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Activist Shi'ism in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon

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"There were three idol breakers, Abraham, Muhammad, and Ruh Allah Khomeini."

I heard this slogan and its variants hundreds of times in the street demonstrations in Tehran and other cities of Iran in 1978-79. The slogan captured the aspirations of the Shi'ite Muslim masses in Iran that ushered in the Islamic revolutionary movement under the leadership of the Ayatollah Khomeini. The Islamic revolution marked the beginning of an innovative idea in Shi'ite Islam, namely, the creation of an Islamic government in the modern nation-state of Iran under the religious leadership of its learned scholar, the ayatollah.¹ To the Shi'ite masses, the notion of a legitimate religious authority assuming political power corresponded to their historical affirmation of the theological leadership of the Prophet Muhammad's male descendants as divinely guided Imams (temporal-religious leaders). They believed that there had been twelve such Imams, the last of whom had disappeared in the tenth century C.E., to return at some future date as the Mahdi, the messianic deliverer. The Shi'ite creed had consistently depicted the ultimate divine victory as a time when the last Imam would return to establish an Islamic government and create the rule of justice and equity on earth. However, no human being could know the day or hour of that victory. During the extended period of waiting, Shi'ism developed and drew upon an identity rooted in a sense of a communal suffering and passion in anticipation of that day when God would send the Imam to deliver the community from tyrannical absolutist political power. In the meantime, pending the return of this messianic Imam at the End of Time, they had acknowledged the religious leadership of their scholars, who continued to guide the community in their mundane as well as spiritual affairs.

On 1 February 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini returned from a fifteen-year exile to institute a "rule of justice and equity" in Iran.² The welcome that he received among the Shi'ites reflected their heightened sense of expectation, sparked by the prophecy of one of the Shi'ite Imams, heard repeatedly in Iran at the time, that "A man will rise from Qum [as a precursor to the Mahdi] and he will summon people to the right

path. People will rally to him like pieces of iron [to a magnet], not to be shaken by strong winds, free and relying on God." The suffering-and-passion motifs developed in Shi'ism served for Khomeini as a ready-made source of inspiration in the successful mass mobilization of the Shi'ites in their struggle against the "unjust" rule of the "Pharaoh" of Iran, the Shah Reza Pahlavi. In place of the shah's regime he proposed to erect an alternative in keeping with the cherished messianic vision of Shi'ism: an Islamic government guided both by the leadership of the ayatollah and by the expectation of the return of the last Imam. In my conversations with various persons of different social strata at the time of Khomeini's ascendancy, I discovered that, despite widespread enthusiasm for this vision of Iranian society, almost no one, whether religious or secular in orientation, had a clear understanding of the nature or goals of "Islamic government" in the absence of the legitimately and theologically acknowledged last Imam of the Shi'ites.

The question to be posed in examining the recent Shi'ite revolution in Iran turns on this insight: given the continued absence of the Imam and of specific prescriptions for "Islamic government," how, then, did the Ayatollah Khomeini succeed in "activating" politically quietist Shi'ites? How, in other words, did he succeed in transforming the suffering-and-passion motif, an element of Shi'ite identity that had previously generated political quietism and withdrawal, into an activist ideology of rebellion and confrontation in the context of the modern age?

On 9 April 1980, Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, a renowned Shi'ite religious scholar and leader of the Shi'ite struggle for political justice in Iraq, was executed by Saddam Hussein, the ruler of Iraq. When I visited Iraq during the summer of that year, it was evident that the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran had at that time a receptive audience of Iraqi Shi'ites, especially among the leading Shi'ite scholars in the holy city of Najaf whom I interviewed. The Shi'ites of Iraq comprised the largest religious community in the country, and constitute a majority of the total population. The determination of the "downtrodden" Shi'ites of Iraq to press ahead with their demands for sociopolitical justice was evident in spite of Saddam's policy of ruthlessly suppressing any such Shi'ite-inspired threat to his own regime.

The execution of Baqir Sadr, often termed the "Khomeini of Iraq," was prompted by his numerous writings and speeches, widely circulated in the Islamic world, which encouraged the Arab Shi'ites of Iraq to demand their political rights. Like Khomeini, Baqir Sadr appealed to the latent radicalism of Shi'ite theology, with its emphasis on suffering and martyrdom as elements of the divine plan. This emphasis, with its glorification of the role of the underdog, appealed to adherents moving in the direction of activism to enhance their social position in Iraq. The Iraqi regime's fear of this inchoate activism was also revealed in its decision to execute Muhammad Baqir Sadr's sister, Bint al-Huda, who had collaborated with her brother in carrying on his struggle among the Iraqi Shi'ite women. Again, the question arises: how did Muhammad Baqir Sadr overcome the traditional restraints of Shi'ism which had required the Shi'ites to maintain the purity of their faith by shunning politics?

On 31 August 1978, Imam Musa al-Sadr, the leader of the Lebanese Shi'ites, was seen for the last time in a hotel in Tripoli, Libya. Musa Sadr had come to Lebanon in

1959 as a trusted representative of an Iraqi Ayatollah in Najaf and thereafter emerged as the leader of the Lebanese Shi'ites, who up to that point had made accommodation with their world of alien domination. Musa Sadr changed the subdued attitude of the Shi'ite community within a few years of his arrival. The heightened sociopolitical awareness among the Lebanese Shi'ites was underscored after his disappearance in Libya, when his mantle was inherited by another religious scholar, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadl Allah, at present the reputed spiritual leader of the Hizbullah (the "Party of God"). Like other contemporary Shi'ite leaders, Fadl Allah (b. 1934) was educated in Najaf, where he lived until the 1960s while keeping in close touch with the Shi'ites of Lebanon by visiting them from time to time. After his permanent return to Lebanon in the mid-1960s, he dedicated himself, through his numerous writings and lectures, to the nurturing of activist Shi'ism. From the pattern of political quietism and submission prior to the 1970s, the Shi'ites of Lebanon emerged as a major political force in Lebanese affairs in the 1980s. What prompted a radicalized Shi'ism at this time in Lebanon?

In order to answer the questions that these developments in the Shi'ite Muslim world raise, we must consider "the historical development in Islam within the hegemony of the West during the past century and a half" which has given rise to the religious fundamentalism among Muslims in the modern age.⁵ Religious fundamentalism among Muslims stems from the acute awareness of a conflict between "the religion which God has appointed and the historical development of the world which He controls."⁶ To correct the spiritual crisis caused by this awareness, Islamic fundamentalism has endeavored to strike a balance between the divine promise of earthly success to the Muslims and their contemporary situation by moving in two directions: first, by introducing reforms to prevent further internal deterioration of Islamic religious life; and second, by protesting and resisting alien domination in any form over the Islamic character of Muslim societies.

The first direction—the requirement of internal reform—has been dominated by the repeated call to return to the original teachings of Islam in the Qur'an and the Prophet's paradigmatic life (the Sunna), in variant degree and form. The proponents of this form of Islamic response to the perceived corruption and heedlessness among contemporary Muslims firmly believe that the earthly power and success of the first generation of Muslims were due to their strict adherence to the pure faith, to the fundamentals of Islam. Consequently, if the Muslims want to regain their early position of power and prestige, they must fashion their practice, including their government, on the ideals prescribed by the Qur'an and by the pristine community. In a sense their religious fundamentalism is puritanical. It has a considerable following among numerous sectors of Muslim brotherhoods throughout the Islamic world.

The second direction—the requirement of resistance to alien intrusion—has been far more challenging in that it has meant providing an Islamic alternative to the consciously imported or externally imposed sociopolitical systems during the past century and a half. Because of the importation of modernized legal codes and social norms, the proponents of this form of Islamic response to the threat of the alienation of the Muslim peoples from the Islamic way of life have also had to fall back on the funda-

mentals of original Islam. However, their return to the Islamic fundamentals is based on the acceptance of the linear notion of development of an Islamic society. As such, their retrieval of relevant teachings that would enable them to build an Islamic system adaptable to the modern circumstances is selective. In other words, their fundamentalism can be designated as an activist type of reaction involving creative interpretation of religious ideas and symbols to render them applicable to contemporary Muslim history.

In answering the questions raised above in connection with Shi'ite activism in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon, we will encounter both of these directions of Islamic fundamentalism, adopted in varying degrees of emphasis by the Shi'ite leaders responding to the perceived deterioration of Islam in the modern age.

At the outset it is important to state the difficulty faced by a Muslim Islamicist, who has actually witnessed the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism in the areas under consideration and whose primary interest is in conveying the actual practice in the Islamic world, in interpreting information pertaining to the dynamics of this practice so it will be intelligible and manageable to persons living and working in another culture. Ironically, at the present time, neither prejudice nor a lack of information stands in the way of understanding the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism; rather, the problem is that the considerable information we have has not advanced or refined our discernment of the *religious experience* of modern-day Muslims. In other words, what demands further clarification in Islamic fundamentalism relates to the essential nature of the Islamic religious experience. Most of the scholars on Islamic fundamentalism, because of a methodological insistence on neutrality and impersonality, have either denied its existence or have treated it casually. However, a central thesis of this essay is that the core of Islamic fundamentalism is the religious idealism that promises its adherents that once the Islamic norm is applied, it will effect dramatic change and vanquish the manifold sociopolitical and moral problems afflicting the Muslim peoples. In other words, it is Islamic religious experience, above all else, which guides believers in reasserting the relevancy and applicability of the normative pattern of pristine Islamic revelation to the task of creating the ethical order on earth. The self-confidence which arises from religious conviction inspires the believer to embark on the venture of reducing or eliminating altogether the existing gap between the ideal and the real. Thus our understanding of Islamic fundamentalism will have to be concerned with the innermost aspect of the ways in which Islam, as an eternal divine blueprint for ordering human life, provides its adherents with both revelatory and rational guidance as they experiment with ways of fulfilling the divine command in history.

Islamic civilization is founded on a unique understanding of creation and revelation which has been decisive in the shaping of Islamic identity. This difference in understanding can be studied in the Muslim comprehension of a salient feature of their history since Islam was proclaimed as a religion in seventh-century Arabia. The early history of Islam was marked by "centuries of temporal as well as spiritual achievement, an age of conquest and brilliance. . . . Muslim achievement was seen as intrinsic to their faith."⁵ This faith maintained that the divine purpose is reflected in

the cosmic order and in divine guidance for individual and collective conduct. Humanity is constantly faced with a fundamental moral choice of conducting itself so as to conform to the divine norm and be prosperous or face perilous doom as a consequence of rejecting that norm. Accordingly, human beings, as an inseparable part of the divinely originated cosmos, should aim at implementing God's normative will as expressed in the Islamic religious-moral law, the Shari'a. In this sense secularism, which in the context of modern Western civilization signifies a movement away from God, will inherently remain alien to Islam's theocentric emphasis.⁶ Commentary on the most important goal of Islamic fundamentalism (i.e., the creation of a social order based on Islamic norms of society) must recognize this subtle yet substantial distinction between the worldviews of Islam and modern secularism, lest it be reduced to descriptive data "without soul."⁷

Islamic fundamentalism is rooted in the widespread Muslim belief that the centuries of temporal and spiritual achievement in the past were the result of the religious experience of the Muslim community. This understanding of religious history orients and guides the sociopolitical behavior of the Muslims at the present time, in part because religious leaders and increasingly the masses perceive that the imported Western models for creating social institutions and a social ethic have failed to respond to their aspirations.

Of course Islam as a religious phenomenon is not severed from the mundane stage of human political, social, and economic endeavor; on the contrary, Islamic faith becomes a self-propelling and self-reinforcing inducement to the establishment of a just order, the advent of which is to be heralded by the success of these endeavors. Accordingly, the religious culture of Islamic fundamentalism is seen as playing a meaningful, even irreplaceable, role in nurturing new social, political, and cultural attitudes and in building new social and political institutions capable of responding to the demands of modernity. With this relationship between religious culture and sociopolitical contexts in mind, the present study of Shi'ite activism as an objective illustration of religious fundamentalism in Islam will undertake to sketch the religious history of the Shi'ites in the context of the sociopolitical vicissitudes of the community in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon in the last century and a half in order to answer the central question: why now?

The Vitality of Religious Experience in Islam

Islamic religious experience originates in a worldview shaped by revelatory monotheism that emphasizes individual and collective life as a reflection of God's purposeful creation to further the establishment of ethical order on earth. Accordingly, this religious experience has always involved attempts to comprehend and submit to God's revelation and to institute the just and good society. More importantly, this religious experience has created an ongoing tension between the exigencies of a timeless and immutable revelatory norm and its applicability for the Muslim community on earth. This tension has furthermore caused the Muslim community to perpetually

reevaluate the extent of its responsibility to the divine norm and, in the face of repeated failure, has caused Muslims to reform themselves to conform to its objective realization in history. The impact of the hegemony of the West, while not irrelevant, is secondary in importance to this fundamental burden of the religious experience of the Muslim. The religious concern of a Muslim today is how to live as a Muslim in a world dominated by forces that fail to see the challenge of his faith.⁸ The challenge of living as a Muslim in the modern age requires one to attend to the rehabilitation of the earthly success of early Islam, which was accomplished in a time when Muslims were in control of their own destiny without intrusion from colonial powers; when Muslims were themselves but still were successful and excelled in the world, reputedly because of their obedience to God's commands.⁹

The attempt to meet this ongoing religious challenge, complicated as it has been by the existence of injustice in the Muslim polity, gave rise in history to two distinct and in some ways even contradictory attitudes, namely, quietism and activism. Both of these attitudes had sanction in the revelational authority of the Qur'an and the Prophetic practice, the Sunna. However, the exponents of a quietist posture were often supporters of authoritarian politics and offered unquestioning and immediate obedience to almost any Muslim authority which publicly accepted the responsibility of upholding the Shari'a. Gradually, as the development of the political history of Islam bears out, the quietist and authoritarian stance became associated with the majority Sunni Muslims. Sunni religious leaders (the ulama) had a major role to play in shaping the quietist posture toward rulers: in many cases, they acted as the legitimizers of the de facto Sunni power and encouraged Muslim peoples to accept and obey the de facto Sunni authority. On the other hand, the exponents of an activist posture supported radical politics and taught that there was no obligation of obedience to corrupt and wicked rulers; indeed they insisted that the duty of "commanding the good and forbidding the evil" in the Qur'an necessitated the removal of an unjust authority from power. In the early centuries, the activist and radical stance became an attribute of Shi'ite Islam.¹⁰ However, following numerous unsuccessful attempts by the Shi'ite leaders at different times in their history to overthrow the ruling power (even when that power was Shi'ite), Shi'ites adopted the quietist attitude rather than the activist one. There is sufficient historical precedent to argue that the quietist attitude was at times adopted as a strategy for survival rather than as principle in itself. In the face of unfavorable circumstances it became imperative to protect Shi'ite life from destruction. Moreover, such quietist passivity was justified as a religiously sanctioned strategy (*taqiyya*) to allow for time to regroup and reorganize for future activism.

These realities render difficult the task of charting precisely the ebb and flow of Shi'ite activism, for given the proper sociopolitical conditions, the activist mentality may be seen as merely dormant or latent within Shi'ite quietism. As this essay argues, recent Shi'ite activism has, as in the past, emerged after a period of relative quietism in large part because of the central role played by Shi'ite religious leaders and their radical teachings in response to specific sociopolitical conditions. In other words, Shi'ite activism is in an important sense a function of the religious leaders' discern-

ment of both the "signs of the times" and of the possibilities for action present within the historical tradition.

As a minority group living under adverse conditions, Shi'ites had by the end of the third century of their existence following the death of the Prophet in 632 C.E. developed a religious-legal intellectual mechanism for resolving pressing problems encountered by the believers in crisis situations. This intellectual development, initially prompted by practical problems encountered by the Shi'ites in dealing with political vicissitudes, followed a dialectical pattern, incorporating positions that at one time seemed untenable but that through further interpretation of theological-political doctrines in the context of sociopolitical exigencies were declared valid.

Thus, for instance, one of the major problems facing the Shi'ites as a minority living under Sunni domination in ninth-tenth century Arabia, Iraq, central Iran, or Khurasan (today the southern Soviet Union) was whether a member of the community could enter the service of an "unjust" (meaning Sunni) authority and accept an official administrative position in its government. As it turned out, the Shi'ites had penetrated the Sunni administration even before a solution to satisfy a Shi'ite believer's conscience was sought. Accordingly, the resolution that it was permissible for a Shi'ite to accept an official position and remuneration for service rendered to an unjust administration as long as that "benefited the brethren in faith" (i.e., other Shi'ites) was given in the form of a religious justification for engaging in something that was earlier deemed to be prohibited and even harmful to one's faith. Such intense Shi'ite preoccupation with preserving the original purport of Islamic revelation was necessary, it was argued, given the absence of the divinely designated Imam to lead Shi'ite affairs on a day-to-day basis.

The Shi'ites believed that the Prophet had designated their first Imam 'Ali (d. 660) to succeed him as the head of the Muslim community. However, he was passed over for succession three times in a row by the caliphs Abu Bakr (d. 634), 'Umar (d. 646), and 'Uthman (d. 656), who were recognized as such by the Sunni Muslims. Finally, almost a quarter-century after the Prophet's death, the caliphate was assumed by 'Ali in 656. But 'Ali's leadership was marred by political turmoil in the Muslim polity, and after a brief and contested rule, 'Ali was murdered, and his son and designated successor, Hasan, became the caliph. Hasan's caliphate lasted for less than six months; then circumstances forced him to abdicate in favor of Mu'awiya, a member of the Umayyad clan whose enmity to the Hashimite clan of the Prophet dated back to pre-Islamic days in the seventh century C.E.

