

# **The Roots of the Islamic Revolution**

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## FOREWORD

There is a strong temptation to write a self-righteous 'we told you so' introduction to this edition of Hamid Algar's four lectures on the Islamic Revolution in Iran. For, at the time when these lectures were given at the Muslim Institute in London the Revolution was less than six months old. The whole world was expecting Iran to fall apart, the mullahs to fail, the liberals to take over, the army to intervene, the communists to emerge in control, the CIA to put an end to it all, etc. we in the Muslim Institute were the only ones to evaluate correctly the popular depth, dynamism, power, vitality and versatility of the Islamic Revolution.

Indeed, so strong was our 'theory' that virtually everything that has happened in Islamic Iran in the last four years was foreshadowed in Professor Algar's lectures, in the discussion that followed the lectures, and in my preface to the 1980 'student' edition of the transcript. For this reason that preface is retained here.

All we need to do now is to note briefly that Imam Khomeini's leadership has also overcome the multitude of internal and external enemies; that the ulama have emerged as the most competent leaders that any post-colonial country has produced; that the western educated 'liberals' and communists have been outwitted, outmaneuvered, and defeated; that the people of Iran are more united and mobilized today than at any time before; that the colonial culture and bourgeois capitalist, political, economic and social systems are being replaced; and that Iran has developed a new range of institutions all its own.

The Islamic Revolution to which this book is an introduction has ushered the world into an era to which the modern world is unaccustomed. Politics in the world of Islam will never be dull again.

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## A new phase in the Islamic Movement

Kalim Siddiqui

At its widest point, the Islamic movement spans the entire Ummah. At its narrowest, it represents that part of the Ummah which is most advanced towards the ultimate goal.\* A year or so ago it was difficult to recognize a single leading edge in the Islamic movement, although a number of organized groups laid claim to being in the vanguard. These were such movements and parties as Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimoon in Arab countries and the Jama'at-e-Islamic in Pakistan. A few of the nation-States in Muslim areas laid claim to being 'Islamic'.

In the years following the tragic 1967 war in which vast new areas of Muslim lands passed into US-Israeli occupation, the burning of the Al-Aqsa mosque in 1969, and the humiliating defeat and dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971-72, it became clear that none of the existing nation-States was capable of attaining the minimum goals, of even defending the minimum interests, of the Ummah.† The post-colonial elites and their governments, after a generation of 'independence' and political power, had failed to solve any of the socio-economic and political problems of their peoples. They had managed to make their countries more dependent in the post-colonial phase than they had been as direct colonies. The failure of the westernized elites was total.

Over the same period the Islamic movement that attempted to tackle the problems at the political levels also failed to make any measureable impact. The Ikhwan was physically crushed and many of its workers and leading figures attained martyrdom. Some of those who survived were offered 'refuge' in Saudi Arabia in the form of jobs. These one-time revolutionaries accepted 'royal' patronage in return for acquiescence. In Pakistan the Jama'at was given a little more rope because it offered no direct challenge to the existing order. In the general election of November 1970, the Jama'at secured four seats in a National Assembly of 310.‡ In 1977, the Jama'at, in coalition with other secular parties, managed to secure popular participation in the movements against the late Mr. Bhutto. Any advantage they entered the Martial Law cabinet of Zia ul-Haque. The Jama'at is now committed to maintaining the 'stability' of the present order.

This was the bleak outlook which faced the Ummah as history moved into the final decade of the fourteenth century of the Hijri era. It was in this dark, dismal and gloomy historical situation that a group of Muslims began to meet in London. It was an informal group. There was no leader and no-one was led. We all asked ourselves the familiar questions: how did we get here? Where do we go from here? How? When?

In 1974, after more than two years of work, the group produced a Draft Prospectus proposing the establishment of the Muslim Institute for Research and Planning. The position that the group took in relation to the contemporary realities in the Muslim world needs a brief summary. It came to the conclusion that: 'The Muslims' quest for 'modernization' and 'progress' through the westernization of Muslim individual and Muslim societies was... bound to fail and has done so at great cost to Muslim culture and the economic, social and political fabric of Muslim societies.' The group rejected the 'nationalist/secular identities and capitalist/democratic philosophies' and took the uncompromising view that:

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\* For a definition of the Islamic movement, see my introduction to *Issues in the Islamic movement 1980-81*, London and Toronto: the open press, 1982, pp 6-7.

† See Kalim Siddiqui, *beyond the Muslim nation-states*, London, the open press, 1977.

‡ See Kalim Siddiqui, 'whose failure in Pakistan?', *London: impact* 2:15, 22 December 1972, p 10.

The damage to Muslim societies is so extensive that it may not be possible, or even desirable, to repair and restore their existing social orders; the only viable alternative is to conceive and create social, economic and political systems which are fundamentally different from those now prevailing in Muslim societies throughout the world.

However, the group's overall view was optimistic. It held that 'the Muslim intelligentsia has the potential to commit itself to the historical role of re-creating fully operational social, economic and political systems of Islam in all Muslim societies.' The Draft Prospectus said that the Muslim Institute's primary task shall be 'to draw up detailed conceptual maps and operational plans of a Muslim civilization of the future...'

The authors of the Draft Prospectus then turned their attention to the actual process. In a centre-piece entitled A Strategy for Change, the authors state that the Institute they propose 'is part of a strategy of social action which should ultimately lead to the restricting of the entire socio- economic and political systems in Muslim societies throughout the world.' They recognize that progress towards the goal would be 'uneven in time and space'. They then add:

It may well be that a model society will have to be created and developed in one geographical area before the pace of change can be accelerated in other areas...

The strategy they worked out involved the prior emergence of a 'leading sector' of change. This catalyst of change, said the Draft Prospectus, would emerge through the coming together of the disillusioned from among the westernized elite and the dynamic section from among the ulama. A 'common ground of area of agreement' already existed and the Muslim Institute was charged with the task of expanding this consensus 'to the point where common concerned programme to reshape Muslim societies becomes possible, indeed unavoidable.' The task was seen as long-term and multi-generational. There was, so far as the authors could see, no hope in the short-term. The Islamic movement was deep and diffuse but without a 'leading edge'. The Muslim Institute set out to mobilize such intellectual, material and spiritual resources as it could find and to provide academic input in key areas in the hope that some day, somewhere, it would help to produce a new situation, a new reality, a 'leading edge'.

The group, during 1972-73, was quite unaware of the Islamic movement in Iran. The Iran under the Shah was beyond the pale. Iran was a blind spot. We were Sunni and our age-old ignorance of the Shi'i scene was deep and total.

Thus, when the Islamic movement in Iran began to make headlines in early 1978, the bulk of the Sunni world was caught unawares. The Shah's propaganda blamed the 'Islamic Marxists'. The western media, and the Muslim media orchestrated by the west and the alienated regimes, dismissed the events in Iran as insignificant. All of us were slow in recognizing the new reality in Iran. The Muslim Institute was less slow than others. Our framework predicted some such development but in the distant future. Once the initial focus had been adjusted, it became clear to us that the events in Iran had all the elements we ourselves postulated as essential to an Islamic Revolution. These may be summarized as follows.

- The Revolution must declare itself a part of the worldwide Muslim Ummah;
- The Revolution must reject the nation-State and all its institution;
- The Revolution must set out to establish an Islamic State of Islam's own conception;
- The Revolution must mobilize all section of Ummah in Iran;
- The Revolution must defy the superpowers and their local agents;
- The Revolution must produce an Islamic worldview; and
- The Revolution must produce a leadership which has no class of other selfish interest of its own.

The Muslim Institute had been set up to serve the Ummah during a prolonged and indefinite pre-revolutionary period. But, suddenly, almost without warning the entire world was catapulted into a post-Islamic Revolution stage of history. For the western civilization and its dominant political and economic systems this has been a traumatic experience. The west had consigned Islam to oblivion. It conceded that Islam had deeper historical roots than other major religions, but argued that once the 'modern civilization' had reached the erstwhile Islamic lands and Islam too had experienced 2000 years of history, it will become as irrelevant as Christianity and other religions. The arrogance of the 'modern civilization' is such that even after a year of the Islamic Revolution, the west is still trying to maintain that the events in Iran will soon pass and the country will return to some form of former 'stability' and 'normalcy'. The revolutionary leadership in Iran on the other hand, has decided to destroy all centers of former stability and counter-revolutionary activity. The Revolution can only survive through perpetual revolution and the total defeat of all counter-revolutionary forces. There has been massive US-backed intervention in most parts of Iran, often in the name of minorities seeking 'autonomy'.

The world is going through a painful learning process. This is going to be long, protracted and often difficult. It will be difficult for the west, and particularly the Marxists, to abandon their 'scientific' view of 'religion'. A kicking, screaming, protesting world will learn its lessons at great cost to itself, but the Islamic Revolution has no choice but to drive the lessons home.

The learning process within the Muslim world is difficult, particularly in the early years. The Muslim world, too, is likely to outside Iran stands poised at the brink of successful Islamic Revolution. The Islamic movement no longer functions in a vacuum. There is now a revolutionary reality. Despite the distorting filter of the hostile media, the little knowledge of the new reality in Iran that has reached the Muslim masses has already sealed the fate of the existing regimes. Iran does not have to export its Revolution. Revolution elsewhere will be internally generated. Events in such areas as Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, Iraq, Syria, the Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria and even Egypt are already beginning to reflect the influence of the Islamic Revolution. The scenario will vary, the pace will be uneven, but the new overall direction of events will be towards the Islamic Revolution. The revolutionary process, however, is little understood in modern Muslim societies. The westernized elite are ignorant of the Islamic revolutionary processes and the demands of the new situation. Those under the direct influence of the west are still committed to the 'democratic process and bourgeois democracy being Islamic. The old guard in the Jama'at-e Islamic still insists that its democratic approach is the right one and that the Revolution in Iran is due to factors peculiar to Iran and Shi'i psychology. The Ikhwan has no central voice, but its leading figures now settled in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, and the United States take a similar view. But the Ikhwan workers in the Arab heartlands of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Palestine disown the exiled 'leaders' and are engaged in armed struggle.

The success of the revolutionary process in Iran and elsewhere will depend on a number of factors. But one important factor is the articulation of the revolutionary experience and its conceptualization. Sometimes the concepts exist but need to be related to new experience. Sometimes habits and ideas acquired during our flirtation with the west will linger into the post-revolutionary period.

In short, the work of the academic in the Islamic movement is only just beginning. Every step of the revolutionary Islamic movement has to be carefully recorded and analyzed. For a long time to come the Revolution in Iran will guide and inspire the Islamic movement. It is, therefore, essential that this Revolution is studied in great depth. The meaning of 'revolution' in its Islamic also needs to be aside from the generally held notion about revolution. The Islamic Revolution is not an event; it is a series of events and an on-going process. It cannot

be over in a flash. It must last a long time, a number of year, perhaps a generation or more while the Revolution itself becomes the 'norm'. There is no known normality to which the Islamic Revolution can quickly return. The Islamic Revolution must lead to its own stability and normality when it has acquired control over its environment; or perhaps on its borders and in dealing with the outside world the Islamic Revolution must always remain revolutionary. All these issues and many others need to be debated by Muslim everywhere.

This course of lectures given by Hamid Algar at the Muslim Institute in London provides a most useful starting point. There is no one outside Iran who knows the roots of Islamic Revolution as well as Hamid Algar. His is a most perceptive mind and his knowledge of his subject is the right mix of the academic and Islamic commitment. The story that unfolds has many dimensions. At its simplest, it is a plain man's guide to the understanding of perhaps the most significant event of modern history.

## First Lecture

### **Iran and Shi'ism**

The subject of the Islamic Revolution in Iran is one whose importance hardly needs underlining. With the passage of time, its importance will become even clearer, as being the most significant and profound event in the entirety of contemporary Islamic history. Already we see the impact of the Islamic Revolution manifested in different ways and different degrees across the length and breadth of the Islamic world, from Morocco to Indonesia, from Bosnia in the heart of Europe down to Africa.

It is not surprising that in the face of the wave of renewal that has been at least partly inaugurated by the Iranian Islamic Revolution, the holders of power in the Islamic world, not to mention their various agents and representatives abroad, are seeking to contain the effect of the Islamic Revolution within the boundaries of Iran. They also seek to suggest that the Islamic Revolution has certain particular characteristics that do not permit of an extension beyond Iran. The easiest and most obvious way in which they attempt to accomplish this task is by branding the movement in Iran as a Shi'i movement and Shi'i in a divisive and exclusive sense. I do not wish to give the impression that through choosing the title for the first lecture of Iran and Shi'ism, I am in any way contributing, even unintentionally, to this campaign for putting a particular and limiting stamp on the Islamic Revolution. It is, nonetheless, the case that from a historical point of view, the Revolution in Iran and the foundation of the Islamic Republic is the culmination of a series of events that began in the sixteenth century of the Christian era with the adherence of the majority of the Iranian people to the Shi'i school of thought in Islam. Indeed, one of the important factors that set the Islamic Revolution apart from all the other revolutionary upheavals of the present century is its deep roots in the historical past.

Whereas the Russian, Chinese and other revolution, at least in theory, seek to negate the past in a radical fashion, to react against it, on the contrary, the Islamic Revolution is the continuation, the culmination of an important part of the Islamic heritage of Iran. In one sense the beginning of that heritage comes with the introduction of Islam to Iran in the seventh century of the Christian era. In a more immediate and important sense, the appropriate point of departure for our examination of the historical background of the Revolution is the early part of the sixteenth century which sees the conversion of Iran into the only country in the Muslim world with a majority adhering to the Shi'i school of thought. It is appropriate, therefore, also to say at least a few words about Shi'ism.

Shi'i school of thought in Islam, which has an extremely complex history, has gone through many different stages of development, both in Iran and outside. It is hardly possible for me to attempt even a sketch of those developments here. What I will lay emphasis upon are those aspects within the context of Iran which have had an important political and social impact. Whatever version of Shi'ism one looks at, at whatever point it may have expressed itself in Islamic history, the crucial point has been the doctrine of the Imamate, the figure of the Imam, who is not merely the successor of the Prophet (on whom be peace) in a legislative, administrative and even military capacity, but is also in some sense an extension of the spiritual dimensions of the prophetic mission. Let there be no mistake, Shi'i Muslims, like the Sunnis, accept and believe in fully the sealing of prophet hood with the Prophet Muhammad (on who is peace). However, they differ in their theory of the succession. Not

merely in the identity of the successor, but also in the function of the successor. The function of the successor, the Imam, in Shi'i beliefs, include the authoritative explanation of the text of the Quran, the authoritative interpretation and even extension of Islamic law, the guidance of the individual in his spiritual life in a fashion akin to the murshid in Sufism, and the role of sole legitimate leader of the entire Muslim community- the Ummah.

Given the occultation, the ghaiba of the Imam, that is his disappearance, his absence from the plane of physical history from an early period, it can be said that in certain sense all that is implied in the Shi'i doctrine of the Imam has also absented itself from the worldly plane. This absence of the Imam has been one of the constant preoccupations of Shi'i philosophy, mysticism and speculation. What we are concerned with here is chiefly its political implication. If the sole legitimate successor of the Prophet, if the sole wielder of legitimate authority after him is no longer present on the earthly plane, that means that inherently any worldly power that claims to exercise authority must be, ipso facto, illegitimate unless it can demonstrate in a clear and indisputable fashion that it exercises rule on behalf of the absent Imam. This very important belief has led the Shi'i Muslim to assume throughout the major part of their history a stance of rejection with regards to political authority, with regard to the de facto, existing political authority, whereas for the greater part of the history of the Sunni Muslim the prevailing political theory, in its classical formulation by Al-Mawardi, was that the existing political power should not be disputed on condition that a few simple precondition were observed, like the sultan performing the Friday prayer and the shari'a, at least certain segments of the shari'a, being formally implemented.

Whereas this was the predominant theory of the Sunni Muslim, and we see traces of it even today in the Sunni Muslim countries, the Shi'i always rejected the notion of an accommodation with the existing political system. This rejection was sometimes purely theoretical and in fact its practical implication had not been fully worked out and realized in the case of Iran right now until the Islamic Revolution itself, which, one can see, is the final implementation, or the logical implementation, of the political theory of the Shi'i. In any event, it has been present as a powerful attitude throughout the history of the Shi'i school of thought in Islam and most particularly in Iran.

Another theme of Shi'ism in general that we may refer to before passing on to the particular case of Iran, is the importance given to the concept of martyrdom. Martyrdom is not in any way a monopoly concern of the Shi'i. It is a common value of all Muslims, having its archetype in the example given by the Companions of the Prophet (upon whom is peace). Nonetheless, it has acquired a certain particular flavor and importance in the context of Shi'ism. This has been through the martyrdom of Imam Husain, who, we can say, is, after the Prophet and after Hazrat Ali, who from the point of view of the Shi'i is the first Imam, after those two figures, is doubtless the most important figure in the religious consciousness of the Shi'i. The fact that he met his death in battle, that he attained martyrdom, is seen by the Shi'i not simply as a fact of history, it is seen as a fact of profound and continuing spiritual significance. In the person of Imam Husain, the whole fate of humanity when faced with overwhelming and tyrannical power is seen to have crystallized in the single significant incident and the commemoration of this incident year after year is not merely a matter of pietistic commemoration, it is not a question of remembering a certain event in human history, it is, at least implicitly, a self-identification with Imam Husain and the determination to participate to some degree, through emotion and intention with Imam Husain in what the Shi'i perceive as having been a struggle for justice against the overwhelming power of tyranny.

In the course of the Revolution in Iran, one of the interesting slogans that was constantly raised, and which shows clearly the importance of Imam Husain, not only for the religious but the political consciousness of the Shi'i, was:

Every day is Ashura, and

Every place is Karbala

In other words, wherever the Muslim is, is a field of struggle where the forces of justice and legitimacy are confronted by the forces of tyranny. Every day of his life is a day of battle in which he should seek either triumph or martyrdom. In addition to the important theme of the absence of the legitimate political authority, the refusal to bow before the existing political authority in the name of public order, joined to this we have an important contribution with the concept of martyrdom, as exemplified in particularly tragic and significant fashion by Imam Husain.

The combination of these two themes, the rejection of de facto authority and the belief in the virtue of martyrdom, has given Shi'ism, particularly at certain points in its history, an attitude of militancy that has been sadly lacking in a large number of Sunni segments of the Muslim Ummah. To summarize it and to quote yet another slogan of the Revolution in Iran, it was said that martyrdom is blood. That is, throughout the history of the Shi'i, in their confrontation with the powers of illegitimacy, they have been pushed to martyrdom and to self-sacrifice.

Let us pass to the particular case of Iran and the historical circumstances of the emergence of Shi'ism in Iran. Shi'ism, which today appears closely mingled with the whole Iranian sense of national identity, was in its origin a total stranger to Iran. Among the various orientalist theories that have been elaborated with respect to the origins of Shi'ism it has been said that this was the Iranian response to an 'Arab Islam'. Apart from the inappropriateness of these ethnic categories, there is the simple fact that the earliest Shi'i were themselves, with few exceptions, Arabs and Iran was for a long time an overwhelmingly Sunni country. Aside from a few centers, traditional centers such as Qum, which we shall hear more about later, and various quarters of other major cities, Shi'ism was little represented in Iran. In the aftermath of the Mongol conquest of the Muslim near-east in the thirteenth century, when the authority of the Abbasid Caliphate was shattered and destroyed, with the consequent weakening, at least in the official position of Sunni thought, a gradual increase in the influence of Shi'ism in Iran began to be noticed. The stages of this are difficult to delineate completely and in any event the process was by no means a rapid and irreversible one. On the very eve of the conversion of Iran to Shi'ism, in the beginning of the sixteenth century. We find that Iran was still an overwhelmingly Sunni country. Strangely enough, despite the fact that within a short period of time a close mingling of Iranian national identity and Shi'ism had taken place, we find that there are two foreign or external factors which were crucial for the implantation of Shi'ism in Iran.

The first was the Safavids dynasty (1502-1747), originally a Turkic dynasty centered in the north-western frontier lands in Iran, which recruited a large number of its followers from outside Iran, from the Turkic nomads of Asia Minor, Syria and the southern Caucasus. Afterwards the Safavids, for political reasons, manufactured a false genealogy for themselves, seeking descent from Imam Kazim, one of the Imams of the Shi'i. Subsequently, historical research has shown this genealogy to be false and that on the contrary they are of purely Turkic descent with a possible intermingling of Kurdish elements. In any event, the military forces that brought Safavids to power in Iran were non-Iranian and recruited from outside Iran.

We may think of the foundation of the Safavids State in Iran as being in many ways one more nomadic invasion of this country, with this difference, that unlike the Mongol invasion, it came not from the east but from the west. After these Turkic nomads had placed the Safavids on the throne of Iran and the decision had been made to convert the majority of the people, if necessary by force, to Shi'ism, it was found that there was hardly any Shi'i scholars

in Iran and very few books available on Shi'ism in the Persian language. Consequently there took place the second influx of an external element, on this occasion Shi'i Arab scholars from traditional centers of Shi'ism in the Arab world, that is to say, Bahrain and Al-Ahsa on the Arabian Peninsula and Jabal Amil in the first southern part of Syria.

These scholars formed the first instance of that class of Iranian ulama that have seen assuming a progressively more important historical role through the centuries until the culmination of that tradition in the Islamic Revolution. Despite this reliance on two external elements for the propagation of Shi'ism in Iran, the Turkic soldiery and Arab scholars, we see that in some fashion the ground must have been very well prepared. Historical research is not yet in a position to tell us how precisely this preparation took place. It is clear that for any spiritual tradition to flourish and take root, the mere process of coercion will not be sufficient. Although the Safavids did engage freely in the use of coercion leading to a large stream of emigration from Iran to neighboring Sunni countries, nonetheless, in a few generations, Shi'ism had not only taken root in Iran, it had begun to produce one of the major intellectual and cultural flowering of the Islamic tradition as a whole. For this to have taken place, clearly the ground must have been prepared. Shi'ism found a suitable environment to flourish in Iran.

I turn now, within the context of these general developments of Shi'ism in Iran, to the emergence of this class of Shi'i ulama. With the hindsight provided by the Islamic Revolution it will be more appropriate to write the Iranian history of the past three or four centuries not so much in terms of dynasties as in terms of the development of the class of the Iranian ulama. Dynasties have come and gone, leaving in many cases little more than a few artifacts behind to account for their existence. But there has been a continuing development of the class of Shi'i ulama in Iran which has been totally without parallel elsewhere in the Islamic world. The origins of the Iranian Shi'i ulama are with those scholars imported by the Safavids from various Arab countries. Given the fact that they were dependent on royal patronage, they were initially obedient and loyal servants of the State. One finds one of the earliest among them, for example, a certain Sheikh Ahmad Karaki, even writing a treatise defending the practice which was to be found, not only in Iran, but in neighboring Sunni countries, of prostration before the monarch. The entirety of the religious hierarchy was headed by a certain official known as the *sadr al-mamluk* whose function it was to distribute patronage of the State and ensure the obedience and loyalty of the class of ulama as a whole. Relatively swiftly, however, the matter began to change. At the very height of Safavid power, during the reign of Shah Abbas (1587-1629)-who was known in pre-revolutionary version of history as 'The Great' has now been removed.- we find the ulama for the first time within the context of Iran enunciating the essential political theory of the Shi'i, of the illegitimacy of monarchy, his power, was held not by divine right, not as a result of any particular fitness on his part, but rather as something that was a trust on behalf of the Imam and that if the trust were violated, and the hint was there that the trust was being violated, then, the ulama had the right to remove the trust from the king. This, as far as I know, is the earliest recorded instance of the disputation of the legitimacy of the royal power in Shi'i Iran. Towards the end of the Safavid period, we find that the relationship between the ulama and the State has changed again. It is no longer a question of the ulama reminding the monarch in a very hesitant and theoretical fashion that his power is held only on trust and not by inherent right. On the contrary, they come to establish certain dominance over the State.

We find, precisely in the last part of the seventeenth century, the first in a long series of powerful mujtahids. This term I will explain. These people came to dominate the life of the country, whether they held effective political power or not. The first of these great mujtahids in terms of whom I would suggest Iranian history be rewritten, is Mulla Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, it cannot be said of him that he exercised his dominance of the monarchy in a creditable fashion. In fact, he can receive a large part of the blame, or credit, for the downfall of the

Safavids State in the second decade of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, his historical importance is not to be disputed. He is the first of a series of importance and influential mujtahids who came to dominate not merely the intellectual and religious history of the country, but its political fortunes.

With the decline of the Safavids dynasty in 1724, a period of anarchy began in Iran. At one point within the eighteenth century we find no fewer than thirteen different contestants for the throne doing battle with each other. This total disintegration of the political authority accelerated the process of divorce between the religious institution and the monarchy. We can say that in the absence of an effective centralized monarchy throughout the eighteenth century the ulama came, in a practical fashion, quite apart from theoretical developments that I shall discuss later, to assume the role of local governors, arbitrators of disputes, executors of a law and so forth. By the end of the eighteenth century, the new dynasty had emerged that was able gradually to impose its rule on the entirety of Iran-the Qajar dynasty. However, the Qajars (1795-1924) were in no position to continue the same relationship with the ulama that the Safavids had enjoyed at the beginning of their powers. On the very eve of the rising of the Qajar dynasty, we find taking place among the religious class, an important debate on a seemingly technical matter which had the greatest of political consequence as well. This debate took place between the two schools known as the usuli and the akhbari. This debate was on a matter which appeared to be technical, relating to the details of Islamic jurisprudence.

To summarize briefly the positions of the two schools, the akhbari, as their name indicates, said that in the absence of the Imam it was not permissible for a religious scholar to engage in the use of his reason to enact a certain judgment, to apply the principles of the law to a specific problem or situation. What had to be done was merely to have recourse to hadith, hence the word akhbari, and on the basis of the sifting of those, to arrive at a conclusion, given any particular problems. To put it in the language of the Sunni Islam, we can say that the akhbari held that every alim should be a scholar of hadith and that he had no legitimate competence beyond that. In other words, they tended totally to an abolition of the whole discipline of development, of the law jurisprudence. The usuli, by contrast, said that this was not the case and even in the absence of the Imam it was permissible to engage in independent reasoning with respect to legal questions, of course on the basis of the source of law as defined by the Shi'i. Hence the designation given to them, usuli. They were those who believed there were a certain number of principles of law, sources of law, which could be applied and expended through the use of the individual reasoning of the qualified scholar. The qualified scholar in question is the mujtahids, that is literally, he who exercises himself in a general sense and in a technical sense, he who exercises his reasoning power on the basis of the principles of law to arrive at a certain decision concerning a given problem. There is some confusion in that the word mujtahids has certain application in Sunni Islam, in the sense of one of the founders of the four madhhabs. Its usage in Shi'ism does not presage such a wide connotation. It is not a question of each individual putting forward a new madhhab, a whole series of legal principles. It is of a more limited kind of independent reasoning.

The mujtahids is not merely a legal authority, one who can give an expression of opinion in this fashion concerning a problem of Islamic law; he is also a person whose views must be followed. The usuli believe that in the absence of the Imam, the entirety of the community is divided into those who are either mujtahids. If they are not mujtahids, that is if they do not have the necessary power of comprehension of the law and independent reasoning to attain that state, they must of necessity follow the guidance of one who is and this following of guidance is known as taqlid. The common connotation of the word is imitation of following the guidance of a qualified religious scholar.

Given the fact that Islamic law in its scope knows of no distinction between the secular and the religious, given the fact that the affairs of State and economy and society all fall within the scope of the Islamic law, it follows that the mujtahids is bound to follow his guidance. Hence it is that every Shi'i Muslim who is not himself a mujtahids is bound to follow a mujtahids as his marja-I taqlid. This is a term difficult to translate. It means the mujtahids who is chosen by an individual Muslim as his source of authority and guidance.

