic text, the hadiths and the proofs of the concept of the Qur'anic text are valid for them. With the emergence of a new wave of Salafism in the Hanbalians from the seventh century, imitation appeared as a spectrum of Hanbal schools. Such an approach is seen in the works of Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728) as one of the most prominent Salafist and anti-Shiite figures in the Middle Ages and then in the works of earlier followers of Ibn Taymiyyah, such as Ibn Gheim Jawziyah (d. 571). Especially in the book "The Declaration of Al-Raqqa 'al-'Al-'Al-Amin." In the works of moderate Hanbalist jurists in later periods, emphasis was placed on the inability to imitate the mujtahid. One of the turning points of Salafist thinking is the emergence of Ibn Taymiyyah Harani. After sitting in his seat of teaching and abstinence instead of his father, he stated that there were monotheistic and biased views of the hadith and the followers of the predecessor and opposition to other religious groups and theological and jurisprudential divisions that led to a sharp divide among Muslims. He emerged to the point where some accepted him as their intellectual leader and some vehemently rejected him as heretical and issued a fatwa to murder or imprisonment that required further comment on him. After the death of Ibn Taymiyyah, his ideas were also of interest to the Hadith, especially the Hanbalis, and his disciples based on his intellectual elements founded the invitation of Salafis. In fact, he is considered a bridge to the Salafist religion (Salih, 1352: 20).



the Iranians of that period, and later and to this day.<sup>6</sup> Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, is one of the influencers of Ibn Arabi's works and the commentators of Fosous.<sup>7</sup>

Another thinker of the western Islamic world is Ibn Khaldun (4-5), who is famous for his introduction to social philosophy and civil science in his book *Introduction*. The remarkable point is the continuity of Ibn Khaldun's ideas in the Islamic world at that time and his repeated recognition in the works of Western and Muslim scholars from the late nineteenth century onwards.

## **2. The Second Period of the History of Political Thought in Iran and Islam: Tenth Century to the Constitutional Period (14th Century)**

In the beginning of the tenth century, with the formation of the Shiite Safavid government in 907 AH, the first national government was formed in Iran after ten centuries.<sup>8</sup> Although it is not possible to adapt all the features of the Western nation-state after the Westphalia peace (1648) to this newly established state, the formation of a state on the territory of Iran, with widespread religious unity, centralized sovereignty, and the promotion of language The official Persian language can be very close to the modern concept mentioned above.<sup>9</sup> For more than 230 years, the

٦. Due to its high importance and value so far more than one hundred and ten different descriptions have been written in different languages in different languages (Jahangiri, 1385: 23).

٧. In his message to Gorbachev, about Ibn Arabi, the Imam writes: "I will not bother you anymore and I will not mention the books of mystics and especially of Muhammad al-Din Ibn Arabi; They are strongly involved in such matters, paving the way for Qom, so that after many years of trusting in God they will become aware of the finer depths of the hair of wisdom, which without this journey would not be possible .... Islamic Iran as the largest and most powerful base in the Islamic world can easily fill your system of beliefs Maidan" (Khomeini, Ruhollah, 1369, Vol. 31: 175).

٨. See: Heinz, Walter (1361), *The Formation of the National Government in Iran*, Translated by Kikavus Jahandari, Third Edition, Tehran: Kharazmi

٩. When *Jebel al-amal*'s scholars were present in various socio-cultural spheres, the first steps in the development of Shiite thought in Farsi were taken. Researcher Kirkey pursued this goal with ingenuity and acumen. Naturally, of course, achieving this lofty goal was made possible by presenting the culture, the teachings, and the religious commandments in the language of the masses and with the proverb that was well understood. Because of this necessity, the Farsi-speaking and translation movement was formed, and gradually the generalization of Shi'ite teachings as the main strategy of the scholars became manifest. At this juncture, Ali bin Hassan Zawara'i (d. 947), a student of Mohaqiq Karaki, began translating and writing Farsi by order of a professor. In 938 AH he translated "*Kashf al-ghumma fi ma'rifat al-a'imma*" into Persian, followed by eight important works by Shiite elders: *al-Aqtiqat* by Sheikh Saduq, *al-Etajaj* by Ahmad bin Ali Tabari, *Makarem al-Akhlaq* by Hassan Tabari, *Ada al-Dawa* by Ibn Fahad Al-Hadi translated *Tafaf al-Dawat* and *al-Anwar* from Erbil. His most important work is the Persian