However, Hasan continued to be acknowledged by the Shi'ites as their second Imam. Against the backdrop of the political undoing of the Shi'ite leadership in the early history of Islam, the Shi'ite creed did not require the Imam to be invested with political authority in order to be accepted as the leader. The position of Imam was transmitted from one legitimate Imam to his successor through the process of special designation, which according to Shi'ite belief, also guaranteed authoritative transmission of the knowledge about Islamic revelation through these rightful and infallible Imams. Following Hasan, his brother Husayn became the third Imam of the Shi'ites. Both Hasan and Husayn held a special status in Muslim popular piety because they

were the grandsons of the Prophet through his daughter Fatima. The popular veneration of the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*) was common among Muslims in general.

However, in Shi'ism, the Prophet's family was regarded as the bearer of authentic Islam. Accordingly, all the Imams of the community had to be the descendants of 'Ali and Fatima. The Shi'ites held that there were altogether twelve such Imams, including 'Ali and his two sons, Hasan and Husayn. The twelfth Imam, the Mahdi, according to Shi'ite belief, is the last and the living Imam who disappeared in the year 874. His return as the messianic restorer of Islam is awaited by the Shi'ites.

The disappearance of the twelfth Imam is designated as the doctrine of "occultation." The period of occultation is divided into two forms: the "Short Occultation" and the "Complete Occultation." According to this division, during the Short Occultation, which lasted for some seventy years (874–941), the last Imam had appointed some of his prominent followers as his "special deputies" to carry on the function of guiding the community in its religious and social affairs. However, during the Complete Occultation (941–present), the learned jurists (the *faqih* or *mujtahid*, as they are also known) among the Shi'ites were believed to have been appointed by the twelfth Imam as his "general deputies" to guide the believers pending his return.¹¹ In other words, the learned Shi'ites were to assume the role of functional imams.

Undoubtedly the role of the functional imam was bound to become very influential and efficient in the community. Additionally, the community, whose single justification to be organized as the Shi'a ("partisan" or "supporter") was its unquestionable loyalty to the Imam, did not find it religiously problematic to include in that loyalty the tangible, functional imam, the Shi'ite jurist. Evidently this sense of faithfulness on the part of the Shi'ites toward their religious leaders made feasible the emergence of Ayatollah-like leadership in Shi'ism.

Modernization and the Reaction of Shi'ite Religious Leadership

One of the ironies in the history of modernization in the Islamic world lies in the fact of its introduction from outside by the Western colonizing powers and by westernizing elites within the Muslim community. Modernization, along with the reaction of the religious leaders in the Islamic world to its failure to arrest the sociopolitical and moral breakdown of Muslim life, thus cannot be fully appreciated without taking into consideration the way modernization was introduced by "modernizing dictators" who failed to establish appropriate mediating institutions by which the indigenous populations might have developed the attitudes and techniques required to deal with the demands of modernity.¹² When the aggressive Western nations began, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to dictate the direction of Muslim politics, the complacency of the Muslim governments seemed almost to welcome the modernizing policies of the westernizers among the Muslims. To these westernizers, the obvious course of action under those circumstances involved replacing the weaker sociopolitical system of Muslim societies with the stronger Western model. Their solution—westernizing as a means either for the Muslim polity to hold its own in relation to the

hegemonistic Western states, or simply as a means to attain power in the new order—served to extend and deepen Muslim dependence on the West.

Nevertheless, the Muslim westernizers failed to recognize that *westernization* was problematic without the attitudes and spirit which had imbued *modernization* in the West, including a "sense of innovation, of enterprise, of spontaneity" without which "the copier must always be several crucial steps behind."¹³ In other words, modernization could not be adopted merely by westernizing externally. Muslim societies had to find their own resources from which to build their new social order. The Muslim westernizers were slow to recognize this and instead hastened to shed their weaker Islamic heritage in favor of the stronger Western heritage. Because this policy rendered them dependent upon an alien cultural and political world, it robbed them of the sense of unassailable identity necessary for them to be able to shape the world on their own terms.

This fateful policy led to disastrous consequences, at least in the eyes of the Shi'ite opponents of the westernizers within their ranks. One such consequence was the importation not only of Western technology but also of its accomplice, the Western secular worldview, which in the wake of the Enlightenment and its scientific and social advances, called into question the saving power in religion. Hence, modernization through westernization in the Islamic setting implied nothing less than the displacement of the view that the Qur'an and the Sunna could provide a framework for prescribing appropriate social institutions and social ethics in the technical age. More important, this approach to modernization had adverse implications for the cultural and the political future of the Muslim nations and threatened to leave Muslims "culturally homeless" in their own nations.¹⁴

Nonetheless, Muslim leaders, both religious and the modernizers and westernizers, whether in Iran or in other parts of the Islamic world in the nineteenth century, were confronted by almost constant foreign intervention. The traditional ruling elite and the existing military and administrative institutions were no longer capable of resisting or checking this intervention that destabilized the Muslim public order. In the face of the Western encroachment and the inability of the Islamic heritage to check the loss of independence because of internal decay of the Muslim societies, there was a unanimous call for change through reform and adaptation to deal with the political and social decline that had shaken the confidence of Muslims. In this way, the Muslim ordeal with modernization through westernization began with the need to respond effectively to the deeply felt attacks on the Muslim community by Western interference and even outright colonization of their homelands.

At any rate, the development of such a response was complicated by the fact that westernization had been accepted as a necessary tool to combat political decline, and this acceptance led in fact to an inability to control the wholesale and indiscriminate importation of Western ideas. In fact, for the Muslim modernizers, westernization was the only way of dealing with the political predicament caused by Western powers. Islamic universalism came to be regarded as internally incapable of arousing a Western type of nationalistic attitude deemed necessary, ironically, to free a Muslim land from foreign intervention. However, the adaptation of Western ideas not only served to

eliminate the historical Muslim ambivalence toward the European concept of nation-state and to foster the national solidarity needed for success in implementing modernization; it also became the model for restructuring institutions dealing with the modern nation-state and the infrastructure to sustain public welfare.¹⁵

Nevertheless, an active reaction to Western domination, in some cases amounting to a militant anti-Western Muslim modernism, coincided with the despotism of the Qajar monarchs (1796–1925) in Iran and developed in response to their overt alliances with foreign powers for personal gain. Whereas the Shi'ite populace in Iran submitted to Qajar absolutism, the religious leaders, in alliance with their followers in the bazaar, attempted to carve a greater political role for themselves as the defenders of Islam "against the encroachment of infidels."¹⁶

In the nineteenth century, the interests of the Qajar shahs were served by the traditional and hierarchical organization of Persian society, in which arbitrary monarchical power was exercised through an elaborate system of formal alliances with various factions. Leading members of the village or tribal groups loyal to the Qajars were favored, for example, over their local and regional rivals, while urban leaders and neighborhood trade and bazaar merchants were pitted against each other. By appointing members of the Qajar tribe to the most important posts in the state and provincial bureaucracies, by imposing arbitrary taxes on dissenting factions, and by strengthening local alliance relationships, the shahs secured absolute control over the military and government administration. However, the resulting rivalries, including that between "the men of the sword" (administrators and military officials) and "the men of the pen" (the intellectual class, who played an increasingly prominent role in affairs of state) led to a contentious political climate that made possible British and Russian intervention in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The "men of religion," the ulama, also enjoyed great influence in society through their performance of public services (e.g., they administered local justice, solemnized marriages, presided over funerals, and acted as guardians for orphans and widows). Consequently, they too developed an independent patronage network in Iran, centered largely in the bazaar, but with lines of influence throughout the urban slums and to a lesser degree in the rural areas. By virtue of their religious learning and their representation of the masses before the government, the ulama were also popularly regarded as representatives of the Hidden Imam. The Qajars realized that they could harness the prestige enjoyed by the ulama to their advantage. Accordingly, the shahs treated the ulama with a show of respect even as they attempted to reduce the influence of those among them who were potential leaders of popular discontent.¹⁷

The mid-nineteenth century witnessed a subtle but important increase of European influence. Iran established an institute of higher learning on Western lines, even as the Europeanization of urban life in the Qajar capital of Tehran became widespread. However, although increasing numbers of Iranian students were coming in direct contact with the Western lifestyle by pursuing an education in Europe, Iranian society in general remained unaffected by the new admiration of the West and retained its loyalty to Islamic cultural tradition. However, the somewhat superficial westernization of urban life upset traditional alliances, and the ulama found it necessary to de-

fend the religion of Islam itself against the subversive influence of foreigners and foreign-educated Iranian youth.¹⁸ In the eyes of some prominent ulama, the Qajar rulers had failed to uphold their principal duty of defending the boundaries of an Islamic polity from the incursions of non-Muslims. One explanation for this lapse that gained currency among the masses held that the elite segments of the society—Qajar family members, educated bureaucrats, and the wealthier families—had abandoned or compromised Islam in their eagerness to acquire the reputed wealth to be gained, presumably, by accepting Western domination and by mimicking the West. Subsequently a twentieth-century Iranian intellectual, Jalal Al-e Ahmad, denounced the situation as "Westoxication."¹⁹

As the nineteenth century entered its final quarter, some of the ulama became dissatisfied with the governmental policy of pursuing foreign money, which led to further foreign domination of the Muslim lands. Consequently they organized to oppose the tobacco monopoly granted to a British company in 1891.²⁰ The ulama saw the monopoly as a threat of foreign, infidel intervention in Muslim society.²¹ The chief mujtahid, Mirza Hasan Shirazi, residing in Iraq at the time, issued a judicial decision (*fatwa*) prohibiting the smoking of tobacco until the monopoly was withdrawn. The decision by the mujtahid was obeyed throughout the Qajar realm. The success of the prohibition was achieved through the collaboration of intellectual, commercial, and religious groups: the religious class, operating in a traditional society in which actions contrary to religious authority were, and still are, regarded as a serious matter, were bound to play a leading role in political reform, but they did not do so in isolation.

The abolition of the tobacco concession was in large part facilitated by the emergence of a type of Qajar diplomacy, itself conditioned by the internal policy of "divide and rule" as a measure to keep the dynasty in control, which sought to draw contending foreign powers into Iran in order to pit them against each other and so maintain a rough balance of power and a maximum amount of freedom for the indigenous ruling power. In the case of the tobacco monopoly, Russia and Britain each took advantage of the Qajar concessions within the larger context of their rivalry for dominion over Iranian affairs.²² The ulama and their supporters interpreted the Qajar concessions as an outright capitulation of Muslim territorial integrity to the foreign powers and hence regarded the powers, without any discrimination, as an undivided, utterly hostile Western presence. (This perception of the foreign interference in Muslim affairs would be enshrined in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of the 1980s as expressed in the words of Khomeini's famous dictum: "Neither East nor West.")

That the Shi'ite ulama were able, in stark contrast to their Sunni counterparts, to assume a leading public role in opposition to the regime during the 1891–92 protests over the tobacco monopoly can best be understood in terms of the Shi'ite recognition of the more centralized religious leadership of the learned jurist. During the Qajar period, this recognition made it possible for a prominent mujtahid to assume the most authoritative religious office in Shi'ism, namely, that of *marja' al-taqlid* (source of imitation [for religious practice]). By virtue of a sound faith, knowledge, and charac-

ter, marja' al-taqlid are entrusted with the rational interpretation (*ijtihad*) of the sources of Islamic law, the Qur'an and the Sunna, in the light of the requirements of modern life. When the Shi'ites acknowledge someone as the marja' al-taqlid, the latter's rulings in any matter become binding on them. Moreover, the wealthy in the community send their religious offerings to the marja. This practice assured the independence of the Shi'ite religious authority, who resided in Iraq to escape royal pressure. This unique feature in the Shi'ite religious institution allowed Mirza Hasan Shirazi, the acknowledged marja' al-taqlid in 1891, to command obedience to his decree prohibiting the smoking of tobacco. However, as pointed out earlier, the religious decree could not have by itself achieved the social mobilization of all the elements in the society. The alliance between the religious and the modernizing secular sections of the society, on the one hand, and the cooperation of the commercial sector with the ulama, on the other, was of great consequence in turning the concession into a national movement.

The Constitutional Revolution in the first decade of the twentieth century provided a second occasion for alliances between the ulama and different and at times disparate, and secular, factions within a society absorbing the impact of modernization. However, the Revolution (1906–11) also resulted in the dissolution of the ulama-secular coalition which had proven so effective in 1892. The initial demands of the coalition for reforms in the legal and governmental systems through constitutionalism represented "the first direct encounter in modern Iran between traditional Islamic culture and the West"²³ and generated an intense debate between different factions belonging to a spectrum of ideologies.

The last decade of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century was a time of heightened popular resentment against the Qajar family. And although the shah Muzaffaruddin made certain attempts at domestic reform in 1900, concessions granted to Europeans and Russians to pay for his extravagant travels in Europe led to foreign interference in the internal affairs of Iran. Moreover, the shah disregarded the warnings of religious leaders to abide by the Shari'a and thus was perceived to be abandoning the delicate relationship with the ulama that served as the basis for religiopolitical consensus. Popular resentment led in turn to demands for reforms in political procedures in order to effectively limit the autocratic power of the ruler through the promulgation of a constitution, and to guarantee active participation of the new political elite in the elected consultative assembly.²⁴ There was support for the establishment of a "chamber of justice" with the authority to address sociopolitical grievances.

Thus the opening of the first representative assembly (*majlis*) in 1906 was in large measure a victory of Iranian intellectuals seeking political redress by the various means of a constitution, a national assembly empowered to set limits on royal finances and to regulate administrative practices, a code of laws, and in the place of the shah and his governors, regular courts to administer them. The intellectuals were able to muster the support of the religious leaders and their popular constituencies. Moreover, their familiarity with European constitutionalism earned them the leading role in providing the general direction and in making specific demands such as the one for a chamber

of justice. The Shi'ite jurists provided the necessary religious legitimation for these demands and reminded the shah of the temporary nature of his rule in the absence of the Imam of the Age, the only authentic ruler of the Muslim community.

However, not all the jurists in Iran were supporters of political reforms and liberalization. Some prominent jurists regarded the modernization of political institutions as un-Islamic and were accordingly royalists, even when they believed in the necessity of legal restraints on the monarchical authority. Consequently they encouraged counter-revolutionary associations to oppose the liberal democratic ones that had sprung up throughout Iran. Undoubtedly, besides their misgivings about the overall advantages of modernization through westernization, the opponents of political liberalization regarded the reforms undertaken by the Constitutionalists, especially in the areas affecting judiciary and financial administration, as a challenge to their traditional authority.²⁵

In 1907 the opposition to the Constitutionalist reforms was led by a prominent jurist, Shaykh Fadlullah Nuri, who formed a political association to demand that all parliamentary legislation (which he regarded as an innovation of a sort in the Islamic context) be subject to ratification of a committee of leading members of the Shi'ite religious leadership to ensure its religious validity. Nuri's proposal, which was passed and made part of the constitution, marked the tumultuous relationship between the secularly conceived legislative assembly and the religiously derived legal doctrine that regarded the divine law, the Shari'a, as the perfect and sufficient norm for sociopolitical organization at any time. Moreover, it created a political rift between the modernizers and the religious leadership that would continue to the present time and would adversely affect much of what the Constitutional Revolution had accomplished in the area of political liberalization.

However, because the constitutional movement had embraced a vast group of people from every social quarter, it also generated varying expectations. Each element in the governing elite—the educated westernized intelligentsia, commercial leaders, and the Shi'ite jurists—had its own agenda in supporting the creation of modern institutions to bolster the aims of the Constitutional Revolution. Whereas the westernizing intelligentsia and the commercial leaders had little or no interest in pursuing any Islamic goals in providing the means to satisfy the demands of the people, the Shi'ite jurists saw the revolution as an opportunity to implement the Shari'a, the divine blueprint for a just order, in all its aspects throughout Iran.²⁶

The Constitutional Revolution thus failed to unite the disparate and at times conflicting intellectual elements to create a uniform ideology and carry out its program of action (which was, according to the jurists, that of implementing the Shari'a, and according to the modernizing intellectuals, that of establishing a constitutional system of government and modernization of the state apparatus). A conflict between traditionally educated jurists and the modernizers with a modern secular education seems in retrospect inevitable. Through their traditional juridical training in the theoretical basis of the Shari'a, which prepared them to inferentially deduce fresh judicial decisions under changed circumstances, the jurists found the application of Islamic norms in the modern age both relevant and feasible. On the other hand, the modernizers,

under the influence of European secular ideologies, recognized immediately the tension between the concept of a state based on Western-influenced institutions and the traditional Muslim ambivalence to a political life founded on such an exalted sense of nation. Accordingly they deemed it impossible for the traditional Islamic norm to provide democratic structure and thus facilitate public participation in government in a modern nation-state. Consequently the religious leaders and their modern-educated partners in the constitutional movement disagreed on the implementation of the Islamic norms in the changed environment.