Were it not the triumph of the usuli position in the eighteenth century, on the eve of the rise of Qajars, there would have been no mujtahids. The religious scholars would have found themselves condemned to an extremely marginal position, to the sifting of the hadith, the narrations and traditions of the Prophet (on who is peace) with no ability to provide living and continuous guidance for the affairs of society and politics at large. One may say that the Revolution in Iran, at least the particular shape that it has taken, the form of leadership that it has enjoyed and continuous to enjoy, would also be un thinkable without this triumph of the usuli position in this apparently technical dispute in the eighteenth century.

To come now to the Qajar period, given this triumph of the usuli position and the emergence of a strong class of mujtahids, convinced of their authority, not merely as the interpreters of tradition but as the executors of tradition and law, the Qajars found their position disputed from the beginning. First, this disputation of the authority of the Qajar monarchs took place sporadically with respect to certain particular issues or events. Throughout the early part of the nineteenth century, we find a number of provincial governors being expelled from the cities they were supposed to rule by the people of those cities who had been empowered, or even instructed, to do so by the local mujtahids. An early example of the opposition of the ulama or the mujtahids to the royal power is to be seen in 1826 when Muslims inhabiting territories that had been captured from Iran in the first Russo-Iranian war were subject to religious persecution at the hands of the Russians. The ulama then delivered a judgment to the effect that it was the duty of Iran to go to war against Russia. The monarch of the day initially showed considerable reluctance, whereupon according to a British diplomatic dispatch of the time, the most influential of the mujtahids of the day was reported to have said that 'unless this present Shah does our bidding and obeys our fatva, we shall remove him and put another dog in his place.'

Throughout the century the antagonism between the ulama and the monarchy became more and more intense. In part this was because of the logical implications of the political theory of the Shi'i, amplified by the emergence of the usuli madhhab. Another important factor was the growing alliance between the Iranian monarchy and the foreign powers. Now the monarchy was seen not merely to be holding an illegitimate power, not merely to be flouting the law of Islam, to be an instrument of tyranny and injustice, it was seen to be the agent for increasing foreign encroachment upon Iran and exploitation of its resources. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that we see the first mass movement of modern Iran history directed against foreign hegemony in Iran, led by the Shi'i ulama. In 1892 the production and marketing tobacco within Iran and outside had been given to British monopoly. The leading mujtahids of the day, Mirza Hasan Shirazi, gave a fatva to the effect of this fatva that even the women in the royal household refrained from the use of tobacco. This movement in 1892 was followed just over a decade later by the movement in Iranian history known as the Constitutional Revolution which dates approximately as having lasted from 1905 until 1911.

In the Constitutional Revolution, the ulama continued to play an extremely important role. We may say that throughout Iranian history the whole course of constitutionalism has been intimately linked with the role of the religious scholars.

It may be thought that constitutionalism, even the word itself, or the word that it is intended to translate, 'is of European origin and it may be asked how could it be that the

ulama, whether in Iran or any other Islamic country, could adopt a course, a method of political reform which is obviously foreign in its ultimate origins. The answer that can be given, at least in the case of Iran, is fairly clear. It was held by the Shi'i ulama of the day that a totally legitimate authority was, in the nature of things, impossible, given the continuing occultation, or absence of the Imam from the world. It was held that all that could be done in his absence was to limit the inevitable illegitimacy of existing rule. Therefore, it was held that a monarchical power that was limited by the existence of a constitution, by the election of an assembly of representatives, was preferable to one that was absolute and arbitrary in its exercise of power. Hence the idea of constitutionalism, which had been introduced into Iran by certain western educated elements, was given a particular application and content by the ulama. They saw in it a means of limiting the royal power and lessening the illegitimacy that was almost inevitable in their view the whole institution of the State. It is not possible or even necessary to relate to you the events of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. Enough to say that the major Iranian historian of the revolution, Ahmmad Kasravi, has been in the agreement concluded by the two major mujtahids of Tehran, Sayyid Muhammad Bihbihani and Sayyid Muhammad Tabatabal, the starting point of the revolution in December 1906. Throughout the revolution the major directives came from the ulama. The Iranian Constitutional Revolution was frustrated by the resistance of the monarchy, powerfully supported and encouraged by foreign powers. We may say that had it not been for the continued interference in Iranian affairs, first by Russia, then by Great Britain and most recently by the United States and Israel, Iran today, instead of looking back on a quarter century of struggle and a year of Revolution in which a minimum of 50,000 people were slaughtered, would be able to look back on more than half a century of constitutional and parliamentary rule. As it was, first the Russian and then the British and recently the Americans, frustrated the Constitutional Revolution. Here also we cannot go into detail. Time does not permit it. The Russian dominated in the period between approximately 1907, which saw an effective and temporary withdrawal of the British from the scene, to the end of the First World War. Then the British reappeared in force on the scene- in such force that they had no visible competitor, and brought about a change of dynasty, from the Qajar dynasty now happily defunct, to the Pahlavi dynasty. With the Pahlavi dynasty a new period was inaugurated in the history of Iran. A new particularly somber period in which the traditional monarchy is transformed into a modern dictatorship.

It was often said, in the United States, and probably elsewhere, that the Iranian Revolution was motivated by hostility to this glorious phenomenon known as 'modernization'. In so far as the word 'modernization' has had any meaning in the Iranian context, what was modernized by the Pahlavi dynasty was the others before it were limited in their ability to enact their will by the traditional inefficiency of Middle Eastern monarchies, but by contrast the Pahlavi dynasty, although it paid lip service to Iranian tradition, and was appointed, by king George V, to the crown of Iran, in effect ruled as dictators of a modern, European, totalitarian kind. It followed that under this kind of regime, the constitutional ideal to which the ulama from a particular point of view had subscribed was thoroughly repressed and defeated. We find, therefore, in the period of Reza Khan, the first member of the Pahlavi mafia, the coming into being of a rubber stamp parliamentary assembly. That continued effectively until the overthrow of the monarchy. Among the few individuals to resist the imposition of the Pahlavi dictatorship in an open fashion, was again one of the ulama, Sayyid Hasan Mudarris. He spoke up in the Majlis against the measures of Reza Khan and went into exile and was murdered in exile by agents of Reza Khan.

Another characteristic of the period, apart from the suppression of constitutionalism, is the imitation of the measures taken in neighboring Turkey by Mustafa Kamal. An attempt

was made to cultivate an ethnic nationalism with strong overtones of hatred against the Arabs, rejection of the Islamic heritage, glorification of the pre-Islamic past, the purging of the Persian language of Arabic loanwords and so on. For a variety of reasons the measures taken by Reza Khan in Iran were less effective than those that had taken place in Turkey, partly because imitation is always less successful than the original and partly because westernization and secularization had a far longer pre-history in Turkey and the Ottoman Empire than in Iran. In any event, this officially sponsored nationalist ideology continued to dominate at least the surface of Iranian life for many years, so much so that a large number of western observers were happy to write off Iran as a constituent part of the Islamic world and were given to repeating the remarks made by Iranian officialdom, 'yes, we are Muslims, but remember we are not Arabs,' as if there were some kind of tension between these two entities. In fact the continuing and effective loyalty of the Iranian people to Islam with all of the alignments that implies never ceased. It was simply that the open manifestation of it became difficult if not impossible for many years under the rule of the two successive Pahlavi dictators.

In 1941, the reign of the first Pahlavi monarch came to an end. The same people who had put him in put on a train out of the country and then on to a ship, namely the British. On this occasion they were aided by the Americans and the Russians. As the second shah indicates in his own memoirs, in a very interesting sentence, 'it was deemed appropriate by the Allies that I should succeed my father.' So this then young man who was put on the throne in 1941 commenced his rule of exploitation and murder in the service of his foreign masters. The change of dynasty in itself resulted in temporary relaxation of the full rigor of the dynasty. In the first decade of the reign of the now deposed Shah, we see a resurgence of islamically oriented elements in the political life of the country. The ideal pursued is again constitutionalism and the ulama of the time, Ayatollah Kashani, in the numerous speeches he made within the Iranian parliament and outside, would always refer to two source o authority- on the one hand the Quran, and on the other hand the Iranian Constitution. In the name of both the Constitution and the Quran he would call for the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry to bring to an end British imperialist domination of Iran and he would call for an effective limitation on the royal power. Outside the Majlis, there were a large number of Islamic elements at work in this period. There was, for example, the Fidayan-e Islam. This was an organization, an activist militant organization, which specialized in the removal of prominent enemies of Islam in Iran. For example, one of the prime ministers who were a British agent, Razmara, was assassinated by the Fidayan e Islam. But the dominate personality of this first decade of the pre-war period was not a member of the religious class. He was a secular nationalist politician, the late Dr Mohammed Mussadeq, who indeed enjoyed the support of the religious classes, was himself an observing Muslim, although no doubt lacking in full consciousness of Islam as a total way of life. Nonetheless, he was a sincere, patriotic and honest man.

We known now in full detail what happened to Dr Mussadeq and the nationalist regime he headed. It was overthrown by the direct intervention of the United States on the form of the CIA coup of August 1953 which brought about the overthrown of Dr Mussadeq and the return of the Shah from the exile into which he had been sent.

The return of the Shah in 1953 inaugurated the intense period of a quarter of a century of unprecedented massacre and repression, the intensive exploitation o the resources o the Iranian people by the imperialism o the East and West, the western camp being headed then by the United States rather than Britain. In that period, of course, a large number of ideological forces came into being to combat the dictatorship of the Shah and his subservience to foreign powers. But from the beginning, immediately after the coup of 1953, we see these religious elements playing an important part. We can mention what was called

the National Resistance Movement that came into being very soon after the return of the Shah from exile. Although there is no overtly religious component in the designation of this organization. It was succeeded some what later by a movement called the Movement of God Fearing Socialists. It should be said that at this time socialism in Iran, or at least a certain variety of socialism, enjoyed a certain vogue because of the currency in popularity of the slogan of 'Islamic socialism' in the Arab world. This is not the time to go into the suitability or otherwise of this term. I mention it in passing.

Then we had in 1963 the emergence to public prominence for the first time of the present leader of the Iranian people, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. About his immediate background I will speak in much greater detail at my next lecture. To place him for the moment in the historical perspective I have attempted to sketch for you this morning, we can say that he is in many ways the culmination of a long tradition that begins with the first hesitant disputation of the legitimacy of the monarchy. That goes on, in the Qajar period, to openly contest the authority of the monarchy in a certain number of specific incidents. It then goes on to the attempt to limit the power of the monarchy through a constitution, and then sees that the whole formality of legalism, constitutionalism of itself, is not adequate and that nothing short of revolution and the complete overthrow of the existing order is acceptable. It is the part of the greatness of Ayatollah Khomeini to have given a leadership and direction to the Islamic Revolution that is totally without parallel in the contemporary Islamic world. Without in any way diminishing or underestimating the importance of his personal contribution, one should bear in mind that he has behind him a long tradition upon which he draws, a tradition of assertion of the ulama as the directive force in society, a tradition of opposition to rule precisely in the name of Shi'i Islam, a tradition of ever growing militancy and constant readiness to self-sacrifice.

These are the main points I wanted to mention today. There has, inevitably been much omission and over-simplification, names left out and so forth. Perhaps I can partially make up for that in the second stage.

## Discussion

Question: you have attributed the preservation of the monarchy, even though it was viewed as an illegitimate institution, to the influence of external forces. To what extent is the inability to develop alternative institution to the monarchy a reflection of an inadequate political theory or the absence of the development of an adequate political formulation within Muslim thinking in the last few centuries? Will there always be this tension between State authority and the Ayatollah within the Shi'i tradition and what is there to prevent this tension being removed, to allow for the development of a new constitution?

Professor Algar: As to the persistence of the monarchy in Iran, to put it more precisely I should have said that the monarchy was able to defy the constitution through the support of foreign powers. The religious leaders earlier in the century might have been willing to support the continued existence of the monarchy on the condition that the constitution had been observed, and this continued to be the case for at least half a century. There was gradual evolution in the conclusions drawn from the political situation. The conclusion was first drawn that the illegitimacy was inherent in any State in the absence of the Imam and, therefore, the illegitimacy could at best be hoped to be reduced, if not abolished, through the institution of the constitution. When the constitutional experiment failed, gradually realization dawned that the institution of monarchy should be abolished.

Moreover, one of the important contributions of Ayatollah Khomeini that I should mention is that he takes issue with this whole idea of the inalienable illegitimacy of political authority in the absence of the Imam. In a series of lectures that he gave under the title 'Islamic Government', originally given largely to an audience of ulama and students of religious science, he says that because the Imam is absent, does this mean that the shari'a is to be enforced, there must be those who enforce the shari'a. In other words, there must be a political authority that is firmly based upon the authority of the shari'a.

As for a tension between the Ayatollah and the secular authorities, probably you are alluding to the so-called rift between Ayatollah Khomeini and Mehdi Bazargan- a charge played up greatly in the western press, as if there was some fundamental antagonism between the two men, which is not the case. Bazargan has the unusual virtue, although in some cases it is not always an advantage, of speaking his mind in a very precise and frank fashion, whoever or whatever the audience may be. Therefore, he comments in the frankest possible ways upon any problems which come up in his relations with Imam Khomeini in the revolutionary situation. This is not a question of a fundamental antagonism between the two men on a personal or institutional level. There is no question of a continuation in the post-revolutionary period of attitude that is somehow inalienable.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: there appears to have been a lag in the development of Muslim political thought over this period. The lag has been taken up by Imam Khomeini. In other words, the political thought was lagging behind the actual situation.

Professor Algar: I think it is true to say that. It is justifiable to say that there was a lack of a fully articulated political theory and it was largely created by the evolution of circumstance in Iran. After the constitutional experiment essentially failed and after the massive repression took place under the auspices of the United States and Israel, people were led inevitably to have new thoughts on the matter and to take up more uncompromising, more far-reaching positions than had been the case in the past.

Question: may I raise the same question? It refers to the problem of illegitimacy of any government in the absence of the Imam. I find me difficult to trace a point where, in the

existence of the Imam- there were twelve Imams who have existed over two centuries-there has ever been an attempt to displace the existing monarchy. No Imam, to my knowledge, has ever taken up arms against the rulers who are, ipso facto, considered illegitimate.

Professor Algar: There are two contradictory conclusions that may be drawn from the illegitimacy of existing power. One tends in the direction of quietism and the other in the direction of quietism open manifestation. One important doctrine of Shi'ism which operated in the direction of quietism was taqiya, the preservation of the community through its virtual self-effacement in a political sense. After the disappearance of the Imam, both options were open, that of quietism or revolutionary action. Progressively under the impact of particular circumstances the second course came to be chosen.

Dr Salman: As a result of a this policy of isolating Iran from the Arab world and also as a result of degeneration of scholarship in the Muslim and Arab world, and the Sunni world, the Sunni's know very little about the Shi'i, so much so that the term 'Ayatollah', when it became well known at the end of last year and the beginning of this year, was completely unknown. It would be useful for many of us, who are Sunnis, to hear something from you about this office and whether there is a structure, a hierarchy, through which the authority passes.

Professor Algar: The term 'Ayatollah' is literally translated as 'a sign of God' - a person who, through his spiritual and learned attainments, is a manifestation of certain qualities which ultimately draw upon Divine perfection. It is a title given by popular usage, in other words, it is not a rank in the sense of mujtahids. It is a title conferred by popular usage on someone who has emerged as one of the major mujtahids. We cannot speak of a hierarchy within the Shi'i other than the simple hierarchy of mujtahids and muqallid. Essentially, the Shi'i community is composed of mujtahids and muqallid. Among the mujtahids, there are those who have the great authority and degree of learning. It sometimes happens that among the mujtahids a certain individual will emerge as the sole marja-i taqlid. In other words, the personal attainments of that person are such that he will overshadow all of the mujtahids and everyone will exercise taqlid in respect of him.

Dr Salman: How many marja-i taqlid are there? I read that there are six Ayatollahs in Iran.

Professor Algar: No, there are many more than that. The title has become a little over generously used recently. There are probably about four or five marja-i taqlid of whom Ayatollah Khomeini is the most important.

Ayatollah Khomeini in a political sense is the marja-i taqlid of people who, in non-political matters, follow the guidance of other mujtahids. You find people who are in a narrow sense the followers of Ayatollah Shariatmardari but who, politically, follow Imam Khomeini. His authority has gone far beyond the bounds of what I implied in this whole doctrine of taqlid, although that is the technical basis for it. He exercises a far wider authority.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: these marja-i taqlid are not elected?

Professor Algar: No, it is in the strict sense of the word a democratic process. Since there is no machinery, no elective machinery, no machinery of appointment, it is not as though someone puts himself up for the office. It is simply that one attains the technical qualification of mujtahids, and then through piety and learning that is demonstrated, he gathers a certain following. His influence will be mediated to his following by, I would like, the second ranking members of the ulama. Here is where you can speak of a network in Iran. I do not like the word 'hierarchy', but one can speak of a network.

When I was in Paris with Ayatollah Khomeini at the end of last year, it was interesting to see how the various proclamations and instructions of Ayatollah Khomeini were conveyed. A telephone call was made from Paris to a number of provincial cities in Iran. Every individual

seated at his telephone in each of those would have a tape recorder ready. The message would be recorded, transcribed and given into the hands of the local mullahs for distribution within that city. In turn, the students of those mullahs would take it out into the villages. This is the one of the things I should have spoken of, but did not get the chance to. The work of Ayatollah Khomeini was preceded in an organizational sense and made possible by the work of the Ayatollah Burujaerdi. Although he was politically inactive, when there was the struggle against the oil industry, when there was the American coup d'état against Dr Mussadeq, he remained silent. That silence earned him the reproaches of many people. On important achievements that are to his credit his credit is the reorganization of what is called Hauze-ye Ilmiye, the teaching institute on Qum. He established a network for the dissemination of religious knowledge throughout Iran as well as the collection of zakat and khums. The same network established by him was used later by Ayatollah Khomeini and other leaders.

Question: The world press is rather contra directory. Some people say we cannot shut up our eyes the prosperity and achievements brought about by the Shah of Iran, for example, in education, industry, and even in the number of doctors. There are more doctors in Iran than in Pakistan or other countries. This was done in the reign of the king himself. Second, this killing which continues by Ayatollah Khomeini- it is judicial or unjudicial assassination. What do you call it? There is a long list of killings. In spite of the world press which says that this should be stopped the interests of Iran because there should be reconciliation between the people working under the regime of the Shah and others because the target is almost achieved, the king is expelled from the soil. The killing is almost meaningless. There should be complete reconciliation and unity to bring about co-operation in Islamic structure.

Professor Algar: Since this question has been raised, I think that I should answer it. I have to say that I think it is unfortunate that a Muslim should raise this kind of question and put forward these ideas. You speak of a continuation of the killings. If you equate the cold-blooded slaughter of 50,000 people in a single year- I am not speaking of the entire career of the Shah- with the execution of 300 murderers by the Islamic Revolutionary regime in Iran, you must have a strange conception of justice in general and Islamic justice in particular. It is not a question of judicial assassination- I am not quite sure what that means- surely in Islam a murderer is accountable for his crimes and someone who is guilty of multiple murder should also be accountable. You speak about unity. Unity between who and who on what basis? There can be no unity between, on the one hand, the people who have offered thousands of sacrifices and martyrs, whose blood is hardly yet dry on the streets of Iran, and on other hand those who, for the united States, the Soviet Union, Britain, Israel and other centers of corruption and intrigue around the world, have been continually slaughtering and murdering their own fellow countrymen. How can there be unity between them? On the contrary, the number of people executed in Iran since the Revolution has been extremely small and extremely restrained. In the United States, the Zionist idiots and hypocrites who control the media talk about a blood bath in Iran. Where these were people when, on a single day in Iran, September 8, 1978, a minimum of 4,000 people were shot down in a single day. Now you want to have forgiveness and reconciliation. No. These butchers should be put to death. Those of them who have fled to other countries, these thieves, embezzlers, these drug merchants, if they be in Britain or anywhere else, as the Chief of the Revolutionary Council said, they should be cut down and killed. This is the duty of all Muslims, not simply Iranian.

Question: As we know, the western press and the media are controlled by Zionists, imperialists and intriguers. Justice has to be seen to be done and to be carried out as regards the perpetrators of injustices and the western people who have been committing murders against the people of Iran. Will we be cowed down by the western media and the intriguers as regards the carrying out of justice in Iran?

Professor Algar: One thing we should remember as Muslim is that we have our own from judicial procedure in Islam. The Iranian people did not suffer the sacrifices that they did to have a replica, a pale imitation of some western form of government, whether a judicial system, political organization, or anything else. For us, as Muslim the only relevant question is whether the trials and executions that have taken place in Iran are in conformity with Islamic practice and standards. Very clearly they are. Every individual who has been accused and brought before a court in Iran has had the chance of calling witnesses for and against. I know of an individual at Tehran University who testified in favor of one former Savak agent. Those who have a direct interest in the case have been permitted to attend, representative of the foreign press have attended certain of the trials, although not all of them. We hear of this hasty justice by some segments of the western press. What is meant by this? In America, and probably in Britain too, the delay that occurs between the pronouncement of a judgment and its execution is intended above all to enrich the lawyers. That is all there is to it. The agony of the prisoner is prolonged while law years make a fortune for themselves. However, in Islam, if a judgment is given that is fully supported by the evidence there is no logical or human reason to delay the execution of that judgment. It is more merciful.

Question: we have discussed the tradition and leadership of the Iranian movement and the Revolution which is the outstanding event in the Muslim world. Would you consider such background developments to be a prerequisite or otherwise for the Islamic revolution?

Professor Algar: You are anticipating something which forms the topic of a later lecture. In my last lecture to you I want to consider this question of the applicability of the Iranian model to other Muslim countries. To give a partial and preliminary answer, the emergence of an ulama class in the form we have seen in Iran is not a prerequisite for the success of the Islamic movement in other parts of the Islamic world because this would in effect mean that they all accept Shi'ism which, of course, they are free to do, but I do not think we can say that this in itself is a prerequisite. There are other lessons to be drawn from the Iranian experience which are to be designated as prerequisite. On the one hand there is the clear identification of the existing order as being totally opposed to Islam, the refusal of any co-operation with it or to be absorbed into it, the total and realistic and serious opposition that bring with it a readiness to sacrifice, a shunning of the various forms of pseudo-Islamic activities, such as attending conferences in Saudi Arabia, and so forth. Ayatollah Khomeini has never attended a single conference sponsored by the Saudi regime and yet we see him today not merely the de facto ruler of Iran, but the source of inspiration to millions of Muslim throughout the world. These and other lessons of the Iranian Revolution I would like to draw on later.

Question: The question of the struggle of the Iranian ulama seems to be one turning back to the role of religious counselors or advisers during the post-revolutionary period. How far is this true? The ulama played the role of religious counselors, but now Khomeini has not put these men as secretaries of state or as Prime Minister.

Professor Algar: I understand and the reason for your question, but I think it implies a number of things which are not true. You talk about a secretary of state. The minister of foreign affairs in Iran is by no means a secularist. I am sure you would agree that for a Muslim to avoid being a secularist it is not necessary for him to wear a turban. The government is made up of people who are fully committed to Islam. I do not think that Ayatollah Khomeini has withdrawn from a prominent, indeed, a leading role in Iran. There is a duality of authority that we now see in Iran. The Revolutionary council is composed mainly, if not exclusively, of religious authorities. The provisional Revolutionary government is made up of people who have political administrative experience which, for obvious reasons, members of the religious class lack. On the other hand, the wise decision was made by Imam Khomeini not to put religious leaders in a position of obvious prominence so as to

avoid the accusation that an Islamic state means rule by the ulama, which, obviously it does not. There is this temporary arrangement which will come to an end once the constitution has been ratified and, on the basis of the constitution, elections have been held. Then the government which emerges on the basis of elections may be composed exclusively of non-ulama elements. It might be composed exclusively of ulama elements or more likely a mixture of the two. There is a party called the party for the Islamic Republic, the governing body of which, composed of six individuals, belongs exclusively to the ulama. There is a great likelihood that when the elections take place, it will win an absolute majority.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: Can I take you up on this? I detected a number of contradictions. One of them is the existence of political administrative experience among a group of people. Earlier you said that there should be no compromise with the existing system. Now you are saying that you want to rely, in the early period of Revolution, on experience gained in the past. How do you gain experience from that political system and how is the political experience of that period relevant to this period?

My other question is that it seems that you are now saying that there will be elections in which a political party called the party for the Islamic Republic will fight an election. This assumes that there would be another party or could be, technically, another party opposing that party, which does not want an Islamic Republic. In that event you are relying on the attainment of a majority. When was an election last held in a Shi'i political system? What is the origin of election in the political system of the Islamic Republic? In all of this you seem to be dipping your hands back into the foreigners' basket for intellectual and technical tools.

Professor Algar: As to the first question about the acquisition of experience by members of the present provisional government, they acquire their experience not under the reign of the Shah but rather in the period of Dr Mussadeq, which is a more relevant experience. Prime Minister Bazargan managed the Iranian oil industry immediately after its nationalization. Others in the present Cabinet have had experience not in the government as such but rather in the spheres of academia, in some cases in technical enterprises and were totally independent of the State in the period of the Shah. It is not a question of taking on people who have acquired experience of political administration under the regime of the Shah. Moreover, they are being deployed at the moment not in the formulation of policy, but in its execution. I agree that it is not entirely satisfactory that there should be this duality of authority. One must remember that this is an interim and transitional situation in which contradictions are bound to exist and which, we hope, will be resolved.

Turning now to the second question about election, and the place of them in Shi'ism, there is no question of election when it comes to the appointment of the Imam who is divinely appointed. Whether one be Shi'i or Sunni, there is the simple factor of the Qur'anic principle of consultation. An election is nothing more than a mechanism for the implementation of this general Qur'anic principle of consultation. Another point that is of importance and significance about the Islamic Revolution is that it feels secure enough of itself, sufficiently self-assured, to permit the expression of dissenting points of view. It is surely a far more effective way of combating the potential danger represented by Marxism to permit the free organization of Marxist political parties and then, in the electoral process to demonstrate their importance, than it is to jump upon them and put their members in goal, as if Muslims had something to be scared of. This anti-communist bogey that is waved in various parts of the Muslim world to frighten people into silence, should be brought into the open and shown for what it is, as something totally weak.

Moreover, there is the simple question that we cannot have an Islamic State based upon coercion. To permit freedom of expression, even in opposition to the principle of an Islamic

Republic, seems politically wise and in accordance with the fundamental injunctions of Islam itself.

Question: In the light of the Shi'i concept of political authority, if this concept was to be extended from a particular country, say that of Iran, who will make that political authority? Will it be a central authority? If it is a central authority, who will make it and will there be agreement upon it? If that is not the case, do you see any political differences of opinion?

Professor Algar: We have to admit that there is no single uniquely valid system of political authority. There are certain general principles which may apply in different fashion according to certain particular circumstances. Whether, the forms that are in the process of emerging in Iran will be applicable without modification to other countries, it is a question that remains open. Your questions are eliciting from me a number of matters which belong to later lectures. One important factor about the Iranian Revolution and not a coup d'état, is that the people before the revolution evolved their own organs of government and administration. This took place before the final triumph of the Revolution. The removal of Shapour Bakhtiar\* was a formality because an alternative government had come into being and, moreover, this had happened while Ayatollah Khomeini was still in exile.

There is in Iran at the moment a large dispersal of authority, decentralization. This is something valuable from which every Muslim may learn in that frequently when we have our brother Islamic movements, whether in the Arab world, Pakistan, or elsewhere, when they speak of an Islamic State the idea is of setting up a strong central authority, geared to realizing the goals of Islam and then telling the people how to implement these goals. What has happened in Iran opposite, namely that there has emerged in every village throughout the country a local organ of self-government and authority which functions with the mosque as its centre, with the local ulama as its leaders who effectively conduct the day business of government?