**New Reflection on the History of Iranian and Islamic Political Thought**  
**"An Attempt to Understand the Cause of Progress"**

116

Journal of Contemporary Research on Islamic Revolution | Volume 1 | No. 2 | Autumn 2019 | PP. 107-126

Safavid government has used the Shiite civil system intelligently in the fields of politics, culture and economics by cleverly using Shiite scholars, especially jurists and scholars. During this period, Shiite intellectual included the philosophy of Mashayi Farabi and Ibn Sina, the philosophy of Shaykh Suhrawardi, and the mysticism of Ibn 'Arab. The eulogy of Khaje Nasir in Mulla Sadra's Thought (979-1050 AH) and his transcendent wisdom came together and provided the intellectual, philosophical and political backing of the new Iranian and Shiite society up to now.

Political jurisprudence and jurisprudence almost followed a more independent path. After the great Safavid jurists such as Mohaghegh Karaki (940-940), Martyr Sani (911-966), Mohaghegh Ardebili (993) and Sheikh Baha'i (930-1047), Akhbari<sup>10</sup> Since the second half of the eleventh century has gradually become the dominant thinking in the jurisprudential process and almost isolates the rational and principled thinking of the jurisprudence as well as the political thought derived from Sadrian wisdom. The peak of the Akhbarist thought in the early twelfth century was during the reign of Sheikh al-Islami the Great Hadith, Allameh Muhammad Baqar Majlesi (1037-1110).

The fall of the Safavids in 1135 by the Afghans, rather than by the strength and power of the Afghans, stemmed from the overwhelming weakness of the Safavid monarch and the predictive mindset, was a great shock to Iranian society.

Gradually, at the end of the twelfth century, once again the principle of jurisprudential thought that had been linked to Sadrian philosophical thinking, by re-formulating its own intellectual organization, succeeded in overcoming the prophet hood and the principle of *ijtihad* in the field of political jurisprudence. From the Safavid period onwards, it emerged as

---

commentary on the Qur'an and the Nahj al-Balagha commentary, which is a major move to convert the original religious texts to Persian. After him, his disciple: Fathullah ibn Shaker Allah (d. 988) pursued the task of translation. In fact, these two are pioneers of the translation movement at the beginning of the Safavid era. Thereafter, Sheikh Baha'i (d. 1030) translated al-Ramsala al-Amamiyah, attributed to Imam Reza (a.s.). Slowly the translation market warmed up and accelerated. Anyone who was able to translate himself would write. The movement of translation was so passionate that a number of Fazl people made translation their main profession (Miri, 1377: 370). See also: Goodarzi, Hossein (2011), The Position of Persian Language and Literature in Safavid Iran and Its Relation to Official and National Language, National Studies Quarterly, No. 47.

۱۰. Motahhari, referring to the tradition of the Prophetic thinking, writes: "If the path to justice were followed, it would be pursued ... if there was greed and freedom of thought and the subject of the Sunnis would not prevail over the people of justice. The Shiites did not have the calamitous calamity, we now had a modern social philosophy and our jurisprudence was based on this principle and now we had no contradictions and dead ends" (Motahhari, 1375, Vol. 3: 239).

the main practice in the field of thought. It is more speculative that with the formation of the Shiite political system, the need for a coherent legal organization to articulate and respond to complex government issues was essential, so that the jurists, as a group entrusted with legal issues, were at the forefront of the political process in Iran. This is of great importance due to the strong political theory that places the responsibility of the society on the Shiite Imamate during the absence of Imam.

The famous letter of Shah Tahmaseb (919-984) to Mohaghegh Karaki (874-940) and the acceptance of the jurists' priority in the management of society as deputies of the Imam Zaman (A.S.) and conditionality of his government on his permission is a very important development at this point.

The transfer of the seminary from Isfahan to Najaf Ashraf and exodus from Iranian rule, and the provision of a unified, inclusive and unified authority that was the result of the overriding of fundamentalist and Ijtihadist thought, provided the complete independence of the clergy and authority from the Shiite monarchy of Iran. Following these developments, with the expansion of the jurisprudence of the jurisprudence, especially in the eternal work of the late Javahr al-Fiqh, the late Sahib Jahrah (1202-1266), the jurisprudential theory and the jurisprudence of the jurisprudence gradually become the dominant idea of Iranian-Shiite society.