With subsequent sessions of the majlis came unprecedented and ever more complex laws for electors which had the practical effect of continually reducing the religious component of the chamber. It soon became clear that the traditional ulama and the westernizing Muslims simply had little in common beyond their opposition to the regime. The westernizers sought in European models the ideal constitution, while the ulama-merchant coalition sought to protect religious prerogatives and the traditional bazaar economy. The atomization of the constitutionalist movement, first into modernizing and traditionalist camps and then within each camp, accelerated as primordial loyalties and radical ideologies splintered the antiroyalist forces. However, the coup de grace was delivered to the constitutionalist forces, ironically enough, by the West.

The 1907 Anglo-Russian entente divided Iran into three spheres of influence, comprising a Russian-dominated north, a small neutral zone, and a British-controlled south. In June 1908, with the treaty as justification, the Russians instigated a successful coup and backed by troops in Tabriz, quickly assumed control of much of the country. They were kept from Tehran itself only by the concerted action of an alliance of northern revolutionaries and Bakhtiyyar tribesman. In 1911, however, Russian forces found a pretext to march on Tehran, causing the collapse of the majlis and the dissolution of the modernist-ulama alliance.

This disagreement between the secularly educated Muslim modernizers and the religious leaders had wider ramifications in the future role of Islam and its interpreters. The jurists became suspicious of the religious sincerity of the liberal modernizers and their imported Western ideas about modernization. Moreover, the ultimate defeat of the constitutional regime in 1911–12 and the restoration of the traditional ruling class through the intervention of the foreign powers of Great Britain and Russia, who saw control of Iran during the First World War as essential to their military strategy against the Germans and Ottomans, left very little opportunity for the jurists to test their refined juridical methodology in deducing laws and to demonstrate its feasibility in sociopolitical relations in the modern situation. Furthermore, the position of the most prominent among the Shi'ite jurists, who were regarded as functional imams and thus as models for the believers, became increasingly confined to strictly religious matters, a development which forced their withdrawal from a sociopolitical setting which now required a new type of expertise. The establishment of institutes of technology and higher learning on the Western model, dedicated to training the new bureaucrats of the modern governmental and administrative systems, weakened and finally undermined the monopoly of the Shi'ite jurists as shapers of their followers' worldview.

Hence, modernization through westernization left the religious leadership isolated from the public domain and from public discourse. In light of this precedent, the revolution of 1978–79 is all the more striking in that both the leadership and the general body of the Shi'a had for the balance of the twentieth century been conditioned to accept that doctrinally as well as functionally, Shi'ite jurists could not assume political leadership, *especially* in the modern context.

Following the deposition of the last Qajar ruler in 1925 and prior to the revolution of 1978–79, Iran was ruled by Reza Khan and his son Muhammadreza, who assumed the crown under the dynastic name of the Pahlavi. Reza Shah was at first cautious in his dealings with the ulama, whom he had assured of his intention to fulfill Islamic law and to forego any type of radical reforms like those introduced in the neighboring Turkish republic with the secularist policies of Kemal Atatürk. However, Reza Shah pursued a despotic program of modernization that included the suppression of all opposition. Between 1925 and 1941 the program was undertaken with a careful eye on conservative and religious sensibilities. Educational reform included the institution of a public elementary school system and a uniform school curriculum during the years 1925–30 and the establishment of Iran's first modern university in 1935. Coupled with the development of industry and other economic enterprises, the reforms reinforced the decline in the influence of the ulama and their traditional allies in political and social life.

By the late 1930s, the consolidation of royal autocracy allowed for a more direct attack on the religious establishment. The conflict was intensified by a series of direct attacks on the centers of ulama power in Iran. Attempts were made to control the Shi'ite mourning rites commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husayn; mosques were opened to tourists; exit visas for the annual hajj pilgrimage to Mecca became a state prerogative; the veil was outlawed and women were ordered to dress in western-style clothing; and statues of the shah (suspicious of idolatry, the ulama had prohibited the representation of human figures) began to appear everywhere. The leading ulama within Iran were left with minimal jurisdiction in the public order to challenge the shah's policy of modernization, which continued to restrict the public role of Islam.

With World War II came the end to Reza Shah's development program and his rule. In the wake of the German attack on Russia in 1941 and Germany's intention to use Iran as a base against Russia, the British and the Russians demanded free transit and military assurances from Reza Shah, who refused to comply. As a result, Iran was occupied in the north by the Russians and in the south by the British. In September 1941 the allies pressured the shah to abdicate, and his young son Muhammadreza was put on the throne.

The young shah assumed the crown under politically unstable conditions created by the occupation. These conditions were a major factor in the growth of oppositional organizations and economic and social disruptions. From 1943 to 1945 political activity increased and political groups emerged under diverse ideologies, from the conservative, religious party on the right, supported by the ulama and their allies in the bazaar, landlords, and tribes, to the leftist Tudeh, with its communist and socialist

program. Between the two was a nationalist group led by Mohammed Mosaddeq, whose opposition to foreign intervention in Iranian affairs was well-known.

The conflicting currents of ulama politics came most clearly to the surface in the Mosaddeq interregnum. Whereas leading members of the religious class remained withdrawn from political involvement, some politically activist ulama adopted a radical stance by organizing small but enthusiastic anti-Western groups to combat the antireligious attitude perpetrated by the regime. One such group was the *Fida'iyan-i Islam* under the Ayatollah Kashani, made up of a small number of young zealots who assassinated persons they regarded as enemies of Islam. The *Fida'iyan*, like other small groups under the leadership of the activist ulama, were a religious nationalist group and as such had supported Mosaddeq's anti-British policies during the nationalization of the oil industry, a move designed to ease the economic and social crisis that faced Iran in the late 1940s and early 1950s. However, some senior ulama, including Avatollahs Bihbahani and Burujirdi, suspicious of the secularist tendencies in Mosaddeq's nationalist movement, were in favor of a constitutional monarchy. Thus, by the time of the overthrow of the nationalist Mosaddeq regime in 1953 by an American- and British-supported coup, the ulama from both quietist and activist camps were united in their support of the coup, which returned the shah to power. The shah returned with a vengeance and took repressive measures to deal with his opposition, whether religious or otherwise.²⁷

After World War II, Iran experienced massive economic transformations with significant political consequences, including the social and cultural dislocation of particular groups. Throughout this experience the government was engaged in implementing a program of development and modernization through the building of a high-capital, high-technology economy. This process virtually destroyed the traditional social fabric of Iranian society, creating as a consequence political difficulties of varying intensity. The shah's modernization policy "completed the destruction of important sectors of the rural and bazaar economies and it forced large numbers of people out of ancestral homes and villages into the urban labor market and into new patterns of life. Moreover, much of the social and cultural impact of the shah's program was erratic and inconsistent."²⁸ The program notably failed to extend opportunities for active participation in the political process to a new generation of modern, educated Iranians; it also tended to alienate the new generation from their comprehensive cultural roots through educational and cultural policies which diluted the Iranian religious identity by overemphasizing its pre-Islamic component. In the eyes of many who would come to oppose the regime, the forced modernization, bereft of opportunities for the political development of potential citizens, was to proceed at any cost and through ruthless measures adopted by a despotic authority.²⁹

The economic and political conditions under the shah in the 1960s and 1970s created circumstances ripe for the emergence of a new type of leadership in Iran, though not necessarily a religious one. There is evidence to support the argument that the development policies pursued by the shah's absolutist system were bound to create an oppositional unifying leader who would attempt to reinspire confidence in the traditional Iranian culture as capable of producing an alternative to modernization

programs that had threatened the traditional and religious security of the ordinary people and, more dramatically, had led to the human misery attendant upon profound social and economic dislocation. Certainly it is clear that the conditions under the shah were the sine qua non for the emergence of political activism among the previously quiescent Shi'ites of Iran.

The Shi'ite religious leadership seized upon this potential for activism in the growing disillusionment with the rapid modernization and the social consequences of Western "cultural colonization."³⁰ Moreover, the religious leadership was fully aware of the direct or indirect attempts at undermining their influence and appropriating their traditional perquisites. However, because of their self-imposed aloofness from the complex sociopolitical developments of the period and their lack of intellectual preparation to respond effectively to the developments, the leaders were ill-equipped, in dealing with modern ideologies, to engage in a critical analysis of the factors contributing both to the social dislocations and to the weakening of tradition. In addition, modernization had the effect of alienating many members of the Muslim community from their religious leaders. Because the potential of Shi'ite religious culture for political activism rested upon the interpretations of the social, economic, cultural, and political conditions pronounced by the *marja' al-taqlid*, it is probably correct to suggest that, by weakening the influence of the religious leaders, the shah's government in the 1960s sought to undermine the practical religious culture and the sense of moral responsibility toward these conditions.

The de-emphasis of the Islamic element in the restructuring of a modern Iranian society was directed more particularly toward the educated class and the younger generation in the high schools and universities. Development programs that as a matter of policy ignored Islam as an important factor in orienting Iranian society to modernity were hardly concerned about the erosion of traditional moral and religious values that increasingly affected the educated class. The *marja' al-taqlid* and other leading members of the religious class found it most difficult to reach the young and the educated, disoriented as they were, the religious leaders believed, by the corrupt, narrowly materialistic lifestyle associated with Western prosperity.

Educated Muslim youth, frustrated in the 1960s and the early 1970s with the failure of imported Western ideologies and institutions to satisfy their sociopolitical aspirations, began to exert pressure on their religious leaders to reinterpret Islamic revelation and apply it to their situation. However, any attempt to shape responses to meet the needs and demands of the people in the contemporary setting inevitably involved revising, or even abandoning, traditional (and socially outmoded) religious prescriptions, especially in the area of interpersonal relationships, that were often conditioned by an outdated sociopolitical perspective. For example, traditional Islamic sources are almost silent on the public role of a Muslim woman, because their ideal involvement in traditional Muslim society was always conceived of in terms of their domestic pursuits. With the introduction of compulsory education for girls and the opportunities that became available to the modern educated Muslim women outside their homes, religious leaders were expected to provide necessary religious sanction for their extradomestic exposure.

Such an attempt to shape a response to modern living was perceived as requiring "rethinking" and "reapplying" of independent reasoning (*ijtihad*). In the past, application of personal independent reasoning by the Shi'ite jurists had made it possible to maintain a smooth interaction between the demands of the original teachings of Islam and the new contingencies underlying the social, political, and economic conditions of the time. In the context of the rapid pace of social and political change in the affairs of the Shi'ite community during the modernization program of the shah, the religious leaders were not yet willing to venture innovative decisions to ease the burden of the Muslim conscience as it struggled to find an answer to the vital question: is Islam capable of providing direction to a modern life?

In the absence of the twelfth Imam, the functional imam (i.e., the *marja' al-taqlid*), was seen as legitimately invested with the discretionary authority to make binding decisions for the public interest of the Shi'ite community; he alone could undertake to rethink the relevancy of Islamic norms to modern life. As far as the political order was concerned, the assumption of the Hidden Imam's constitutional authority by anyone, including a well-qualified Shi'ite jurist, would depend on a juridical reinterpretation of the doctrine that the ideal ruler was the Imam in occultation. Accommodation with changed circumstances within the context of existing political arrangement had precedents in the long history of Shi'ism. The historical precedents would guide them to infer solutions in modern times.

Historical Roots of Contemporary Shi'ite Activism

If Islamic fundamentalism in the modern setting signifies the "reassertion of the relevancy and applicability of the given norm, with the intent to enhance its effective application,"³¹ then Shi'ism offers the modern world a rare glimpse of the dynamics of a religious ideology that embodies postulates about active divine intervention in human history and claims that its program will establish the best social order of which human beings are capable.

As a religious ideology Shi'ism functions within a specific sociopolitical order which it constantly evaluates and calls upon its adherents either to defend and preserve or to overthrow and transform. Moreover, it operates within a specific cultural setting whose most powerful symbols it utilizes in order to articulate its subtle and even complex ideas in the general language of the people. Accordingly, Shi'ite religious ideology is both a critical assessment of human society and a program of action, whether leading to a quietist authoritarianism or an activist radicalism, as the situation may require, to realize God's will on earth to the fullest extent possible.

From this ideological perspective, Shi'ite movements, at different times in history, have reflected the intent of Islamic revelation to the construction of a new society and polity. The obvious question that arises in the minds of pious Muslims when they experience injustice, whether personally or collectively, is: do Muslims have an obligation to take arms to oppose and expunge tyranny and corruption within the community? The response to the question of perceived injustices has depended upon the

current sociopolitical circumstances and has been conditioned by the precedents set by the Shi'ite Imams whose reactions to similar situations remain a precedent for their followers.

Shi'ite theologians and jurists have treated the major question of armed revolt against an unjust government by examining whether such an action is justifiable without the leadership of a divinely appointed Imam, or whether any individual qualified Shi'ite can undertake to fight the tyranny and corruption of his time if it has reached an intolerable level. Historically the guidance of Shi'ite jurists, whether leading to radical political action or otherwise, turned on their interpretation of the two basic doctrines intrinsic to an authoritative perspective or worldview that organizes the mundane existence of Shi'ite Muslims. These two doctrines are the justice (*al-'adl*) of God and the leadership (*al-imama*) of the righteous individuals. In the highly politicized world of Islam there have been numerous ideas and conceptions about God's purpose on earth and leadership of human society. Territorial expansion in the name of Islam and the process of supervising the conquests and administering the affairs of the conquered peoples not only demanded strong and astute leadership, it also required the creation of a system that would provide stability and prosperity. Undergirding this social, political, and economic activity in the early centuries was the promise of Islamic revelation that only through obedience to God will believers accomplish the creation of a just and equitable public order embodying the will of God. The promise was buttressed by the certainty that God is just and truthful. Divine justice demanded that God do what was best for humanity, and divine truthfulness generated the faith that God's promise would be fulfilled if humanity kept its covenant of working toward a truly godly life.

The proof that God is just and truthful was provided by His creating the rational faculty in human beings and sending revelation through the prophets to guide it toward the creation of an ethical world order. The indispensable connection between divine guidance and the creation of an ethical world order provided an ideological mandate for the interdependency between the religious and the political in Islam. It also pointed to some sort of divine intervention being necessary in the creation of a just society. Consequently, the focal point of the Islamic belief system envisions the Prophet and his properly designated successors as representing God on earth—the God who invested authority in them in order for them to rule over humankind rightly. In other words, the linkage between the divine investiture and the creation of an Islamic world order became a salient feature of Islamic ideological discourse almost from the beginning. Accordingly, the basic religious focus on the creation of just order and leadership, which can create and maintain it, orients the worldview of the Muslims in general and of the Shi'ite Muslims in particular.

However, the essential connection between the religious and the political became an underlying source of crises in the Muslim community. The first major crisis in the political history of Shi'ite Islam occurred with the death of the Prophet (632 C.E.). At this time the first Imam of the Shi'ites, 'Ali, according to Shi'ism, was denied his legitimate claim to succession as the head of the Muslim community, their caliph. This was regarded as usurpation of the rights of 'Ali. The circumstances demanded

that Muslims explain the situation that seemed to point toward the breach of divine promise. The desperation felt by the pious observers of the political scene is discernible in the subsequent insistence upon a qualified leader who would assume political power to further the divine plan and to enable God's religion to succeed.

The crisis prepared the ground for the emergence of the early *Shi'ra* (partisans) of 'Alī as a distinct group in the Muslim community who refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the three caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthman, who had preceded 'Alī in the Medinan caliphate (632–56). However, these caliphs, including 'Alī, are regarded by the Sunni as the ideal Muslim rulers who, because of their personal character, deserved the position of leadership in the community.³² The differences in the Muslim community over the question of rightful successor to the Prophet marked the permanent rift between the two factions that would gradually develop into two distinct schools of thought in Islam, namely, Sunnism, the majority, and Shi'ism, the minority faction. Sunnism and Shi'ism, even when they have shared common beliefs in the matters of fundamentals of Islam, have differed substantially in their conceptualization of early religious history. Whereas Sunnism has regarded this religious history as the period of the great earthly success of Islam to which later generations of Muslims should aspire to return, Shi'ism has downplayed the period as a deviation from the true Islamic position. The ideal period in Shi'ism hence is to come in the future when the last messianic Imam, the Mahdi, will establish a rule of justice.

The period that followed this first crisis in Shi'ite history witnessed discontent among all Muslims. Some were moved by profound religious conviction and deep moral purpose to seek activist political steps to confront injustices. The activist solution to seek redress for wrongs committed by those in authority was by no means limited to the Shi'ites only; rather, dissatisfaction and dissension were widespread among all people, a situation which led to the murder of the third caliph 'Uthman in 656. He was regarded by the rebelling Muslims as both personally corrupt and politically unjust.³³

The period, moreover, generated much discussion and deliberations regarding the duty of obedience to an unjust ruler who caused disobedience to God. The most important questions that were raised in this connection and that had implications for the political stance adopted by some activist groups, including the Shi'ites was, what were the limitations over the power of a Muslim authority in the state that ideally existed as a divinely approved necessity to promote justice and equity? And what were justifiable courses of action that the community could take if the authority in power became unjust, thereby making the state evil?

Responses to these questions could not ignore the Qur'anic imperative that calls for "commanding the good and forbidding the evil," which in fact was the underlying principle in the permission for undertaking *jihad* (the struggle, up to and including armed struggle, to realize God's will for humanity). Jihad, as such, becomes a divinely sanctioned instrument to procure the divine will on earth. However, jihad in the sense of "holy war" is less evident in the Qur'an. The Qur'an justifies defensive warfare on moral grounds, namely, to fight injustices and persecution in society. A legitimate Muslim ruler is obligated to undertake defensive jihad to protect the lives and prop-

erty of the Muslim community. Thus it became firmly established in early Shi'ite theology that every pious Muslim was to oppose any nominally Muslim authority regarded as corrupt and degenerate, as long as such opposition did not endanger the believers' lives.