The new draft constitution, interestingly enough, provides for the perpetuation of this feature. The field is definitely open for experimentation. One of the valuable things that have happened in Iran is that for the first time, not on the basis of some theoretical concepts drawn up by so-called Islamic research academies, but on the basis of the true and genuine revolutionary participation by the whole people, a viable model of government had come into being. Whether other Muslim countries follow this model is another question. The important thing about what is happening in Iran is that it has been a mass movement which has evolved its own form of self-government. It has not been a question of theory. Other movements elsewhere have been strong on theory and have spent lots of conference time debating this, generally abroad, in America and Europe. But they have been weak in practice. You can reproach the Iranian movement with late development of a theory, but you cannot reproach it with lack of practice. Lack of theory is the less essential factor.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: It seems to me that in your lecture you were saying that over 300 years in Iran there developed Shi'i intellectual thought and there was a process of development of thought in Iran which has led to this Revolution. You rightly linked Ayatollah Khomeini with all the major figures before, who articulated Shi'i thought of Islamic thought in Iran leading up to this Revolution. Now you appear to be saying that there was no need for the intellectual basis of the Revolution.

Professor Algar: No, I am not saying that.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: I am looking at it as a criticism of intellectual pursuit in Islam. You would not mean to do that, I am sure. Being a professor, you would not like to be out of a job.

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\* The last Prime Minister appointed by the Shah

Professor Algar: I do not know. Sometimes I would like a more honorable job. No one disputes the necessity of intellectual pursuit, but an intellectual pursuit that is carried on in isolation or at the expense of factual practice and actual involvement in the day to day problems of Muslims, the Muslim masses, is something else. That is something totally useless.

Question: The Islamic Revolution in Iran has brought about a change in the role of leadership in the Islamic system as compared to other systems. Could you briefly comment on how the leadership role differs in different systems?

Professor Algar: This is a generalized question. Rather than attempt a comparison, I would say that Ayatollah Khomeini has emerged as the leader of the Iranian people. I do not like this word 'leader' because it carries a certain kind of connotation with it. That is, it does so in English, where we are obliged to make compromises. He has emerged, for want of a better word, as the leader of the Iranian people. Here again, I may be sounding anti-intellectual, but it is not because of a question of theory. All this theory I have elaborated, has been of importance but it is not a question of what Ayatollah Khomeini has done and is doing, it is a question of what the man is. Anyone who has come into the presence of Ayatollah Khomeini has realized that this man is a kind of embodiment of the human ideal. It is by exercising this combination of moral, intellectual, political and spiritual ability that he has come to have this tremendous role in Iran. He has gone much beyond the traditional bounds of authority of the *marja-i taqlid*. He has become a symbol, an incorporation of the whole Iranian concept of self-identity. If Muslims look at him, non-Iranian Muslims, they will see in him an example of the human ideal of Islam also.

This is a man who today can have demonstration of millions of people on the streets in Iran in a few minutes. Yet when you see him in his place of work, and his residence, he is sitting on the floor with a little lectern in front of him. That is the entirety of his office equipment. Yet you can go to so-called Muslim leaders- this is the relevant comparison- and see them in their comfortably appointed offices. I recall visiting an apartment in Ankara belonging to a prominent leader of a party which with some justice calls itself an Islamic party. Unfortunately, it falls far short of what it should be. This was an apartment overstuffed with all kinds of souvenirs of trips to Western Europe, with pseudo-French furniture and gold-plated telephones. Yet this was one of the people who claimed to represent Islam. I am not saying that Ayatollah Khomeini is totally unique in his personal way of life. There have been others and there are others in the Islamic worlds that have at least approached the same ideal. But if you are speaking in general about the qualities of leadership, it is not a question of a particular theory of leadership or a certain organization or network; it is to do with the peculiarity of this man, the spiritual and moral dimension which must be there. I read an interesting article in a Turkish secularist newspaper that, before the Iranian Revolution, like many other writers in the Turkish daily press, had written all kinds of nonsense about Imam Khomeini, had gone to see Khomeini. It was interesting, beside he went in the presence of Imam Khomeini with a whole list of idiotic questions, such as, 'What about women?', 'Are you going to dismantle the factories?,' And that kind of junk. Instead of putting forward this series of questions he found himself reduced to complete silence and a great sense of shame and embarrassment. In the end the only question he could ask Imam Khomeini was to give him to study Islam and begin making his prayers, and so on.

Anyone who has the honor of seeing Imam Khomeini has the same story. It is what the man is. All too often in this pseudo-intellectualism, the Muslims waste their time and energy. You totally lose sight of the end. You sit around arguing about words. You lose sight of those spiritual and moral qualities. It is not a matter of sentimentalism or spiritualism. This is a demonstrable reality. How else can we explain the success of the Iranian Revolution? These people who had no material resources at their disposal whatever, faced with one of the best equipped armies in the world, opposed by all, triumphed. How? The historians will still be

scratching their heads 100 years from now wondering how it happened. But the Muslim, when he sees this, will see the kind of leadership provided by Imam Khomeini and the moral and spiritual dimensions which he gave to the Iranian Revolution.

Question: what is the relationship between the ulama and the existing rulers of Iraq compared to the ulama of Iran?

Professor Alger: This is a subject on which I am not well informed. Recently, there has been considerable antagonism between the Ba'athist regime in Iraq and Ayatollah Sadr, who has been a close associate of Ayatollah Khomeini and was an acquaintance of his during his long years in exile. There are many reports of large-scale demonstrations in Iraq against the Ba'athist regime, which led to the killing of a large number of people and the arrest of many more, including the personal emissary of Ayatollah Khomeini. I believe that he was later released. There is a danger when we talk about the coming influence or even the present influence of the Iranian Revolution to think only in terms of Shi'i communities. Obviously Shi'i communities have a particular interest in what is going on in Iran, particularly those in Iraq which is next door. But the influence of the Revolution is in way confined to the various Shi'i communities.

Questioner (as above): I was talking in a historical sense.

Professor Alger: Historically, the Shi'i element of Iraq led a long struggle against the British mandate. Ayatollah Khashani and his father, Mustapha Khashani, were sentenced to death by the British in Iraq for their role in opposing the imposition of a British regime there. Further, the Shi'i ulama also opposed the British in Iraq. There is a long and protracted jihad against the British regime. In the post-war period there was activism against the Hashemite and even more recently against the Ba'athist. But I am not in a position to go into details in the case of Iraq.

Question: the mujtahids can arrive at different conclusions based on different interpretations. Both might be correct. No one can claim that he is right. You mentioned that various imams said that no one should follow blindly a ruler. They should know what the reason was behind their mujtahids, the marja-i taqlid?

Professor Alger: taqlid is not following blindly. Taqlid is recognition of the limits of one's own knowledge and competence, in the sense of the prophetic hadith, that Allah has mercy on the man who knows his limits and stops at them. There is a great exercise of judgments here when it comes to the choice of a particular mujtahid, or the choice of a marja-i taqlid. Having made that choice, you follow the guidance of someone who has more authority when he gives his reasons. There is no question of blind following. Within the Shi'i school it is true that whatever result is arrived at has no claim to infallibility. It is a reasoned supposition. What is essential is not to follow the guidance of any given mujtahid, it is essential from the viewpoint of the Usuli school of thought that one should choose a certain mujtahid. To my mind this is one reason why our brethren in Iran have a far clearer understanding and sense of direction in their Islamic lives, because they have this comprehensive leadership and guidance. The rest of us in the Sunni Muslim world unfortunately under the influence of Wahabism and other related misfortunes, tend to reject taqlid without in any way approaching the position of anyone claiming infallibility. It is a question of following the guidance and direction given by one who is obviously better qualified.

## Second Lecture

### **Ayatollah Khomeini: the embodiment of a tradition**

The Islamic Revolution differs from other events of the present century that have been given that designation by being firmly rooted in history. Far from being a radical break with the essential and profound developments of the Iranian nation, it is, on the contrary, a continuation and fruition of long years of political, spiritual and intellectual development.

I laid particular stress last week on the development of the institution of the Shi'i ulama, beginning with their importation into Iran in the Safavids period. Then I described their gradual emergence as a class providing not only religious leadership in the narrow and technical sense but also leadership of a national and political nature, given increasingly to contesting the legitimacy of the monarchical institution.

Inevitably, I was obliged to omit certain topics and names, and by way of introduction to today's topic- the culminating figure of this whole tradition of the ulama, Ayatollah Khomeini-I would like to make more detailed reference to some aspects of what I briefly touched upon last week.

First, it would obviously be a distortion of the institution of the ulama to regard it simply from the viewpoint that most interests us –namely, the political. We should also bear in mind that the ulama, not only within the Shi'i and Iranian context, have been the guardians of a certain body of traditional learning and devotion which has been the whole underpinning and basis of social and political Acton.

If we look at the specific case of Shi'i school of thought in Iran, we see that again since the Safavids period – the sixteenth century of the Christian period – the ulama have studied and cultivated a wide variety of different discipline. These have included not merely the familiar theological discipline – Qur'an, hadith, tarsi, fiqh and so on – but philosophy, a certain form of philosophy appropriate to the Islamic context, and mysticism, again a certain form of mysticism appropriate to the Islamic and specifically the Shi'i context.

Indeed, if we look at the person of Ayatollah Khomeini and his achievement, we find that he is the culmination of the tradition of the Shi'i ulama in Iran, not merely in exercising an unusually comprehensive, wide and profound influence in political and social affairs, but also with respect to the purely learned dimension of the tradition. Here, too, he is an unparalleled figure.

This, then, is one thing. In order to understand the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the role played in it by the ulama, particularly Ayatollah Khomeini, it is necessary to regard not merely their political theory, not merely their sensibility and strategy and their identification with popular aspirations, but also the background of cultivation of Islamic learning and piety from which they sprang.

Secondly, as a footnote to last week's presentation, I would like to go into more detail on two figures that provide the immediate background to the emergence of Ayatollah Khomeini. The first is Sheikh Abd Al-Karim Hairi and the second is Ayatollah Burujerdi. The first is of great importance as the founder of the religious learning institution in Qum, from which Ayatollah Khomeini went forth and which has become in a certain sense the main stronghold of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and also the spiritual capital of the country, given the residence there of Ayatollah Khomeini.

The dates of Shaykh Abd Al-Karim Hairi are from 1859 to 1936. Qum is one of the oldest centers of Shi'i school of thought in Iran. Not coincidentally, it is also one of the few

cities founded in Iran by the Arab Muslim conquerors of the country. It has traditionally been a stronghold of Shi'i learning that exercised great authority within Iran also were situated outside the country, in the cities known as the 'atabat – that is, the cities of Iraq, where certain of imams are buried: Karbala, Najaf and Kazimayn, and to a certain extent some others. Almost all the prominent ulama received their education there. Many, even though Iranian by birth, would spend most of their lives there.

This situation has continued to a certain extent, but in Iran the city of Qum came to great prominence as a result of the activities of a succession of important ulama, the first of whom was Sheikh Abd Al-Karim Hairi. In 1922 he founded in the city what is known as the Ehaize-ye Ilmiye, which roughly translated is the teaching institution. It is a conglomerate of different colleges and institutions of learning, informally organized and containing a number of teachers, offering the entire spectrum of the traditional religious sciences, joined by philosophy and mysticism.

There is a tradition, attributed to the sixth imam of the Shi'i that in latter time's knowledge would arise in Qum and be distributed from there to the rest of Iran and to the rest of the Islamic world. Sheikh Abd Al-Karim Hairi, in fulfillment of this tradition, consciously decided to revitalize Qum as a centre of religious learning and teaching. This took place in 1922, a date almost the same as the date of the foundation of the Pahlavi dictatorship. Although Sheikh Abd Al-Karim Hairi was apolitical, it can be said that his achievement indirectly contributed ultimately to the overthrow and destruction of the Pahlavi dynasty.

Although he failed to exercise any effective opposition to Reza Khan and the institution of the Pahlavi dictatorship, Sheikh Abd Al-Karim Hairi came to repent his inactivity in this respect, and is reputed to have died in a state of great sorrow.

The second of these two figures who form the immediate background to the emergence of Ayatollah Khomeini, is of course, Ayatollah Burujerdi (1875-1961). He is the major mujtahids and marja-i taqlid of the immediate post-war period. He continued the twin emphasis of Sheikh Abd Al-Karim Hairi – the strengthening of the teaching institution in Qum as the centre of spiritual and religious direction, and certain quietism in political affairs. He organized a network throughout Iran for the collection of zakat, khums and other religiously-sanctioned taxes, which gave a greater financial independence and stability to the religious institution in Qum. This network, established for these purposes, later became of great utility in the course of the Islamic Revolution.

At the same time, Ayatollah Burujerdi on the purely religious place instituted an important development which has not received sufficient attention – a deliberate attempt by the leading authorities of Shi'i Muslims to affect a rapprochement with the Sunni Islamic world. Through his efforts and those of the then Shaykh al-Azhar, Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut, an institution was established for the taqrib, the rapprochement between the different schools of thought in Islam.

This theme has also been taken up by Ayatollah Khomeini, who has repeatedly expressed the need for collaboration and unity between the different segments of the Islamic world.

Politically, however, Ayatollah Burujerdi has been open to considerable criticism. Throughout the tumultuous events of the first decade of the post-war period, years which saw the rise of a large and threatening communist party in Iran, the Tudeh Party, the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry, the rise of Dr Mussadeq, the CIA coup d'état, we find complete silence on the part of Ayatollah Burujerdi. Even after the royalist coup d'état of August 1953, he received emissaries of the Shah's regime at his residence in Qum.

This seemed in the eyes of many Iranians to exclude any role for the ulama, for the religious leaders, in the opposition to the Shah's regime that was now intensifying after the

downfall of the Mussadeq regime. Particularly because the role of Ayatollah Kashani (d.1962), one of the previous supporters of Dr Mussadeq and the campaign for the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry, also was ambiguous on many points.

In the first years after the downfall of Dr Mussadeq and the institution of the royal dictatorship, under American patronage, we find a certain current of religiously-inspired opposition to the Shah's regime. But it has no leading personality; it is relatively weak; and it is overshadowed by secular and leftist forms of opposition to the Shah's regime.

However, a decade after the overthrow of Mussadeq, in March 1963, there emerge for the first time in prominence on the Iranian scene the great figure of Ayatollah Khomeini. He overshadows not only all his predecessors in this tradition of ulama that I have attempted to sketch for you but also the figure of Mussadeq himself and certainly all other secular politicians and potential of opposition to the royal regime.

The life of Ayatollah Khomeini before his emergence for the first time to the public eye in 1963 deserves some attention. As the final element in his name indicates, he was born in the little town of Khomeini in 1902, of a family that for many generations had cultivated religious knowledge and learning. His grandfather was a certain Said Ahmad, who was also known as Said Ahmad Hindi, because he had spent a number of years in India.

As far as I known to me, the family is of Iranian origin for many generations, although ultimately, since he is a Sayid – a descendant of the Prophet – the ultimate origins of the family go beyond Iran. But throughout recent generation the family is Iranian. It is simply that the grandfather spent a certain time in India. There are, apparently, even now, a number of relatives of the family who are still resident in India, somewhere near Luck now.

His father was a Sayid Mustafa Khomeini, who was killed by the mayor of Khomeini in the last days of the Qajar dynasty, because of his protests against the exactions and the unjust taxes and other oppressive practices carried out by the mayor against the local population.

The learned and religious career of Ayatollah Khomeini began when he was 17, in the year 1919, when he went to study in the city of Arak. After a brief stay, he left this relatively small and unimportant city to go to the main centre of religious learning in Iran, namely, Qum. His arrival shortly preceded the establishment there of the Hauze-ye Ilmiye by Sheikh Abd Al-Karim Hairi. Ayatollah Khomeini swiftly emerged as one of his most prominent and important pupils. Under his guidance, Ayatollah Khomeini studied the discipline of Fiqh and Usual al-Fiqh, and at the same time he learnt philosophy and mysticism under the guidance of another of the prominent teachers of the day, Mirza Muhammad Ali Shahabadi.

I would like to make a brief diversion to speak of the place of philosophy and mysticism in the learned and even the political career of Ayatollah Khomeini. It is one of the remarkable facts about him that his political role in leading a revolution, unparalleled in recent history, has come totally to overshadow his achievements as a scholar, philosopher and mystic. All too frequently in the modernist Muslim mentality philosophy and mysticism are held to represent a retreat from reality, a total abdication of any kind of political and social role, as if they were merely abstract matters that had no real connection with the existing problems of Muslims and the Islamic world. Ayatollah Khomeini is living proof that these two subjects, correctly conceived and pursued, are, on the contrary, the mainspring for a form of activity that is profoundly correct, guided by a clear insight that is not merely political and strategic but is also at the same time an insight that is metaphysically correct and well-guided.

As for mysticism, it may be said that it is precisely the moral and spiritual qualities that Ayatollah Khomeini has cultivated that have made him what he most obviously is – a complete embodiment of the human ideal of Islam. This is the revolutionary leader who lives not in comfortable apartments, who spends his nights in prayer and supplication, whose daily sustenance consists of the simplest and most elementary foods. It seems to me that his very

thorough ground in philosophy and mysticism has been even of political relevance and effectiveness.

The earliest fame of Ayatollah Khomeini in the teaching institution at Qum was precisely as an exponent of these two disciplines. He gave a number of well-attended lectures on some of the major texts of Islamic philosophy and developed great eloquence and a forceful teaching style. He has also written from this period a number of texts, partly original and partly commentaries upon existing texts, which for the most part have remained on his orders unpublished, since he holds that their publication at the present juncture would not be helpful but would divert from more pressing tasks. He also wrote a large number of books on Fiqh, and came to be regarded as an authority in that field. Had his attainments been restricted to these relatively traditional areas – Fiqh on the one hand and philosophy and mysticism on the other – he would no doubt have entered the spiritual history of Iran as a great personality. But although in many respects he is the perpetuator, the culminator, of a tradition, he also broke sharply with the existing tradition of the learned institution by cultivating from a very early point, radical political interest.

During the period of Reza Khan, Ayatollah Khomeini authored a book in criticism of the Pahlavi dictatorship, entitled *Kashf al-Asrar*, 'The Uncovering of Secrets.' It was uncompromising and clear, written in style that characterizes all his pronouncements. He vigorously criticized the regime of Reza Khan and laid open its dependence upon and subordination of foreign powers, at that the hostility of the Pahlavi regime to Islam was not merely the idiosyncratic desire of a single dictator but rather part of a comprehensive strategy for the elimination of Islam as a social and political force throughout the Islamic world, and as such had been conceived by the major centers of imperialism and entrusted to the various local agents of imperialism.

In the course of the *Kashf al-Asrar*, he wrote, for example, in criticizing Reza Khan:

'All the orders issued by the dictatorial regime of the bandit Reza Khan have no value at all. The laws passed by his Parliament must be scrapped and burned. All the idiotic words that have proceeded from the brain of that illiterate soldier are rotten and it is only the law of God that will remain and resist the ravages of time.'

This form of expression, totally uncompromising and marked by a radical insight into the realities of politics, gave rise to misgivings, interestingly enough not only on the part of the Pahlavi regime but within the religious institution itself. For all its strength, like any other institution it had as its primary interest self-preservation and the promotion of its institutional interests.

In the period when Ayatollah Burujerdi was the dominant figure in Qum, Ayatollah Khomeini enjoyed a position of prominence, but the view entertained of him by certain of the other scholars surrounding Burujerdi was ambivalent. In the period between the downfall of Reza Khan in 1941 and the overthrow of Mussadeq in 1953, Ayatollah Khomeini did not attempt an open denunciation of the regime in the same fashion as he did after 1963. He has more recently expressed regret that he did not earlier begin on the course that for many years now he has seen to be his clear and manifest duty. It should be said, however, that throughout this period he sought to induce a measure of political realism and commitment in Ayatollah Burujerdi. If his efforts in this respect were largely frustrated, there is no doubt that he exercised his influence upon a large number of the younger ulama in Qum and elsewhere, who later came to form part of the directive force of the Revolution. Even before the expulsion of Ayatollah Khomeini from Iran, he had built up a certain following – among the important leaders of the Revolution. It is highly probable that the Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iran consists largely if not entirely of the pupils of Ayatollah Khomeini. In other words, they are people whom he has been training for years, both in the traditional

religious sciences and in the tasks of political struggle and guidance and leadership. A list of the major students of Ayatollah Khomeini would take many pages. We can mention briefly simply two names that come to mind – Imam Musa Sadr, the leader of the Shi'i community in Lebanon, and Ayatollah Montazer, who was one of the major strugglers against the Shah's regime in Iran.

Ayatollah Khomeini's emergence to prominence began in the years following the overthrow of Mussadeq and the emergence of an intensified form of dictatorship in Iran. In 1963, the Shah inaugurated what became known in the western press, and of course in domestic propaganda, as the White Revolution. It has been appositely said of the White Revolution that the only white thing about it was that it was conceived in the White House. It was certainly not white in the sense that it was bloodless, and it was hardly a revolution. On the contrary, it was an attempt to forestall revolution and make it impossible.

The so-called White Revolution consisted of a package of measure allegedly designed to reform Iranian society to promote the welfare of the peasantry and the industrial workers and to 'emancipate' the women. Among the various measures included in it there were two that assumed particular prominence in the propaganda of the Shah's regime and his foreign supporters – land reform and women's rights. It may be appropriate to dwell a little on the nature of these two measures before continuing with my narrative of Ayatollah Khomeini's activities.

The slogans of land reform in Iran was the disguise for the total disruptions of the agrarian economy in a manner designed to assure maximum profit for the royal family, a certain oligarchy tied to the royal family and foreign agri-business interests, including companies headquartered in the United States, Europe and, above all, Israel. It is true that a certain amount of property was distributed among the peasantry, but the land that was distributed was of a barely cultivatable nature and, moreover, it was not distributed free of charge; it was distributed against monetary payments that had to be made to banks controlled by the royal family. Moreover, large tracts of land were totally excluded from the scope of the law and were passed instead either to the direct ownership of the royal family, under the title of the Pahlavi Foundation, which was the cover for the financial operations of the royal family, or certain foreign agri-business interest that used the agrarian land of Iran for the cultivation of certain crops that are not consumed in Iran but were destined for the foreign market. For example, wide areas of Iran were given over to the cultivation of asparagus, an item totally missing from the Iranian diet. At the same time, Iranian-produced butter became increasingly unavailable, so that in a Tehran supermarket you could find only Danish butter.

This destruction of the agrarian economy caused massive depopulation of the countryside and the coming to the cities of peasants forced to seek work there. The former landowning class were transformed into speculators on urban real estate and import-export merchants, and in pure financial terms they gained from the transformation rather than losing from it.

As for women's rights, this was a measure designed more for foreign consumption than for domestic purpose, since the Shah's foreign advisers were well aware of the traditional western prejudices concerning Islamic attitude towards women and thought that this was an infallible way of making the Shah appear an enlightened and benevolent person, acting on behalf of the poor oppressed women of Muslim Iran. In point of fact there has taken place a great transformation in the political-social role of Iranian women over the past twenty-five years in Iran – fifteen years at least – but the direction it has taken me against the regime. Iranian women found their emancipation not through any measure decreed by the regime but, on the contrary, in struggling against the regime, in suffering abuse, torture, imprisonment and martyrdom at the hands of the regime.

In the declaration of Ayatollah Khomeini made from March 1963 onwards against the Shah's regime and his attempt to deceive Iranian opinion with the so-called White Revolution, we do not find consistent mention of land reform and women's rights. It is a remarkable thing that right down until last year it was said particularly in the American press – and probably the British press was not much better – that these conservative, reactionary, fanatical Muslims in Iran were struggling against the Shah because of their opposition to land reform and their desire to get back what was quaintly termed 'the church lands' and because they wanted all women to be shrouded from head to foot again. This total absurdity has no basis, not only for the Revolution of the past year but for the preceding fifteen years.

In the earliest declaration of Ayatollah Khomeini, made in 1963, declaration which have been preserved – verbatim and are available to anyone who can read Persian, he concentrates by contrast on a number of other themes. The first is the continued violation by the Shah of the Iranian constitution and his violation of the oath that he took upon acceding to the throne to preserve and to protect Islam. Secondly, he attacks the Shah's subordination to foreign powers, mentioning primarily the United States and, following very closely upon that, Israel.

The question of Israel with respect to the Islamic Revolution is of great importance. It has not been realized, because of the embargo on news in the so-called free press of the west, that Israel has been second only to the United States as one of the major props of the Pahlavi dictatorship. It was a well-known in Iran that there were two items that were totally excluded from any form of public comment or criticisms. It was a well-known rule of Savak, the security police established by the United States for the Shah, that there were two items that had to be totally excluded from public comment and criticism. One was the royal family and the other was Israel. It is interesting that even the United States, in a certain form and under certain pretexts, might be subjected to criticism, but even the name of Israel had not to be mentioned.

Ayatollah Khomeini, with his characteristic refusal to compromise, broke this rule in 1963 and pointed out the very close relationship on the military, political, intelligence and economic, planes between the Pahlavi regime and Israel of course, in press accounts of the western world in 1963 you would find not a word on this aspect of the matter.

As for the land reform and women's emancipation, which was supposedly a target of so much righteous anger, the only reference in the declaration of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1963 and subsequently are passing references denouncing them as totally fallacious and not even wroth commenting upon in detail?

After on of the talks that Ayatollah Khomeini was giving at his madrasa in Qum in March 1963, an attack took place upon the madrasa by paratroopers and members of the security police, resulting in the death of a members of people and the arrest of Ayatollah Khomeini. After a period of detention, he was released but, far from being intimidated by this imprisonment, he increased the intensity and frequency of his attacks on the government, so that by June of that year, which corresponded to the important month of Muaharram, the nationwide camping of enlightenment of public opinion by the ulama under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini had come into being. Throughout these decelerations he continued to attack the subordination of the Shah to foreign powers, particularly the United States and Israel, and his violation o the Iranian constitution and of Islam.

One particular topic that appears to have been the catalyst for the uprising of June 1963 was the granting to Americans in Iran – American adviser, military personal and their dependants – of total exemption from Iranian jurisdiction, in such ways that, as Ayatollah Khomeini put it, were the dog of an American soldier to bite the Shah it himself, the Shah would have no legal resource. This matter, together with the contracting of a \$200 million loan from the United States for the purchase of the military equipment, supplied a clear

illustration of the subordination of the Shah's regime to foreign powers. Ayatollah Khomeini clearly said that the vote of the Majlis which had approved these and similar measures was illegitimate and contrary to the Qur'an. He issued an appeal to the Iranian army to rise up and overthrow the regime and to the people also that they should no longer tolerate a tyranny that was 'working towards the total enslavement of Iran.'

On the day in the Iranian calendar known as the 15<sup>th</sup> of Khurdad, corresponding to the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1963, a vast uprising took place in numerous Iranian cities, which was brutally repressed by the use of force. Not for the first time in the Shah's career, he gave the orders to his security police and to the troops to shoot to kill. It has been estimated that on this day and in the events of subsequent days a minimum of 15,000 people were killed.

Ayatollah Khomeini was arrested again and then after a short period sent into exile in Bursa in Turkey. Interestingly enough, in violation of Turkish law, he was kept under close surveillance in a house guarded by members of the Iranian security police. The Prime Minister of Turkey at the time was a certain Suleyman Demirel, who is a well-known freemason.

In October 1965, Ayatollah Khomeini was enabled to leave his place of exile in Turkey to go to a more congenial environment, that of Najaf, one of the cities in Iraq that have traditionally been centers not only for the cultivation of Shi'i learning but of refuge for Iranian religious leaders. This was the case, for example, in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century when a number of the important religious leaders supported the constitutional revolution or, before that, the tobacco boycott movement. They issued their directives from the relative security of the atabat, which were outside Iran.

On this occasion, however, Ayatollah Khomeini by no means found an untroubled refuge there. It needs to be pointed out very plainly and strongly that, despite what was said in the western press for many years, the presence of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iraq in no way constituted any form of alliance, however, slight, between himself and the Ba'athist regime in that country. He was, on the contrary, subjected to repeated harassment by the Ba'athists, in conjunction with the general repression enacted by the regime in Iraq, which is continuing.