This issue, with the dominance of principled thinking in which reason played an important role in the process of issuing the Sharia, provided the grounds for attraction and understanding, and provided a solution for dealing with new concepts before Shiite thought. The Book of Eid al-Ayyam by the Naraqi (1185-1245) devoted an independent discussion to the subject of the jurisprudence and Mirza Shirazi (1230-1312) with the provincial sentence of tobacco banning showed the peak of the power of a jurisprudence that smoking hookah in the shrine was also sanctioned for the Qajar king (Najafi, 1391: 235).

### **3. The Third Period of the History of Political Thought in Iran and Islam: from the Constitutional to the Present Times**

There is a consensus among scholars of the Islamic world and Eastern scholars that modernity has entered the Muslim world since Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. After the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, the New West needed new territories to expand economic influence and consequently political and cultural ones. To this end, the view of the East was on the agenda of the colonial powers. Gradually, the

**New Reflection on the History of Iranian and Islamic Political Thought**  
**"An Attempt to Understand the Cause of Progress"**

118

Journal of Contemporary Research on Islamic Revolution | Volume 1 | No. 2 | Autumn 2019 | PP. 107-126

great Islamic states of that day, the Ottomans, the Gurkanians, and Iran, faced widespread invasions of the new West.

The land of India was officially colonized by Britain in 1815. Under the influence of this confrontation, the Ottoman great government put in place a number of major reforms over a period of time that ultimately failed to maintain the idea of a Sunni caliphate and collapsed in the wake of the events of the First World War. The guardianship of Islamic lands by foreigners and the formation of numerous small governments were a major blow to the Sunni world of thought. It was hard for scholars of the Islamic world to accept the new nation-state that introduced by West, either The transition from wide-ranging political theories to a centralized decision-making structure, and to Dar al-Islam's view of small and multiple political states.

The great peacemakers of the Islamic world such as Sayyed Jamal (1254-1314), Mohammad Abda (1266-1323), Abdul Rahman Kawakbi (1266-1320), Ali Abdul Razzaq (1300-1388), Rashid Reza (1282-1354), Hassan al-Banna (1324-1368), Sayyed Qutb (1320-1387), or nationalist or Western or Orientalist movements or political parties, made various efforts during the fourteenth century (19th and 20th century) either for the proper correspondence between the new developments and the political thought of Islam and the reasons for the degeneration of the Muslims and the ways out of this theoretical impasse, or theorizing the complete abandonment of Western tradition and acceptance of modernity and attributing all problems to the prevailing religious view.

Reproduction of the Caliphate Theory by democratic views in Rashid Reza's thought, the Salafist thought of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1115-1206) in the Arabian Peninsula with the slogan of eliminating Islam from the doctrines of false beliefs and practices in Ben Baz's theoretical thoughts (1330-1430), Al Saud's political opportunism which reflects the widespread promotion of nationalist and pan-Arabist thoughts in the minds of Jamal Abdel Nasser (1336-1392) and the Ba'ath parties in Iraq and Syria were among the most important events of the world of Islam in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, ideas of Ali Abdul Razaq (1307-1957) and Michel Aflaq (1910-1989), the formation of a new government centered on Mustafa Kemal Pasha's pan-Turkism (Ataturk) (1837-1981) in the great Ottoman remnant, Ten Muslim Brotherhood movements in Sunni countries to revive the era of Islamic glory by Hassan al-Banna and turning

it into a strict religious theory of Sayyed Qutb's<sup>11</sup> ideas in Egypt, the formation of the Jewish-Zionist state with the occupation of Jerusalem, the numerous defeats of Arab nationalists by Israel, all were among the most important political events in the Sunni world in the twentieth century.

In Iran, too, the defeat in Russian wars in the second half of the thirteenth century and Abbas Mirza's (1168-1212) famous question<sup>12</sup> from French ambassador considered as the beginning of modernization in Iran. The first Iranian students go to West and write Astonishment Letters<sup>13</sup> about Western power. The foundations of modernity in Iran shaped by these memoires. Amir Kabir (1186-1230) brought to Iran the process of Western technology with the establishment of Dar al-Fonun. Iranian intellectuals, like their counterparts in the Arab world, envision different versions for confronting the West.