By the time of the second crisis, the end of manifest leadership of the Imams through the occultation of the twelfth and last Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (941), the notion of a revolution to overthrow unjust authority favored by the radical element in the Shi'ite community had taken on an apocalyptic cast: the revolution would come in a future time of fulfillment. This belief in the future coming of the Mahdi, the restorer of pristine Islam, is shared by all Muslims, Sunnis and Shi'ites alike (although the term "Mahdi" has become associated more with its Shi'ite connotations). However, in Shi'ism, belief in messianism has served a complex, seemingly paradoxical function. It has been the guiding doctrine behind both an activist political posture, calling upon believers to remain alert and prepared at all times to launch the revolution with the Mahdi who might appear at any time, and behind a quietist waiting for God's decree, in almost fatalistic resignation, in the matter of the return of this Imam at the End of Time.³⁴ In both cases the main problem was to determine the right course of action at a given time in a given social and political setting. The adoption of the activist or quietist solution depended upon the interpretation of conflicting traditions attributed to the Shi'ite Imams about the circumstances that justified radical action. Resolution of the contradiction in these traditions in turn was contingent upon the agreement about, and acknowledgement of, the existence of an authority who could undertake to make the Imam's will known to the community. Without such a learned authority among the Shi'ites, it was practically impossible to acquire reliable knowledge about whether a government had indeed become evil, and whether a radical solution was an appropriate form of struggle against it.

In Shi'ism, authentic religious knowledge was regarded as part of the divine guidance that was available to the community even though the Imams were not invested with political authority and were living under the political power exercised by the de facto governments. With the termination of the theological Imamate in the tenth century, when the last Imam went into occultation, the Shi'ites were faced with the issue of the continuation of this guidance. The Imam's authority (notwithstanding his lack of political power, he still had the right to demand obedience from his followers) had been located in his ability to interpret divine revelation infallibly. The Imam's interpretation and elaboration of the revelation formed, in fact, part of the religious obligations binding on believers. Moreover, the interpretation was regarded as the right guidance needed by the people at all times. In the absence of the twelfth Imam during the occultation, the Shi'ites sought that guidance in the authority that could assume the decisive responsibility of guiding the community to the will of God under critical circumstances.

Following the occultation, the Shi'ites believe that the authority was assumed by the deputies of the Hidden Imam, who were believed to have been directly appointed by him. During the Short Occultation for some seventy years following 874, four prominent members of the Shi'ite community became the functional imams. The year

941 marked the beginning of the Complete Occultation which extends to the present time. During the Complete Occultation the duty of guiding the community was undertaken by the qualified Shi'ite jurists who, according to Shi'ite belief, became the leaders of the community through a general designation of the Hidden Imam.

This development consolidated the authority of Shi'ite jurists by initiating an unprecedented relationship between believers and their religious scholars. This sense of devotion to the religious leaders as the representatives of the Imam made possible, after 941, the exercise of powerfully influential religious leadership in the Shi'ite community, pending the return of the messianic Hidden Imam.

The Leadership of the Jurist and its Legitimation in Shi'ite Political Jurisprudence

The question of religious leadership has always received greater attention in Shi'ism than in Sunnism. This is reflected in the debate among the Shi'ites regarding the theological propriety of the religious scholars (the mujtahid or faqih) assuming the leadership of the Shi'ite community as the specifically designated deputies of the Hidden Imam. However important the question of the continuation of divine guidance might have been for the Shi'ites to survive under the de facto governments of their times, it was not for just anyone to undertake the responsibility of guiding the community. In accordance with the Shi'ite expectations of their religious leadership, the position of a jurist as a deputy of the Imam certainly needed authorization from the Imam himself, a sort of deputization that could guarantee the availability of reliable guidance. But in view of the prolonged occultation of the Imam and the absence of special designation during this period, no realization of this prerequisite was possible. The issue of the proper designation of leadership was discussed, and exegetically resolved, in the works of Shi'ite political jurisprudence. Therein the lack of specific designations by the Imam led to an important distinction between "power" (which could exact or enforce obedience) and "authority" (which reserved the right to demand obedience, depending on legal-rational circumstances), a situation that had existed even during the lifetime of the Imams. Under those concrete historical circumstances (the lack of actual power) Shi'ite jurists argued that both the investiture of authority and the assumption of political power were necessary for the creation of the rule of justice.

However, delegation of the Imam's authority to a jurist who could assume both the authority and the power of the Imam without specific deputization was deemed dangerous by the jurists themselves. As historical events unfolded, and as Shi'ite peoples were subjected to one seemingly arbitrary, autocratic rule after another, the jurists grew increasingly wary of the exercise of absolute authority without divine protection in the form of the infallibility that the Shi'ite Imam enjoyed as a successor of the Prophet, and taught that government by anyone besides the Imam was evil and those engaged in it inevitably corrupted. This attitude toward contemporary governments can be discerned in the works of Shi'ite jurisprudence in which those jurists

took it upon themselves to produce a coherent response to the problem and the nature of delegation of the Imam's authority to a Shi'ite jurist and to assert the Twelver Shi'ite doctrine that the infallible Imam was the only Just Ruler (*al-sultan al-'adil*). Pending the establishment of the ideal rule of the Hidden Imam, the possibility of an absolute claim to political power (*saltana*) and authority (*wilaya*) resembling that of the Imam himself was ruled out. Nevertheless, the rational and revelational need to exercise authority in order to manage the affairs of the community was recognized and legalized.

During the Occultation the establishment of the Twelver Shi'ite dynasties like those of the Buyids (945–1055), the Safavids (1501–1786) who converted Iran to Shi'ism, the Zands (1750–94), the Qajars (1794–1925) and the Pahlavis (1925–79) did not alter the basic doctrine of the Twelver Shi'ite leadership, that is, the doctrine of the theological Imamate. According to this doctrine, the twelfth Imam was the only legitimate ruler of the Muslim community, and he would return at the End of Time to establish the Islamic public order. Nonetheless, the indefinite absence of the Imam allowed the jurists to develop a profile of a just Shi'ite figure of authority, however temporary and fallible, who could in the interim follow the Qur'anic mandate of creating a public order that would "enjoin the good and forbid the evil."

It is important to bear in mind that Shi'ite jurists were individually responding at specific times to specific political situations created by the establishment of Shi'ite temporal power in their works on jurisprudence. Their works included judicial opinions about the reigning political power, whether Sunni rulers or the professing Twelver Shi'ite dynasties. Thus there was a lack of any definite organization or strict uniformity of response among them. The Shi'ite jurists in the classical age (ninth–twelfth centuries), although often living under some sort of state protection (especially under the Shi'ite dynasty of the Buyids), continued to be private individuals as they are today. Although less willing than their Sunni counterparts to relax the limits of Islamic authority or to encourage obedience to unjust and tyrannical governments, Shi'ite jurists were themselves engaged in rationalization of, and accommodation to, their historical circumstances. These responses to the existing political order reflect the tensions within the Shi'ite political jurisprudence created not only by the occultation of the Imam but also by intellectual interaction between Shi'ite and Sunni scholars. The occultation of the Imam and the minority status of the Shi'ites made it possible, and in some instances necessary, for them to be quite pragmatic and realistic in their contacts with contemporary de facto governments and in the formulation of their judicial opinions about them, more so if the de facto rulers happened to be professing Shi'ites. Accordingly, each work of jurisprudence is copiously documented by quotations from the fundamental sources of Islamic religious practice, the Qur'an and the Sunna, as well as the critical evaluation of the opinions of precedent-setting jurists. Meticulous examination of past legal decisions and the rational and traditional proofs produced to support them reveal that these decisions were never simply theological abstractions but, to the contrary, were made in intimate dialogue with specific situations in the Muslim polity at the time.

In order to trace the development of the jurist's authority that culminated in the

powerful position of an Ayatollah in the 1970s and 1980s, it is necessary to proceed chronologically, from period to period of Shi'ite jurisprudence. It is convenient to divide the responses of Shi'ite jurists in regard to the nature of deputyship and the extent of its authority into four historical periods when major judicial decisions with implications for the contemporary Shi'ite leadership were inferentially deduced.³⁵

The first was the Buyid era (945–1055), the time of a decentralized Iranian dynasty that controlled such centers as Baghdad in Iraq and both Shiraz and Kirman in Iran. This was the first instance of a Twelver Shi'ite dynasty coming to power. However, the Buyids did not lay any claim to religious authority. In fact, they allowed the Sunni caliph to remain as the head of the Muslim community. Consequently, the Buyid assumption of temporal power did not affect the basic Shi'ite doctrine regarding the constitutional leadership of the twelfth Imam. Nevertheless, according to the juridical formulations at this time, a number of obligatory religious acts had implications for the Imam's constitutional authority. Islamic law required that either the Imam or his specifically designated deputy should be present to undertake or convene the religious duties with political implications. Thus, for instance, in the case of waging offensive jihad against nonbelievers, Shi'ite law required that only the Imam as the head of the Islamic polity could initiate the war against the nonbelievers, or he could appoint his deputy to undertake it on his behalf. Evidently in the absence of the Imam or his special deputy during the Occultation, the question of offensive jihad was ruled as suspended until the Imam reappeared as the messianic restorer of pristine Islam.

While the question of engaging in offensive jihad had little relevance for the Shi'ites living as a minority in the Islamic world in the tenth century, there were other obligations in the Islamic law, such as the duty of preservation of social order, collection of religiously ordained taxes, and administration of justice, which had relevance for the existence of the Shi'ite community under changing sociopolitical circumstances. The performance of these sociopolitically relevant obligations could not be postponed indefinitely, and the juridical works produced during the Buyid period advocate and support the major development of that period, namely, the assumption of leadership of the Shi'ite community by their qualified jurists. This assumption of leadership was in turn (and necessarily) seen as a logical extension of the leadership of the Imam as the dependable guide of the Shi'ites.

The Shi'ite jurists became the custodians of the Shi'ite creed, including the theory of the spiritual and temporal authority of the Imam. The establishment of a Twelver Shi'ite temporal authority of the Buyids during the occultation of the Imam, although an innovation of a sort, had absolutely no impact on the central doctrine of Shi'ism, namely, the Imamate. Accordingly, no attempts were made to explain this development in political jurisprudence as a political development. The juridical decisions made at this time disclosed the conviction of Shi'ite jurists that the continuation of the socioreligious structure of the community did not depend upon the temporal authority of the Shi'ite dynasty; rather it depended upon the consolidation of the institution of the Imam's deputyship. In almost all the cases in which religious acts with political implications were required, the jurists deemed it permissible for the

Twelver Shi'ite jurists to substitute for the Imam or his specifically designated deputy. For the jurists of the first period, deputyship was a sort of trust on behalf of the Hidden Imam. As a trustee of the Imam among his followers, a Shi'ite jurist could assume all those functions that the Imam as a political head of the community was entitled to undertake himself or would have delegated to someone qualified to represent him. Thus, the Shi'ite jurists were authorized to undertake functions with political implications as functional imams, in the general interest of the Shi'ites.³⁶

The second period of Shi'ite political jurisprudence (twelfth–fourteenth centuries) witnessed political turmoil in the central Islamic lands (the modern-day Middle East) following the breakdown of the Sunni political authority and the destruction of the Baghdad-based Abbasid caliphate by the Mongols in the thirteenth century. This unfavorable situation in the Sunni world, in addition to the earlier downfall of the Shi'ite Buyid dynasty under which the Shi'ites had enjoyed relative peace and security, convinced the Shi'ite jurists that the existence of a just Shi'ite political authority (other than that of the Imam) willing to consider the implementation of the Islamic laws was not only expedient but necessary. The reason was that the existence of such an authority would fulfill the Qur'anic obligation of "enjoining the good and forbidding the evil." The fulfillment of this obligation would also provide religious grounds to apply the phrase *al-sultan al-'adil* (the just ruler) to any Shi'ite authority committed to the promulgation of the Islamic laws. In other words, the Islamic public order under a just ruler was an end in itself only inasmuch as the community required it for "drawing close to obedience to God and away from disobedience."³⁷

Among the administrative institutions that had grown up in the Islamic empire, administration of justice became one of the most important in preserving the popular sense of justice. Consequently, at times when the central power of Muslim rulers had disintegrated, the prestige and influence of the Muslim judge as the upholder of that popular sense of justice in general became immeasurable. In Shi'ism the administration of justice became the most fundamental aspect of the growing political power of the jurists, who, in their well-established position as the deputies of the Imam by this time and hence competent administrators of justice in the juridical writings, were regarded as the protectors of the people against the unjust behavior of those in power. In addition, the expectations of the Shi'ite community required the jurists to undertake the wider role of functional imam (beyond their already acknowledged role as the interpreters of the Islamic revelation), in their capacity as the "general" deputy of the Hidden Imam. During this period the new role of the functional imam was carefully explored in detail in jurisprudence under the rubric of the "Guardianship of the Jurist" (*wilayat al-faqih*).

The third period in the development of Shi'ite political jurisprudence was the Safavid era (1501–1786). During this time the first Shi'ite state was established in Iran under the Safavids. The successful conversion of their domains to Shi'ism afforded natural legitimacy to the Safavid rulers. Thus the jurists had little difficulty in validating the Shi'ite temporal authority by interpreting the rational necessity for the management of the affairs of the community by the ruler of the age (*sultan al-zaman*). Meanwhile, the most significant argument justifying the authority of the jurist as the

“guardian” of the community turned on the desirability of implementing fully the Shari'a before the messianic return of the twelfth Imam. The jurist, according to this argument, had to be asked by the ruler to undertake the responsibility of the execution of the divine norm. The comprehensive authority of the jurist as the functional imam had the same validity, in this line of reasoning, as the power of a ruler in whom authority was invested in the Muslim public order. Moreover, just as the investiture of authority was a precondition to assuming any official political function in Islamic public order, so the investiture of comprehensive authority in Shi'ite political jurisprudence was regarded as necessary to carry out the obligation of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. This latter obligation, as noted earlier, was the main religious justification for the existence of any government during the occultation. However, as the opinions of the leading jurists of this period indicate, the assumption of the political authority by the ulama was contingent upon their investiture by the ruler.

The fourth period of Shi'ite political jurisprudence began with the establishment of the Shi'ite dynasty of the Qajar in Iran in the late eighteenth century. The role of Shi'ite religious leadership received fuller elaboration during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, until it reached its logical conclusion in 1980 in the constitutionalization of the “Guardianship of the Jurist” in the modern nation-state of Iran. During this fourth period, the position of the jurist as the guardian of the community became institutionalized and centralized through the process of an obligatory religious requirement for all Shi'ites to accept the authority of a mujtahid in the position of marja' al-taqlid. It is significant that with the weakening and discrediting of the Shi'ite temporal authority, the jurist was seen as an alternative head of the Shi'ite public order who could fulfill the function of the just ruler. In popular Shi'ite belief at the time, the marja' al-taqlid was the deputy of the twelfth Imam authorized to assume the duty of guiding the community during the occultation. Moreover, in the perception of the Shi'ite masses, the learned, pious jurist had a more legitimate claim than did the monarch to exercise the comprehensive authority in the name of the Hidden Imam pending his return. The jurist in the position of marja' al-taqlid, then, came to enjoy the popular confidence to function as the guardian of the Shi'ite community.

However, to generate the loyalty of the Shi'a, the marja' al-taqlid had to demonstrate objectively that he possessed “sound belief,” “sound knowledge,” and “sound character.”³⁸ He demonstrated sound belief and sound knowledge through his learning, his publications on religious subjects, and the training of disciples. His sound character was established by his piety, which qualified him to become the leader of daily congregational worship and to receive religiously ordained taxes for distribution among the needy.

As depicted above, the Qajar and post-Qajar eras coincided with the introduction of modernization, that is, a modern system of administration, modern education, and modern values. The modernization of traditional institutions in Shi'ite society, however gradual and at times mismanaged, created tensions in the sociopolitical life of the community and undermined the effectiveness of traditional Shi'ite leadership. Additionally, during the reign of the shah the Shi'ites exerted enormous pressure on their

religious leaders to resolve the tensions created by changed expectations under the forces of modernization. The leaders' response to this pressure was the retrieval, assertion, and final development of the doctrine of the “Guardianship of the Jurist” (*wilayat al-faqih*), a concept the relevance of which now outstripped academic concerns, for it offered the theological sanction by which to legally consolidate the position of a Shi'ite jurist as the executor of the affairs of the Shi'ites in a Shi'ite state in modern times. The consolidation of a jurist's position was sought by raising the fundamental question taken up by many Shi'ite jurists since the founding of Shi'ite dynasties: If a temporal ruler can assume and exercise the discretionary authority of the twelfth Imam in a Shi'ite state, then is not a well-qualified jurist, who has exercised most of this authority as a de facto functional imam during the occultation, a more fitting candidate for this position?

The response to this question regarding the candidacy of the Shi'ite jurist as a legitimate head of a Shi'ite state to administer the affairs of the community in modern times was undertaken by prominent jurists such as Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran and Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir Sadr of Iraq. They offered their own nuanced interpretation of the Guardianship of the Jurist in the modern context.