From Najaf, Ayatollah Khomeini continued periodically to issue his declarations on Iranian affairs. The Shah's hope that by exiling him from the country he would also put an end to his influence and popularity was decisively frustrated. It has been said that Ayatollah Khomeini emerged to prominence in the course of the Revolution as the result of a vacuum, because there was no viable alternative in sight, but this judgment results from ignorance of the gradual development of the role of Ayatollah Khomeini during his more than fourteen years in exile. Throughout his years in Najaf, he by no means remained silent. We find him, on the contrary, issuing a wide variety of proclamations on Iranian affairs, all of which penetrated the country, were circulated and had a great effect on the formation of Iranian public opinion.

For example, in April 1967, Ayatollah Khomeini sent an open letter to the Prime Minister of Iran at that time, Amir Abbas Hoveyda, in which he denounced Hoveyda and the Shah for their continued violation both of Islam and of the constitution. He went through a comprehensive survey of all the government's policies, criticizing them one by one, warning Hoveyda that one day he would be held responsible. One may imagine the contemptuous disbelief with which Hoveyda received this letter from an exile whose followers had been slaughtered in the streets, a letter addressed to the Prime Minister at the head of one of the major repressive apparatuses in the modern world. Yet it is one of the remarkable things about Ayatollah Khomeini which contributed to the effectiveness of his leadership that every word he has said is seriously meant. This warning, given as far back as April 1967, bore its

fruit with the execution of Hoveyda by the Islamic Revolutionary Court in the aftermath of the Revolution.

Another example of the declarations of Ayatollah Khomeini during his years in exile we can draw from a series of events in May 1970, when a consortium of American investors met in Tehran to discuss ways for the more effective penetration and exploitation of the Iranian economy. On this occasion, one of the followers of Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Saidi, gave a khutba in his mosque in Tehran denouncing this conference and calling upon the Iranian people to rise up and protest against it. He was arrested and tortured to death by Savak, the Shah's security police, and Ayatollah Khomeini issued a proclamation calling on the people to renew their struggle against the Pahlavi regime.

Later, we find Ayatollah Khomeini denouncing the idiotic and wasteful expenditure of the regime for the so-called celebration of 2,500 years of monarchy, a celebration conceived and planned by certain Israeli advisers of the regime. He later also condemned the inauguration of a one – party system in Iran, saying that whoever joined this party voluntarily, without pressure, was in effect a traitor to both the nation and Islam. He also issued many proclamations on the general state of Islam and in particular on the role of Israel.

It is interesting to note that on two occasions, once in 1971 and once, during the Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini also issued two appeals to the Muslim world in general, appeals that were translated into various languages and distributed during the Hajj. In the both these declarations he called for solidarity among the Muslim and collaboration he called for solidarity among the Muslims and collaborations for the solution of their common problems. It is interesting to note that the so-called champions of Islam, the Saudi regime, saw fit to imprison and torture for long periods a number of those responsible for the distribution of these declarations. Therefore, it was no surprise to anyone that the Saudi regime, despite its professed loyalty to Islam, ranged itself with Israel, the United States and the Soviet Union in opposing the Islamic Revolution. It has a long history of opposition to the revolutionary Islamic movement led by Ayatollah Khomeini.

Throughout the years of Ayatollah Khomeini's exile in Najaf, during which he was receiving visitors from Iran and making these and other proclamations on Iranian and Islamic affairs in general, a number of important developments were taking place in Iran which also contributed to the Revolution. Foremost among these was the lecturing and writing activity of the subject of my next lecture, Dr Ali Shari'ati. I can say in partial anticipation of what I shall say about him that his influence on a different plane acted complementarily to that of Ayatollah Khomeini. The massive and overwhelming response given by the Iranian people during the Revolution to the declarations and leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini is in part due to the extremely important influence of Dr Shari'ati during the years of Ayatollah Khomeini's exile.

As for the role of Ayatollah Khomeini in the Revolution itself, this is direct and immediate in the sense that the opening events of the Revolution are directly concerned with his person. The government-controlled press on January 29 1978 published an article insulting Ayatollah Khomeini in abusive and obscene terms. That aroused an immediate response of anger in the city of Qum. After the first uprising in Qum, which was suppressed with heavy loss of life, a series of demonstrations and protests unfurled across Iran with ever-increasing tempo, until in December 1978 when probably the greatest demonstrations not merely in Iranian history but of modern history in general, took place, forcing the exiling of the Shah and paving the way for the ultimate triumph of the Revolution.

Ayatollah Khomeini increased the tempo of his declarations as the movement picked up speed within Iran. In October of last year he was expelled from Iran as a result of an agreement between the Shah's regime and the Ba'athist regime. It is interesting to note that

Ayatollah Khomeini considered a number of possible alternatives. He would have preferred to take up residence in a Muslim country but, as he said publicly, and as I myself have heard from him not one Muslim country offered him the possibility of a residence that would be both safe and permit him to continue his activity. This simple fact is an eloquent commentary on the nature of the regimes that rule the different Muslim countries today. The Qur'an orders the Muslims to give refuge even to a mushrik in order that he might hear the Qur'an and be informed of religion. Yet these contemporary Muslim regimes that send money for the construction of mosques. Preferably in prestige places like London, New York's and so on. That holds conferences in Hilton and Sheraton hotels. Refuse even the elementary right of security and refuge to one whom any objective Muslim observer must regard as the greatest mujtahids of the present day.

Like so many of the stratagems of the former Iranian regime, this one also turned against it in its ultimate result, because, faced with the impossibility of finding refuge in any other Muslim country after Iraq. Ayatollah Khomeini proceeded to Paris, where he became infinitely more accessible to Iranians from America, Europe and Iran itself. He also became immediately accessible to the world press – not that the world press, of course, was in any way inclined or even intellectually and mentally equipped to reflect the true message and aspirations of Ayatollah Khomeini. Nonetheless, from Paris his communications with Iran were infinitely easier and his visibility was far greater than had been the case in Najaf.

The study of the proclamations of Ayatollah Khomeini during the year of the revolution would in itself be an interesting topic. One sees throughout the year, as the Revolution reaches new peaks, a certain evolutionary style of his declaration. For example, if one looks at the declaration he issued on the eve of Muharram last year (1399 AH, December 1978), one sees a great eloquence and forcefulness of expression that one would say from a purely literary point of view has few parallels in contemporary Iranian expression. By the time he returned to Iran from exile at the beginning of February this year (1979), Ayatollah Khomeini, with no material resources, without the construction of a political party, without the waging of a guerrilla war, without the support of a single foreign power, had established himself as the undisputed leader of a major revolutionary movement.

How is that possible? I shall try to supply part of the answer in my fourth lecture, in which I shall examine the events and the chronology of the Revolution and certain general conclusions that can be drawn. Now, with respect to the person of Ayatollah Khomeini, I would suggest the following concerning his importance as a revolutionary leader.

First, the 'Revolution' for him – and I use a quotation marks because the word has all kinds of connotations which are not necessarily appropriate to the Iranian context – is one in which as a revolutionary leader he is not merely intellectually and emotionally committed to a certain cause but is totally identified with it. He has been totally unwilling to compromise. Why? It is because he has not been a politician of a familiar kind, concerned with the attainment of personal political advantage. On the contrary, he has sought to heed the commands of Allah and His Messenger in a fashion that is appropriate to Him.

One of my Iranian acquaintances who travelled to Paris to visit Ayatollah Khomeini asked him. 'Do you think our present course is wise? What will happen if the army keeps on straightening people? Will people sooner or later not get tired and discouraged?' he responded quite simply that it is our duty to struggle in this fashion and the result is with Allah. It is precisely this apparent lack of strategy, this refusal to contemplate the precise calculations of normal political strategy that constitute the highest form of revolutionary strategy in an Islamic context.

Secondly, we can say that Ayatollah Khomeini has been enabled to fulfill the great and unparalleled role that he has by his spiritual and moral qualities, qualities that cannot be

called into doubt by even those who have ideologically no commitment to Islam. One of the remarkable things I that in the course of the Revolution, people who had no particular commitment to Islam in an ideological fashion came to rediscover Islam and at the same time made commitment to Islam as a revolutionary force through the self-evident moral and spiritual virtues of Ayatollah Khomeini himself. It was obvious that here was a man in no way concerned with the obtaining of a personal or sectarian benefit, but one who represented the deepest aspirations of the Iranian nation.

## Discussion:

Dr Salman: you mentioned the important role of philosophy and mysticism. Could you elaborate on this slightly, specifically in relation to Sufism? I do not know whether in the Shi'i school of thought, Sufism is organized as it is in the Sunni world. If so, the question of Ayatollah Khomeini's affiliation would be important.

Professor Algar: The word 'Mysticism' is a little problematical. I used it for convenience as an English approximation. Sufism as an organized body has only a peripheral existence in Shi'i school. We do find Sufi orders, but they are generally rejected by the Shi'i ulama. What I mean by mysticism with respect to Ayatollah Khomeini is what is known as erfān, which is a different form of mysticism appropriate to the Shi'i context. This is something that draws upon certain dimensions of the Qur'an, the teaching of Ibn Arabia and also the 12 Imams of Shi'i School. This is what I mean by mysticism in this context – a certain form of mystical devotion which gives a certain contour to the spiritual life. It has clearly given Ayatollah Khomeini – I do not like to use the expression, but for want of a better one – certain other-worldliness. It is a paradox that here one has a man so devoid of worldly ambition who is yet on a worldly plane so eminently successful. Viewing matters at a deeper level. From the viewpoint of Islam, we see that it is not a paradox at all. The rejecting by the self of all forms of attachment to this world makes it possible to be extremely effective and active in this world.

In that sense of the hadith, he who humbles himself before God will be raised by God. This is what I intended by the reference to mysticism in Ayatollah Khomeini.

Question: Will you please explain the concept of the imam and the concept of the caliph, and the relationship between the two, with particular emphasis on two points – the unity of the ulama and, secondly, in relation to the contemporary situation in Iran?

Professor Algar: This is a very wide question, not directly related to today's talk. I am sure that most of the audiences know what is implied in the terms 'Imam' and 'caliph'. The imam in Shi'i school is the divinely appointed leader of the community, the first of whom is Ali and the last of whom is the Twelfth Imam, who is held to be in a state of ghaiba, of occultation, of absence from the physical plane, but nonetheless continues to exercise his authority.

This form of succession is in a sense hereditary. Moreover, the prerogatives of the successors of the prophet go beyond the purely political, administrative, military tasks of the caliph in Sunni thought.

I am not sure beyond that what it is possible to say without embarking on an unnecessarily detailed lecture. What is perhaps of more interest is the second part of your question – the relevance of these differences to the present day state of the Islamic world. I would say that it is minimal, if not nonexistent, since we in the Sunni Muslim countries do not have a caliph, nor do we have machinery or any conceivable process at present for the selection of a caliph. As far as our Shi'i brothers are concerned, the imam is also in a state of ghaiba so it does not pose itself as a problem.

What both Sunni and Shi'i Muslims should direct their attention towards is collaboration on the far more numerous and important matters on which they are agreed. There I so doubt that the Islamic Revolution can be, and already to some extent has been, an important occasion for the gradual elimination of centuries of prejudice and hostility between Sunni and Shi'i.

Imam Khomeini himself, when I had the honor of meeting him in Paris, expressed a great sorrow that when the Shi'i Muslims of Iran were obtaining martyrdom in the streets of Tehran, during the last Muharram, for the sake of the establishment of an Islamic Republic, Shi'i and Sunni Muslims in India in the same month of Muharram were engaged in slaughtering each other, because of the details of taziya.

Fortunately, as a result of the Revolution, one sees a large number of encouraging developments. For example, in Afghanistan, a country where there have been deep and prolonged hostilities between the Sunni and Shi'i – probably about seventy percent of the population are Sunnis and thirty per cent Shi'i - one sees in the wake of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and in the course of resistance to the Soviet established Marxist regime, that historic hatreds have been overcome to a remarkable degree. They are fighting together against Soviet imperialism. (This was before the Soviet invasion of December 1979).

In Turkey, again a country where because of centuries of warfare between the Ottomans and the Safavids there are deep-rooted prejudices towards Shi'i school, a positive interest has been aroused as a result of the Revolution. In many Islamic periodicals in that country now one can see articles about Sunni-Shi'i relations, a desire to obtain objective, correct information about Shi'i school of thought and above all to establish an effective collaboration between the Islamic movement in that country and the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Therefore, rather than hashing over again the question of imam and caliph, or whatever differences may have existed, it is far more fruitful for Muslim to spend their energies in establishing closer links of co-operation. After all, we should not forget that the Islamic revolution has been the only major setback to the cause of Zionism in the Middle East – far more than any military undertaking attempted by any of the Arab States, far more even than the activities of the Palestinians themselves, however heroic these may have been. There can be no doubt that the only major setback suffered by Zionism and American imperialism in the entirety of the Middle East region – or, if you like, the Muslim region – has been the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

It is a Revolution which has potential in the services of all Muslims. It is up to the Muslims of the Sunni countries – Arab countries, Turkey, Afghanistan and so on – to align themselves with this Revolution and give it every possible form of support and co-operation.

Question: You mentioned Israel. What was the role of the Jewish minority in Iran in collaboration with Israel, in the light of the execution of one of their leaders?

Professor Algar: We should not make the automatic assumption that the entire Jewish minority in Iran was Zionist in its aspirations or aligned with the previous regime, the Pahlavi regime. Some certainly were. The millionaires like Elghanian, who was put to death, had very close ties with Israel and also with the regime.

But apart from the existence of the Jewish community in Iran, the State of Israel had very close ties with the Pahlavi regime, not necessarily through the Iranian Jewish community. Those ties were established, I think, in 1947, shortly after the establishment of the Zionist State in Palestine, when de facto recognition was accorded to Israel by the Iranian government of the day. That was revoked by Mussadeq.

Then a more thorough going relationship between Israel and the Iranian government came into being after the coup d'état in 1953. Co-operation took place on many levels, but notably in so-called intelligence and security work. After a certain point it appears that the task of staffing and training the Savak was taken over by Mossad, the Israeli security, from the CIA, although the CIA always retained the right of supervision over the operations of Savak. I know of many people who report having been interrogated and tortured by Israelis while in the custody of Savak. It was a deep involvement.

In return, the Israeli got a large proportion of their oil between seventy and ninety percent-from Iran. There was a certain amount of penetration of the Iranian economy, partly through Iranian Jews, but not in all cases.

There was overwhelming similarity between the two of utter dependence on the United States. Israel is hardly independent of the United States-or rather matters are the reverse. Israel certainly commands more votes in the Senate than does the White House. There was a very close relationship between Israel and the United States and between the shah and the United States.

This collaboration did not always go through the Jewish community. It also went through the Bahai community. If one is speaking of religious minorities, the most important one with respect to staffing the bureaucracy and the security police is the Bahais, many of whom in any case are of Jewish origin. A number of cases could be mentioned, including the former vice-chief of Savak, Sabeti. He was of Jewish origin and received his training in torture techniques in Israel. He and a number of other officers are living in Israel after the Revolution. It is the Bahais rather than the Jews as a community who should be indicted in this respect.

Israel, with its eternal search for immigrants, thought that an ideal situation was developing in Iran with the Revolution. But apart from a certain minority that profited handsomely under the Pahlavi regime, the bulk of Iranian Jewry is not showing an interest in leaving the country to go to Israel. That minority is interesting. There was a piece in the Economist, which one can hardly accuse of being anti-Semitic, describing the arrival in Israel of certain Iranian Jewish immigrants. As they unrolled their carpets at Tel Aviv airport, the gold tumbled out onto the tarmac. This was an interesting demonstration of the way in which this Jewish oligarchy was able to profit under the Pahlavi regime. However, the bulk of Iranian Jews decided to remain behind, much to the displeasure of the Jewish Agency, which, therefore, began to have recourse to the same kind of tactics as it had earlier employed in certain Arab countries, notably Iraq. It went around writing anti-Semitic slogans, throwing bombs into synagogues and so on. These tactics were uncovered and publicized by an organization in Tehran called the Society of Jewish Intellectuals, which warned member of the community against these Zionist tactics.

When I was in Paris in December and early January, visiting Ayatollah Khomeini, a delegation of Iranian Jews came to visit him, and on that occasion he assured them not merely that Iranian Jews should remain in the country but that those who had been deceived by Zionism and had migrated to Palestine-where they were receiving treatment as second-class citizens because of their Asiatic and non-East European origins-should return to Iran, where as citizens of the Islamic Republic they would enjoy rights superior to those they had in the Jewish State of Israel.

Question: what position was held by Ayatollah Khomeini after he graduated from the institute of Qum? Did he introduce changes in the curriculum and methodology? I should also like to know whether his open criticism of the Shah's regime was on behalf of the ulama or of a particular group which he founded.

Professor Alger: as regard the methodology of teaching, I think it is true to say that in effect Ayatollah Khomeini brought about a reform in that he established a close link between the subjects he was teaching and the practical concerns of the day. For this reason, he attracted a far larger audience than many of the other teachers in Qum.

One thing of interest in the aftermath of the Revolution is that after his return to Qum for the first time the systematic teaching of the four madhhabs of Sunni school in Islam has been introduced into the curriculum, both in order to further awareness among Shi'i Muslims of

the potentialities of the Sunni tradition and to draw, if it appears appropriate and necessary, on those potentialities for the solution of particular problems in Iran.

There are a number of individuals who have attained importance in Qum in reforming, in strengthening the teaching institution. Both Khomeini and Ayatollah Shari' madari performed great services in this respect in making the teaching syllabus of greater applicability to present-day problems.

As for your second question, I do not think that Ayatollah Khomeini in 1963 or subsequently was speaking either on behalf of the ulama or on behalf of a more narrow group. On the contrary, he saw it to be his duty, as a scholar of Islam and a citizen of Iran, to speak out on these problems. One of the constant themes of all his proclamations is that the ulama have a great importance and dignity in Islam that they cannot fulfill simply by the reading and teaching of texts, that they have a far more comprehensive duty, indicate in the tradition, and that they are the heirs of the Prophets and cannot effectively transmit the legacy of the Prophets simply by retreating into the corner of a madrasa and reading and commenting on text. They have a far more comprehensive duty of guidance. He was speaking as an alim, conscious of the comprehensive nature of his responsibility, but this is different from speaking on behalf of the entirety of the Iranian nation and beyond that to Muslims at large.

Question: You referred to doubts about the role of Ayatollah Burujerdi, and you mentioned Ayatollah Kashani. It seems to me that you are taking a unidirectional view of the Iranian ulama. You must have pointed this out in your last lecture – that the difficulty stems from the fact that there are various possible interpretations of the role of ulama during the ghaiba of the Twelfth Imam. As is evident from Ayatollah Naini's (1860-1936) work, one is faced with the question of both leaving the political field altogether and waiting for the reappearance of the Imam on the physical plane or with devising a system which is the least imperfect.

If you take the two extremes, you can see that the various ulama have taken their stance somewhere between these, and, therefore, fashioned their own activities on the political plane in accordance with their interpretation of the ghaiba. It seems to me that Ayatollah Burujerdi was very much in favor of a quite attitude towards not taking action, although in present day circumstance apparently that attitude may seem indefensible. But if it is viewed in the context of the responsibility of the ulama during that ghaiba of Imam it may become more explicable. I should like your comments.

Professor Alger: it is not my intention to criticize Ayatollah Burujerdi or Kashani for the roles they played. I merely wished to point out in the historical context the effect of their attitudes, or at least the perception of their attitudes. It is true that there have been difference of opinion among Shi'i ulama as to the political implication of the ghaiba. But the general belief that has acquired increasing force since the days of Ayatollah Burujerdi is what Ayatollah Khomeini describes in his book as the vilayat of the scholar, as devolving upon him the duty of leading and guiding the community.

I feel unhappy that in the course of these lectures I am obliged to generalize and oversimplify. This is in the nature of the subject, but it should be pointed out at least that Ayatollah Khomeini's position has evolved over the years. Although he has certain very distinct characteristic from the very beginning, I would say that his political – I would not like to use the word 'philosophy' – attitude has changed and evolved.

After all in 1963 he was calling not for the institution of an Islamic republic in Iran, but for the implementation of the existing constitution, which provided for a monarchy, however limited in its exercise of power. He was calling upon the Shah in effect to observe the constitution and to be loyal to Islam. I would say that a progressive radicalization took place of Ayatollah Khomeini's position in his year of exile, and more particularly in the course of

the Revolution. There are many things to be said here, and I would like to have had more time. But as you have raised this question of political theory, which is of importance, I think it is permissible to say that in the usage of Ayatollah Khomeini there is a difference, at least implied, between an Islamic Republic and an Islamic State. On the one hand, an Islamic Republic is intended to be a transitional form of government in which the policies of the State will be geared in a general fashion towards the objectives of Islam and the administration of the affairs of the State will be entrusted to commit Muslims. But there will not be a total implementation of Islamic law in every area of life.

At the same time as this provisional form of government, which will bear the name of Republic, is in existence, a process of education and enlightenment will take place, with respect both to those who have been alienated from Islam and those whose Islam is of a narrowly traditional type – that is based on prayer, fasting and so on, without much awareness of political and social issues.

When that process has been completed, the Islamic Republic will be succeeded by the Islamic State. There is no explicit statement to this effect by Ayatollah Khomeini, but it is an impression that can be gained from careful reading of his proclamations during the year of the Revolution and after his return. That impression I strengthened by reading of the draft of the constitution. One of the interesting things about it is that it does not have any explicit statement that the laws of State are to be the laws of Islam. Of course, it is a draft constitution, and it may be revised before it is finally ratified, but as it stands there is no explicit stipulation that the laws of the State should be the laws of Islam. Instead, there is a provision that we find in the constitution of a number of other Muslims countries that no legislation shall be enacted that is contrary to Islam, which is quite different.

It seems to me that in the context of Iran this is intended as a transitional stage, a stage at which that which is repugnant to Islam will be gradually uprooted and an effort will be made to move in the direction of a truly integral Islamic State. Where things to that effect are to be found in other constitutions, notably which of Pakistan, it is a piece of demagoguery. But in the case of Iran – I hope I am right, only events will tell – the inclusion of this clause should be seen as a provisional measure. It would be easy to make an overnight declaration that now everything will be according to the shari'a and go around spectacularly chopping off hands and so on. But I think that this is one measure of the seriousness of the Revolution and the authenticity of the liberal process of gradualness that is being embarked upon. We can sum up this gradualness as being within the concepts of an Islamic Republic which will be the prelude to an Islamic State.

Question: May I ask a supplementary question? In this evolution of Ayatollah Khomeini's thought, from pure implementation of the constitution to an Islamic State, do you think he has moved to a position which was taken up by Ayatollah Nuri way back during the constitutional revolution at the turn of the century, and broken line with the constitutionalist altogether?

Professor Alger: I do not think one can equate the position of Ayatollah Khomeini with that of Sheikh Fazlullah Nuri, who was the chief among the ulama during the constitutional revolution in Iran in the first decade of the present century. Unlike his colleagues, he opposed the constitution, probably on religious grounds though there is a certain possibility that was the being venal. After all, he was allied with the court and beyond the court with the Russians. He put forward certain telling arguments in a number of theoretical writings against the constitution. His slogan was 'we want mashru'a (sharia government), not mashru'ta (constitutional government).' Although for many years it was customary in Iran in Islamic circles to deride Nuri and to regard him as a traitor, a reactionary and so on, it is true that a certain reappraisal of him has taken place, giving him a more creditable position.

However, it is not helpful to suggest a parallel between him and Ayatollah Khomeini, for many reasons. The most obvious and most important is that he was content to see the monarchy continue and even tried to find a place for it, which is obviously not the case with Ayatollah Khomeini.

Jamil Sharif: Nothing has been mentioned about the role of women in the Revolution. What was his view of the role of women in the Islamic struggle?

Professor Alger: there are two reasons why the role of women has not been mentioned. The first is that I have been talking about the ulama and Ayatollah Khomeini. Secondly, 'the role of women' is a phrase that I think Muslims should not use. It is a phrase that has been coined by the enemies of Islam to distract us and waste our mental energies.

Once you speak about the role of women you have the role of men, as if there were a great divide, doing totally different things. All that you can say with respect to the Islamic Revolution is that Iranian women together with Iranian men played a very important role in furthering the aims of the Revolution. They participated massively in all the important demonstrations. They suffered torture, imprisonment and abuse. Since the triumph of the Revolution they have continued to play an important role.

It is interesting that a Revolution which, according to the popular image in the western press, is designed to reduce women to a status of total inferiority should see this unique picture of Muslim women in their Muslim dress on the streets participating and guarding demonstration, holding machine guns.

It is enough to say that on Black Friday, 8 September 1978, when more than 4,000 people were slaughtered in Tehran to the applause of President Carter, among those slaughtered were a minimum of 600 women.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: those who write books on women in Islam should be asked: 'When were women outside Islam.'

Question: In your course outline, you put a heading 'The Ayatollah as Ruler.' Would you like to expand on that?

Professor Alger: On reflection, I am not sure that word 'ruler' is appropriate in the context. What he has done in the aftermath of the Revolution is to continue in the same role as he predicted before the triumph of the Revolution – that of the guide who speaks out whenever he feels it necessary on matters of policy. Since his guidance is of the nature that it will be immediately followed, he comes in effect to be the final arbiter in almost all matters that he chooses to speak on.

The nature of the guidance given by Ayatollah Khomeini since the triumph of the Revolution in February (1979) has been of a nature to ensure that its fundamental aims are kept intact and no major deviation takes place. Of course, the frequent complaint of the Iranian leftists and their allies, the rightist press of Britain and the United States, is that the old dictatorship has been replaced by a new one. There are a large number of fallacies in this comparison. We should point out that the authority of Ayatollah Khomeini derives entirely from the popular will and the popular choice. If he 'interferes' with the government's workings or issues directives, this should not be construed as illegitimate interference. On the contrary, the government of Mehdi Bazargan derives its authority because it was nominated by Ayatollah Khomeini. Therefore, his authority is precisely the authority brought into being by the will of the people. This is an exceptional and transitional situation. It is not something that one can say will institutionalize in the future.

Therefore, I do not think that the word 'ruler' in the synopsis that I prepared in haste is appropriate. He continues to be the leader. I know that is a word that has unfortunate connotations from different contexts, but one has little choice. He continues to be the leader of the Revolution in all senses.

Question: it is in that context that you use the word 'Imam' when you talk about him?

Professor Alger: Yes. In designating him as 'Imam' we should not imagine that the word is applied to him in the same sense as the Twelve Imams of Shi'i tradition. I am not aware of the precise time when the term came to be applied to him by the Iranian people. May be some of our Iranian brothers here could enlighten us on that. I think that the title was given to him in the course of the revolution. It has come to be applied to him increasingly after the Revolution and to supplant the title which has by now become familiar to the western press – namely, 'Ayatollah'.

This usage of the word 'imam' is, after all, justified on the condition that we do not confuse it with the Shi'i concept of imam, and because his authority, his leadership, has gone far beyond that which has been traditionally exercised by an ayatollah. One of the things that I did not give myself a chance to mention is that, of course, Ayatollah Khomeini is from one point of view a mujtahids. People have been following him because he is a mujtahids. But his authority has gone far beyond the traditional bounds of marja-i taqlid or mujtahids. He has been followed not merely in the traditional sense of taqlid, but in, but in a far more comprehensive sense. This comprehensiveness of his leadership, which is indeed based on the whole concept of taqlid but has gone beyond it, is reflected in the use of the word 'imam.'

I should be interested to know precisely what our Iranian brothers understand any the word when they apply it to him.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: Will Brother Dabbagh\* enlighten us?

Hussein Dabbagh: it was newly introduced into our language. We never used such a word for a mujtahids. This is a reflection of the Islamic teaching. This means a leader, political as well as spiritual. But this is very recent. It is because usually you find that the mujtahids is not sufficient.

Professor Alger: In some publications from Iran, I have seen him described as Naib al-imam, the vice-regent of the hidden imam. Is this very widespread?