Jalaluddin Mirza (1234-1287) attempts to theorize ancient nationalism by writing a book called Letter of Khosrowan.<sup>14</sup> Mirza Malekm Khan (1249-1326) calls for the implementation of Western political and social change and sets up an "occult booklet" to launch a new bureaucratic system addressed to Nasser al-Din Shah (1248-1144).<sup>15</sup> Mirza Fath Ali

---

۱۱. Sayyed Qutb for the first time presents a new definition of Dar al-Islam: "There is only one Dar al-Islam, and that is where the Islamic government is based on God's law and rules and the boundaries of God are enforced and Muslims are friends. Whatever exists except this, it is Dar al-Harb and the Muslim relationship with it, is either war or struggle or peace on the basis of the Amman Treaty" (Sayyed Qutb, 1977: 239-238).

۱۲. "I don't know what power you Europeans have over us, and what do you think of our weakness and growth," says Abbas Mirza to the French ambassador. You are skilled in fighting and conquering and applying the powers of the intellect, even though we are immersed in ignorance and hostility and rarely consider the future. Is the population and wealth of the East less than Europe? Or the sun that shines on us before it reaches us, has less beneficial effects on our heads than yours, or a God prefers your will over us? I don't think you can speak a barbarian! Tell me how should I alert Iranians? (Haeri, 1349: 300).

۱۳. Mirza Abolhassan Ilchi's travelogue or astonishment letter is one of the works.

۱۴. Jalaluddin Mirza can be considered one of the theorists of the ideology of chauvinistic ancient nationalism. From a young age, he tended to skeptical and secularist tendencies and atheism. In 1285 Jalal al-Dawlah wrote and published the book "Letter of Khosrowan" and sent it two years later to the Akhundzadeh (then a secular intellectual and materialist living in Tbilisi), which was highly regarded by Akhundzadeh. Khosrowan's letter is an undocumented, illusory, unfounded book on ancient Iranian history inspired by the book "History of Iran" by Sirjan Melkom. This book is the first work in Persian to formulate and theorize royalist ancient nationalism and has written "Jalal al-Dawlah" on "script." The book "Letter of Khosrowan" by Jalaluddin Mirza has been published in 120 pages by the Pazineh Cultural Publishing Institute. This book has been printed in Nastaliq script, calligraphy and in the same way.

۱۵. "I wish our government officials would have been less trusting in their minds in government inventions, and they would have less changed the principles that the Westerners have learned with so much science and experience. Governmental proposals

**New Reflection on the History of Iranian and Islamic Political Thought  
"An Attempt to Understand the Cause of Progress"**

Akhundzadeh (1230-1296) speaks of religion as the explicit intellectual of the secular adjective of human wisdom and, writing the "New Alphabet" treatise, marks the change of script from Arabic to Latin as the gateway to modernity.<sup>16</sup>

Mostashar al-Dawlah (1239-1313) tries to present new concepts and institutions with religious approaches in accordance with the social conditions of Iran.<sup>17</sup> Talibov (1330-1252), while avoiding full Westernization, demanded that Western technology and knowledge be used by Western experts to advance the economic development of Iran until the self-sufficiency of Iran (Mojtahedi, 1381: 123). Maraghey (1328-1125) is one of the pioneers of the theoretical foundations of the Western constitution, having authored the book *The Testament of Abraham Beig*.

Maraghey's book can be considered the first genuine European social novel which elaborates Persian and satirical language and has criticized Iranian ancient traditions and Iranians' immoral habits and habits in a very vivid way. (Arianpour, 1376: 124) Returning to ancient Iranian culture and explicit or implicit opposition to religious and indigenous teachings and attempts to enter the modernity and rule of colonial governments in Iran were the most prominent features of Iranian intellectuals.

In the meantime, Iranian religious thought and its scholars have come up with new concepts in the political field. Utilizing the practical breadth of their Ijtihadic thought, the mullah Khorasani and Mirza Naeini, one in the zeal of the religious man and the other in Constitutional and anti-authoritarian theorists' played an important part in changing Iran's political system from individual tyranny to popular rule and law and adapting new concepts to religious thought. Unfortunately, execution, assassination, and isolation of Shiite leaders from the constitutional movement, and the rise of the quasi-modern Reza Khani government to implement the thoughts of Iranian modernists in the process of modernization, was the end of the movement.

---

must either be fully accepted or rejected. These designs are arranged like clockworks, when half of the wheels are rejected, the other half will be useless and like the toy, we got from the westerners" (Melkomkhan, Beta: 126).