Shi'ite Ideology in the Modern Age

In analyzing Shi'ite activism as a manifestation of contemporary Islamic fundamentalism I have thus far discussed the theological-political and juridical sources of the modern upheavals in the Shi'ite world precisely in order to underscore the importance of the ideas which constituted Khomeini's Shi'ite ideology. However, it is unrealistic to think that the Shi'ite public has responded primarily, if at all, to the purely intellectual basis of Shi'ite juridical leadership in their collective decision to become supporters of the temporal authority of the marja' al-taqlid. Nor did ordinary believers automatically recognize sound belief, knowledge, and character in the jurist whom they acclaimed as their religious authority and, in the events of 1978–79, their revolutionary leader. What made the Shi'ites responsive to their religious leaders, especially to Khomeini and Baqir Sadr, relates in large measure to a threefold religious experience which shapes their political attitudes and inspires their willingness to strive to preserve their religious identity in the context of the larger Muslim community. Khomeini and Baqir Sadr, among other Shi'ite religious leaders, well understood this dynamic, and so availed themselves of these three religious experiences in order to mobilize the Shi'ite community for the sociopolitical causes they desired to pursue.

The threefold experiences, in approximate chronological order, were martyrdom (*shahada*), occultation (*ghayba*), and precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyya*).

Martyrdom (Shahada) in Shi'ite Religious Experience

Martyrdom has been sustained as a religious ordeal in Shi'ite political history by the conviction that God is just and commands human society to pursue justice in accord with the guidance provided by divine revelation to the Prophet. When the Shi'ite

Imam, following the death of the Prophet, was denied his right to assume the temporal authority invested in him by divine designation, as the Shi'ites believed, direct political action was regarded as justified to establish the rule of justice—to replace a usurpatory rule by a just and legitimate one. The ensuing struggle to install a legitimate political authority resulted in the murder of several Shi'ite leaders. In the light of this conviction, the violent deaths were interpreted by succeeding generations as martyrdom suffered in order to defeat the forces of oppression and falsehood.

The most powerful symbol of this religious experience has without question been the third Imam of the Shi'ites, Husayn b. 'Ali (d. 680), the grandson of the Prophet, whose martyrdom is annually commemorated with solemnity throughout the Shi'ite world. Imam Husayn provides Shi'a history with its pathos. Husayn's journey to Kerbala in southern Iraq in 680 was undertaken in response to the political circumstances created by the ascension of Umayyad ruler, Yazid, as a caliph of the Muslims in Damascus, Syria. In Kerbala, on the tenth of Muharram, the day of 'Ashura, Husayn and his family and friends were mercilessly killed by the Umayyad troops. The Shi'ites have preserved this moment in their religious history as a tragic event reminding humanity of the sullied nature of power and the way the righteous ones suffer in the world. For the greater part of Shi'ite history, the memory of the tragedy of Kerbala has been tempered by the tradition of political quietism among the Shi'a minority; however, there were times when the episode was interpreted by the religious leaders in such a way as to encourage activism to counter injustice in society.

The importance attached to the commemoration of Imam Husayn's martyrdom has provided the Shi'ite community with a rare paradigm that is traced with remarkable enthusiasm by lay believers. In modern times, the commemoration went beyond its basic purpose of recounting the tragedy that befell the family of the Prophet. It provided a platform that was used to communicate Shi'ite teachings to the populace, which had little or no academic preparation to utilize written sources on the subject. It was also in such gatherings that prominent Shi'ite jurists lectured or engaged in debate with other Islamic schools of thought, thus demonstrating their leadership abilities to the community. Indeed, these important gatherings have served as the principal platform of communication with the Shi'ite public, among whom politically adroit marja' al-taqlid such as Khomeini and Baqir Sadr found their main support.

In fact in the case of the Lebanese Shi'ites from the 1970s onward, it is remarkable that this religious institution has been the primary medium through which socio-politico-religious ideas have been disseminated by their leaders, including Imam Musa Sadr and Shaykh Fadl Allah. But with the increasing literacy of Lebanon's Shi'ites, Fadl Allah's publications, in particular *Islam and the Logic of Force*, have been influential as well. Recognizing the low level of religious education among the Lebanese Shi'ites, these leaders used the commemorative gatherings as a forum by which to awaken their followers to the injustices of the sociopolitical realities of modern Lebanon. Imam Husayn's act of self-sacrifice became a model in the struggle to improve the standing and increase the influence of the Shi'ite population in the country.³⁹

With the increase of political awareness among the Shi'ites came a demand for some detailed information on religious topics that were touched upon in the com-

memorative gatherings in the 1960s and 1970s. Subsequently the mourning gatherings were utilized to disseminate religious literature which among other things included information on both quietist and activist postures of Shi'ite ideology, depending upon the sociopolitical climate at the time. Unlike the theological and juridical corpus produced by the jurist-theologians for themselves, this religious literature was written in the language of the people and in response to their religious and social questions. This widely read or read aloud (in rural gatherings where the literacy rate still continues to be low) literature recounted the miracles of not only the Imams but also their deputies, those who held the prestigious position of marja' al-taqlid. The spread of this devotional literature was instrumental in legitimating the Shi'ite jurists, at least in the eyes of the Shi'ites, as legitimate guardians of the community pending the return of the twelfth Imam. Certainly the stories about learned and pious jurists were disseminated with the purpose of strengthening the belief of the Shi'ites in the tenet that even during the absence of the Imam, divine guidance had been continuously available to the community through these pious eminent scholars, the marja' al-taqlid, and their erudite representatives among the Shi'ites like Imam Musa Sadr and Shaykh Fadl Allah. These pious gatherings took place in the special buildings constructed for that purpose and known as *husayniyya*, or they were simply convened in a mosque.

The husayniyya or the mosque served, then, as a crucial center for public religious education and in the 1970s and 1980s were important indicators of political and social awareness among the believers. Representatives of the leading marja' al-taqlid lectured in these centers and gave the gatherings either an activist or a quietist tone. They were in most cases students in the *madrassa* (centers for learning Islamic theology and jurisprudence) of that marja' al-taqlid whose stance on religious and political matters they represented among the Shi'ites. They made the marja' al-taqlid's religio-political position known among his followers, who through the formal process of declaring that they abided by his rulings had accepted his authority in matters pertaining to the faith. In addition, these deputies of the marja' al-taqlid functioned as the collectors of the religiously ordained taxes. The administration of the religious taxes paid by the Shi'ite community to their religious leaders became the most significant source of their independence and the independence of their institutions of religious learning, the *madrassa*, from any sort of government control. Indirectly this independence from the government increased their power and prestige as the trustworthy protectors of the Shi'ites against the perceived oppression and tyranny of government officials.

The religious experience of martyrdom in Shi'ism thus provided Shi'ite leaders with a formidable channel for mobilizing the Shi'ite populace. The intense glorification of martyrdom in Shi'ite religious experience, with its appeal to human suffering causing sorrow and lamentation at times of defeat, as well as the human sense of justice demonstrating political choice and courage at times of revolution, created and nurtured religious institutions like the commemorative gatherings, the *husayniyya*, and the mass-educating preachers in the context of the sociopolitical circumstances of the community. These in turn directly contributed to the acknowledgment and con-

firmation of the leadership of the Shi'ite jurists as the guardian of the community pending the final revolution of the twelfth Imam.

Occultation (Ghayba) in Shi'ite Religious Experience

The second religious experience, namely, occultation (the removal of the Twelfth Imam from the temporal sphere), signified the postponement of the establishment of just Islamic order pending the return of the messianic Imam. Moreover, it reflected and helped to explain the failure of the Shi'ite revolts provoked by atrocities of the ruling house in the centuries before Shi'ite political power became consolidated in Iran under the Safavids in the sixteenth century. Such revolts, endemic among Shi'ites after Kerbala, tended to be of comparatively small scale and in the central Islamic heartlands of Iran and Iraq tended to be efficiently suppressed. In essence it was extremely difficult under conditions of ghayba to mobilize significant sectors of Shi'ite society to political action, for such action was often seen as futile in the face of overwhelming state power and in the absence of incontrovertible evidence that the ensuing struggle was legitimized by divine will and to be marked by the fulfilment of Shi'ite messianic expectations. Thus those revolts that succeeded in establishing independent dynasties including the Fatimid Isma'ili Shi'ites, who founded a ruling dynasty in Egypt (909–1171), and the Zaydi Shi'ites, who ruled in Yemen until the 1962 coup, tended to be restricted to the frontiers of Islamic society. However, neither the Fatimids nor the Zaydis maintained the belief in ghayba as the Twelver Shi'ites did. Conversely, as the success of the Buyids and the Safavids demonstrates, Twelver Shi'ite dynasties could be and were established in periods of political weakness or disorder through external imposition, that is, through the successful conquest of outside, invariably tribal, forces. In all these cases, it should be noted, the intense revolutionary fervor that brought these movements to power tended to dissipate once the reins of government were firmly in hand.

Religiously speaking, the doctrine of occultation connoted some sort of divine intervention in saving the life of the Imam, the only awaited Just Ruler, by moving him from the realm of visible to invisible existence, and conveyed the idea that the situation was, at least before the Safavid era, beyond the control of those who proposed to overthrow the tyrannical rulers in order to establish the Islamic rule of justice. Furthermore, belief in the occultation of the Imam and his eventual return as the Mahdi of the Muslim community at a favorable time helped the Shi'ites to persevere under difficult circumstances and to hope for some degree of reform pending the Imam's messianic return. Such expectation necessarily implied postponement of the establishment of the thoroughly just Islamic order pending the reappearance of the last Imam, who alone could be invested with valid political authority.

As with the religious experience of martyrdom, the belief in the occultation of the twelfth Imam led, given a particular religious leader and particular sociopolitical circumstances, to the promotion of both the activist and the quietist attitudes. On the one hand, the doctrine raised questions about the pretext for any Shi'ite leader to venture to create a thoroughly Islamic public order during the absence of the twelfth Imam; on the other hand, it demanded that the entire Shi'ite community provide the

means for its religious, social, and political survival pending the final return of the Imam. The attitude of resignation that can properly be derived from this religious experience has been adopted by a number of leading marja' al-taqlid today, for whom, it appears, the establishment of an Islamic social order without divine intervention through the return of the infallible Imam is impossible. It is for this reason that they have slighted any political involvement in the contemporary demand for sociopolitical justice. Moreover, they have regarded public involvement of any other marja' al-taqlid in assuming the political authority, even within a limited national boundary of a modern state, as theologically and juridically problematic. The problem, as they see it, is in its implications for the universalistic authority of the Imam as the sole Just Ruler whose political authority cannot be delegated to any Shi'ite, however qualified he may be.

On the other hand, the attitude of responsibility for the survival of the community generated by the religious experience of occultation convinced marja' al-taqlid such as the Ayatollahs Khomeini and Muhammad Baqir Sadr to argue for an activist interpretation of occultation. Thus they called for the active involvement of the religious leadership as theologically legitimate and juridically incumbent and articulated a religious and moral obligation of Shi'ites to support their marja' al-taqlid in the struggle against the unjust sociopolitical system.⁴⁰ By this interpretation, activist religious leaders delegated the Imam's political as well as juridical authority to a qualified marja' al-taqlid, who in his capacity as the trustee responsible for supervising the affairs of the Shi'ites during the Occultation would be willing to shoulder the obligation of "enjoining the good and forbidding the evil." In the eyes of both Khomeini and Baqir Sadr and of those who followed them in Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon, the "Guardianship of the Jurist" became almost an absolute, religiously sanctioned political institution. As an absolute type, this institution was empowered to make all necessary binding decisions that cover the broad range of moral, legal and religious matters in a modern state.⁴¹

Precautionary Dissimulation (Taqiyya) in Shi'ite Religious Experience

The open call for the redress of injustices committed against the Shi'ites in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s to some extent minimized the preponderance of the third religious experience, namely, precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyya*), which in the past had been a predominant consideration in determining the political direction of the Shi'ite community. Historically, this practice of shielding the true intent of the faithful community from unbelievers and outsiders characterized the political attitude of all the Imams and their followers subsequent to the martyrdom of the third Imam Husayn. The Shi'ite leaders encouraged taqiyya and even declared it to be a duty incumbent upon their followers, so as to avoid pressing for the establishment of the Shi'ite rule and the overthrow of the illegitimate caliphate. In a sense, taqiyya signified the will of the Shi'ite community to continue to strive for the realization of the ideal Islamic polity, if not by launching the revolution contingent upon the appearance of the messiah and his consolidation as the leader of the community, then at least by preparing the way for such an insurrection in the future. In the meantime,

the Shi'ites had to avoid expressing their true opinions publicly about the shortcomings evident in the various de facto Muslim governments, regardless of whether they were Shi'ite or Sunni, in such a way as to cause contention and enmity. Consequently the practice of *taqiyya* was determined by the conditions of the Shi'ites as a minority group living under adverse settings; here again, the religious leadership determined the appropriate time for the community to abandon quietist passivity and engage in activism.

Shi'ite activism in recent years, as in the earlier times, has been the result of its leadership appropriating the stance symbolized by the religious experience of martyrdom. Such an experience, as interpreted by the leaders in the 1970s, regards martyrdom a new revolution in itself, violent death suffered in order to uphold justice against oppression. Thus, in his major work on the justification of resorting to force in Islam,⁴² Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadl Allah, the leader of the Hizbullah (the Party of God) in Lebanon, regards the notion of quietist passivity in Shi'ism as rooted in an erroneous understanding of the theologico-political doctrine of precautionary dissimulation.⁴³ In order for Lebanese Shi'ites to seek redress for their oppressive sociopolitical condition, Shaykh Fadl Allah has consistently encouraged them to actively pursue the establishment of social justice as provided in the Shari'a. Moreover, he contends that the Islamic revelation places that responsibility on them at all times without limiting its relevance or applicability to a particular place.

The transformation of traditional Shi'ism in the 1960s from a politically quietist, *taqiyya*-oriented stance to an activist preparation for revolution was deepened by the reinterpretation of the role of religion and the custodians of religion, the *ulama*, in modern society by a modernly educated intellectual, Dr. 'Ali Shari'ati (d. 1977). There is sufficient evidence to show that Shi'ite activism under the leadership of the *ulama*, as maintained by Ayatollah Khomeini in his lectures in Iraq in the later part of the 1960s, was elicited by Shari'ati's criticism of the *ulama*'s role in modern society. The 1960s in Iran were the decisive years for bringing the religious scholars in tune with modernity. Several leading scholars of Shi'ite jurisprudence, including Murtada Mutahhari (d. 1979), one of the intellectual leaders of the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1978–79, made pertinent suggestions about reforming the most important institution of the religious leadership during the occultation, namely, the *marja' al-taqid* establishment.⁴⁴ But Shari'ati took it upon himself to confront the religious leaders, who were satisfied with their traditional submissive interpretation of the Shi'ite religious experience and had abdicated their social and political responsibilities. He challenged them to plumb the activist potential of Shi'ism and provide the Shi'ite community with much-needed ideological leadership in modern times.

In his position as a teacher at the University of Mashhad, Iran, Shari'ati was in close contact with the Iranian youth exposed to the shah's modernization program. Aware of the predicament of the majority of the rural, industrious, educated youth, he proposed a form of Shi'ism which took into consideration the personal, social and political bonds inherent in the concept of Islam as a total way of life. As the title of his seminal work, *Islamology*, suggests, Shari'ati analyzed the interaction between the

underlying values of Islam and society—the very embodiment of the cultural life of the community that continued to nurture the youth. In his discussion of Shi'ite history, Shari'ati depicted original Shi'ism of Imam 'Ali as dedicated to egalitarianism, preeminently concerned with social justice, and most of all as unabashedly revolutionary. Shari'ati denounced the official Shi'ism of the Safavid court (and by implication, of the Pahlavi court) for all the later accretions and the aloofness of the prominent members of the religious leadership. The manipulation of Shi'ism and the religious leadership by the rulers had led, he charged, to the distortion of the original Shi'ism of the Imams 'Ali and Husayn, and more devastating, to the quietist authoritarian politics which had plagued so much of traditional Shi'ism.⁴⁵

Accordingly, Shari'ati introduced a crucial distinction between the original Shi'ite spirit and its later political and social incarnations under Shi'ite temporal authority. This move served in his scheme to portray authentic Shi'ism as a socially and politically binding ideology, open to reinterpretation in the light of modern contingencies. To become politically effective within the Shi'ite community, however, such a reinterpretation had to be undertaken by an enlightened religious scholar, a *mujtahid*, who would engage in a sort of *jihad* to make it compatible with the aims of original Islam, namely, the creation of a just and progressive social order. The ordinary Muslim, though not a *mujtahid* in the technical sense of the term and not required to think as one, is nevertheless, capable—and indeed must exercise the capacity—of making up his own mind about whose interpretation of Islam to follow.

Shari'ati's appeal to reappropriate "original Shi'ism" gained a sizable following among the educated, the urban, the politically aware, and those seeking an Iranian clarification of a true Muslim-Iranian identity that might be in harmony with modernity. It also had an impact on the young activist preachers, who were the followers of the prominent jurists and who without acknowledging it were using Shari'ati's equation of true Shi'ism with a radical revolutionary Islam as a vehicle for instituting divine justice on earth.⁴⁶ For Shari'ati, the religious history of Shi'ism, interpreted through the lens of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, suggested the authentic Islamic response to the unbearable sociopolitical conditions. The martyrdom of Husayn was not simply a tale of sorrow and lamentation; it was a militant assertion of the Islamic sense of justice.