Hussein Dabbagh: Yes. It is being used by some people to indicate to others not to confuse the real meaning of 'imam'.

Dr Ezzati: Ayatollah Khomeini is mujtahids and not an imam. The use of this term in Persian really began when he was in Paris. Since then people have started calling him imam. But this is not new. It happened before, while he was in Iraq, because he was in an Arab environment, and 'imam' in Arabic literature means simply 'the leader', not a traditional Shi'i leader. They use term for Musa Sadr, calling him Imam Musa Sadr, because he lives in Labanon, in an Arab environment. The Shi'i term would be mujtahids.

Professor Alger: I think this is true. In some of the literature in Arabic one finds the use of the word in early days with respect to Ayatollah Khomeini. But its introduction to Persian usage in Iran seems mere recent.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: About eighteen months ago we had a course on the political thought of Islam, and, as in all our courses, we had both Sunni and Shi'i participants. As individuals, we are Sunni and Shi'i, but as an institution we are just Muslim. During the discussion on the political thought of Islam, it emerged that if and when Muslims came to the point of establishing a modern Islamic State, the Shi'i and Sunni position would be identical, that in its operational, practical form there would be no difference. Would you agree with this assessment?

Professor Alger: I think that in general terms this is without doubt true. If one were to list the major differences of belief or outlook between Sunni and Shiites', one would see that the most important relate to matters that have no immediate practical application. The whole

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\* Better known now as Abdul Karim Soroush.

question of the imamate, even though it is of great importance for our Shi'i brothers, as long as the ghaiba continues would not arouse any problems of political collaboration with Sunnis.

If one looks at the other differences of a minor variety relating to the details of fiqh, one will see that some of the differences between our (Sunni) madhhabs are greater than the difference that separate them from Ja'fari fiqh.

Therefore, as you phrase it, in the operational details of a functioning Islamic State there need be no fundamental difference between Sunni and Shi'i. If there be any, they will arise from the differing provisions not merely between Sunni and Shi'i but the four schools of the Sunni Muslims, insofar as we choose to bind ourselves by the four schools.

Dr Ezzati: Though there is certainly a historical and ideological difference between the imamate and caliphate, between Shi'i and Sunni schools, as far as the modern situation is concerned I do not think there are any ideological difference between the two. The question of leadership is the Muslim important issue regarding the political affairs of a Muslim State. The basis of leadership in Shi'i jurisprudence is the religious social responsibility (wajib al-kifai), which is shared currently by the Sunnis. They both base their authority on the doctrine of the 'Amr il-Ma'uroof Va al-Munkar.'

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: this point I not generally understood, and it needs to be brought home clearly.

Dr Ezzati: I agree, it should be explained. But the difficulty is this: how can we introduce a Khomeini-type leadership into Sunni communities?

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: Since the Revolution in Iran I have been moving around of the Sunni countries – some of the most reactionary Sunni countries, if I may put it that way. I can assure you that the people in those countries have been absolutely galvanized and their imaginations have been captured by the Revolution in Iran. Some of them take the precaution of locking their doors before they talk about it. If national boundaries were taken away, probably Ayatollah Khomeini would be elected by acclamation by the Ummah as a whole as the leader of the Muslim world today. I think that the difference between Sunni and Shi'i would disappear in one instant. They are artificially maintained by the world in which we live. Do you agree?

Professor Alger: Very definitely.

Jalim Sharif: Would you say that Ayatollah Khomeini's stay in Paris will have a discernible impact on Muslims in Francophone Africa?

Professor Alger: I am not really in a position to say anything on that subject. All I know is that for the period of about ten days that I was in Paris I saw a large number of Muslims from different countries coming to visit Imam Khomeini. I do not recall seeing among them any Muslims from Francophone Africa. There were a large number from North Africa, Egypt, coming not necessarily to talk but to pray behind him. I hear that there has been some influence of the Revolution in Nigeria, that there has been an important echo of the Revolution among the Muslims Nigeria. Presumably the same will be the case in the Francophone countries, but whether as a result of his being in Paris. I do not know.

Jalim Sharif: Have other Muslim scholars, particularly Maulana Maudoodi, had any impact on the Ayatollah Khomeini went, in a very belated fashion, in early January of this year, and Ayatollah Khomeini expressed regret to me not merely that all the Muslim countries had refused him admission in a suitable fashion in October 1978, but that he had had not a single expression of effective support from the Islamic movement.

It is not likely, in the nature of things, that he should have concerned himself greatly with the works of Maudoodi. In a more general fashion, one could say that the Persian translation of some of the works of Maudoodi could have had an effect on people in Iran when

circulated. Some may have had some effect, but who is to say how great is the effect? Whether Ayatollah Khomeini has had an influence in the other direction upon Maudoodi or other Muslim leaders, I do not know. Unfortunately, there is no sign of it. Otherwise, Maudoodi would hardly accept the so-called King Faisal awards of Islamic Studies.

Question: I know that you have done work on freemasonry in Iran and Turkey. Is there any evidence to suggest a link between the Shah and Zionism was forged the medium of freemasonry?

Professor Alger: I think there were many channels of communication, linkages, and overlapping interest and so on. Probably freemasonry was one among them. In the aftermath of the Revolution all the Masonic lodges have been closed in Iran and their entire archives have been captured intact. A preliminary selection of documents has already been published. They confirm what was suspected some time earlier. Many of the lodges in Tehran and elsewhere in Iran were controlled by Jews or by Bahia's of Jewish origin, which furnishes another avenue of communication with Israel and Zionism generally. But one should not overestimate the importance of this one medium of communication, when there were so many others available. Freemasonry played an important role on the domestic plane, but it is not necessarily connected with the question of Zionism.

Abdullah Ahmed: I want to return to the question of women. Being a Muslim, one believes in community and that one is responsible for the community first. Have you ever come and who says she went there on a women's mission? What was her mission?

Professor Alger: I have had no communication with Kate Millett. I do not know what she thought her mission in Iran was. But, irrespective of her, let me say a few words about the so-called women's demonstrations in Iran which took place for four or five days in succession. The alleged cause of the demonstrations was the curtailment of women's rights by the Revolutionary regime. They coined a nice slogan for the occasion: 'In the spring of freedom there is no freedom.' Ayatollah Khomeini, I think in the last public address that he gave before leaving Tehran to return to Qum, in a speech that touched on many subjects, said 'Now that we have in Iran an Islamic government, women should observe Islamic criteria of dress, particularly those that work in the ministries'.

There are two things to be noticed. First, this was a recommendation. Secondly, it was directed particularly at women in government service. It was interpreted willfully as a command to be enforced by coercive means if necessary and as meaning that all Iranian women must immediately cover themselves with the chador. The Islamic criteria of dress do not necessarily imply the chador, which is merely the traditional way of fulfilling those criteria in Iran. Seizing upon this distorted series of sentence in the speech of Ayatollah Khomeini, a weird alliance of people organized a series of demonstrations in Tehran. On the one hand there were the leftists, who, like most people who talk about equality, have a very elitists mentality. They seeing their lack of support among the working class in Iran have tried to seize upon a number of marginal issues and build them up as vehicles of their own attempts to again power. One such vehicle was the women's demonstrations.

Those taking part in the demonstration were the upper echelons of Tehran society. It was interesting to see television footage of those demonstrations. These were women dressed in the latest fashions from Paris. Many had dyed their hair, which in the context is of significance. It shows a certain kind of self-hatred. It is the same kind of thing as one has seen in the United States, where Afro-Americans have tried to straighten out their hair. These were the people who were parading through the streets, led by Kate Millett and calling for women's emancipation. Far large demonstration in support of Ayatollah Khomeini and denunciation of these intrigues of the leftists on the one hand and the upper classes on the other went largely unreported in the western press. This was a bubble that burst very quickly.

## Third Lecture

### **Islam as ideology: the thought of Ali Shari'ati**

I shall speak today of the life, thoughts and influence of the late Dr Ali Shari'ati, whom one may briefly characterize as the major ideologue of the Islamic Revolution.

If the Revolution in general has been led by the Shi'i ulama, primarily by Ayatollah Khomeini, drawing on a long tradition, nonetheless it remains true that it is largely the work of Dr Shari'ati that has prepared a large number of the younger educated class in Iran to accept and follow with devotion and courage the leadership given by Ayatollah Khomeini. Although Dr Shari'ati in all his numerous writings hardly ever referred directly to the political, social and economic problems of contemporary Iran, and although his martyrdom in exile in England in July 1977 came before the Revolution, he must be regarded as one of the major figures in the Revolution, second only to Ayatollah Khomeini himself.

Before examining the figure of Shari'ati, the content of his thought and the nature of his influence, it may be useful to give some background history of modern Islamic thought in Iran, in the same way as we gave a similar background for Ayatollah Khomeini.

The background history of modern Islamic thought in Iran is relatively recent, and can in no way compete with the centuries- old tradition of the Shi'i ulama as an institution and as a tradition in political leadership in Iran. In fact, we may say that one of the major reasons for the relative paucity of modern Islamic thinkers in Iran is precisely the leadership exercised by the Shi'i ulama. Whereas in other Islamic countries the ulama progressively lost their social and intellectual standing, so that other individuals from outside the traditional institutions came forward to assume the task of reformulating Islamic for the contemporary world, in Iran this was not the case.

As I have sought to demonstrate, the Shi'i ulama maintain their role in a fashion unparalleled anywhere else in the Muslim world. This almost monopoly on the direction and expression of religious sentiment by the ulama tended naturally to militate against the emergence in Iran of figures who were folly devoted to Islamic but came from a different intellectual and social background than the ulama. It is for this reason that, for example, we do not see in Iran any figure such as Iqbal in the Indo- Pakistan subcontinent, or any of the well-known modernist thinkers of the Arab world and Indonesia.

It is not until the post-war period that we see the beginning of an Islamic development in thought and expression that is separate from the traditional concerns and institution of the Shi'i ulama. This development comes in the aftermath of the expulsion of Reza Khan and the partial lifting of controls and repression by the now deposed Shah in the early years of his reign.

There arose at Tehran University an Islamic students' society which was by no means a simple students' association but concerned itself with the propagation of Islamic in the contemporary idiom. It was designed to attract the younger class, particularly those who had been subjected under Reza Khan to a secular education. Many of the figures, now well known worldwide because of their involvement in the Revolution and the provisional government, had their first involvement in Islamic affairs precisely with this Islamic students' association at Tehran University, founded during the Second World War and its immediate aftermath. For example, none other than Muhandis Mehdi Bazargan, the Prime Minister of the provisional revolutionary government, was one of its leaders. Even outside that organization, Bazaran must be regarded as the first and most important exponent of Islamic

ideas in a modern fashion, before Dr Shari'ati himself. As his title, Muhandis, indicates, Bazargan is an engineer by background and was well grounded in Islamic subjects. Bringing together these two areas of concern and competence, he wrote a large number of books stressing a number of things.

The first was the complete congruence between Islamic and the established findings of modern natural science, the applicability of Islam to contemporary social and political problems, and the fact that Islam is a total way of life that addresses itself to all strata of the society. These ideas are put forward by him in a large number of books. To give one example of his method of thought, we may mention one of his books, entitled *Mutahhirat dar Islam*, on the prescriptions for ablution and personal cleanliness in Islam, in which he demonstrates in great detail not merely the spiritual benefit but the hygienic and biological usefulness of all the provisions of Islam in this respect.

Bazargan was followed by a large number of other writers, who also, each in his own way following approximately the same line of thought, came forward to write on Islamic subjects in a contemporary idiom, designed to attract the allegiance of the secularly educated. Neither Bazargan nor any of the other figures that followed in his wake was able to exercise an influence comparable to that of the late Dr Shari'ati, whom future historians of Iran will no doubt regard as being, along with Ayatollah Khomeini, one of the seminal figures in the history of the Islamic Revolution. I think it is fair to say that once the full dimensions of his work become known he will be seen as one of the major Muslim thinkers of the present century, in the range, depth and profundity of his thought at least equal to, if not superior to, any of the other names that are already familiar to Muslims.

Dr Ali Shari'ati was born in 1933 in a village called Mazinan in the eastern part of Iran, in the desert region known as the Kavir. He was born into a family that for many generations had cultivated the religious science. In what is, in literary terms, one of his most accomplished books, he wrote a detailed memoir of his early background in the village and in particular of the great and formative influence exerted upon him by his father, who is still living, Muhammad Taqi Shari'ati.

At a fairly early age Dr Shari'ati left, with his father, for Mashhad, where his father assumed responsibility for teaching religious subjects. Ali also father continued his education there, first under the guidance of his father and then also under other of the religious leaders in Mashhad, which, after Qum, is the second major centre of religious learning in Iran.

At a very early age he showed an interest in going beyond the traditional. Building up on the firm basis of learning and piety given to him by father and other teachers, he continued to branch out in new directions and to gain new interests for himself. The first fruit of his interests was the translation from Arabic into Persian while he was still in his teens of a book on Abu Dharral-Ghaffari as a struggler against the perversions of the Islamic ideal in the Umayyad period and a forerunner of what is in Shi'i terms viewed as the perpetual struggle of justice against injustice.

The interest in Abu Dharral-Ghaffari on the part of Dr Shari'ati was permanent throughout his life, and Abu Dharral-Ghaffari became one of the archetypes of the Islamic perfect man, so to speak, and was frequently mentioned in Dr Shari'ati's works.

Dr Shari'ati then entered the newly-founded teachers' training college in Mashhad to pursue his studies. Here also he did not restrict himself to the traditional. On the contrary, he read extremely widely and began to acquire knowledge of French and other western languages, finishing at the top of his class. He was sent by the government for a period of study in France, which must be regarded as the second formative period in his life. He spent a total of five years in Paris, during which time he not only continued his formal studies in sociology but also established contact with a wide variety of intellectual and political circles.

For example, he had very close ties with certain of the leaders of the Algerian FLN, the National Liberation Front of Algeria in exile, and contributed articles to their French language organ. Also in the context of his involvement with the leaders of the Algerian revolution, he made the acquaintance of the works of Franz Fanon, the Martinique-born supporter of and participant in, the Algerian revolution. He learnt from him the ideas of cultural alienation; psychological damage wrought by the excesses of imperialism, and translated into Persian for the first time a number of extract from his work and kindled an interest in his work, which is still alive in Iran. Most of the major works of Fanon have now been translated into Persian.

Beyond these contacts with the Algerian revolution, Dr Shari'ati also had a wide range of contacts with other Arab and African anti-colonialist strugglers and theoreticians in France. He formulated not merely a theoretical but also a practical interest in the problem of unity, unity of action as well as sentiment, between Iran and rest of the Islamic world and beyond it with Africa and the Third World in general.

As for his purely intellectual and academic contacts, we may mention that while he was in France he also studies under, and made the personal acquaintance of, the French orientalist, Louis Massignon, and all the major theoreticians of contemporary European sociology. He also engaged in a profound and systematic study of Marxism, a study which is of great importance for two reasons. First, it was to enable him on a basis of knowledge and not mere hostility and fear to produce one of the most systematic and compelling critiques of Marxism to be written by a Muslim. Secondly, as with any debate or dialogue with an opponent, this debate and dialogue with Marxism left a certain imprint upon the work and thought of Dr Shari'ati himself, not in the sense of absorbing any ideas of Marxism, which he thoroughly refuted, merely in the sense of confronting certain problems at the forefront of Marxist dialectic in order to be able thoroughly to refute them.

Apart from these multifarious contacts with Arab and African leaders in France and the world of French intellectual life, he was also heavily involved in Iranian exile politics. Before leaving Iran he had been briefly involved in a movement known as the Movement of God-Fearing Socialists, one of the major organizations of opposition of the Shah's regime after the American coup d'état in August 1953. The inclusion of the word 'socialist' in the designation of the organization should be seen as evidence for the attraction exerted in at the time by certain ideas of 'Islamic socialism' current in the Arab world.

At the conclusion of his studied in France, he returned to Iran and immediately was arrested at the crossing point from Turkey. He was separated from his family without even being given the opportunity to see his father. This was in 1964. This first arrest of Dr Shari'ati showed clearly that the regime had recognized in him already a major opponent, not merely because of his political activity abroad, which was, after all, nothing uncommon among Iranian students, whether in Europe or America, but because of the role of leadership that he had exerted and because of the intellectual dimension to his thought and activity, which by far transcended the normal agitation and concentration on demonstrations and shouting of slogans which was current among the Iranian opposition abroad.

After his release from prison he was prevented from assuming any teaching position consonant with his abilities and qualifications. He was allowed only to act as a teacher in various high schools and later to teach courses in humanities at the college of agriculture. After a time spent in this activity, whether by administrative mistake or for some other reason, he was enabled to gain a teaching post in the department of sociology at the University of Mashhad, where he swiftly acquired a huge following, so much so that his classes were attended not merely by the students of that department but by others from other parts of the university. This was because of the method that he followed in his teaching,

which refused to restrict itself to the normal preoccupations of the academic life, which sought totally to discard once and for all the discredited notion of a value-free and uncommitted sociology. He made it plain from the very beginning that sociology, whether it acknowledges it or not, is the outcome of a certain world view and certain loyalties and commitments, whether these are stated or not. He made it plain that his sociology was committed, that it drew its values from Islam and had as its purpose the correct understanding of the contemporary reality of Iranian Islamic society, and that it has as its purpose the change and reform of that society.

It is not surprising; therefore, that pressure was soon exerted upon him compelling him to leave the university. But, far from putting an end to his influence, this proved to be the prelude to the most influential and fruitful period of his life. Deprived of any formal academic appointment, he began giving a vast number of lectures in various institutions across the country. He was invited constantly by students at various college and universities throughout Iran. Most important of all, he concentrated his activity at a Husayniya-yi Irshad. The first part of this designation refers traditionally to an institution or place in which the suffering and martyrdom Imam Husain are related and is traditionally the commemoration of these suffering and martyrdom. This might have had a purely emotional purpose, but the addition of the word 'Irshad' made plain that the purpose was not merely emotional gratification and the shedding of tears once a year during Muharram. On the contrary, it was a more active and purposeful form of guidance towards change in the affairs of society.

Dr Shari'ati's major lectures were given at this institution. Here again he attracted huge audience when he put forward all the distinctive themes of his philosophy and outlook, which I shall attempt to recapitulate. Throughout the country also he toured constantly giving lectures. The texts of numerous of these lectures, though not all, were recorded and transcribed and circulated in book form.

Such was the reception given to the teaching and lectures of Dr Shari'ati that the Husayniya-yi Irshad was in time closed down and he was imprisoned again and subjected to the abuse and torture that were common under the Pahlavi regime for all political prisoners. When he was released, it was with the understanding that he would go into exile. Before he went abroad, the Iranian regime tried to discredit him by one of the subtle tricks that it frequently employed. Shortly after his release, without his knowledge or permission, they published in one of the major Tehran daily newspaper in the form of a series of articles his critique of Marxism which has been translated into English under the title, 'Marxism and other Western Fallacies-An Islamic Critique'. Although the text of these lectures was more or less accurate, the circumstances of their publication were obviously intended by the government to imply that he had agreed to collaborate with the regime as a condition of his release. Indeed, such undertaking was given by a number of other opposition figures under varying degrees of duress, so that after their release they were either silent or collaborated with the regime. By publishing these articles, the regime hoped to give the impression that Dr Shari'ati had done the same.

Dr Shari'ati protested and sought legal assistance, but to no avail. He was then obliged to go into exile, leaving behind his immediate family, in the hope that they would join him soon after. He came to England and died in England in July 1977 under circumstances that have not been fully clarified but that lead strongly to the suspicion of assassination by the Iranian security police. I believe that the coroner's report issued at the time made no mention of unnatural causes, but the suddenness of his death arouses inevitable doubts and suspicions. Moreover, we know that one of the sons of Ayatollah Khomeini, Mustafa, also died in a sudden and mysterious fashion in a way which cannot leave any reasonable conclusion other than that it was the work of the Iranian security police. Even if it be a question not of poisoning or some other fashion of assassination, in the sense that Ali Shari'ati had suffered

continually at the hands of the Iranian security police and had been sent by them into exile, dying there, he fully deserves the title of martyr that the Iranian people have bestowed upon him.

I now turn to some of the major themes of his work. If we were to try to summarize the achievement of Dr Shari'ati in one sentence it would be to say that he presented Islam not as a religion in the sense commonly understood by western usage—that is, a spiritual and moral matter concerning only or primarily the relations of the individual with his Creator—but rather as an ideology—that is, a comprehensive view of the world and reality, and a plan for the full realization of human potential, individually and collectively, in such a way as to fulfill the whole purpose of man's being. When we try to describe Islam as anything else, in terms of any of the categories of western thought and language, the result will inevitably be imperfect. In the same way as 'religion' is inadequate to describe the reality of Islam, so is 'ideology', since it implies a system of ideas, and ideas, by definition, may be correct or may not be correct. Islam, at least for us Muslims, is something concerning the correctness and veracity of which there can be no doubt. So when we apply the word 'ideology' to Dr Shari'ati's presentation of Islam it is not to imply that Islam is an ideology in the commonly understood sense. What is intended is a comprehensiveness, a totality, that does not restrict itself merely to a moral purification of the individual and God. I think this is what is meant by the word 'ideology' in the usage of Dr Shari'ati.

The foundation of Dr Shari'ati's scheme of ideas is what he calls the world view, *taw hid*, and oneness. He has his own interpretation and presentation of the doctrine of *taw hid*. He stresses that, as he puts it, reality is one, not in the sense of the *wahdat al-wujud* of the Sufis, but rather in the sense that the spiritual and the material, this world and the hereafter, constitute a single continuum for the Muslim, and when he is confronted with them he makes no distinction between them. He sees himself not as a stranger in nature, something apart from it, but rather as being, together with nature, a single origin and single purpose. This living unity of the entirety of reality, of man and the universe, is a reality that has a certain purpose as well as unity, and a certain direction, a direction of the attainment of ever-growing perfection.

This is the fundamental, *taw hid*. Built on it, or deriving from it, are three major branches of his ideas of Dr Shari'ati. The first is sociology. Here we mean his own concept, not any of the imported schools of sociology, whether capitalist, western European or Marxist. He means by sociology a certain view of the nature of society, and even the terminology for the other sources of Islam. He establishes that there are two fundamental forms of society in existence, both in the contemporary world and in the past. There is the society based upon *shirk*, upon the assignment of partners to God, and there is the society based upon *taw hid*, which has its separate characteristic. For him, this is the fundamental cleavage, not capitalist and communist, or democratic and dictatorial.

Then there is anthropology, by which we do not mean in this context the study of societies, of distinct, particularly primitive societies—the recording and analysis of their various habits, mores and customs. We mean a distinct view and teaching concerning the nature of man and his reality. Dr Shari'ati, in numerous works, returns to this theme: what is man and what is the essential nature of man? He says that man is essentially a being that has been infused in him as the life-giving principle. Man is inevitable process of becoming away from the lowly principle or pole of clay towards the sublime principle of the spirit of God contained within him.

Then there is the philosophy of history, which is also based upon the Qur'an and which sees the entirety of history as a conflict of forces; in the same way that man himself is the battleground for the competing forces of his lowly origin, his lowly bodily nature, and

element of divine spirit contained within him, history is also a battleground where *taw hid* and *shirk*, justice and injustice, have continually opposed each other. Here he makes a particular reference to an episode that is touched upon only lightly in the Qur'an—that of the fratricide of Cain and Abel. In this he sees the archetype for the continuous struggle throughout history between two different types of man, two different types of society, and two different types of world view.

It can say that this subjects-sociology, anthropology, philosophy and history – are particular derivation or applications of the general world view of *taw hid*. They in turn form an ideology, which is a comprehensive programme for action, which in turn has as its purpose the construction of an ideal society – and that in turn an ideal man. The term given by Dr Shari'ati to the ideal society is none other than the familiar Islamic term of *Ummah*, the etymology of which he analyses, coming to the conclusion that an *Ummah* is a society based upon no particular organizing principle of race or class, but united only by the pursuit of a certain goal and moving towards it under the correct form of leadership. Here also ties in his understanding of the word 'imam', which has a certain distinct meaning in the Shi'i context but is given an additional meaning by Dr Shari'ati to mean the leader of a self-conscious, aware society, which has chosen a certain direction for itself and is moving towards it. From this ideal society of the *Ummah* will emerge also the ideal man?

Of course, there is much more to be said about each of these components of the thought system of Dr Shari'ati, but I think this will give you an idea of the major themes of his thought. In addition to this kind of systematic presentation of Islam in a manner and idiom which were able to secure the loyalty to Islam of large numbers of young educate people in Iran who had been alienated by secularism and materialism, there are one or two other dimensions of his thought that I would like to bring out.

I turn first to his view of Shi'i school of thought in Islam. Dr Shari'ati subjected to a critical revision many of the major concepts of Shi'i school. I have already alluded to the particular meaning he gave to the word 'imam'. He says at one point in his works that for Shi'i Muslims, the imam has become a sanctified, semi-divine being, in memory of whom they shed tears and at the very mention of whom they begin to tremble, but he has no influence on the actual conduct and direction of their lives.

He reinterpreted the whole notion of waiting for the emergence of the imam, which might be taken as the pretext for a mere passive stance of idleness' and inactivity. He taught that waiting for the imam essentially meant anticipating the circumstances of his return, trying to pave the way for it by bringing about a just and *muttaqi* society.

Also important in Dr Shari'ati's view of Shi'i school was his was his attempt to interpret it in such a way as not to exaggerate and enlarge the inevitable difference between Shi'i and Sunni Muslims. In a very interesting and important book, entitled *Safavids Shi'ism and Alavi Shi'ism*, he criticized the coercive methods used by the Safavids for the imposition of a particular form of Shi'i thought on Iran and virtually discarded the entirety of this dimension of the Shi'i heritage in Iran. It may be as well to explain briefly the sense of this title, by which he meant that there was a certain form 'Establishment' Shi'ism promoted by monarchy, the Safavids monarchy that was a distortion of it. It expressed itself in violence against Sunnis and violated the very spirit of Shi'i thought. On the other hand, opposed to Safavi Shi'ism is Alavi Shi'ism, the Shi'ism, which exists eternally, in contrast and in opposition to the Safavi Shi'ism.

Because of these distinctive views of Shi'i thought and its history, Dr Shari'ati was accused by certain people of being a crypto-Sunni or even a Wahabi. It should be pointed out that although he received over-whelming acclaim from the young generation in Iran, other segments of religious opinion held a more negative view of him.

In connection with this, we should also mention one other constant theme of Dr Shari'ati work, which is best, summed up in the title of one of his books, *Mazhab 'Alayhi Mazhab, 'Religious against Religion'*. In the book and elsewhere he said that religion as a historical phenomenon has two distinct ways of appearing. It may become either an instrument in the hands of the ruling class, the established interest of corruption and distortion, as one of the means at their disposal for the control and exploitation of that society, or a means of struggle for the realization of truth and the establishment of a just society.

In a very interesting insight, he points out that all the prophets of the Abrahimic tradition, mentioned in the Qur'an, find the beginning of their historical career in opposition to the existing secular order. This was so with Abraham, Moses, Jesus, who was also a prophet, and Muhammad himself. This is for Shari'ati an indication of the essential nature and ambition of religion – not merely to propounded a message of salvation in the hereafter but also to throw down a challenge to existing secular authority and take hold of the existing social, economic and political reality of man and transform it into a shape acceptable to God, conforming with man's purpose.

I have already gone over my time, but there is one matter I would like to touch on before concluding. There has recently reappeared in Iran a terrorist organization by the name of Furqan, which has carried out two assassinations, that of the first Chief of the General Staff of the Islamic Republic, Major General Qarani, and that of Ayatollah Mutahhari, one of the members of the Council of the Revolution. In the communiqués published by Furqan they claim to be following the thought of the late Dr Shari'ati. They claim to be preaching a revolutionary mode of Islam opposed to the akhunds

It should be pointed out very clearly that this Furqan group is transparently a creation of the CIA and of the United States, which has realized the importance of Dr Shari'ati and the legacy of his thought in Iran and is seeking to create division, in the Islamic camp, by dividing the people into the followers of Shari'ati and the followers Ayatollah Khomeini and the rest of the ulama

There are a number of pieces of evidence in this respect to which I have personally had access. For example, when the new American ambassador was nominated, a number of academics were invited to brief him on topics of interest. I was invited to brief him precisely on the subject of Dr Shari'ati, his thought and influence. It is very interesting that on the same day another academic was invited to give a lecture on the problem of ethnic minorities in Iran, which is also a topic of considerable significance, given the current attempts at destabilization in Iran.