۱۶. The reason for the change in the Islamic line was that science and industry education has become easier ... the urban or rural Islam nation ... like the Prussian nation has been able to get into the circle of literacy and science education and industry, and Gradually reach out to Europeans in their civilization .... The spread of the Latin alphabet promoted literacy, helped to spread Western knowledge, and spread Western knowledge, contexts and institutions of Western civilization in the Muslim world (Adamiyat, 1349: 70).

۱۷. In his book *One Word*, Yusuf Khan Mostashar al-Dawlah explained his views.

However, after the relative stabilization, which rooted from the fall of Reza Khan (1332-1256), the Shiite field of thought continued to expand its sphere of influence. As it was said, from the beginning of the Safavid era, with the serious introduction of Shiite thought into the realm of sovereignty, the main theme of Shiite political thought was the extent of the expansion of the ijtehad during the absence of Imam. From the three domains of divination, judiciary and political theology, Akhund Khorasani (1255-1329) believed in divinity and judiciary, and the presence and accountability of the political (Ismaili: 1395: 210). The views of later Shi'ite scholars also formed in the dualism of whether or not to hold political responsibility in society. Ayatollah Boroujerdi (1292-1808), Ayatollah Golpayegani (1414-1314) in Qom and Ayatollah Sistani (born 1349) in the Najaf and Allameh Mohammad Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fazlullah (1354-1431) In Lebanon believed in political guardianship of jurists while scholars such as Ayatollah Shaykh Muhammad Mehdi Shams al-Din (d. 1354-1424) in Jebel Amel, believed in the lack of political guardianship for jurists (Ibid: 215).

In the meantime, the victory of Islamic revolution in Iran is not only a unique development in the Shiite and Sunni sphere of the Islamic world, but also as a revival of the religious trend against the idea of Western modernization, whether liberal or Marxist. It was considered being an important event in the contemporary intellectual and political field. The Islamic Revolution of Iran is a milestone in the field of Islamic world thought. For this reason, attention to the way in which victory is conceived and established and its roots, along with its widespread reflections in the Islamic world, is an independent chapter in the history of Iranian and Islamic political thought.

Imam Khomeini (d. 1280-1368) as a prominent figure in the Islamic world who had attained the rank of Marja in the formal apparatus of authority, while being the interpreter of Ibn Arabi's ideas in Fosous al Hekam and the Sadrian philosopher, took the lead in this religious movement. He has used all his previous experiences and applied his deep religious knowledge in various fields, and most importantly, his moral and personality characteristics since the year 1340 and the death of the late Ayatollah Boroujerdi. At first, the Pahlavi regime tried to force the constitution to be implemented correctly, but after the regime refused to do so, in June 15, 1342 movement followed by his fiery speech at the Supreme Mosque of the Qom, and the arrest of the supreme leader. After that, he was banished to Turkey, and then to Iraq, on November 13, 1343 because of his vigorous protest against capitulation. In 1348, during the

**New Reflection on the History of Iranian and Islamic Political Thought**  
**"An Attempt to Understand the Cause of Progress"**

122

course of extra-jurisprudence courses, Ayatollah explained the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist in 13 sessions, which resulted in the book *Islamic State*. Imam Khomeini called the throne illegal and in 1974 following the rise of the revolution after the suspicious death of his son and an insulting article in the January 1976 issue of the February of the following year, came back to Iran. The Islamic Revolution of Iran won on the 22nd of that month.

The first constitution of the Islamic Republic inspired by the political thought of Imam Khomeini and theorists such as Shahid Sadr (1453). In 1358 (1400) it approved by an overwhelming majority of the people (Ibid: 156). Imam Khomeini combined the Islamic content with the form of republic and democracy of the new world and the democratic and popular structure of the Islamic system. Regarding to the people-centered aspect of the Imam's thought, it is emphasized that this has been the case in the Shi'ite domain, from the era of the infallible Imamate to the era of political philosophers such as Farabi, Ibn Sina (370-425) and the great jurists of the Imamiyyah, such as Martyr I, Sheikh Ansari (1281- 1281) and others. It is considered as a part of the nature and essence of religious rule; it is at least a necessary condition for its realization. The idea of "transformation" adopted by Sunni scholars since the fifth century onwards has always been the red line of Shiite scholars. Ayatollah Khomeini, taking full advantage of all the talents of Shiite thought in the areas of jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, mysticism and Islam, referred to the guardianship of the jurisprudence as the only legitimate government in the absence of the infallible Imam (A.S.) while accepting the new concepts from Western governments such as separation of powers, activism of parties, public freedoms especially for women, formation of parliament, constitution and strong presence of people in formation of political structure in the form of multiple elections.