Shari'ati's main consideration in his lectures was to provide a constructive critique of the ritualized character of Iranian religious life, which had the affect of reducing the Shi'ite population to passivity and acquiescence in the face of oppression. His forceful discourses about the potentially activist aspects of Shi'ite Islam were intended to forestall the sociopolitical indifference among the religious leaders, and he sought to appropriate religious ritual in the service of the activist cause. Thus, Shari'ati reformulated the themes of martyrdom so as to awaken the spirit of sacrifice for the ideal of justice and provided the impetus to transform the ritual of commemorative gatherings to mourn the tragedy of Kerbala to the popular social and educational institution of the *husayniyya*. In this modern version of *husayniyya*, he introduced the symbol of Imam Husayn's struggle against the Umayyads as a model for the

struggle of Iranian Muslims to transform their own oppressive circumstances into a just social order. Accordingly, Shari'ati rejected "the logic of taqiyya" as involving compromise, passive endurance, or "a non-dangerous approach to the struggle."⁴⁷

Shari'ati was not alone in his critique, and his challenge to the ulama was repeated by a number of politically activist members of the religious class in Iran and Iraq. In his Najaf lectures on the Guardianship of the Jurist, Ayatollah Khomeini had criticized his colleagues for their lack of social and political vision which betrayed the dignity and true mission of their class.⁴⁸ Similarly, Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir Sadr, Iraq's most renowned Shi'ite jurist, called upon the religious leaders of the Iraqi Shi'ites and their young students at the seminaries in Najaf, Iraq, to mobilize in order to roll back the sociocultural dislocations among Shi'ite youth caused by unchecked modernization and legitimated by secular communist and Ba'athist ideology.

In the 1970s it became apparent that secularly educated Iranian intellectuals, who had been prepared to assume the Iranian leadership, were alienated from the majority of the groups that formed the traditional alliances in Iran and thus could not muster the popular support necessary to guide the future of that nation.⁴⁹ Technocrats, bureaucrats, and other government officials on the prosperous side of the Iranian economic divide were targets of envy and bitter criticism for their perceived abandonment of the traditional values, which continued to orient the everyday life of the majority of the Iranian population. This popular perception and the rift it caused between the intelligentsia and the citizenry created an opportunity for the religious leadership to encourage religious activity in general and to synthesize traditional and modern ideologies and devices for social influence. Key to the success of the Iranian religious leadership in mobilizing the populace was the identification of the Iranian nation exclusively with the spirit, practices, and history of Shi'ite Islam.⁵⁰

In their accommodation with modernity and in their efforts to provide a viable Islamic alternative ideology in a modern nation-state, jurists such as Khomeini and Sadr had to make meaningful choices of their own, which included accepting some elements of modern secular political culture like nationalism and even popular political participation—an anomaly to the traditional conceptualization of political authority. By the mid-1970s, Khomeini had provided the Iranians an innovative, but authentically traditional, alternative to the "colonizing culture" of the West. This alternative eliminated the compromise of retaining the constitutional monarchy of the 1906 revolution. Instead, the Islamic revolution of 1978-79 called for the establishment of an Islamic government based on justice and freedom (in the sense of freedom from sinful license) for all, as interpreted by the leading jurist.⁵¹

The concept of the "Islamic Government," which was never worked out in any systematic detail by Khomeini, was ambiguous enough to unite all segments of Iranian society predisposed to political activism and opposed to the repressive rule of the Shah. In the absence of an elitist institutional base that could have provided the new political leadership and steered Iranian society smoothly into the era of mass politics, Khomeini's politico-religious leadership was acknowledged, invariably, even by those who did not necessarily believe in the relevance of Islamic norms in the modern age.⁵²

More significantly, Khomeini's call to resist an unjust government found supporters among the leftists and Islamic socialists who saw in Khomeini, and in Shari'ati, revolutionary pawns that could be manipulated to their advantage.

Thus, Khomeini's politico-religious "guardianship" of the Islamic state, granted legitimacy in part through its commitment to promulgate the Shari'a, managed to convince many quietist religious leaders of various standings in the hierarchy of Islamic learning to actively participate in the different roles demanded by a modern Islamic public order. Furthermore, Khomeini managed to bridge differences not only between disparate secular and religious ideologies (by emphasizing his opposition to Western imperialism and cultural colonization) but also between a religious ideology and the apparently secularized process of modernization in the service of justice and human welfare (through the promulgation of the divine will in the Shari'a). As events in the decade after the revolution proved, however, Khomeini's mere occupation of the position of Guardianship in the Islamic state did not guarantee that Iran would develop as the perfect model of an Islamic government for all Muslims in search of their Islamic identity and political destiny in the modern age.

The Search for Identity in Iraq and Lebanon

A brief review of the quite different political and social contexts for the Shi'ites of Iraq and Lebanon may serve to illustrate the point that the shape and direction of Shi'ite activism is determined not only by the interpretations of a charismatic leader elevated to a position of supreme authority but also by the particular sociopolitical circumstances in which the Shi'ite masses find themselves at a given time and place. Indeed, what was presented to the Iranian Shi'ites as an Islamic alternative could not be offered to the Shi'ites of Iraq and Lebanon living under quite different political systems. At the same time, the manner in which the religious leadership attained a prominence based on the threefold religious experiences of the Shi'ites, namely, martyrdom, occultation, and precautionary dissimulation, applies to all three regions under consideration and provides a basis for comparison of the Shi'ites' varying responses to oppression.

There was, then, a substantial difference in the way the Shi'ite religious leaders under the secularly oriented and largely Sunni-dominated government of Iraq could make the particular Shi'ite religious experiences with political implications relevant and applicable to the circumstances of their followers there. Moreover, to the Shi'ites of Iraq, Khomeini's Islamic Republic under the all-comprehensive Guardianship of the Jurist had a limited appeal, for the Sunnis of Iraq could neither comprehend nor participate in this exclusivist and particularist vision of Islamic public order based on Shi'ite religious experiences. Furthermore, the religious requirement to accept the authority of a leading Shi'ite jurist as a *marja' al-taqlid* and to abide by his rulings in matters pertaining to religious practice in its present form was peculiar to Twelver Shi'ism only. Accordingly, the Shi'ite paradigm of the religiopolitical leadership under

the leading scholar presented by Ayatollah Khomeini and endorsed by the Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir Sadr, both in form and content proved unable to win the support of the Sunnis of Iraq.

Instead the Arab Shi'ites of Iraq drew upon particular moments in their own historical experience in developing an activist posture in the 1970s and 1980s. To provide the necessary context for understanding contemporary Arab Shi'ite activism it is necessary to begin with the 1920s, when, under the Hashemite monarchy, created by the English in 1921, profound political changes were introduced in Iraq. The Hashemite monarchy promoted Arab nationalism, an attitude designed to generate a new sense of loyalty to the nation in order to displace the old divisive sectarian and tribal loyalties. Although the force of the nascent Arab nationalist movement eroded the traditional patterns of the body politic in Iraq, it also made possible for the first time the integration of the Shi'ites and the Sunnis as a national community. To understand this complex process, it is necessary to briefly examine the nature of the traditional patterns.

First it must be understood that a sense of national community had been essentially alien to an Iraqi polity characterized by extremes of localism, sectarianism, and tribalism. These conditions may be traced in the first place to geography: communication between mountain and plain, desert and marsh, city and city, before the late nineteenth century was virtually impossible. Further reinforcing the harsh nature of Iraqi geography was the essentially decentralized nature of government control. For these reasons, the first concerted efforts to unify and centralize national administration would not be undertaken until the late Ottoman period (1831–1914). Moreover, the Ottoman effort could not have been undertaken without the rapid technological advances introduced into Iraq in the late nineteenth century.⁵³

However, below the elite level these efforts did little to alter the primarily tribal-local outlook of the average Iraqi. So strong was the sense of division that within cities, people lived within segregated city quarters (*mahallas*), divided one from another by religious sect and ethnicity. Even within quarters, streets were subdivided into residence patterns based roughly on work or craft associations, and then again into extended-family units. Linkages binding one quarter to another were minimal and, as such, were much less conducive to generating so abstract a concept as metropolitan identity, and still less national consciousness. So complete was the isolation that, for instance, when the people of the Shi'ite shrine city of Najaf rose successfully against the Turks in 1915, the four quarters of the city, organized on tribal lines, established independent and autonomous city-states and would remain as such until the British occupation of 1917.⁵⁴

Conversely, even while the primarily local-tribal outlook of Iraqis remained imperious to change, the impact of Ottoman centralization, followed as it was by the experience of British colonialism and rapid socio-economic and technological change, dissolved the traditional social and political bonds cementing tribal-local relationships. In the countryside, tribal leaders were becoming increasingly alienated from the tribal members through the increasing adoption of a cash economy, which in practice linked tribal elites to governing elites and resulted in the land laws of 1858 and 1932.

These laws favored the gathering of vast tracts of tribal land into the sole possession of tribal chiefs, leading further to large-scale cash real estate speculation by urban elites who dealt exclusively with the tribal chiefs, thus strengthening the new alliance of urban and rural leaders. By the 1920s and 1930s, this alliance, including top government officials and military officers, was able, when the need arose, to put aside their own intense personal rivalries to pursue their own interests on the national level, that is, to grant themselves such boons as tax exemptions and to guarantee a virtual monopoly of state offices. Meanwhile, the Shi'ites, whose own elites were rapidly advancing as traders, and a few of whom were favored by royal policy as civil servants in the nascent bureaucracy, found their further advance blocked by the monopolistic character of the new coalition. They were nevertheless being integrated into the emerging Iraqi state. These two decades would mark the high point of Shi'ite identification with their Sunni counterparts in the context of the Iraqi state.

The rise of nationalism in the 1920s failed to fill the vacuum left by the breakdown of local-tribal ties, as it tended to be absorbed into traditional Sunni-Shi'ite symbols. Nationalism did forge some ties between Shi'ite and Sunni elites, but the rise of cities and the new forms of social organization as a result of the modernization process essentially doomed tribal cohesion, and the alienation of tribal leaders from their tribesmen was symptomatic of a greater malaise. Rapid modernization invariably favored the cities at the expense of the tribes, resulting first in the breakdown of the great tribal confederations and then in the dissolution of the tribes themselves. The breakdown was reflected in rapid migration. Baghdad, for example, quadrupled in size between 1922 and 1957. But significantly, when the migrants arrived in the cities, they tended to group together and isolate themselves through private compacts aimed at continuing tribal custom. The influx, however, could not but speed the breakdown of traditional urban relationships, themselves undergoing a process of dissolution not dissimilar to that experienced by the tribes.⁵⁵

The Hashemite monarchy administered the civil service in such a way as to allow some opportunities for promising young Shi'ites, and for its own stability thus provided means to accommodate the rising national consciousness during the period from the 1920s to the 1958 revolution. However, while these modernizing and centralizing forces could and did speed the breakdown of traditional localistic ties, they proved largely unable to unify their highly segmented populace within the context of a modern nation-state. This process resulted ultimately in conditions of feuding, economic struggle, and near anarchy in the countryside, and urban tensions that promised to result in confrontations of great violence at the slightest pretext, as the urban risings of 1948, 1952, and 1956 indicated. Thus, historic moments of Iraqi national accord tended to be short-lived and were invariably directed at a clear foreign foe, in this case the British.

In the period between 1921 and 1939, the monarchy succeeded for a time in integrating diverse elements into the Iraqi body politic, as it expanded Iraq's educational program based on the common Arab history and language and the common ethnic origin of the majority of Iraqis. This two-decade process served to cultivate the new national feeling among the educated Shi'ites and Sunnis. The educational policy

also assisted, as it had in Iran, in the spread of modern ideas drawn from Western modes of thought. The increasing number of the new educated middle class from both the Shi'ite and Sunni affiliations became the carriers of the increased sense of patriotism and even the pan-Arab ideal.⁵⁶

However, Shi'ite loyalty to Iraqi nationalism always remained in question. Because of the common religious ties to Iran, in addition to the presence of *marja' al-taqlid* sometimes commonly recognized by both the Iraqi and Iranian Shi'ites, the Sunni Iraqi politicians suspected the Iraqi Shi'ites of divided loyalties.⁵⁷ From the British perspective, these signs of factionalism in Iraqi nationalism were hardly ominous. In pursuing their colonial policy of balance of power, the British (and later the British-backed monarchy) favored, and even encouraged, Shi'ite advancement in the economic sphere in the southern and central parts of Iraq to create a sort of power parity between them and the dominant Sunnis. By the 1940s, the royal policy of integration of the Shi'ites in the Iraqi body politic and the diffusion of the new national sentiment through modern education effected noticeable changes in the social as well as political situation of the Shi'ites, perhaps the most significant of which was the stratification of Shi'ite society. Finding that their generally low standard of education limited their access to state offices, the Shi'ites turned their energies toward commerce, and a portion of the community acquired significant wealth. However, many Shi'ites in Iraq did not share in this new prosperity, and "if in 1958 the richest of the rich were often Shi'ites, so were also predominantly the poorest of the poor."⁵⁸

Indicative of this rise in the fortunes of a portion of the Shi'ite community were the growing number of intermarriages between the wealthy Shi'ites and Sunnis, as well as Shi'ite political achievements in the wake of commercial success. Whereas before 1947 not a single Shi'ite was raised to the premiership, in the period between 1947 and 1958, four Shi'ites were appointed to that office. At the same time, the new wealth only served to exacerbate the chronically chaotic social conditions among the poorest Muslims, both Sunni and Shi'ite. As revenues from oil exports flooded into the coffers of the elites during the post-World War II boom, an unprecedented wave of inflation eroded the economic status of the urban poor, increasing the price of food almost beyond the reach of the mass of the urban population and increasing the overall cost of living. Thus while the average wage of unskilled laborers rose about 400 percent between 1939 and 1948, the price of food had risen 805 percent.⁵⁹ Although not as severe, this same pattern of decline affected the middle class, teachers, clerks, civil servants, writers, and journalists, as well. As the majority of Iraqis tied to the urban-based money economy suffered a decline in economic position, the elite coalition of aristocrats, privileged government officials, top military officers, and tribal chiefs, both Sunni and Shi'ite, grew increasingly wealthy. The resentment this engendered contributed to the conditions leading to the popular rebellion of 1948, and with it the rise of revolutionary ideologies.

By the 1950s, communist ideas of social justice evoked powerful passion among the Iraqis in general, leading to the political movements which disturbed the last years of the monarchy. The rulers in Baghdad, regarded as insensitive to the needs of their subjects, had done little to eradicate poverty and to generate a sense of loyalty among the poor to the existing institutions. To the poor, whether Sunnis or Shi'ites, the

government came to be regarded as an object of distrust and hatred. Moreover, "the Sunni character of the government, which rendered it a usurpation in the eyes of the Shi'ite majority, turned popular enmity into an act of faith."⁶⁰

Thus Shi'ism provided recruits for the protest movements of the 1940s and 1950s and found itself in a sort of alliance with Communism which, insofar as it bred opposition to the existing authority which was perceived as tyrannical, found resonances in the oppositional spirit of Shi'ism. For example, Najaf, the holy city of the Shi'ites and "the seat of oppressive wealth and dire poverty,"⁶¹ became the staging ground for a number of significant communist uprisings. This Shi'ite city was and remains today both a center for religious reaction and protest and a breeding ground for revolutionary ideas. Many of the militant communists in the 1950s were the sons or relatives of men in the lower ranks of the *ulama* who had suffered a decline in prestige and prosperity because of the new and remote economic and political forces transforming the shape of Iraqi commerce and industry.⁶² The communist uprisings of the 1950s thus coincided with the declining role of the Shi'ite *ulama*, whose appeal to the common people to abide by the commandments of religion had no effect on either the communists or the nationalists, influenced as they were by modern secular ideologies.

As in Iran, modern secular ideologies, whether in the form of nationalism or Communism, or as disseminated in the methods and content of modern education, had become popular at the expense of traditional patterns of Islamic religion. And although the introduction of the modern sense of loyalty to the nation did not displace the emotional ties and the structural organization of traditional Iraqi social patterns, especially in the rural areas, it did serve to undermine the role of traditional education in the Islamic seminaries and thus the authority of the religious leadership. The historical independence of the Shi'ite religious leaders from government control, thanks to their independent financial resources, was also compromised in the wake of reforms that were introduced by the government in the management of the revenues from religious endowments and related sources. The *ulama* became dependent on the merchants in the bazaar to fund and execute their religious projects. Consequently the Shi'ite religious institutions had to remain sensitive to the traditionalist outlook of the bazaar before they could offer solutions to the pressing problems of modernity. The fear that the bazaar could withhold financial contributions if it found their traditionalism threatened by innovative religious prescriptions rendered the *ulama* incapable of providing critical religious guidance in encountering the influences of secular ideologies.⁶³ Indeed in the 1950s and 1960s, Islamic education and the leadership it had nurtured in the past in Iraq was enfeebled considerably. Increasing numbers of young students of religion were dissatisfied with and abandoned the isolated life in the religious seminaries to pursue modern education and to acquaint themselves with modern thinking in the universities. Meanwhile, in spite of the economic prominence of a greater number of Shi'ites, the vast majority remained economically underprivileged in Iraq, even as the influence of religious leaders dwindled. The Shi'ites suffered the hardships attendant upon their lot as the "poorest of the poor": squalid and unsafe living conditions, crowding, and lack of access to health care institutions and schools.