It is also reliably reported that the CIA has engaged a certain lady to prepare a complete English translation of Dr Shari'ati's works for the internal consumption of the American State Department and intelligence agencies.

In any event, this attempt is no doubts doomed to failure, since the vast majority of young Iranians in particular who support the Islamic Revolution in that country are simultaneously the followers of Imam Khomeini and Dr Shari'ati. There is no question of a choice or contradiction facing them. It can be said that Imam Khomeini has supplied in a masterful fashion the strategic and political leadership, as well as much of the spiritual inspiration. Dr Shari'ati, by contrast, has supplied, and will continue for their commitment to the Revolution.

## Discussion

Shama Siddiqui: the speaker is no doubt aware of the promise concerning the coming of Imam Mehdi. How does this fit in with Shi'i belief, and might Ayatollah Khomeini be Imam Mehdi?

Professor Algar: There are a number of qualifications set out in the appropriate sources and in Tradition for the qualifications of the Mehdi. To my knowledge, Ayatollah Khomeini does not fulfill them. I do not think that anyone except Savak agents during the course of the Revolution sought to create any confusion on this point. Nobody else suggested that Imam Khomeini might be the Mehdi. At one point certain Savak agents put a rumor around to create confusion and disturbance, but nothing came of it.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: Shama is unlikely to be aware of the Savak attempt. She is genuinely concerned to know what the concept of Mehdi is and how it fits in with the Shi'i understanding.

Professor Algar: I think that I outlined the concept briefly in my first lecture, that the Shi'i Muslims believe in a succession of twelve imams, the twelfth of whom – Imam Muhammad al-Mehdi – disappeared in 874 AD from the physical plane in the city of Samarra in northern Iraq, and that there, at a point in time unknown, he is due to emerge. As for the various signs that will indicate his coming, these are to a large extent identical with the signs that we find in Sunni source for the coming of the Mehdi. There is the Sunni belief in the coming of the Mehdi. However, it is commonly believed that the Mehdi will appear in Damascus rather than in Samarra. But other general descriptions, eschatological descriptions, of the last days that will precede his coming, are common to both Shi'i and Sunni sources. I do not think that one can say anything useful about how the present situation in Iran relates, whether you take it as a sign that the return of the Mehdi is near, I do not know. I know of no useful way of the approaching that question.

Farid Shayyal: My question concerns what we call in Arabic, *tarbia*, which many workers in the Islamic movement consider one basic concept to prepare for change, to bring back Islam and build, or rebuild, a State of Islam. We gather that the Pahlavi's worked hard to uproot all the Islamic principles in Iran. Therefore, until recently there was no chance for the Islamic activities to flourish and lead to such *tarbia*. When the Revolution took place, was there a chance to work out this *tarbia*? To someone like me, who is not aware of exactly what is going on; it seems that there is a sort of layer on the surface formed by the development of events, but that the message did not go deeply into the heart of the Muslim individual in Iran.

That is reflected when we gather that there is a Front forming the political entity which governs Iran. This Front is composed of people who belong to Imam Khomeini, the Islamic Liberation Movement of Mr. Bazargan, and other factions. Do you see this scenario as a point of weakness? What is the role of *tarbia*, and what was done towards it in order to strengthen the solidarity of Muslim in Iran, protect the Revolution and keep it up until it achieves its ultimate goals?

Professor Algar: You raised two points – the depth, or lack of it, of the Islamic commitment of the majority of people and the problem of disunity or division within the Islamic camp. One should not doubt a great depth of commitment by the overwhelming masses of the Iranian people. Indeed, without this commitment it would hardly have been possible for the Revolution to take place. Since the Revolution triumphed in the face of overwhelming odds, a commitment that was less than profound or less than complete could

not possibly have succeeded in the face of the great alliance of power and coercion that was ranged against it.

We should not confuse depth of commitment with depth of knowledge. These are different things, although hopefully the depth of commitment will lead to the depth of knowledge.

One point that I might have made about the influence of Dr Shari'ati is that there is a certain danger among some young Iranians that they have made their acquaintance with Islam exclusively through his works and tend to understand Islam only by this channel and to develop a certain narrowness of mind and attitude, something that the late Dr Shari'ati certainly never intended. He made it very plain that he intended to stimulate thought, not to lay down in a dogmatic without question. In the case of a number of young Iranians whose acquaintance with Islam are recent and only by way of his works there are some problems of knowledge and understanding Islam. This is not restricted in any way to Iran and Dr Shari'ati. In the Arab world we see people who will read only the books of Sayyid Qutb as if those exhausted all need for understanding and study. We see in Pakistan people who read only the works of Maudoodi, as though they were the last word on everything. It is a general sickness among contemporary Muslims.

Given this reservation, we can say that there is certainly a very deep emotional commitment to Islam, which needs supplementing by a more profound and broader knowledge of Islam. It was often said in the western press during the Revolution that it was kind of loose coalition of different forces – the secularists, leftists and Muslims, but this was never really true. All that was ever asked for by the secularists, people who are today coming together in various groups and parties, was the implementation of the existing constitution and may be a few reforms and adjustments and human rights, was exclusively the work of the Muslim masses in Iran. At no point was there a question of coalition. The masses are still there in Iran. Just a few days ago there was a vast demonstration in Tehran in condemnation of the various foreign intrigues against the Revolution, as well as their local agents.

I do not think you can speak of nay serious division in the Islamic camp. There are certainly differences of opinion between Imam Khomeini and the government of Mede Bazargan on certain points. There are differences of opinion, approach and outlook between Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Shariatmadari. But I think it is a mistake to expect a sort of dictatorial, monolithic unity. The existence of these differences, on condition they are not pushed to the point of division, capable of exploitation by the foreign enemies of the Revolution, is entirely positive.

Every crisis in Iran since the Revolution has been heralded with great glee by the western press as the beginning of the downfall of the Islamic Republic of Iran. There was a certain incident a few months ago when the sons of Ayatollah Taleghani were arrested in Tehran for a few days. I was then contacted by the representative of one of the television networks in America and invited to participate in a programme on the upcoming civil war in Iran. I asked him what civil war he had in mind, and he replied, 'between the followers of Ayatollah Khomeini on the one hand and the followers of Ayatollah Taleghani on the other'. I said, 'We'll let the civil war begin and the n we'll see.' The matter was settled in a fairly peaceful way in just two or three days, and they were disappointed.

When you look at the reports of unrest and trouble, what they call anarchy and chaos, do not underestimate that there are problems in Iran, as is natural and inevitable, but do not get excessively upset, and think that things will apart. I find it particularly ridiculous that the American press always speaks of anarchy and chaos – in a country where you cannot walk the major streets of the nation's capital city without the danger of being mugged. There has not been a revolution or anything like that in the United States, but it is incapable of

providing elementary security on the streets of its own capital city. I do not think that they are in a position to talk about anarchy and chaos.

Dr Salman: I was interested in your observation that Dr Shari'ati had been labeled a crypto-Sunni or crypto-Wahabi, but in fact his exposition of the *taw hid* doctrine looks very much as if it would suggest that he is a crypto-Sufi. I find it difficult to distinguish this from the orthodox Sufi view.

Professor Algar: I would tend to agree. I think that Dr Shari'ati main strength lay in his exposition of sociology. When it came to matters of metaphysics, I think he had a rather weaker grasp. Since he never made fully plain what he understood to be the Sufi view, it is difficult to see where the difference lies between his own understanding of *taw hid* and the Sufi understanding.

Also, from many of his works it becomes apparent that he understands Sufism to be equivalent to Hallaj, and Hallaj is by no means a typical representative of Sufi tradition. The fact that Dr Shari'ati regarded him as such is due, I think, to the influence on him of Professor Louis Massignon, who had this personal inward involvement with Hallaj for reasons of his own, and sought to promote him as a typical representative of Islamic spirituality, whereas in fact he was not.

When we assess Dr Shari'ati work, there are two things to be said. First, he was martyred at a relatively early age, before he had had the chance to complete the task of forming mature and fully coherent school of thought. Secondly, the works that remain from him are, with few exceptions, the transcribed texts of lectures.

It is not as if he had the leisure to sit down at his writing desk and think carefully over every word that he committed to paper. It is largely a question of lectures, which were recorded, transcribed and printed, in most cases without his having the opportunity even to revise and proofread them. There is, therefore, a certain uneven quality about many of the published texts, which characterizes all lectures – including the one being given today.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: You said in the introduction to Ali Shari'ati book on the Sociology of Islam that he was conscious that his would be a short life, that somehow he was conscious of imminent death. Why was this so?

Professor Algar: I think this was a reasonable conclusion to be drawn from the nature of his activity, the context in which he exercised it, the fact that any opponent of the regime in Iran had to reckon with imprisonment or sudden look for any obscure cause. It was simply a reasonable inference from the conditions of Iran under the Pahlavi regime.

Yahya El-Saie: You spoke in your lecture about the tension between Shari'ati a part of the traditional ulama. Could you throw more light on that? Does the problem stem from the fact that Shari'ati moved backwards, as it were, from sociology into Islam, rather than stemming from a religious background, by which I mean religious learning?

Professor Algar: That is a reasonable assessment. Although the entire content of his writing is religious, the style, the manner of formulation, is obviously not traditional, and, we can state without any qualms, owes a great deal to his western education and his encounter with, and refutation of, Marxism. Shari'ati was a man who, without embarrassment, would speak of Marx, Nietzsche, Fanon and a large number of other strange and unfamiliar sounding names which would arouse repugnance in certain traditionalist circle in Iran.

There were also certain personal elements involved. Certain problems arose at the Husayniya-yi Irshad between the late Dr Shari'ati and the late Ayatollah Mutahhari. I have no immediate knowledge of the matter, but from the people who were involved I have heard before the appearance of Dr Shari'ati on the scene and teacher among the university students. After the appearance of Shari'ati, his audience swiftly declined, since people were much

more attracted by Shari'ati, and inevitably, human beings being what they are, this led to a certain feeling of disquiet and discomfort on the part of Ayatollah Mutahhari.

Apart from that, there were one or two specific points of disagreement. In the book that I have already mentioned, Safavi Shi'ism and Alavi Shi'ism, Dr Shari'ati attacks one of the ulama of the Safavi period, Mulla Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, as a representative of what he calls Safavi Shi'ism, which in his view is a distortion of true Shi'ism. But from the point of view of the traditional Shi'i, it cannot be overlooked that Majlisi is the compiler of the *Bihar al-Anwar*, the huge compendium of Shi'i tradition. He is also the author of a large number of others works, which continue in use in Iran down to the present day.

Mutahhari's criticism of Shari'ati for his condemnation of Majlisi was reflected, I believe, as far as the circle of Ayatollah Khomeini at that time, in Najaf. Ayatollah Khomeini, with the usual mastery that he displays, gave a very interesting answer to a question by a friend of mine who went to meet him and asked precisely about the influence of Dr Shari'ati in Iran. He asked him first what in his opinion were the major causes of the Revolution and its success, to which Ayatollah Khomeini replied that it was a question primarily of the will of God, manifested through such and such causes and in such and such ways. Whereupon my friend, who is himself one of those numerous people who were led back to Islam by Dr Shari'ati, asked, 'Do you not think that the work of the late Dr Shari'ati also was of great effect?' Ayatollah Khomeini replied, simply and factually, that Dr Shari'ati teaching aroused a certain discussion and controversy among the ulama, but at the same time had a great effect upon leading back the younger intellectuals. He also said that the followers of Dr Shari'ati should go beyond what Dr Shari'ati offered them, to investigate the traditional. In the same way, the followers of the traditional ulama should recognize that none of the ulama said the last word on anything. So, there was the need for a reappraisal of precisely the issue raised by Dr Shari'ati.

One thing that I should have pointed out with respect to the influence of Dr Shari'ati is that he has had a great influence upon the younger ulama in particular. It was interesting when listening to some of the tape recordings of the Khutba given in Iran during the Revolution to find that there were constant echoes in them of the ideas and even the terms of Dr Shari'ati. So he also had a great influence there.

Wahid Munir: I very well understand the classification of knowledge presented by Dr Shari'ati, but to me it seems a little too abstract. Can you elaborate?

Professor Algar: Ideas, by their nature, are abstract, and I am not sure how I can make them less abstract. Obviously this scheme of things claims no final authority for itself. One is under no obligation to accept it. It is simply the statement of certain theme of Islam in a coherent form. It may be oversimplified, but it is nonetheless of some utility, in that it shows the basis of all things in Islam to be *taw hid* and the ultimate application of *taw hid* through these various ways to be the creation of an ideal man, who has fully realized the purpose for which he has been created.

I do not think we need be so unnecessarily salafi and ask 'Where did you get this from? Where is it Qur'an and Hadith?' the elements of it are present in Qur'an and Hadith. It is simply that the y has been put together in a certain patterns. Those who find it useful are free to accept it, and those who do not, are welcome not to. Nobody has any arguments with it.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: Would you agree that a certain climate of opinion has to be created in a situation like that in Iran under the Pahlavi dynasty before such a Revolution can occur, and that this is what Dr Shari'ati succeeded in doing? Much of the work that we intellectuals do is attacked by the practical men of this world as being 'pie in the sky', not very relevant and so on. They say, 'Let's get down to the ground and do some work instead of talking and

writing about it.' Does the work of Dr Ali Shari'ati in any way vindicate our work, or are we still the useless people?

Professor Algar: It is interesting that precisely this point is made by Dr Shari'ati in the first of the extract translated in the book on the Sociology of Islam. He says there that some people say we have been talking and writing long enough, and it is time to get down to action. He says that on the contrary we have yet talked or written adequately from a proper perspective. This dichotomy of either thinking and planning or acting is in itself a false dichotomy as the two are interrelated and proceed together.

Hussein Dabbagh: the feeling of disquiet between Ayatollah Mutahhari and Dr Shari'ati, which you referred to, was perhaps psychological, but the reasons go much deeper. I had direct contact with the late Ayatollah Mutahhari who confided to me a number of points. He questioned all the basic concepts that Shari'ati put forward and introduced into our culture – his philosophy, the very notion of *taw hid*, according to his explanation. Ayatollah Mutahhari thought that Shari'ati was an instrumentalist, in the sense that he used religion as an instrument for his political and social objectives. I am not saying that here we are dealing with his beliefs, inside his heart, but objectively, in his lectures and books. That was the sort of thing that gave this impression to the ulama, and that was the main reason for the tension between Ayatollah Mutahhari and him. It was not only Ayatollah Mutahhari that disagreed with him. There were many others, including Imam Khomeini himself. They covered a wide rage.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: Could it be that the language of Ali Shari'ati was not understood in its entirety by the traditional sector in Iran, because he represented the modern, western educated sector, and that the coming together was the basic cause, rather than the concepts involved?

Professor Algar: It would be nice to say that it was only a question of language and formulation, but I do not think so. I think that brother Dabbagh is right. I did not mean to imply that it was a question of personal jealousy between the two people. Of course, there were far more substantial issues. It is a question not only of formulation but of content. In my lecture I did not necessarily mean that whatever Dr Shari'ati has said is the last word on any subject. This is not a claim that he made for himself. He always said that Islam was a becoming, not being in a static sense but evolution. He applied this concept to his own thought.

I have not read such a huge amount of his works, but I have read all his major works, the entirety of *Islam shinas*, etc. For what my personal view may be worth, I would say that I probably disagree with about forty percent of the content, at least, not that my judgment is of great importance. But together with this there is a certain stimulating quality in his writings, a mind at work, which is a rare thing in the Muslim world. There is a mind at work which is not intimidated by the west in any of its dimensions in order to resort to polemics and apologetics. It is engaged in an experiment, a rediscovery, a reformulation of a certain tradition. The ulama, despite their importance, which I have repeated, have not been able to do this. May be it has not been their task. Dr Shari'ati has been able to achieve something that they have not. It is not enough to issue fatwas to lead a whole generation back to Islam.

What was the difference between 1963 and the Revolution? What took place in those fifteen years? Why did the Shah leave in the space of only a few days, when he could crush an uprising in 1963? Why was he compelled to leave the country in 1978? It is because a certain process took place in those years within Iran which supplemented the continuing activities of Ayatollah Khomeini outside the country.

It seems to me that the single most important factor in this process of preparation for revolution was the work of Dr Shari'ati. Whatever one may think of this or that statement or

doctrine of Dr Shari'ati, his achievements that cannot be denied is that he led back a large part of the alienated middle class generation to identification with Islam. May be their understanding of Islam needs refining, and in some cases correcting, but the commitment is there, and in many cases it is the singlehanded work of Dr Shari'ati. This is an achievement which one's disagreement with this or that point of his writings cannot efface.

Iqbal Asaria: You said that you should capture the weapons of the enemy and fight with them. That is precisely what Ali Shari'ati did when he moved to France, by forming the Groups of God-fearing Socialists. It puzzles me that a person like him had to invent this term. In your opinion, was it the people who were God-fearing or the people who were socialists, who were exploited by the invention of this term? Was he not in the beginning more influenced by socialism, then changing to God-fearing, the group then becoming a freedom movement?

Professor Algar: I think you misunderstood what I said: First, the movement was not his creation. He was a member of it in Iran before going to Paris for his studies. Neither the movement nor the term was his creation; he was merely a member, as were a large number of other people.

As for the whole question of Islamic socialism, about which so many pages have been blackened and so much ink has been spilt, of course, it is objectionable to take socialism as the basis of Islam, as a label to affix to it. There is no doubt about that. But there are a number of things to be said.

First, at a certain time there was a currency in the Arab world of these ideas, and not only on the part of the Nasser regime in Egypt. There was also Mustafa Sibai, writing a book called, *Ishtirakiyat al-Islam, Socialism of Islam*, which created a considerable echo and impact. There is the simple human phenomenon that whoever is the enemy of your enemy you will regard as your friend. Therefore, a number of Iranians, seeing this kind of shadow enmity between various Arab regimes, particularly Egypt, and the Shah, tended to look upon intellectual developments in the Arab world, including Egypt, with some favor. This I think applies to the origin of this partial, passing interest in the idea of socialism.

Looking at the works of Dr Shari'ati, including the critique of Marxism, you will see a thorough and clear refutation of socialism by him. It is not that he was a one-time socialist who became a Muslim or sought to achieve an incoherent mixture of the two. That is not the case.

It is true that we have a doctrine of Islamic socialism that has been formulated and has been criticized, but on the other hand we have a practice of Islamic capitalism. Nobody has formulated the theory of it, but the ugly reality of it is there. I do not know whether any of our ulama have given fatwas against Islamic capitalism, even though it is far more of an ugly reality in the Islamic world than so-called Islamic socialism.

Yahiya El-Saie: To return to Dr Shari'ati's role during the formative period of the Revolution, it seems to me that, as we have already discussed, there is a certain anti-clerical, if not an anti-ulama, stance in his work. It seems to me that Mutahhari, as perhaps one of the best philosophers to emerge from contemporary Iran, it seemed to me that the work of Dr Shari'ati had formed a basis, on the one hand, for simulating intellectuals to Islam but also, on the other hand, for stimulating it in a direction which would alienate them from the established ulama. This was the danger, I think, posed by people like Mehdi Bazargan and Shari'ati to a greater extent.

Professor Algar: I think it is an oversimplification and an injustice to the late Dr Shari'ati to describe him as anti-clerical or anti-ulama as such. He criticizes certain aspects of the traditional religious establishment in Iran, and to my mind the overwhelming majority of those criticisms are fully justified. But to say that he opposes the institution of the ulama as

such is a different matter. I do not think this can be documented from his works. In fact, he makes a clear distinction between the true alim and what he calls the mere mu'ammam – somebody who wears the turban and cloak without necessarily having the appropriate religious knowledge and commitment. But he makes it very clear that he is full of respect for the genuine alim.

As to whether what Mutahhari feared would take place, that the people under the influence of Shari'ati would not prove amenable to ulama leadership, I do not know. But certainly what has happened is not that. On the contrary, as I have already said, people were ready to participate in the Revolution under the leadership of Imam Khomeini to a large degree because of the influence upon them of Dr Shari'ati.

There are problems in the relationship, as the other brother pointed out. There is no absolute harmony. There is not a neat dove-tailing of the ulama and the influence of Shari'ati, but in general terms they have complemented each other.

Because there is a problem there, the foreign enemies of the Revolution – primarily the United States – have sought to inflate this and create a real problem, creating a camp of what they call followers of Shari'ati, Shari'ati's, so to speak, on the one hand, and Khomeinists on the other. These terms are actually used in the American press. Anyone with the least acquaintance with young Iranians, both inside and outside the country, who form one of the major elements of the Revolution, know that they are at the same time followers of Imam Khomeini and the enthusiastic students of Dr Shari'ati. There is no contradiction. On the philosophical, pure intellectual, plane, there are problems and contradictions, but when it comes to political and social effects I would say that there are no major problems.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: May I take up the point about Islamic socialism and capitalism? I entirely agree with your stricture, with this exception. I believe that although the expression 'Islamic capitalism' is not used, much of Islamic capitalism goes under the name of Islamic economics. There is a vast literature called Islamic economics and a large number of Islamic economics are being bred in Middle Eastern universities, changing their from Muslim to Islamists. These kinds of semantics are developed and used. This is all within the frameworks of Islamic imperialism as we know it. It is not just developed. It is being practiced and institutionalized.

Professor Algar: I agree.

Farid Shayyal: What happened in the Arab world is that prior to Mustafa Sibai's book, we had Sayyid Qutb's work, in Egypt, dealing with the same subject. But here I find, it is quite a different thing, and I do not know how you evaluate it. Sibai and Sayyid Qutb were people of a religious background to start with, and then they went to tackle the matter of economics and so on, while Dr Shari'ati was closer to sociology and economics and then moved to religious subjects.

As you said in your discussion, it is unacceptable to have socialism as the foundation and then you try to fit Islam with it. But the other way round could be acceptable, that Islam is the basis and then you tackle any modern situation. We can derive from it, so that always the derivation will be based on certain measures which are acceptable to Muslims.

What line would you suggest should be followed – that we start with Qur'an and Sunnah and then tackle the other subjects, or that we start basically from the so-called a secular science and then there is no need to go very deep into the real sources?

Professor Algar: We do Dr Shari'ati an injustice if we suppose that he began from a secular background and then started studying Qur'an and so on. That is not so. He grew up in a thoroughly Islamic household, and his father, one of the ulama of Mashhad, was the earliest formative influence on his life. It is not a question of his later acquiring Islamic knowledge in

a superficial and haphazard way, in such a way that the dominant element in his thought is western origin. I hope that I did not give that impression.

Before he died, he had more work to do in integrating these two elements. He had not been given the opportunity to complete this work. It was certainly not a question of his merely taking western concepts in a mechanical fashion and then trying to affix Islamic labels to them. Any reading of his work will show that, on the contrary, he had in a real sense assimilated western philosophy, sociology and thought – by that I mean not simply that he knew it was about, but that he understood its inner spirit. Precisely for this reason he was able to criticize it far more effectively than all our other Muslim writers who have written in refutation of Marxism and say, ‘After all, Marx’s father was a Jew. He was opposed to private property. He wanted to abolish the family. He did not believe in God’. That is not a very convincing series of arguments in refutation of Marxism, because most other Muslim critics of Marxism have no real knowledge or control of the subject in the first place, whereas this was not so with Shari’ati. He fully assimilated these subjects and then moved to a refutation of them. He was not intimidated by them.

Many people in Islamic work who keep writing of the dangers of Marxism are terrified by it, because they do not know what it is in the first place. Shari’ati knew what it was and was not afraid of it. This goes for the entirety of western thought. He was not a person who sought a mechanical joining of something from Islam and something from the west. He was a far more profound man than that.

I always hesitate to speak about Iqbal before an audience that contains Indo-Pakistanis, but I think that when the day comes that enough of Shari’ati’s work is available in English, if we compare his writings with, say, Iqbal’s lectures on the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam, Shari’ati will appear more profound.

I turn to your more general question – should we take Qur’an first or modern social sciences? This is another of those false dichotomies. There is no programme laid down, that first we read Qur’an and Sunnah and then a certain point we put them aside and take up textbooks on economics. Everything goes together.

There is a third element which is more important: active involvement in some form of struggle. Otherwise, it becomes a mere academic exercise of no value to anyone. Again, at the risk of offending Indo-Pakistanis sensibilities, why is there such a great air of unreality about many works of Maudoodi? It is because these are entirely intellectual works. They have not been written in the process of a revolutionary struggle. They are theoretical works which you feed to people, saying ‘Come and get it. Follow this programme and everything will be OK’. These are not ideas which are intermeshed with the living reality of a revolutionary struggle, which is one of the hallmarks of the work of Shari’ati. There we find the sense of vitality that comes from living commitment and not a mere intellectual exercise.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: Did you say that Dr Shari’ati translated from Franz Fanon?

Professor Algar: Yes.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: I find it difficult that the Iranian intellectual scene needed the thoughts of Franz Fanon and all of this school of thought in order to understand the Iranian situation, the whole of the Third World formulation in order to understand the imperialist system. Could it not have been done from the Muslim intellectual thought and source alone, rather than going to Franz Fanon and so on?

Professor Algar: I did not mean to say that Franz Fanon, any more than any other writer, was taken up by Shari’ati and incorporated in to into any system of thought. I was only saying that among the intellectual influence upon Shari’ati at a certain time in his life was Franz Fanon.

We should not claim to have a monopoly of everything in the Muslim world. If we did have a monopoly of all that we needed for successful living in the contemporary world, the Muslim world would not be in the state it is in now. It is not enough to go on repeating in the form of a slogan 'Qur'an, Sunnah Qur'an, Sunnah...' and forget everything else. Of course. We read Qur'an and Sunnah, this is our basis. It is precisely because we do that, on the basis of Qur'an and Sunnah we examine what else is available in the world, what other people are saying.

In Shari'ati's case, what he derived from and may be carried over into his own thought from the works of Fanon was the notion of alienation, the notion of culture, psychological alienation and damage brought about by imperialism. I do not see what the problem there is. If no Muslim writer has written on the subject, why put Franz Fanon in a corner because he is not a Muslim? If he has something interesting to say, why not take note of it and draw the necessary conclusions?

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: Coming to the literature of the Jama'at-e Islami, I do not really think that it is all theoretical. I think that it is deeply affected by the western literature on the emergence of the so-called democratic west, the consultative west, and, therefore, trying to say that the western civilization is really a latter-day branch of the original Islamic trunk. This is a major trend of thought among Muslims. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan and many others have propounded these thoughts. I feel that Maudoodi is a relevant figure in the progression of that apologist thought. Although he did not appear to be apologist, I think he was and is an arch-apologist. His literature is relevant and very modern, rather than purely theoretical and old fashioned.

Professor Algar: When I used the word 'theoretical' I did not mean to imply that it was totally devoid of any influence from the existing environment. I mean simply that it is not the result of an actual revolutionary struggle for the implementation of Islam. What you say is true. Maudoodi's works, whatever their merits – and I do not mean to imply that they are totally without merit – come in a certain tradition, which can be characterized as apologist. One of the most unconvincing books on birth control in Islam that I have ever read is Maudoodi's since he fails to take the real issue which is the whole crux of the argument about birth control – the necessity of lowering the population and so on. Maybe it is a false argument, but if so the falsity needs exposing. He does not do this. Instead, he concentrates purely on the horrendous moral consequences if a means of birth control becomes freely available. In that book he is concerned more with criticizing what he perceives as the social reality of the western world than with addressing the problems of the Islamic world. Thus far he I correctly described as apologist.