What is interesting about those who believe in the lack of political authority of jurists is the experience of failure and failure to attend the political arena and the general disapproval of the people. This is an important point that fewer researchers have paid attention to it. Experience the failure of Khorasani's thinking and Allama Naeini's political policy in the constitution, Ayatollah Khuey's silence on the Iraqi Ba'athist regime, and the humiliating treatment of the Iraqi government after the defeat of the Shabaniyah Intifada and their forced departure to Baghdad and meeting Saddam, and the defeat of Saddam, Shams al-Din's "guardianship of the People on His Own" with the agreement of Lebanese groups to



continue the tribal system and his desire to continue political activities, all are examples of the failure of this thought in Shiite society (Ibid: 270).

Conversely, who believe in the theory of the political guardianship of jurists largely left a brilliant record in practical sphere. Mirza Shirazi, under the leadership of the Tobacco Movement, inflicted a fatal blow on the body of domestic despotism and foreign colonization. Abdul Hussein Lari (1264-1342), while forming a limited religious government, displayed a heroic resistance to England and the Qajar. Above all of these is the public support for the victory of the Islamic Revolution, a magnificent and historic welcome to Imam Khomeini in return to Iran, a companionship during the ten years of supreme leadership and in the face of overwhelming problems such as the eight-year imposed war and economic sanctions. The twenty-five-year continuation of Ayatollah Khomeini's path, by obeying the supreme leader and creating numerous scenes in the succession of his rightful successor, are examples of the success of this political thought.

Parallel to the victory of the Islamic Revolution, both Shiite and Sunni communities developed a thought. Shiite parties and groups in Iraq, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon have become increasingly active, and in Sunni countries, especially in occupied Palestine, Egypt and North Africa, many groups with Islamic identities, and particularly with the defeat of nationalist movements, were established in the face of Israel.

The last link of this reflection, revealed itself during the revolutions of the region in 2011. Despite all the different interpretations and analyzes, the religious nature and the emergence of Islam is agreed among Islamic scholars. Although with the introduction of Salafi and Wahhabi religious discourse into the political arena, there is a strong concern for sectarian and religious activity, and it's becoming a serious threat to the future of Islamic world convergence, however, the general tendency of the region's political space towards the rule of religious thoughts.

### Conclusion

The nearly four decades after the establishment of the Islamic Republic and the clear signs of progress in various fields in Iran, indicate the success of the "drive of the Shiite intellect" in governing and advancing societies. If the historical reviews revisited, the most important and golden age of Islamic civilization is between the third and fifth centuries A.H., where Shiite thought was ruled by the Buyieds, Fatimid and Hamadani governments. Although this magnificent period was reborn for nearly a century in the first Shiite Iranian national government, the growth of

**New Reflection on the History of Iranian and Islamic Political Thought**  
**"An Attempt to Understand the Cause of Progress"**

124

Journal of Contemporary Research on Islamic Revolution | Volume 1 | No. 2 | Autumn 2019 | PP. 107-126

Akhbarism and political and governmental problems prevented it from continuing. Now, once again, with the advent of Shi'a rational thought in the framework of Religious democracy theory, one can hope for the revival of the glorious Islamic civilization. It seems that in the historical study of political thought in Iran and in order to draw a pattern of progress and movement from the current situation to the desirable one, the knowledge of jurisprudence about "human nature" as well as its ability to solve life's problems has a central position and can bring about a transformation through the use of mystical and philosophical tradition. In the meantime, Imam Khomeini's theories deserve to be noted that by introducing jurisprudence as "the complete and real theory of human and social governance from the cradle to the grave" it does not exclude rational and mystical sciences and their views. It can be of great help in explaining the epistemic and intellectual foundations of the political model of progress.