In the early 1970s, however, a new generation of activist and militant Shi'ite or

ganizations and leaders emerged in response to this situation. Their initial *raison d'être* was the development and implementation of programs by which the social and economic deprivations could be eased.⁶⁴ The rise of these groups followed a period in which Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir Sadr promulgated his activist interpretation of the Shi'ite ideals of justice and equity among the ulama and among the masses gathered at ritual commemorations of past Shi'ite struggles against oppression such as 'Ashura. Baqir Sadr and his disciples were intent in the early 1970s on interpreting the sacred past in such a way as to mobilize the Shi'ite masses to form and join socially and politically activist Shi'ite organizations such as *al-da'wa al-islamiyya* (The Islamic Call) and *al-Mujahidin* (The Islamic Fighters).⁶⁵

Modernization through westernization, which in Iraq was perceived by the poorer Shi'ites as the wholesale, uncritical adaptation of secular Western ideas and economic practices, had ramifications for religious life similar to those experienced in Iran. Leading Shi'ite ulama were of course painfully aware of the critical situation in the 1950s and 1960s when secular communist ideas were infiltrating the displaced lower classes in strongholds of Shi'ite Islam such as the holy cities of Najaf and Kerbala, and religious practices were being abandoned by graduates of modern schools and colleges. Most of the prominent ulama in Iraq, however, remained bound to the traditional restraints of Shi'ism which had required them to maintain their probity by shunning politics. And given their constrained political situation at the time, they adopted a posture of aloofness, complained about the decline of religious practices among their followers, but had neither the will nor the intellectual or political preparation to guide them in crafting a supple response for their (erstwhile) followers among the poor.

When Shi'ite activist leaders attempted to reverse this tradition of aloofness by providing concrete guidance and a blueprint for political action, they faced two fundamental problems in the Ba'thist Iraq of the 1970s. First, they had to contend with the ever-present fear that they would be regarded as the agents of the Shi'ite Iranian regime employed to subvert the Iraqi administration and would consequently be subjected to the fate of a number of prominent religious personages executed under that pretext. Second, and less dramatic but equally difficult, was the exercise of their role as the custodians of Shi'ite ideology over against the rival Sunni Islamic vision (considered the majoritarian position). Because these ideologies differed radically on the precise question of the proper response to an unjust government, and because even the criteria for identifying an unjust government were significantly different, Shi'ite religious leaders faced an uphill battle in mobilizing their own followers for specific political action, not to speak of the entire Iraqi Islamic community. Any political solution designed to forge a unified Islamic front would have to proceed from a series of accommodations and doctrinal compromises on both sides.

Nonetheless, the existence of several explicitly activist Shi'ite organizations attested to the appeal of the notion of an Islamic revival among the Iraqi Shi'ites. The most important of these, *al-da'wa al-islamiyya* (The Islamic Call), illustrates both the difficulty of analyzing the Shi'ite movement in Iraq with any precision and the extremely precarious situation of any oppositional political or religious organization under the

Ba'thist regime. The Da'wa was founded in Najaf, probably in the early 1960s, possibly influenced either by Ayatollah Khomeini's residence in that city, or, conversely, by the shah's regime in Iran as an anti-Ba'thist policy instrument (in the world of Middle East politics, the two contentions are not necessarily exclusive). The organization clearly appealed to the younger and junior ranks of the religious class of Najaf, Kerbala, and Kazimayn. The precise program of the organization is difficult to determine, although it is clear that the triumph of the Iranian revolution had great resonance in the Da'wa ranks. Thus, in 1979, in response to the Ayatollah Khomeini's call to action on the eve of 'Ashura demonstrations, there was a discernible wave of Shi'ite unrest in Iraq, which was quickly and ruthlessly suppressed.⁶⁶ Under these circumstances, some prominent ulama in Najaf and Kerbala, including the senior marja' al-taqlid, Ayatollah Abu'l-Qasim al-Khu'i, refused political involvement of any sort.⁶⁷

The campaign of repression against the Shi'ites reached its height in 1980 with the hanging of Sadr. His execution came despite the fact that no evidence appeared linking him directly to any particular oppositional group in Iraq; the regime seemed convinced nonetheless of his critical role as the guiding genius behind the activist Shi'ite cells. What is certain is that his open support for the Iranian revolution was seen by the Ba'thist as a dangerous instigation of the Iraqi Shi'ites.

The risk of death had not prevented Sadr from formulating an Islamic alternative to the "godless communism" of the Ba'thists. In this venture he was unique (and virtually alone) among the Najaf ulama, the majority of whom had very little training in modern secular thought. When Sadr embraced openly Khomeini's principle that religion and politics in Islam are inseparable and that therefore the religious leadership should assume political responsibility, he was criticized by leading conservative ulama of Najaf. Defying this criticism, Sadr recognized that given the political reality of Iraq in the 1970s, the only forum through which the Shi'ites might voice their political grievances against the oppressive measures adopted by the Ba'thist regime was the annual 'Ashura martyrdom commemorative gatherings in Najaf and Kerbala. At these gatherings Sadr proclaimed that the only religious authority that could guarantee justice in Iraq was the Shi'ite marja' al-taqlid—a seeming endorsement of the temporal and religious Guardianship of the Jurist as it was being interpreted in Iran.

The Iraqi regime at this time was in a rule-or-die situation. By publicly voicing this activist message Sadr had emerged as the most dangerous force against the Ba'thist regime by the late 1970s as it became clear to the regime that the Shi'ites had begun to look to him for political leadership. It was in this climate that Sadr and his sister, Bint al-Huda, who had collaborated with her brother in activating the Shi'ite women in Najaf, were executed in 1980.

Along with the repression of any manifestation of dissent among the Shi'ite, however, the regime also pursued a strategy of appeasing Shi'ite unrest. On the rhetorical level it mounted a campaign to portray Saddam Hussein as an "Islamic" leader and to depict the militantly secular Ba'th Party as not incompatible with religion. This campaign culminated in 1979 with Saddam's analysis of Islamic history, in which the perception of Shi'ite dispossession and historical injustice was for the first time in a

millennium endorsed by a Sunni head of state. Mu'awiya, the Umayyad caliph whose rebellion had dispossessed 'Ali of the caliphate, was explicitly denounced. 'Ali was praised, and most remarkable, the revolt of Imam Husayn was held up as a model that the Iraqi president was proud to follow.⁶⁸ With the campaign of rhetorical Islamization, the regime began in 1979 to invest large sums of money in the Shi'ite areas, revitalizing the shrines at Kerbala and Najaf, upgrading Shi'ite mosques, schools, neighborhoods, and economic infrastructures to win the Shi'ites over. This sum is reported to have exceeded 24.4 million dinars on religious institutions in 1979 alone,⁶⁹ and the program continues to this day.

The message to Iraqi Shi'ites is both clear and historically resonant: cooperation is rewarded economically, if not politically, while its opposite is ruthlessly and efficiently suppressed. This may in large part explain the reticence of Iraqi Shi'ites to respond to the Iranian call. But there is another factor, immeasurable but, below the elite ulama level deeply rooted. It is put best by one of the anonymous Iraqi Shi'ites speaking to Hanna Batatu in 1981: "In their heart of hearts, Iraq's Shi'ites like things of their own soil."⁷⁰

This attitude, common to Iraq and Lebanon no less than to Iran itself, may help to illustrate the powerful barriers to concerted action which have to date hampered the forging of effective transnational ties on a religious or confessional basis. For what the above quotation refers to is not an allegiance to Iraq as a nation-state but to deeper primordial ties of family and clan, language and culture, which underlie the very self-perception of an Iraqi Shi'ite.

In Lebanon the Shi'ites were faced with a somewhat different situation from that of their brethren in either Iran or Iraq. As the largest of the seventeen religious sects officially recognized in Lebanon, the Lebanese Shi'ites attracted international attention in the wake of the tragic death of 241 U. S. marines near Beirut airport in 1983. While it is true that these and other events of the 1980s with dramatic implications for the American and other Western interests in Lebanon raised widespread concern about Shi'ite activism as a manifestation of Islamic fundamentalism, this radicalization of the Shi'ites should be considered the culmination of a process of politicization initiated by Imam Musa Sadr. Musa Sadr came to Lebanon as the representative of the marja' al-taqlid, Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim (d. 1970) of Iraq. Like Sadr in Iraq and Khomeini in Iran, this religious leader made it his chief cause to activate the politically quiescent Shi'ites of Lebanon. And like Sadr and Khomeini, he offered his followers an innovative ideology comprising a potent combination of traditional values and modern concepts.

The Lebanese political structure was based on the national pact of 1943, which had vested the most important political office of the country in the then-largest of the religious sects, the Maronite Christians. In the late 1950s, the Shi'ites began to migrate from their villages in the south in large numbers to settle in the southern suburbs of Beirut. The main purposes of this migration seem to have been the quest for better economic and social opportunities and the promise of modern education at government schools or at the newly established national university. The migrant Shi'ites from

the south, uprooted from their villages, belonged to the underprivileged in Lebanese society, a condition that made them prone to radicalization.

The arrival of Musa Sadr in 1959 as a trusted deputy of an Iraqi marja' al-taqlid, Ayatollah Hakim, ushered in a new era in the history of Lebanese Shi'ites. Musa Sadr had received his training in religious sciences in Qum, Iran, during the crucial years of the awakening of the religious leaders to the realities of modern challenges to Islam and to Muslim societies. He set out to organize the Shi'ite community as a formidable, independent political force in Lebanon. With the change of demographic balance in Lebanon in favor of the Muslims, the Muslim community was beginning to demand a restructuring of the political institutions that would reflect the new situation. However, the Muslim demand initially took only the Sunni interests into consideration, because, like other sects—the Maronites, the Druze, the Greek Orthodox, and others—the Sunnis had an established and officially recognized institutional structure under the leadership of the Grand Mufti of the Lebanese republic. The Shi'ites lacked such an institutional body to represent their interests. In 1969, however, following massive Israeli bombing raids on southern Lebanon, Musa Sadr's efforts led to the establishment of the first such organization in Lebanese Shi'ite history, the Higher Shi'a Council.

Before this official recognition of the Shi'ite community as an independent voice in Lebanese affairs, the Shi'ites had most closely resembled their brethren in Iraq—a sizable presence underrepresented in the body politic. The Sunni-Shi'a relationship in Lebanon had remained tense for most of the history of the republic. With their courts and schools and philanthropic associations in Beirut, the Sunnis were able to exert greater influence in the political life of that city, whereas the Shi'ites, through the calculated policies of the Sunni leaders in Beirut, remained on the periphery of political life. Thus, the Shi'a Council, a democratically elected organization entrusted with some responsibility for the distribution of relief funds to Shi'ites, was conceived primarily as a forum for Shi'ite "new men" (newly wealthy and influential Shi'ites) who were effectively blocked from political power or social influence by traditional Lebanese Shi'ite leaders. The council provided the Shi'ites with a concrete expression of their identity as a distinctive people—an identity which they had lacked and which Musa Sadr offered them without rejecting the particularism of Shi'ite history. Nor surprisingly, he was criticized by the politically quiescent Shi'ite ulama of Lebanon, who themselves had failed to raise objections to the exclusion of Shi'ites from the deliberations of the sects and had failed to provide their followers with adequate guidance in adopting strategies to preserve their identity in the modern age.⁷¹ Musa Sadr responded to their criticism by citing these failures and by faulting the Shi'ite feudal families for having done little to remedy the social injustices and governmental neglect suffered by their communities in the south.

Known as "Imam" to his large number of supporters, Musa Sadr soon became the symbol of the new politically aware Shi'ite presence in the multireligious society of Lebanon. Of central importance in understanding Musa Sadr's meteoric rise is the fact that the Shi'ite tradition of submission and political indifference encouraged by

some of their quiescent religious leaders had contributed significantly to the political marginalization of the Shi'ite masses. Musa Sadr recognized this and strove to reinterpret the tradition by drawing upon selected moments in the Shi'ite past, elevating them to a position of prominence infused with political meaning, and claiming that political activism was now not only necessary in order to preserve Shi'ite identity in Lebanon but, equally important, was in keeping with authentic Shi'ism. In this Musa Sadr's charismatic leadership approximated, in tone and content, that of Khomeini and Baqir Sadr; and it is this type of leadership that has been associated with the term "fundamentalist."

As did Khomeini and Baqir Sadr, he too appropriated ritually and symbolically the historic threefold religious experience of the Shi'ites (martyrdom, occultation, and precautionary dissimulation) in his successful efforts to organize a mass movement, originally conceived as nonviolent, to campaign for social justice. Shi'ism here, as in the case of Iran and Iraq, provided the imam's followers with religiously expressive categories; instead, however, of interpreting the sufferings of the Imam Husayn in Kerbala as a warrant for political quietism and submission, Musa Sadr presented the event as an identity-shaping episode of political choice and courage. Furthermore, during the crisis of national and personal identity in the 1970s, Musa Sadr's activist interpretation highlighted the experience of martyrdom in the quest for justice as the fundamental core of Shi'ite religious identity. Under oppressive circumstances, Musa Sadr taught, martyrdom suffered for the lofty ideals of a just and equitable public order on earth became plausible, and if the occasion demanded, desirable through violent revolution.⁷²

This aspect of the Shi'ite movement of Imam Musa Sadr came to fore when his nonsectarian "Movement of the Deprived" of the 1960s developed into a military movement known by its acronym, AMAL (*afwaj al-muqawwama al-lubnaniyya*, meaning "Battalions of Lebanese Resistance"). AMAL acknowledged Imam Musa Sadr as its spiritual guide, although he held no official position in it. AMAL was thus uniquely placed to unite the different classes of Shi'ite "new men," businessmen and professionals, with the aspirations of the poorest of Shi'ite society through its community development programs and to spearhead a Shi'ite movement that would effectively respond to the political scene in modern Lebanon.⁷³

In the late 1960s another political factor was added to the already tense atmosphere of the Lebanese political scene. Following the Cairo Agreement of 1969, Lebanon, as an expression of its identity as an Arab nation, was to allow the PLO to establish bases there. The Shi'ites lived through further painful days in Jabal 'Amil and in the suburbs of West Beirut where they bore the brunt of Israeli reprisals against the Palestinians. As Muslims and Arabs, the Shi'ites had supported the Palestinian demand to be allowed to return to their former homeland. However, that support had not involved their active participation in the Israeli-Palestinian hostilities launched by the Palestinians from the villages in the south. Nevertheless, the Shi'ites suffered heavy casualties for the moral support they lent to the Palestinian cause, thereby intensifying the bitterness they felt toward the PLO forces in the south.

The Sunni-Shi'ite demand for the restructuring of the political institutions to re-

fect the Muslim majority in the 1970s set in motion the civil war that has plagued that nation with sectarian animosity almost unknown in modern times. The civil war which ensued has deepened ancient sectarian wounds and fragmented the state to such an extent that today many voices are heard calling for the breakup of the state into the strongholds of different religious communities. The Shi'ites were themselves caught up in the bid for power between the Christians and Druze in the early stages of the civil war and suffered heavy casualties fighting in an ideologically left-wing coalition formed by the Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt to challenge the Maronite ascendancy. As a result of their participation in this coalition, during the civil war years the Shi'ites were evicted from east Beirut by the Maronite militias, and their shantytowns of Maslakh and Qarantina were destroyed in another attack in 1976. Following this destruction, Shi'ite settlements in other places in and around east Beirut were forcefully evacuated and looted by the militia, leaving thousands of Shi'ites homeless, while thousands more Shi'ites in the south were uprooted by the intensifying struggle between the PLO and Israel. These circumstances served only to further radicalize the Shi'ites.

In 1976 yet another political element was added to the existing oppressive situation in the south. The Israeli-backed rebel Lebanese army of Major Saad Haddad terrorized the entire border region to deter the Shi'ites from aiding the Palestinians.⁷⁴

Finally, in that decade, during the 1978 Israeli invasion of the south, when Shi'ite villages and homes were destroyed completely, hundreds of thousands of these homeless villagers sought refuge in and around Beirut. The relations between the Shi'ites and the PLO worsened under these conditions. All the radical elements necessary for the Shi'ite refugees to explode in retaliatory violence seemed to be in place, including the desperate hope that such violent operations would at least earn the attention of the international community and thus publicize the injustices committed against the Shi'ites. The role of Imam Musa Sadr at this juncture is not clear and remains a matter of speculation— he had encouraged his followers to pursue, as far as possible, nonviolent methods of demanding justice, but as we have seen, he also saw violent revolution as a last resort—for he disappeared in Libya later that year. As it happened, the "explosion" did not occur until 1982, in the violent Shi'ite reaction to the Israeli invasion and the U. S. intervention in Lebanon.

However, the evidence indicates that with the disappearance of Musa Sadr in Libya in 1978, the Shi'ites lost any remaining confidence in the Arabs, especially the so-called socialist block among them.