Question: One of the latest slogans of Shari'ati was 'Socialism, mysticism and freedom'. He changed it later to 'Equality and mysticism'. What is your comment?

Professor Algar: First, I shall have to see the evidence that this was so. It is the first time I have heard of it. His refutation of socialism I contained in the book Irfan Barabani Azadi, where there is a fairly comprehensive critique not only of Marxism but of western socialism – social democracy. I do not think that he uses the words 'socialist' and 'socialism' in a positive sense at all. Even if he had used the word 'socialism' instead of 'equality' originally in the title of that book, it does not necessarily mean, as far as I can see from a reading of that book, that he espoused socialism, because in that book he is criticizing, among other things, the excessive emphasis given in differing periods and in differing societies to each of these three elements. He says that each of them, conceived correctly, responds to a genuine human need, but they must be kept in balance and so on, and this is what Islam does. He criticizes various schools of thought for failing to do precisely this, giving excessive emphasis to one of these three elements.

I have numerous reservations about many of the ideas of Dr Shari'ati. Some of them derive from the fact that I am a Sunni, whereas he was Shi'i. Some of them derive from other matters that have nothing to do with the question of Sunni and Shi'i. But I find him more rewarding to read than any other contemporary Muslim writer, because he says, 'I come to disquiet the quiet;. The Muslim world is half asleep. You should be thankful that in Iran people have awoken. Nobody can deny that, right or wrong, one of the agents in this awakening was Dr Shari'ati.

## Fourth Lecture

### **The year of the Revolution**

We come today, after considering certain of the important factors in the background of the Islamic Revolution, to consider the Revolution itself; that is, series of events that began in January 1978, to use the Christian calendar, and terminated a little over a year later with the final removal of all traces of the Shah's regime in Iran and its substitution by a provisional Islamic revolutionary government. We have seen how there existed in Iran with growing intensity from the latter part of the nineteenth century onwards a tradition of opposition to the monarchy, the institution of the monarchy, and the foreign powers that stood behind it. This opposition was led, directed and inspired by the most prominent of the Shi'i ulama in Iran. We have seen also, as the culmination and perfect embodiment of that tradition, that there came to the fore the unique figure of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1963.

We have seen how during the nearly fifteen years of his exile his influence came to be supplemented by the teaching of Dr Shari'ati. Nonetheless, we need some further investigation to establish precisely why, at the beginning of 1978, a long tradition of agitation, discontent and opposition turned into a revolutionary situation.

We can find throughout the years of the Shah's dictatorship numerous signs of all not being well in the so-called oasis of stability in the turbulent Middle East, this being the image the Shah and his propaganda agents sought constantly to create. But the signs of discontent multiplied throughout 1977 and, to some degree, even earlier. We saw, for example, in the summer of 1977 remarkable evidence that even on the material plane the Shah's regime had failed to create the so-called civilization that was offered. There was vast electricity failures in Tehran which in a way came to symbolize the inability of the regime to create the very simple infrastructure of a modern industrial economy which had been the great promise held out by the Shah. Together with this, there was rising inflation, a soaring of cost of living, not merely in the capital city, but in the major provincial cities, and to some extent in the countryside. This economic discontent soon intensified the existing social and ideological discontent so that in the fall of 1977, shortly before one of the Shah's trips to the United State, there were a large number of demonstrations and open letters to the regime demanding, not yet abolition of the regime, but certain reforms.

We find, for example, that as one consequence of President Jimmy Carter's hypocritical election propaganda concerning human rights, people decided that this was a useful instrument to employ against the Iranian regime. It is sometimes said in America in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution that Carter somehow undermined the Iranian regime by promising people human rights and that people, encouraged by President Carter, therefore took to the streets. This is an absurdity. A more accurate version of the situation is that it was seen as a useful tactic to demand human rights, not that the regime was deemed capable by its nature of giving human rights, but simply that given this apparent verbal change in American policy, the slogan of human rights was a useful one to be used for tactical purpose against the regime.

Similarly, the partial demands made by certain professional organizations, of writers and lawyers, calling for freedom of expression, the abolition of the restrictions of censorship, and the strict observance of the Iranian legal ode all had the same purpose of tactically whittling away at the regimes position. None of this was new in the Iranian context and none of it was aimed at a totally comprehensive revolution, a sweeping away of the very foundations of the

regime. It was a question of tactically harassing the regime in a fashion which might be thought to coincide with the new emphasis in American policy abroad.

In November 1977, the Shah of Iran visited the United States. The Shah had been visiting the United States continuously since his accession to power in 1941. In the American press at that time an interesting series of photographs appeared which showed the Shah in friendly conversation with every American president since Truman. A commentary supplied by an Iranian friend seemed apposite. He said that those pictures of the Shah shaking hands with every incoming president reminded him very much of the traditional political practice in Iran when the provincial governor, at the accession of every new king, would travel to the capital city, offer some appropriate present to the king, be confirmed by him in his position and then be sent back to the provincial under his control to resume plundering and looting for his own profit and that of the central government. We can say that this is a very apposite comparison for the appearance of the Shah in Washington, to swear allegiance to every new American president.

It turned out that this visit of the Shah to Washington was to be his final visit. It was one, moreover, which was overshadowed by unprecedented student demonstrations in America, so much so that the tear gas employed in putting down the demonstrations drifted even across the White House lawn and caused the Shah to shed a few tears. Despite the massiveness of the Iranian protest against the Shah on the threshold of the White House, Carter now proclaimed a total reversal of his policy and, far from criticizing the Shah or exercising pressure upon him to change his human rights policy, praised him in lavish terms, saying that there was complete identity of policy between the United State and Iran. This declaration of friendship and support to the Shah was repeated in even more exaggerated and fulsome terms when Carter visited Tehran. He said that he and the Shah saw eye to eye on the question of human rights – an interesting confession on the part of Mr. Carter. These expressions of support were to be repeated throughout the year at strategic and crucial points by the Carter administration.

We find, for example, that immediately after the great massacre in Tehran on September 8, 1978, when an estimated 4,000 people were killed, Carter left his humanitarian efforts on behalf of so-called peace at Camp David to send a personal message of support to the Shah. It is noteworthy that Sadat and Begin and the other participants in these humanitarian efforts at Camp David also took time off to telephone their best wishes to the Shah in the aftermath of this massacre.

Given this timing of Carter's expression of support for the Shah, we can do no other than regard his visit to Tehran and his proclamation of support for the Shah at the beginning of 1978 as an implicit statement of support of the Shah and of all the acts of massacre and repression that he undertook in the year of the Revolution. It was not only a revolution, an uprising designed to shake and destroy the tyrannical rule of the monarch; it was at the same time in a real sense a war of independence waged against a power which had successfully turned Iran into a military base and which had incorporated the military, repressive apparatus of that other country into its own strategic system.

One of the errors that proved fatal for the Shah's regime and hastened its eventual downfall, an error which we may say from a Muslim perspective was divinely determined, was that the Shah's regime, in its arrogance, caused a series of articles to be published, insulting Ayatollah Khomeini in the grossest and most obscene terms. They were published in the government controlled press shortly after the visit of President Carter to Iran. In these articles it was claimed that Ayatollah Khomeini was guilty of sexual deviance, that he was of Indian origin, which was meant in the terms of Shah's regime and mentality to be an insult, and that he was an agent of British intelligence.

Such a series of accusations and fabrications is a common weapon in the armory of various tyrannical regimes in the Muslim world. In documents that have recently become available in of various Iranian consulate and embassies around the world, we see that the Iran regime fabricated similar allegations to discredit the late Dr Shari'ati. In another Muslim country, to engage in a brief diversion, we can see that recently the governments of Syria and Iraq have accused the Muslim Brethren of being traitors and the servant of Zionism and United State imperialism, this familiar tactic. Its application in the case of Iran backfired totally against the regime. Immediately after the publication of the offending articles in the government- controlled press, demonstration and protests broke out in Qum. This is in the same city in central Iran where Ayatollah Khomeini studied and had first risen to public prominence in 1963. The people of the city took to the streets denouncing not merely this latest affront of the Shah's regime against all sense of humanity, Islam and decency, but also against the overall record of the regime. The answer of the regime was the usual one – the massive use of force resulting in the loss of about 200 lives. In this case, as in other subsequent cases, the exact number of casualties is difficult to determine.

After the events in Qum, a cycle of recurring demonstrations, put down with heavy loss of life, began to be repeated. These gradually changed from being a series of isolated incident in different parts of the country to a coordinated, unified movements, having not merely the negative aim of removing the Shah but the positive aim of establishing in the place of his regime an Islamic republic. Forty days after the martyrdom of the people of Qum, demonstration and ceremonies of remembrance took place in the north western city of Tabriz, which is the capital of the large and populous province of Azerbaijan in the north-west of the country.

Tabriz has had a long history of prominence in Iranian revolutionary politics, for various reasons, partly because of its proximity to Turkey and Russia, or better to say the Caucasus, which were in the early part of this century centers of revolutionary thought and activity, and also partly because of the character of the Azerbaijan themselves. They have always had a certain feeling of separateness towards the majority population. In any event, the demonstration and commemorative ceremonies in Tabriz soon took on the complexion of a full-scale uprising, and for at least two days the entire city of Tabriz was out of control of the government forces.

The uprising was on a scale that the government had been unable to foretell. The local police and Savak proved unable to cope with the massive scale of the uprising and member of the local garrison also proved either unwilling or unable to intervene effectively. Reinforcements were then brought in from outside the city, but these were met by the people of the city themselves who pointed out that they were Muslims and it was the duty of the soldiers not to engage in the killing of their own brethren. This argument appears to have had an effect on a large number of soldiers. Finally, the uprising in Tabriz was broken not so much by the use of the police or the army as by firing on the population from the air from military helicopters, gunships of the same type that the United States used repeatedly in Vietnam. Very heavy reprisals took place. It has been estimated that a minimum of 500 people were killed in the course of the uprising in Tabriz.

In the aftermath of the Tabriz uprising, the Shah and his representative claimed that the people of the city were in reality not participating in the uprising but that it had been a question of foreigners smuggled in massive numbers to perpetrate this plot. It seems remarkable that thousand of Azerbaijan- speaking foreigners could be infiltrated into the city without detection. Another absurdity propagated by the regime and others associated with it was that the uprising in Tabriz had as its object the suppression of the Bahai community. This was one line put out by the former American ambassador to Iran, Mr. Sullivan, who happened to visit Berkeley shortly after the Tabriz uprising. The only problem, as one

member of his audience pointed out, was that there is no Bahai community in Tabriz for people to rise up in protest against. This same member of the audience further suggested that the traditional definition, by Samuel Johnson, of an ambassador or a diplomat should be revised. You may recall that Samuel Johnson defined a diplomat as a man who went abroad to lie for his country. In the case of Mr. Sullivan, it appeared that, on the contrary, the diplomat was the man who came to lie on half of the government to which he had been accredited.

The uprising in Tabriz was followed soon after by the series of commemorative ceremonies in different cities of Iran. That also took on an aspect of minor insurrection. We can mention in particular the case of Yazd, where people emerging from a peaceful commemorative ceremony in one of the main mosques of the city were met with a hail of machine gun fire. A tape recording of these events was made and circulated widely throughout Iran. As anyone who has had occasion to hear this and similar tapes will know, it is a remarkable sequence of sounds which bears great witness to the brutality of the Shah's regime and its repressive methods.

On the tape one hears the termination of the Khutba ending the commemorative ceremony, people emerging from the mosque into the streets and then the wail of police and army sirens, then the opening of machine gun fire and the wailing and screaming of the dying and the wounded. This tape, and the even more horrific tape made on the occasion of the government attack on the inside of a mosque several months later in Shiraz, should be required listening for all of those who have any lingering doubts concerning the nature of the Shah's regime.

We can say that the cassette tape played a role of considerable importance in the Islamic Revolution. The Shah had a technological apparatus of repression of considerable sophistication. He had an army of 400,000 men, among the best equipped in the Middle East, second in military potential only to the other agent of the United States, Israel. He had also a sophisticated repressive apparatus which had struck fear into the people for about fifteen years. In contrast to this, the Iranian people had, at their disposal, very little in the way of armaments, organizational or technological capacity. The one thing that was used and used to great effect was the cassette tape.

Not only were recordings such as those I have mentioned circulated widely throughout Iran, but the declaration of Ayatollah Khomeini in their spoken as well as their printed form were circulated throughout the country by a simple means, through the use of tape recording. I was a witness, while in Paris, to the dispatch of one such message to Iran. The simplicity of this apparatus of dispatch and transmission of recorded message was a source of astonishment to many western observers. All that happened was that the message would be recorded in Paris and read over the telephone to a number of individuals in Tehran who would have tape recorded held against the telephone. They would then telephone other individuals in provincial cities who were waiting with their tape recorders, and in a brief time the message would be duplicated and circulated throughout the country.

Many people in the Middle East and South Asia will know how frequent it is for taxi drivers and lorry drivers to go round with tape cassette players listening to the latest 'pop' music. It was one symbol of the Islamic Revolution in Iran that the only tapes played in long-distance trucks, in buses and taxis were the tapes of Ayatollah Khomeini. We can say that in one way the Revolution was a revolution of which the technological symbol was the cassette tape, just as earlier; the Constitutional Revolution was the revolution of the telegram. Telegrams were sent back and forth between the atabat and the various centers in Iran.

To return to the chronology of events, after the uprising in Yazd and the heavy casualties inflicted there, we find for the first time in August major disturbances occurring in Tehran

also. These obliged the Shah to cancel his projected European trip. On two occasions during the Revolution the Shah was obliged to cancel trips. On both occasions, the trips he had planned were to the communist States of Eastern Europe. The incongruity of the situation was not perceived by most foreign journalist and observers, who persisted in the argument that the Shah was a bulwark of the west in the strategic struggle against communism and that he was threatened by a communist manipulated uprising at home. It was precisely communist States he had been planning to visit when uprising broke out in Tehran. It was also a prominent communist visitor. Hua Kuo Feng, the Chinese Premier. Who saw fit to come to Tehran and to fly by helicopter from the airport over the battle-torn streets of Tehran to confer with the Shah and offer him his condolences and his encouragement in the imperial struggle for progress and emancipation?

The month of August, not only because of the occurrence of large-scale disturbance in Tehran, but as a result of other events, saw a significant rise in the level of the struggle. It was in the month of August, to be precise August 19, that there took place the most infamous of the of the crimes of the Shah's regime – the burning of the cinema Rex in the south west of Abadan. You may recall that on that day the cinema was burnt to the ground, resulting in the deaths of at least 416 or 420 people who were locked inside the cinema. This was billed in the western press as one of the fruits of the fanatical reactionary Islamic movement in the country which was annoyed when people went to the cinema during the month of Ramadan. It is true that it was the month of Ramadan, a month of intensified religious feeling and struggle. It is also true that numerous cinemas had been burnt and destroyed throughout Iran by the Islamic movement.

There are two things to be noted here. The first is in the case of the other cinemas that had been burnt, without exception, advance warning had been given to the staff of the cinema to evacuate the premises in time had been chosen for the burning or the explosion when no showing was taking place and no audience was present in the cinema. Secondly, the film that was showing in Abadan was a film which obliquely and in a censored fashion referred to the activities of one of the guerrilla movements in Iran, the Sazman-e-Mujahedeen. This was hardly therefore a film likely to be found obnoxious by the Islamic movement as a whole. By contrast, in all the other cinemas that had been destroyed elsewhere, the film shown were pornographic and obscene films that offended against the standards of Islamic morality.

Possibly the most telling piece of evidence – and there is a large amount of evidence pointing to the responsibility of the regime for this arson – is that not more than four days before the event, the Shah had given a speech in which he said, 'I promise you the great civilization; all that our enemies are capable of offering you is the great terror, vahshat-e-kabir'. It seems remarkable convenient that a few days later an event should occur which seemed to supply confirmation of this prediction – that the great terror would be created.

The families of those burnt in the cinema Rex were in any event not deceived by the government propaganda. Such was the extent of their protest and outcry that martial law had soon to be imposed on the city. In one grotesque instance of humor which one finds recurring throughout the Revolution, the cinema Rex in Abadan was bitterly nicknamed as the Pahlavi kebab house. The people who had been burnt to death there were the direct victims of h Shah's regime.

The series of events which gained momentum throughout Ramadan, including the burning of the cinema Rex, continued without let into September so that the Shah began to make a number of outward concessions. He installed the government of Sharif Imami, who was widely praised in the western press, or at least described in the western press as a pious Muslim. You may know that this title of 'pious Muslim' is given on a rather arbitrary basis by the western press. Someone who is from our point of view very obviously a Muslim and

servicing the interest of Islam is described as a reactionary and a fanatical Muslim. Someone who is willing to do the ways of the west is generally described as a pious Muslim. In this context, for example, Anwar Sadat is a pious Muslim, but Ayatollah Khomeini is a fanatic or a reactionary Muslim.

In any event, Sharif Imami, because of certain family ties several generations back, was designated as a pious Muslim and the Shah went through the gesture of removing certain Bahais from his immediate entourage, abolishing the imperial calendar which he had introduced in substitution of the Islamic calendar and promised a complete purge of the administration to remove all traces of corruption. The problem was that he was the greatest instrument of corruption and thus that promise was self-contradictory. As the Turkish proverb says, 'When fish stinks, it stinks from the head first'.

It was soon realized that the month of Muharram would be a crucial period in Iran. In preparation for that month, which corresponded approximately to the month of December 1978, the Shah's regime made certain preparations. First of all, Sharif Imami was replaced by an outright military government under General Azhari. The immediate pretext for this was provided by successive days of riots and burning in Tehran when part of the British Embassy was burnt down and a number of other targets attacked. Shortly after, the Shah brought pressure upon the Iraqi government to expel Ayatollah Khomeini from his long-standing place of exile in Najaf. We may regard this attempt to exile anew Ayatollah Khomeini from the Islamic world as one of the great blunders of the Shah's regime. This turned out to be very much to the advantage of the Shah's opponents.

Ayatollah Khomeini was harassed in Najaf by the Ba'athist regime – not for the first time, by the way. There had been numerous instances over the years when he had been placed under pressure as a result of the Ba'athist regime's amenability to the Shah's desires. On this occasion, Ayatollah Khomeini was placed under house arrest virtually. His house was besieged and he was informed that he could continue to reside in Iraq only on two conditions: first that he abandon all political activity; and, secondly, that he move from Najaf to somewhere else of the Iraqi government's own choosing. These conditions were rejected by Ayatollah Khomeini. The Iraqi government then proceeded to expel him from the country. The original plan, according to those in the entourage of Ayatollah Khomeini, was that he should pass through Kuwait, there to embark for a further destination. Interestingly enough, the Kuwait government, which has a ministry of Islamic affairs, which publishes books on Islam, which hosts conferences and sends money for various mosques abroad, was so concerned about the promotion of 'Islam' that it did not give permission to Ayatollah Khomeini even for transit through its territory. As a result of this, Ayatollah Khomeini remained for a few dangerous hours in the 'no man's land' between Iraq and Kuwait, with neither government responsible to any conceivable attack from Savak agents.

After a time, the Iraqi government permitted him to re-enter the country on condition that he leave, and he left for Paris, which one can say was a remarkably fortunate choice. That is not to say that there is any particular virtue inherent in the French government but simply that no advance warning or information was given to the French government. Ayatollah Khomeini merely embarked on the plane and presented the French government with a fait accompli by arriving there with a valid Iranian passport and desiring to stay there for three months on a tourist visa. Of course, Ayatollah Khomeini had a far more important task than tourism awaiting him in Paris. He took up residence in a house in the little village of Nauphle le Chateau in the Persian suburbs which soon became a point of attraction for Iranians from Europe, North America and Iran itself as well as a large number of representatives of the world press.

It can be said without doubt that communication between Paris and Iran was infinitely easier and swift and unimpeded than had been communication between Najaf and Iran. Also, Ayatollah Khomeini was now able to bring the cause of the Iranian people more effectively before world public opinion.

The month of Muharram was described by Ayatollah Khomeini in one of the proclamations that he issued from Nauphle le Chateau, as the month of triumph of blood over the sword. This, one may regard, in one way, as a brief description of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. But it applies most particularly to Muharram in the sense that the willingness, the eagerness even, of the Iranian people for the sake of martyrdom during the month of Muharram, manifested on a greater scale. A greater mass of people than ever before responded to the call of martyrdom which totally discredited and destroyed the basis of the Iranian regime.

From the first day of the month of Muharram a large number of people appeared in the streets of Tehran and other cities wearing their shrouds, preparing for martyrdom and advancing unarmed on the rows of machine guns ready to shoot them down. The number of victims is difficult to establish precisely, but probably in the first few days of Muharram a larger total of people was killed than on any other occasion, with the single exception of Black Friday, 8 September 1978, massacre in Tehran.

It occurs to me now that I should have accorded some separate and detailed to the events of 8 September. You must pardon me for this. One of the decisive turning points in the struggle after the firing of the cinema Rex in Abadan was the massacre that took place on 8 September in Tehran. This came shortly after the end of Ramadan, when a number of demonstrators were gathered in what in formerly called the Maydan-e-Jaleh and is now called the Martyrs' Square in Tehran. A curfew had been proclaimed, before there was the possibility of those gathered in the square learning of it, and abiding by it, if they had chosen so to do. No chance was given to those gathered in the square to disperse. They were closed in on all four sides and soon the Shah's troops began firing from all four directions and from the air, from military gun ships. A tape recording of this horrendous occasion has also been made, or part of it.

The slaughter lasted the better part of a day. A number of incriminating photographs are also available. On that occasion it was said that Israeli troops had participated in the work of massacre. In the nature of things, it is not possible to have any decisive proof one way or the other. This much is certain. According to certain eyewitnesses of the event, one company of troops that stood in the forefront on that day had shown reluctance to fire and it was swiftly removed and replaced by fresh troops dressed in Iranian uniforms. These troops spoke a language other than Persian and had the usual unkempt appearance – long beards and semi-hippy appearance – typically associated with the Israel soldiers. It might be said that the Shah's troops had shown little reluctance to slaughter people throughout the better part of the year and people might wonder why it should be necessary for the regime to have recourse to Israel on this occasion. A possible answer is that in the week preceding this, from the end of Ramadan onwards, a series of huge indeed, unprecedented, demonstrations had taken place in Tehran and the Shah may have regarded this as a crucial week in his struggle for survival. It may be that he thought it best to have at his disposal troops, mercenaries virtually, whose willingness to fire, even happiness in firing when their targets were targets were Muslim, would not be called into question.

Whether that precise accusation is true, the fact that it was circulated and widely believed is an indication of the perception of the Iranian people of the deep involvement of Israel in the repressive apparatus and policies of the Shah.

To come from Ramadan to Muharram, from September to December 1978, the massive demonstration that had taken place at the end of Ramadan were repeated on the two most crucial days – 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of the month – which are in terms of the traditional Shi'i commemorative ceremonies of the martyrdom, the most important days. First, it was said by Azhari, the military Premier, that a dawn to dusk curfew would be imposed and that not even ceremonies would be allowed in the mosque, let alone in the streets of the city. Then, when it was made clear that the people had no intention of observing this ban, gradually it was lifted and permission was given for a vast demonstration that took place along the major thoroughfares of Tehran, concluding at the so-called Shahyad monument – the monument to the 2,500 years of Iranian monarchy. We may remark in passing on another instance of revolutionary humor in Iran, which was the renaming of the Shahyad monument as the Shahyad monument – a monument not in memory or commemoration of the Shah but in commemoration of a scoundrel. On this day the streets leading to the northern parts of Tehran, where the royal palaces and the abodes of the wealthy are situated, were sealed off and a vast number of people, estimated at between 5 million and 6 million, moved along the main arteries towards the square where a manifesto was read and approved by those present.

The manifesto called for the abolition of the monarchy, for the institution of an Islamic Republic and the observance of certain points relating to internal and external policy. There was a total of sixteen points. President Carter, in one of the foolish remarks for which he is becoming increasingly celebrated, said that the fact that the day had passed off without bloodshed was somehow a triumph for the Shah's regime and somehow an indication that, after all, things would not be too bad and he could weather the storm, as he had weathered previous storms. The fact that there had been no bloodshed was uniquely the result of the non-intervention of the army on that day. It was a *mora*! Triumph for the Islamic movement and a stunning defeat for the Shah.

It became increasingly recognized by the Shah, and more importantly by his foreign advisers, that his was a lost cause and that the best that could be hoped for was the installation of what was called in American terminology a compromise solution – that is to say, neither the Shah nor the Islamic regime but something in between led by moderate, responsible people; in other words, people who would be content to see a prolongation of American strategic in Iran.

After some hedging and looking around for a suitable candidate, in late December the candidate was decided upon, Shapour Bakhtaran, the leader of the National Front, who was immediately promoted in western propaganda as being a long-standing foe of the Shah, a leading member of the opposition, a champion of human rights, and all other kinds of high-sounding titles.

It should be pointed out that the National Front, particularly as it had come to exist in recent years in Iran, was not a major organ or opposition to the Shah. It had a certain weight and represented a certain number of interests, but it was not in any way an important organization of political opposition such as it had been in the days of Dr Mussadeq. Even within the attenuated National Front, Shapour Bakhtaran had a very devious standing. There were a number of incidents in which he was involved which had earned him the suspicion of his associates, so much so that when he accepted the offer of the Shah, at the prompting of the United States, to become the new Prime Minister, with the Shah going on vacation, member of the National Front and still less the Iranian people at large were not surprised.

Shapour Bakhtaran arranged for the departure of the Shah, which took place in January 1979, and then began the hopeless task of attempting to shore up the foundations of his own power. Whatever the failing of Shapour Bakhtaran, and they are numerous, he was obviously a man not totally without intelligence. One of the intriguing questions which, to my mind, has

not yet been fully answered is why Bakhtaran chose to take on this hopeless task of saving the American cause in Iran after the departure of the Shah in mid-January. The only interim answer that can be given to that question is that he was a man, first of all, totally contemptuous of religious and, therefore, like many other secularists, assumed that religion had no effective power. Because he did not believe in it, he thought ipso facto nobody else sincerely believed in it either and, therefore, it should be discounted as an effective force.

We can say that this kind of assumption is shared in general by many members of the Iranian bourgeois. They thought 'Let the revolution go through, let the rebellion be led for the time being by the ulama. After all, these people are not people of the world and they are politically naive, and we, the secular bourgeoisie, the western educated, the liberal intelligentsia, will assume our natural right of leadership in due time'.

Something of the same mentality in a rather extreme form was present in Bakhtaran, I think. He was incautious enough to describe Ayatollah Khomeini as 'an insane old man'. It was precisely this 'an insane old man' who totally outmaneuvered and destroyed the regime of Bakhtaran within less than a month of its installation. At the beginning of February 1979, after a series of political manoeuvres on the part of Bakhtaran and the Iranian army, including the closure of Tehran airport for a number of days, Ayatollah Khomeini returned to a triumphal welcome from the people of Iran. It has been estimated that on this occasion about one third of the total population of Iran was in Tehran to receive him. A number of cities in the country were almost completely emptied as their inhabitants converged on Tehran to give a triumphal welcome to Ayatollah Khomeini.

He returned, and, in accordance with his proclaimed intention, proceeded immediately to the cemetery in Tehran where the martyrs of the Revolution were buried and gave one of his typically courageous and uncompromising speeches, denouncing the United States for its role during the Revolution, saying that the Iranian people had desired freedom and that they had been given in exchange by imperialism and its agents a graveyard full of martyrs as the answer to their demand. He pointed out also that the struggle was not yet over, and he summoned the Iranian people to continue in their struggle.

Six days after his return Ayatollah Khomeini named his own government – the provisional government headed by Mehdi Bazargan. Progressively, ministers were named to complete the cabinet. This was a process which continued after the final triumph of the Revolution. In the two weeks between the return of Ayatollah Khomeini and the final overthrow of the regime the crucial question appeared to many people to be the possibility of an American-inspired and directed military coup d'état. The great fear of numerous people was precisely this. After all, the United States had been heavily involved in Iran to a degree unparalleled virtually in any other country. Doubtless it must have had some contingency planning for a day such as that now dawning in Iran. Would the United States easily abandon the strategic, economic and military advantages that it had enjoyed in Iran for a quarter of a century?