### **References**

- Adamiyat, F. (1349). *Thoughts by Mirza Fatheli Akhundzadeh*. Tehran: Kharazmi.
- Al-Bīrūnī, A. (1923). *The Works of Al-Baqiyya*. Vol. 3. By the Eduard Zachau. Leipzig (n.p.).
- Al-Esfarayeni, F. (1383). *Description of the Book of Al-Najah Al-Sina (Theology)*. Introduction and Research: Hamed Najj Esfahani. Tehran: Association of Cultural Works and Stories.
- Amoli, H. (1368). *Jama'at al-Asrar, Proofreading and Introduction*: Henri Carbon and Ottoman Ismail Yahya, French Association of Iranian Studies, Scientific and Cultural Publishing Company, Second Edition, 1989. (n.p.).
- Arianpour, Y. (1376). *From Saba to Nima*, Second Edition. Tehran: Zavar.
- Faghihi, A. A. (1352). *Wahhabis*. Tehran: Saba.
- Fry, R. (1362). *The Golden Age of Iranian Culture*. (Rajabi, D. Trans). Tehran: Soroush Publications.
- Ghaderi, H. (1378). *Political Thoughts on Islam in Iran*. Tehran: Samt.

- Goodarzi, H. (1390). "The Position of Persian Language and Literature in Iran in the Safavid Era and Its Relation to the Official and National Language." *National Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 12, no. 47, pp. 53-82.
- Haeri, A. (1349). *The first Confrontations of Iranian Thinkers with two Practices of Western Bourgeois Civilization*. Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Heintz, W. (1361). *The Formation of the National Government in Iran, Kikavus Jahandari*. Third Edition. Tehran: Kharazmi.
- Heli, Y. (1433). *The Discovery of Mormad Fayr al-Atiqad*. With the research of Hasan Hassanzadeh Amoli of the Al-Nusra Islami Institute. (n.p.).
- Hunke, Z. (1361). *Islamic Culture in Europe*. (Rahbani, M. Trans). Tehran: Islamic Culture Publication.
- Iqbal Ashtiani A; Aghili, B. (1383). *Iranian History*. (n.p.): Namak Publishing, Saadi Publishing, Fourth Time.
- Jahangiri, M. (1385). *Ibn Arabi the Great Islamic World*. (n.p.): Publication Organization of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.
- Jalaluddin, M. (1386). *Letter of Khosrowan*. Tehran: Pazineh Cultural Publishing Institute.
- Khansari, M. B. (1390). *Rowdet- ul-Janat Fi-al Ahwal el Ulama val-al Sadat*. Corrected by Asadullah Ismaili. Vol. 4. Qom: Ismailis Publishing.
- Khomeini, R. (1369). *Sahifa Noor*. Tehran: Cultural Revolution Organization of the Islamic Revolution and Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.
- Miri, A. (1377). "The Scholars' Approach to Persian Writing in the Safavid Era." *Journal of Hossein*. Vol. 12, no. 90 and 89, pp. 53-81

**New Reflection on the History of Iranian and Islamic Political Thought  
"An Attempt to Understand the Cause of Progress"**

- Moghadasi, A. (1361). *Hassan al-Taqaṣim fī Marāfar al-qalim*. (Monzavi, A. N. Trans). Vol. 2. Tehran: Iranian Authors and Translators Company.
- Mojtahedi, K. (1381). *Familiarizing Iranians with Modern Western Philosophy*. (n.p.): Institute of Contemporary Iranian History.
- Motahari, M. (1375). *Notes by Professor Motahhari*. Vol. 3. Tehran: Sadra.
- (1390). *Islam-Iran Mutual Services*. Tehran: Sadra.
- Najafi, M. (1391). *The Thought of Sanctions and Self-Esteem*. (n.p.): Institute for Contemporary History Studies of Iran.
- Nizam-al-Mulk al-Tusi. (1391). *Policy Paper, Editing and Description of Somayeh Delirokhi*. Tehran: Tyrgan.
- (1334). *A Policy Paper, by the Efforts of Shafar, with Commentary by Mohammad Qazvini and with the Revision of Morteza Modaresi*. 14. Tehran: Tahori.
- Qutb, S. (1957). *In the Darkness of the Qur'an*. Vol. 7. Cairo: Dar al-Arabiya Revival.
- Spagnaqchi Pashazadeh, M. A. (1378). *The Revolution of Al-Islam between Properties and Al-Awam: The History of the Life and Battle of Shah Ismail Safavi and Shah Salim*. With the Attempt of Jafarian, R. Qom: Publishing the Zahra Sisters' Seminary Library.
- Torkaman, A. B. (1382). *The History of Abbasi's World*. Vol. 1. Tehran: Amirkabir Publications.