Anxiety was increased by the arrival in Tehran of the commander of the American land forces in Europe, General Hauser. The ostensible purpose of his visit to Tehran was to discuss the problems of arms supply in the aftermath of the disturbance and uprising in Iran, and also to dissuade the Iranian military from attempting a coup d'état. It seems that the time, just over a month, which he spent in Tehran was rather a generous period of time for dealing with these limited objectives.

Since the triumph of the Revolution, documentary evidence has been uncovered to the effect that the purpose of Hauser's visit of Tehran was, on the contrary, to undertake a contingency study of the possibility of a military coup d'état. His departure from the country should be taken as a sign that the study had yielded negative results, that at least in the short

term the possibility of a military coup d'état successfully imposing itself was extremely limited. The Iran of 1979 was no longer the Iran of 1953. After all, the Iranian army had become subjected to increasing desertions by its recruits, considerable psychological pressure had been exerted by the religious leadership headed by Ayatollah Khomeini, who repeatedly called for the army to return to the people to whom it essentially belonged. At the same time, it was known that the people were arming in such a fashion that a military coup d'état would not have been unopposed.

It was strangely enough, the most recalcitrant elements in the army which brought about the final downfall of the last vestiges of the Shah's regime. On 10 February 1979, in one of the air force barracks in Tehran, air force cadets were engaged in watching an Iranian television replay of the newsreel film showing the return to Tehran of the Ayatollah Khomeini. As a result of watching this film, they broke out into demonstrations demanding the installation of an Islamic government under Ayatollah Khomeini. Their officers insisted that they return to barracks, instead of which they raided the armory and resisted by armed force. The commanders of the garrison called in the Imperial Guard, the so-called eternal or immortal guards, the so-called crack troops of the Shah, to aid in the task of repression. A number of tanks arrived very quickly at the air force garrison.

The beginning of this battle was the sign for an armed uprising throughout Tehran which resulted in the overrunning, one after another, of all the major installations of power, the Prime Minister's office, radio and television, the parliament building, the headquarters of Savak and its various interrogation and torture centers throughout the city, so that after two or three days, which saw a minimum of 700 to 800 further casualties, the regime of the Shah was finally swept away in the last bloodbath.

This has been an approximate retelling of the important events of the Revolution. Of course, details have been left out, but I think that given you a sketch of the most important events of the Black Friday, 8 September. It is time now, by the way of conclusions to this lecture and the series of lectures generally, to try to draw a few conclusions which are, I hope, illustrate the contention I made at the beginning of my first lecture, namely, that the events in Iran are the most important and significant events for the entire Muslim world in Recent history. They are not in any way an isolated series of events determined by the circumstances of Iran.

First call, I pointed out that the movement of the Iranian Muslim people was opposed unanimously by all the major superpowers and their agents in the region. One can think of this as a simple and automatic test of the authenticity of any Islamic movement. If any Islamic movement finds itself allying. Even circumstantially and unintentionally, with a certain major power, there is a certain problem. It means that there is some willingness to compromise, to settle, to collaborate with a non-Islamic power, or there is the perception that it is willing to do so.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran was opposed by the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Great Britain, West Germany, France – by all these major centers of power and corruption in the world. Within the Middle Eastern region, it was opposed in varying degrees of active engagement by the so-called reactionary regimes and so-called progressive regimes alike. It was opposed by King Hasan of Morocco., who describe the Ayatollah Khomeini as a naïve old man and who sent his special envoy to speak to some of the Iranian ulama to persuade them that they should not fall into the trap of communism. It was opposed by President Sadat of Egypt, who had displayed to the world now his policy of capitulation in his search for a personally and identity, something which he clearly lacks and has little chance of finding.

The movement was opposed by the Saudi regime which, for all its sponsorship of Muslim conferences and for all its mismanagement of the Haramayn, is clearly at the services of the United States and opposed to all manifestations of Islam in the Islamic world. On the side of the so-called progressive regimes, it was opposed by the Iraqi government, the Ba'athists, who are meant to be the ultra hard-line rejectionists in terms of the current political jargon. It was opposed by Libya; let there be no doubt about that. Mr. Qaddafi was opposed to the Shah, but he was not in any way favorable to the Islamic movement in Iran until it became clear that it was about to triumph. The only support given by Mr. Qaddafi was to a Marxist guerrilla group called Fidayan-e-Khalq and to the separatist movement in Kurdistan. It is interesting that recently Mr. Qaddafi has also come out in favor of Kurdish nationalism, the secession of Kurdish areas of Iraq and Iran to form a separate and independent State.

In short, there was this alliance of the great powers and their regional satellites arrayed against the Islamic Revolution. We may say that this is at once a proof of the authenticity of the Revolution and a warning that when any genuine Islamic movement comes into being it will be faced with similar opposition. Yet it was precisely in the face of such opposition that the Islamic movement in Iran triumphed. To find an explanation for this in terms purely of the familiar means of political and historical analysis is impossible. When Ayatollah Khomeini was asked, concerning the causes for the success of the Revolution, he said simply that it was the will of God. The will of God manifests itself through causes which are capable of being analyzed, but we as Muslims believing in Islam as a total view of reality, a set of methods for the understanding of reality, should say that the triumph of the Islamic Revolution was simply the fulfillment of God's promise, which remains eternally valid to those who struggle in his path.

At one point some Iranian friends of mine who were visiting Imam Khomeini in Paris asked him, 'Do you not think there is a danger of this continual bloodshed and sacrifice on the part of our people inducing despair and weariness in them so that the point of our movement will become lost? Might it not be better to pause, to have some temporary arrangement seeking a reform of existing regime?', to which Ayatollah Khomeini replied simply that it is our task to do that which Allah tells us to do and it is then up to Allah whether he supplies the results in our lifetime or in a future lifetime. It was as a result of this trust in Allah, of this solitude with Allah, this deprivation of any form of worldly support and this reliance on the support of Allah – a reliance which was clearly testified through the martyrdom of not less than 50,000 people in the year of struggle – that ultimately the Revolution in Iran was able to succeed.

The second general conclusion we as Muslims should draw from the Revolution is the fact that the crucial factor in the success of the movement is not sophistication of organization. It is not the working out of any precise strategic plan that is crucial; although at various points in the struggle questions of strategy assume importance. It has often been said that in Iran we have a hierarchy of Shi'i ulama that is lacking elsewhere in the Muslim world and, therefore, this triumph is not easily to be duplicated elsewhere.

What is meant by this so-called hierarchy of Shi'i ulama? All one has is the simple mechanism of taqlid, which I attempted to describe for you in my first lecture, whereby the individual believer regards himself as duty-bound to follow the guidance of a religious leader. This guidance is given, not through any formal channel, but on the basis of a moral and spiritual authority that is gained exclusively on the basis of popular assent. There is no electoral process for the choice of the marja or the mujtahids. It is simply that an individual or series of individuals, emerge, who in themselves come to embody the aspirations or the desires of the people so that they obtain a freely given consent which is willing to offer itself in a blood sacrifice.

The same process, although in a different fashion, may exercise itself outside the Shi'i context, i.e. in the Sunni Muslim world. If there emerges a leader or a movement which clearly presents itself as a totally uncompromising and radical alternative to the existing system or systems, if it shows itself not concerned merely in a theoretical sense but in a practical sense with the actual, tangible problems of the people, there is no reason why it should not be able to elicit the same response as that which was elicited by Imam Khomeini from the Iranian people.

Why is it that in Iran today we see the only genuine experiment in the foundation of an Islamic State in which we can have some confidence with other Muslim peoples, are gifted with a superior degree of piety? It is not because they have discovered some particular secret that is inaccessible to the rest of the Muslim world. Certainly, it is not so. Let us not forget that Islam remains the motive force, at least in potentiality if not in actuality, of all the Muslim peoples without exception, whether they be Arabs, Turks, the peoples of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, South-East Asia, Africa or any other group of Muslims. Ultimately, it is not possible to eradicate Islam from the hearts of the Muslims. It is possible only to annihilate the Muslims themselves. Given that, what is necessary is to activate this resource of faith, belief, and readiness to struggle and sacrifice? This is something which is present within the hearts of all the Muslim peoples and even within the hearts of individuals who are apparently secularized.

One of the things which happened in the course of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was the rediscovery of Islam by those who were partially secularized. I have described one aspect of this process in my lecture on Dr Shari'ati, but it was not merely an intellectual process. It was also a question of an individual returning to the self, to the deepest self, to a realization of what is after all fundamentally a mystery. It is possible to evoke this realization in any Muslim country, in any Muslim society, with the overwhelming majority of people, including those who apparently are lost to Islam. This is possible by the presentation of a clear, radical and complete series, a conscientious alternative which has no connection with the existing system, which does not wish to participate in it, does not enter it on the pretext of reforming it, but stands totally apart from it.

This leads me to one more conclusion concerning the Islamic Revolution – that an Islamic movement will not only be automatically opposed by all the major superpowers and their local agents, but also, to be authentic and to have any chance of success, such a time a movement must be uncompromising. There comes a time when to be uncompromising is the only realistic course. It is not realistic to be moderate and compromise for an Islamic movement. For an Islamic movement to enter into so-called realistic compromise means, in effect, the sacrificing of its own nature and ultimate goals. There are too many examples of this for it to overlook. We may mention the example of Turkey, where a so-called Islamic party, which contains many people of great sincerity, energy and devotion, has decided to enter into the parliamentary game for the sake of promoting the Islamic interests. We see that precisely through entering the parliamentary game, it begins playing all the familiar parliamentary tricks, beginning with the swearing of an oath of allegiance to the secular Republic. It is not possible for this party in this situation, or similar situation elsewhere in the Islamic world, to present itself as opposed to the system in which it participates, and, therefore, in the survival of which it has a partial interest.

There is one other conclusion. It is that the Islamic movement, if it be correctly identified with the popular interests and not kept on the plane exclusively of pure ideology, if it be an uncompromising one which refuses any form of participations in the existing system, if it does this, it will be able totally to outdistance between forms of secular competition. One of the great differences between 1953 and 1979 in Iran is that in 1953 there was Mussadeq and in 1979 there was a Khomeini. There was an Islamic involvement in the events leading up to

the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry in 1953. But the secular figure – and I do not wish to imply ‘anti-Islamic’ but merely ‘non-religious’ – of Mussadeq dominated and towered over the religious figure on the scene such as Ayatollah Kashani. Precisely because of this, the nationalist movement of Dr Mussadeq could never be a mass movement with profound roots.

In 1978-79, we see on the contrary the so-called secular opposition, the National Front, with people like Sanjabi and the rest of them, being totally overshadowed by the religious leadership. To have any form of political influence, the secular opposition was obliged to abandon all of its positions and to conform to ideology and political organization, whatever inroad they may apparently have made, have failed totally to penetrate the depths of all hearts and minds of the Muslim people. Even though they may appear to be competitors for the future of the Muslim Ummah, if correctly confronted, there is nothing to be feared from them. This is something that goes also for the purveyors of the secular nationalism and ethnic-based nationalism in the Arab world, in Turkey and elsewhere. It also goes for the Marxists. It is only the Islamic movement, the potential and not necessarily the actual Islamic movement, in various Muslim countries which has the ability to call upon the deepest resources of the people and bring about a genuine revival and renewal.

Any attempt to formulate a path to the future for the Muslim peoples other than with Islam, is ultimately a waste of time and energy and a waste of the most precious of our human and material resources. To prevent that waste, the Islamic movement must learn the fundamental lessons of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Otherwise it will contribute to the state of ideological and spiritual anarchy which persists in the Muslim world. Unfortunately, the signs that the leaders, or at least the self-appointed leaders, of Islam in other countries are ready to learn from the Islamic Revolution in Iran are not very bright.

Let us take two examples. I saw recently an issue of an Islamic magazine called Hilal, from Turkey by a certain Salih Ozacan, who is significantly the representative of Turkey on the Rabita al-Alam al-Islami. This magazine was published in March, on month after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and yet it did not include a single word on the subject of Iran. Similarly, in Pakistan the magazine Criterion, which is affiliated to the Jama'at, also has been revived recently. Its first issue appeared after a long period of interruption, and it did not contain a word about the tumultuous events in Iran.

There is a great responsibility, not only upon the Muslim leaders and the Muslim at large, to learn the lessons of the Islamic Revolution, but upon the leaders of the Revolution to communicate their experience to the Islamic world as a whole. There are signs that this responsibility is perceived in Iran and that steps are being undertaken to fulfill it. It is too soon to predict with any confidence the future course of events in Iran. There are grave problems now being confronted in that country, which are to be anticipated and which are not as grave or as fatal as the western press makes out. They are, nonetheless, real problems demanding real solution.

It is also far too soon to say what will be the ultimate impact of the Revolution on other Muslim countries. Whatever be the future turn of events in Iran and other Muslim countries, there is no doubt that what has already occurred in Iran is at the same time the most unexpected and the most joyful triumph of the Islamic Ummah in the present century.

## Discussion

Dr. Abdel Halima: one is very concerned about the debate in Iran. What I do not understand is the attitude of the religious leaders of the so-called minorities, the Arabs and the Kurds, and so on. These people are demanding separation now. Under the Shah, they kept quiet. Now that the Islamic Revolution has taken place and we are all saying 'we are Muslims', they are going out against the Revolution. We hear, at least in the British press, that the religious leaders of these minorities are demanding emancipation. Could you comment on that?

Professor Alger: In the case of Kurdistan, the allegedly religious leader who is the most celebrated as demanding the segregation or autonomy of Kurdistan is a certain Fizz ad-Din Husain. He has been described as the Marx of Kurdistan since he is evidently on extremely good terms with the leftists in the area. More interestingly, after the Revolution documents were discovered which indicated that he was on extremely good terms with Sava before the Revolution. One of the common transformations following the Revolution is that former supporters of the monarchy have become Marxists. This is one of the forms in which counter-revolution is now seeking to mask itself in Iran. The case of Husain who is one of the so-called religious leaders of the Kurds in Iran is a case in point.

As to the other leaders of the Kurds in Iran, I do not think there are any persons even claiming religious prominence among them. The Kurds in Iran, as elsewhere, are fragmented. There is no single united Kurdish leadership with authority to speak for the Kurds of a single region, let alone for the Kurds or Khorana who is described as the religious leader of the Arab-speaking minority. I do not know anything about the history of this man, whether he was in any way active under the Shah's regime, nor do I know what effective control he exercises over those people in Khuzestan who are demanding autonomy.

The problem that has arisen in Kurdistan and Khuzestan and even in the Belukha – inhabited areas of the south – east is that the people have legitimate grievances. They have grievances inherited from the time of the Persian-speaking majority in Iran, that is, they were neglected and oppressed for a number of years. In addition, they have certain grievances particular to themselves. For years it was forbidden in Iran to use languages other than Persian for any purpose apart from oral communication, whether it the language be Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kurdish, Arabic, Belukha or whatever. In addition, certain minority-inhabited areas were worse off economically than others. A particularly glaring example was in Khuzestan, which was the source of the major wealth of the country the oil industry. One finds that the oil workers in Abadan, most miserable conditions. After the Revolution, these people naturally are impatient to see that their grievances are remedied.

This type of impatience one finds not only among the ethnic minorities but among many other sectors. One of the constant appeals of both Imam Khomeini and Bavarian is for revolutionary patience – patience under the existing circumstances, with people not pressing a class or sectional grievance at a time when there are important general questions to be dealt with.

Taking advantage of this situation in the minority-inhabited areas are enemies of the Revolution, both domestic and foreign. They will move in to build up matters to a point of no return. So far matters have been more or less contained in Khuzestan and Kurdistan. In future I do not know how soluble these problems will prove to be. I do not think it is true to say that

the religious leaders, whether in Kurdistan or Khuzestan as a whole are behind the various agitations.

Amen Udine Adman: Can you tell us something of the organizational aspect of the movement with regard to its membership, selection of members, training and the strategy, especially with regard to the Islamic Revolutionary Council?

Professor Alger: You are touching here on different matters. You speak about the movement, on the one hand, and the Revolutionary Council on the other. As for what we call in broad terms the movement, people should not be under the illusion that this is question of a formally organized movement with membership criteria, and so forth. Perhaps this is another lesson of the Revolution – that it was a broad-based Islamic movement and not some kind of affair in which people sit-down, as an examining body, and decides who is worthy to be admitted. What is necessary is to recruit, in an informal fashion, the massive support of the overwhelming majority of the people.

This is what happened in Iran. It is not that a secret party or organization was set up which brought more and more people into the fold. There were some organizations, the guerrilla organizations, which engaged in urban warfare against the Shah's regime for a number of years. This is not what made the Revolution. The Revolution was genuinely a people's movement. One can say that the Islamic Revolution in Iran was an example of mass political participation and is unique in modern times. It makes the parliamentary elections of the western countries appear as a mere game by contrast. In the United States, not more than thirty percent of the electorate turned out at the last election, and yet that is celebrated as the expression of the popular will. In Iran, in the face of massive pressure, the danger of death, dismemberment and torture, a whole nation took to the streets to enforce its demands.

This massive, almost elemental event has more in common with some natural catastrophe than with a common political happening. This cannot be the result of any broad strategic plan.

As I attempted to indicate, the organizational structure of the Revolution is extremely simple. It was a question of the directives being given by Ayatollah Khomeini, being distributed throughout Iran and then evoking an immediate response of obedience from the mass of the people. This is what it comes down to. Then we have the logistics involved, the planning of mass demonstrations. Then were mass demonstrations where people were organized and arrangements were made for feeding them, and so on.

The Shah, in one interesting comment after the demonstrations, said, 'This superb organization with which these demonstrations have been planned shows that there is foreign and communist involvement'. He had such a low opinion of his own people that he thought they could not organize a demonstration – a demonstration without foreign involvement. He was reflecting his own mentality. He could not take a single step without instructions from Washington, London or Moscow.

There is no organizational strategic mystery. The mosque was the fundamental of the organization. Perhaps this is a conclusion that I should have worked into my body of conclusions. One of the important elements in the success of the Revolution was the revival of the mosque, of the full dimensions and functions of the mosque, not simply as a retreat from society where people go to be away from the world and pray and make their ablutions and listen to the recitation of the Qur'an; on the contrary, it became a centre of struggle, an organization of command. In short, it was all that it was in the time of the Prophet, upon whom be peace.

Dr Abdel Hakim: This is an important point, because the difference between the Shi' I areas and what we have in the Sunni countries is marked. In the latter, the mosque is led by the man who is employed by the government and he is allowed only to speak about morals

and ethical matters. Unfortunately, we cannot expect any movements emanating from the Arab countries to come form the mosques. It will also have to be from outside the main traditional centers of learning such as the religious universities. These have been completely deposit- cited. They deal only with certain things and issue declarations supporting the king or the leader.

Professor Algar: It occurs to me that perhaps there is the necessity for the creation in the Islamic world of the phenomenon that the Muslims have brought about in the Soviet Union, namely, the underground mosques. In an interesting piece of research published by some French scholars, it was established that besides the approximately 300 official mosques existing in the Soviet Union, there were many thousands of unofficial underground mosques which have been the true means for the survival of Islam in the Soviet Union. Whereas in the officially recognized mosques you will hear the Khutba about the compatibility of socialism and Islam and the desirability of improving the output of the collective farm, and so on, in the underground mosques you will hear something quite different. Perhaps we should forget our obsession with nice domes and minarets and create underground mosques which are not mosques, architecturally, but in spirit are indeed true mosques.

Dr M Ghayas: This phenomenon of government- controlled mosques is more typical of Arab countries. It is not true of countries of the Indo- Pakistan sub- continent and South- East Asia.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: It is true that this does not apply in all Sunni countries. For historical reasons, on the sub- continent where Muslims were rulers for 800 years, comparatively very few mosques were built. But during the last 150 years of colonial rule, Muslims built more mosques because there was little else for them to do. These mosques are not run by the government of Pakistan, Bangladesh or India. Each little mosque is an autonomous unit which supports an imam, a muezzin and a number of others. Each has a catchment area for which it provides education, prayers and ritual services. They have become very active at some point in time, such as in 1857 in India and during the Pakistan movement in the 1940s.

Tayeb Habib: The most important factor we have to take into consideration is that people have had to be ready to sacrifice themselves for Islam and give their lives for it. This is a thing we have to learn- that youth has to give all of its energies to Islam and if this does not happen all these other things begin to take place. We can take over the mosques, but we have to go there and work in them. This is the problem. People do not go to the mosque. How can they effect changes in the mosque?

Professor Algar: It is certainly true that there is nothing to be achieved without sacrifice.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: Would you not like to go on and comment on the lifestyle that is brought about by western education? There are people who believe in God, who believe in Islam, but above all who believe in their career and their personal advancement, the bank balance, the mortgage, their wife and family and the bungalow. They come in and pray five times a day, but if you ask them for \$5 a month they would rather give you their life. It would be easier to scarify their life. This is where the Islamic Cultural Centre in London comes in. The centre is a cathedral, a showpiece, an apologia for the Muslim governments of the world. It is not there to serve Islam. The trustees are the ambassadors of these Muslim countries. Instead of trying to stage a coup and reform that place, or any other place like it, we have to establish our own alternative institutions and bypass those people. Let us show them to be as irrelevant as they are.

Musa Haneefa: We have heard in the western in the western press, before the Revolution, about the strikes and the different pressures brought upon the Shah's regime. Would you comment on that?

Professor Algar: I should certainly have mentioned the strikes, particularly the strikes of the oil workers which were caused the income of the Shah to shrink and which were supplementary by the strikes of workers in other sector of industry and within the civil services so that the country was virtually on a permanent general strike. This was an important supplementary lever of pressure. One thing said in the western press was that the communists or lefts elements were strongly entrenched in the Iranian oil industry in particular.

I can recall Mr. Schlesinger, the then American Secretary of State for Energy, predicting that Khomeini would be unable to get the oil workers to go back to work. In part, such distortions arise from pure and simple malice. They also arise from the fact that the very phrase 'workers' committee' tends to arouse in the western mind the image of some Marxist agitator. The worker's council which came into being in Iran, not only in the oil industry but in other branches of industry and in government offices, was very largely Islamic in their orientation and was commonly led by members of the religious leadership. After the triumph of the Revolution in Iran, the oil industry commenced functioning again at precisely the time that Ayatollah Khomeini appealed to the people to go back to work. It is not accurate to speak of an important communist presence. The whole subject of communism poses a separate question of some interest which might be gone into at some time.

One of the important things which have happened since the Revolution in Iran is that the communists – and here I use the term in a general fashion to mean not only the official, Moscow oriented party but the Marxist left in general – have come to realize the very narrow nature of their support. It is precisely for this reason that they are continuously agitating in industry to try to get the workers out on strike again. They are meeting with very little success. They are attempting to fasten on to various secondary issue and make them their own. One example was the so-called women's demonstration that took place in Tehran. Another was the leftist movements in the minority-inhabited areas. The leftists have been involved in these 'issue', attempting to compensate for their lack of appeal to those whose interests they supposedly espoused, namely, the working class and the peasants.

Imran Hosein: In relating the chronology of the events of the Islamic Revolution, you spoke of the comments of President Carter and in your conclusion you cited the opposition of the major powers as evidence of the authenticity of the Islamic movement. I wonder whether you could spend a minute or two on the Soviet role. I believe it must have been one of opposition throughout, but somewhere it must have changed, superficially, to one of support for Khomeini. My second question concerns the satellites of the great powers and their attitudes to the Revolution. Can you spend some time on Pakistan? We know that President Zia went across to Iran in late 1978 and that Pakistan was the first State to recognize the new regime. Is there some duplicity here?

Professor Algar: As to the Soviet Union, what you say is true. The Soviet Union, as late as November 1978, gave its support to the Shah's regime. If you read the articles and commentaries that appeared in Pravda, you will see that in their tone and content they were almost identical with those in the New York Times, saying that the Shah was a likable and impressive man and such things. It was in December that the Soviet Union, a little ahead of the United States, began to see the hopelessness of the Shah's position and gradually began to describe the events in Iran in a more positive light, although still underestimating the Islamic movement and suggesting that the role of Ayatollah Khomeini would be merely a transitional one, heralding the genuine revolution, that is a communist revolution. It gave orders to the Tudeh Part, which has been loyal to Moscow since its inception, to change its policies. Accordingly, one had the incongruous spectacle of members of the party being instructed to give an affirmative vote in the referendum to an Islamic Republic.

More recently, in the demonstrations against enemies of the Revolution, domestic and foreign, the Tudeh Party was in there, carrying banners proclaiming support for the Islamic Revolution. Even more than the rest of the left, the Tudeh Party is a spent force in Iran. It is not taken seriously.

As for Pakistan, I think you have answered your own question. It was a rhetorical question, not requiring any answer from me. As you say, General Zia went to Iran and went through the customary bow in front for the Shah and then, like many other people, attempted to change course rather abruptly after the triumph of the Revolution. Instead of being harsh on the Pakistan government, we should point out that this kind of sudden volte face was not in the least confined to Pakistan. We find so-called Islamic organization doing the same things.

In the United States, the Muslim Students' Association (MSA), which consistently sought to undermine any form of propagandistic activity by the Iranian students in America and those associated with them, suddenly transformed its attitude into a defense of the Islamic Republic after the downfall of the Shah. It is correct to say that the Jama'at-e Islami in Pakistan was extremely late in sending even a message of verbal did this happen. This duplicity, unfortunately, is not confined to Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan. It is the attitude of a certain mentality in the Muslim world that we find in a broad spectrum of persons, governments and movements.

Dr Abdel Halim: I suggested to the Islamic Culture Centre, here in London, that they should hold a meeting to celebrate the Islamic Revolution. They said, 'No! They do not celebrate the Islamic Revolution!'

Professor Algar: More serious is the fact that the Saudis arrested a number of people who were distributing one of the proclamations of Imam Khomeini, as part of their general mismanagement. And that was not the first occasion.

Dr M Ghayas: Do you not think that there is a need to point out that the acceptance of political party system by various Islamic movements as Islamic is in fact an importation from the west? It is divisive and creates similar problems as we have seen in the west.

Professor Algar: This is true, because the assumption of the parliamentary system presents a variety of parliamentary interchangeable alternatives, whereas, as Muslims, we believe that there is not such a permanent variety of viable alternatives. One of the slogans of the Islamic Revolution was 'our leader is Khomeini and our party is of the Allah'. This fragmentation of political life into competing parties, although it may be a reality at present, is not something which we should assimilate and accept as legitimate.

Dr Kalim Siddiqui: I now rise to close this meeting and which it to end the course. Those of us who have sat through these four lectures wish to thank Professor Humid Algar for the great learning and erudition he has displayed, together with a total command of his subject. We are grateful for the great patience and scholarship which he has shown in presenting his material. As an Institute, we are indeed fortunate to have had Professor Algar with us. We are fortunate, to have a scholar of such standing and erudition, who is so young, with plenty more to come from the same source.

We must also thank Allah that Professor Algar leads and works with a group of people in California who read, write and propagate. We in the Muslim institute share a common view of the world, of the Ummah. To you in particular, Professor Algar, I want to say how grateful we are for this course of lectures, for the learning you have imparted to us, the confidence you have infused in us, the intellectual and spiritual leadership you have set for us. It is for student like us an professor like you that the Muslim Institute exists and will continue to exist. It is a place where we can sit, work and analyze, and come to whatever conclusions must be brought out.

Today, Professor Algar, you have brought out ten conclusions from the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Each one was precisely formulated and concisely presented. When published, these lectures and the discussions will form the beginning of a vast literature which will be available for a long time to come.

I thank Allah for everything. He has made possible for us. We are a small, independent Institute and you are a professor, and we have come together in this venture and successfully concluded it. I thank you once again, I thank Allah, and I thank our students for their participation.