Given the emphasis of this essay on the role of religious leadership in guiding the course of modern activist movements in Shi'ism, it is worth comparing the period after the disappearance of Musa Sadr in the 1980s with numerous historical revolutionary movements in the larger Shi'ite community in the era after the occultation of the twelfth Imam. In both the historical and the contemporary postdisappearance situations, the Shi'ite faithful abandoned previous attitudes of political quiescence and in the face of circumstances of economic and political deprivation, split into factions at least in part over varying interpretations of the anticipated messianic Imam's final restoration of justice. In both cases, this splintering produced a range of moderate

and extremist interpretations of the final restoration, represented by various religious leaders claiming to be knowledgeable regarding the aims of the messianic Imam and by various organizations, each with its own unique program for hastening the moment of final vindication. In contemporary Lebanon this pattern emerged after the disappearance of Imam Musa Sadr, when AMAL experienced similar factionalization and radicalization upon including a political dimension in its predominantly social and military program.

The younger generation in AMAL was, after 1978, attracted to the sense of religious identity generated by an activist interpretation of Shi'ite ideals under the radical-traditional leadership of Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadl Allah, to whom a measure of Musa Sadr's influence and power had passed. Fadl Allah, often described as the spiritual leader of the Party of God, the Hizbullah, was trained in Najaf. After his permanent return to Lebanon in the mid-1960s, he dedicated himself to the cause of the elaboration, through his regular sermons and numerous writings, of an activist Shi'ite religious identity. However, the extent of Fadl Allah's influence and authority were felt only after Musa Sadr's disappearance in 1979.

Nabih Berri, an American-educated lawyer and secularist in outlook, eventually took over AMAL after Imam Sadr and developed his peaceful formula to redress the Shi'ite grievances, but he came under constant pressure and criticisms from both the Islamic AMAL, a splinter group headed by Husayn Musawi, and the Hizbullah under Shaykh Fadl Allah.

The ability of these radicalized Shi'ite movements to sustain themselves over the course of time and, more important, throughout a series of community-threatening traumas, was demonstrated in the events that followed the Israeli invasion of 1982 and the U. S. intervention in 1983 and 1984 in Lebanon. The Western policies have been interpreted by these groups as overtly hostile to their identity, indeed, to their survival. As is well known, the religious leaders of these radical groups have repeatedly pointed to the American opposition to Khomeini's rule in Iran; to the American support of Iraq and by extension of Iraq's treatment of the Shi'ites, and to the American support of the Israelis and Christians against Muslim interests. In this way the "successors" to Imam Musa Sadr have not allowed the revolutionary fervor to subside: the presence and threat of the enemy is the warrant for Shi'ite activism. Shaykh Fadl Allah has, to the time of this writing, continued to make symbolic use of bloody episodes in Shi'ite history in his widely attended lectures and circulated writings. His polemic against the West evokes Shi'ite feelings about the "arrogant silence" of the Western powers toward the suffering of the oppressed in the Third World.⁷⁵

It is important to underscore the fact that although Fadl Allah has attempted to emulate Khomeini's role in Iran, which he sees as providing a viable public order in which the Shi'ites would find their appropriate social and political place and identity, he is pragmatic enough to realize that the multi-religious political structure in Lebanon could not be modeled after Islamic Republic of Iran with a qualified Shi'ite jurist as the head of the government. Interestingly, the Shi'ite religious leaders of Lebanon, perhaps because of the absence of a local *marja' al-taqlid*, find their voices to be in unison with the Sunni leaders when speaking about the rule of the Shari'a rather than that of the guardian of the Shari'a (as embodied in Khomeini's concept of the Guard-

ianship of the Jurist). Furthermore, the Shi'ite leaders of Lebanon are fully aware that they and their followers share the Arab identity and the burden of Arab destiny, with Israel and the West as active players in their present and ongoing crisis.

Hence, however devoted to and influenced by the political activism of their coreligionists in Iran they might be, the Lebanese Shi'ites are faced with problems peculiar to them, in which Shi'ism functions as a reformist ideology that calls upon its adherents to transform an unjust social order. As long as the imbalances in the social and political institutions persist in Lebanon, one might expect the Shi'ite struggle to rectify the situation to continue.

However, the subject matter covered in the preachings of the religious leaders has changed significantly. As Fadl Allah has pointed out in the preface of his book, *Islam and the Logic of Force*, to speak about force (*quwwa*) in the context of modern Shi'ism is no longer an abstract idea philosophically related to the attribute of Almighty God. Force and its legitimate use is a subject that touches the very survival of the believers in the world beyond their faith. The reinterpreted traditional teachings of politically quiescent Shi'ism by Khomeini, Muhammad Baqir Sadr, Musa Sadr, and Fadl Allah have consequently provided modern Shi'ite preachers with renewed confidence in leading their followers to come to terms with the real and often merciless world in which they find themselves. In that world, they contend, there lies a warrant for resort to violent means to pursue the traditional aim of preserving Shi'ite religious practice and identity.⁷⁶

Concluding Remarks

Shi'ite activism in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s was a form of religious fundamentalism stemming from the acute awareness among Muslims in general, and the Shi'ites in particular, of the discrepancy between the divine promise of success and the historical development of the world which the divine controls. In order to address this discrepancy, a task they believe is mandated by Islamic revelation, Shi'ites have endeavored to strike a balance between the divine promise of the earthly success to the Muslims and their contemporary situation by moving in two directions: first, by introducing reforms in the religious institutions to prevent further deterioration of Islamic religious life in the modern age; and second, by protesting and resisting alien interference, whether direct or indirect, over the Islamic character of their societies.

In both these directions particular sociopolitical conditions were taken into account by the religious leaders who were involved in directing the internal reform as well as resisting domination by exogenous forces. Shi'ite history provided relevant precedents for the ulama to extrapolate in order to impart necessary guidance to the believers at a given time. The process of extrapolation in the terms of the precedents took into account various sociopolitical factors that were important to the strategy that was ultimately adopted by the ulama as the appropriate course of action. In the pre-modern period, the tendency among the ulama was to shun politics and public life for the preservation of the pure faith. But, as the Shi'ite world began to be domi-

nated by alien, exogenous forces of colonialism and its attendant westernization, the ulama retrieved from their historical repertoire of sociopolitical responses a radical activism. In addition to the imperialism of the colonizing powers, the ulama felt the danger of secular ideologies in the form of communism, socialism, and nationalism seducing Muslim leaders educated on Western models, who in the later part of nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century were engaged in moving the Muslim countries toward modernization through westernization. However, modernization, as it proceeded within this time frame, proved unable to eradicate the social and political ills suffered by the Muslims. This failure was due in some measure to the inability of Muslim modernizers to establish adequate political institutions capable of easing the transition to a technologically based society and generating a positive attitude toward the government and its development programs.

By the second half of the twentieth century, the support lent to the dictatorial and at times oppressive governments by the Western nations convinced many ulama and the educated Shi'ites of Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon that modern secular ideologies imported from the West or the East were not only inadequate for providing them with solutions to their identity crisis; they were also incapable of correcting the socio-political injustices endured by the downtrodden in those countries. The 1960s were the decisive years in bringing the Shi'ite ulama out of their self-imposed aloofness and in exposing them to modernity. Those years prepared them to supply the Shi'ites with an Islamic alternative: the potentially activist Shi'ism of the Imams 'Ali and Husayn. This activist Shi'ism, often termed "fundamentalism," contrary to the traditionally quiescent and submissive interpretation of the events surrounding Imam Husayn's martyrdom, sought to encourage the Shi'ites to become politically assertive and successful in the modern world without sacrificing their identity as Shi'ite Muslims. Activist Shi'ism has, moreover, provided the Shi'ites with renewed confidence in encountering the modern world with its new subtle forms of colonization. Whether Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic alternative will emerge as the only viable solution to the multifarious problems faced by the Muslim societies in these last years of the twentieth century will depend on the ability of the ulama and their followers to restore the earthly success of Islam in the coming years.

Notes

1. Literally, the word means "the sign of God." It is a title that is given to the most learned Shi'ite jurist, the *mujtahid*.

2. The phrase appears in Shi'ite writings to indicate the function of the messianic Imam, the Mahdi, in Shi'ism. That the return of the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979 was viewed as a prelude to the final restoration by the Mahdi in Iran is evident from the

popular expectation of the establishment of justice by their religious leader.

3. Fazlur Rahman, "Roots of Islamic Neo-Fundamentalism," in Philip H. Stoddard, ed., *Change in the Muslim World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981), p. 23.

4. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 41.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29. Smith contrasts this characteristic of Islam with the history of early Christianity which "was launched upon a world already organized." Moreover, whereas Islam's efforts were directed to build on earth the kind of social order that the divine purpose required, Christianity, as the religion of a persecuted minority, was concerned with nurturing an individual who by inner resources would be able to stand against the course of history. Consequently, Christians, unlike Muslims, have not regarded their earthly success as an achievement of or for their faith.

6. C. A. O. van Nieuwenhuijze, "Secularization or Essentialism? Fertile Ambiguities in Contemporary Middle Eastern Civilization," in *Le Cuisinier et le philosophe: Hommage à Maxime Rodinson: Etudes d'ethnographie historique du Proche-Orient*, assembled by J. P. Digard (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1982), pp. 285–86.

7. The phrase is borrowed from Eustace A. Haydon, "Twenty Five Years of History of Religions," *The Journal of Religion* 6 (1926): 32.

8. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), epilogue to 2d ed., pp. 255–65.

9. Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, pp. 38–39.

10. Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), chap. 5, pp. 91ff.

11. *Ulama* (plural of *alim*), *mujtahid*, and *faqih* mean the expert on Islamic jurisprudence. However, a *mujtahid* is a jurist who applies *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) to deduce a judicial decision in Islamic law.

12. The phrase has been quoted by Shireen K. Hunter in her introduction to *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism: Diversity and Unity*, Shireen T. Hunter, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. xii.

13. M. G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. 3, p. 246.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 241ff. Hodgson uses the phrase to describe the situation of the Egyptians under Lord Cromer (1883–1907), the representative of a classic modern West-

ern attitude to those peoples who had not participated from within in the modern transmutation.

15. James P. Piscatori, *Islam in the World of Nation-States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), in the chapter entitled, "The Theory and Practice of Territorial Pluralism," pp. 40–75, has shown with much evidence that the practice of Muslims over the centuries shows an overwhelming acceptance of the reality of territorial pluralism and is firmly on the side of the state. This practice has received a sort of legitimation through a "consensus of action," despite the views of some Muslim thinkers who have maintained the "universal and all-embracing" nature of the Islamic polity.

16. Ann K. S. Lambton, *Qajar Persia: Eleven Studies* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), pp. 212.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 218–19.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 212; Hodgson, *Venture*, pp. 306–7.

19. The Persian title of the book: *Gharbzadagi*, has been translated variously by different translators of the work in English. See, for instance, *Weststuckness*, published by Mazda Publishers in 1982.

20. In 1872, Baron Julius de Reuter, a British subject, purchased from Naser al-Din Shah (1848–96) a major portion of Iran's economic potential, as well as its very infrastructure. For some £40,000 and 60% of customs revenue, de Reuter obtained exclusive control of the state bank, most mineral wealth, communications, including the construction of railways and canal traffic, telegraph lines, and factories, in addition to custom farming. It was too much for even Great Britain, and after protests from Russia and Great Britain, combined with outrage throughout all strata of Iranian society, the concession was withdrawn. The shah nonetheless managed to parcel out almost all elements of the Reuter Concession to various foreign governments and businessmen. In the internal protests against the Reuter Concession, ulama were prominent, but by no means were they to take the sort of leadership role which they would assume almost twenty years later in

the Tobacco Revolt. For further details, cf. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 55; and Nikki Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 58–60.

21. Lambton, *Qajar Persia*, pp. 195–276.

22. The rivalry continued under the Pahlavis until World War II, when the United States would supplant Russia as the anti-British foil. In an ironic twist in the early 1970s, the Russian presence returned on occasion to counteract the influence of American power.

23. Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 166.

24. Richard Cottam, "The Iranian Revolution," in Nikki Keddie and Juan R. Cole, eds., *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 60ff., has dealt with this aspect in his thesis developed to demonstrate that the Khomeini phenomenon is a product of the "alteration of natural change patterns in Iran by the interference of external powers."

25. Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 48ff.

26. In the light of the tyranny of the Shi'ite rulers of Iran and oppression suffered by the people at the hands of government, prominent Shi'ite jurists provided necessary guidance in legitimizing the development of modern political institutions, especially the consultative assembly with the responsibility of legislating for the modern state under the guidance of the leading ulama. But for some other jurists, as pointed out earlier, such a legitimization of a modern legislature was an innovation and in direct conflict with the purposes and function of the theological and juridical authority of the Imam. See Abdulhadi Hairi, *Shi'ites and Constitutionalism in Iran* (Leiden, 1977), for a discussion on the problems of legitimizing constitutionalism, the dispute among the jurists, and the question of legitimacy (especially chap. 6). The existence of a modern legislature and its power to legislate in an Islamic state are by

no means resolved even now. This has led to the notion of the absolute authority of the jurist, who, according to the ruling of Khomeini in February 1988, can exercise his delegated authority to resolve the problem of legislation on the subjects on which the traditional Shari'a has nothing to say.

27. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pp. 142–45.

28. Leonard Binder, "Iran: Crises of Political Development," *Revolution in Iran, Middle East Review-Special Studies*, no. 1 (1980): 29.

29. *Ibid.*

30. The phrase is employed by Nikki R. Keddie, in "Islamic Revival as Third Worldism," in *Le Cuisier et le philosophe*, pp. 275–81, in her discussion about the social classes to whom "third worldism" appeals. Islamic revivalism is also, in her opinion, a form of "third worldism" that appeals to the militantly oriented classes who have a lower place on the socio-economic ladder.

31. van Nieuwenhuijze, "Secularization," p. 288.

32. I have discussed this development in great detail in my study, *The Just Ruler in Shi'ite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). The following discussion is derived from this study.

33. For a detailed account of this early predicament in Islamic history, cf. S. H. M. Jafri, *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1981).

34. I have dealt with the idea of the messianic Imam in Shi'ism in *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of Mahdi in Twelver Shi'ism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981).

35. There is certainly some overlapping between these four periods, particularly when, as I have demonstrated in *Just Ruler*, introduction, pp. 3–57, some eminent scholars who dealt with the question of juridical authority were witness to two periods. It is also possible to identify the four periods with the four regions of the Shi'ite jurisprudence, namely, Baghdad, Hillah, Isfahan, and Tehran-Qum-Mashhad. How-

ever, for the purpose of this chapter, I found it expedient to treat the chronological aspect of the development in political jurisprudence. The juridical authority evolved chronologically as the period of occultation became prolonged and the political history of the Shi'ites took a different turn in Iran.

36. Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, pp. 113–17.

37. This is the meaning of "divine grace" (*ta'uf*) in Islamic theology where the means of procuring the divine purpose for humanity are discussed. According to this doctrine, it is necessary that God appoint prophets and the Imams to create the ideal public order on earth. Cf. Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism*, pp. 122–32.

38. "Sound belief" (*iman sahib*) implied upholding the Imamate of the twelve Imams; "sound knowledge" (*ilm sahib*) connoted learning acquired from the Imams; and "sound character" (*adala*) was the moral probity required of all those individuals who served in an official capacity as the leaders of congregational prayers, judges, witnesses, and so on.

39. For an adequate account of the Shi'ites of Lebanon, cf. Helena Cobban, "The Growth of Shi'ite power in Lebanon and Its Implications for the Future," in Keddie and Cole, *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, pp. 137–55; and Augustus Richard Norton, "Shi'ism and Social Protest in Lebanon," *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, pp. 156–78. Also cf. Marius Deeb, "Shia Movements in Lebanon: Their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis, and Links with Iran and Syria," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1988): 683–98; Robin Wright, "Lebanon," in Hunter, *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism*, pp. 57–70. All these studies are mainly concerned with analyzing the political turmoil in Lebanon and the emerging role of the Lebanese Shi'ites from an insignificant, socially backward group to one of the most important factions in the shaping of the political future of that war-torn country.

40. An account of sociopolitical conditions under which the jurists like Muhammad Baqir Sadr's activist interpretation of Shi'ite ideology in the context of the unjust treatment of the Shi'ites of Iraq by the

Ba'athist government gave rise to the Shi'ite protest movements is given by Hanna Batatu, "Shi'ite Organizations in Iraq: Al-Da'wa al-Islamiyyah and al-Mujahidin," in Keddie and Cole, *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, pp. 179–200. A detailed analysis of Sadr's socioreligious thought in the contemporary Shi'ite intellectual-religious milieu of Najaf, Iraq, that molded Shi'ite militancy in Iraq has been provided by Chibli Mallat, "Religious Militancy in Contemporary Iraq: Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr and the Sunni-Shi'a paradigm," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1988): 699–729. See also his article "Iraq," in Hunter, *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism*, pp. 71–87.

41. Before the judicial opinion of Ayatollah Khomeini in February 1988, in which he ruled in favor of the absolute authority of the Shi'ite jurist who is invested with the *wilayat al-faqih* (The Guardianship of the Jurist) in the public interest of the nation, Muhammad Baqir Sadr, in his lecture on the legality of the Iranian constitution, had argued for such an absolute authority for the well-qualified jurist, who, in the interest of the community, could even postpone those forms of worship that were in conflict with the public interest. Cf. the text of his lecture in *al-Islam waqadu al-hayat* (Tehran: Wizarat al-Irshad al-Islami, 1403/1983), pp. 3–19. For Khomeini's judicial opinion and its political implications and its various interpretations among the leading government officials, cf. Hamid Algar, "Recent Developments in the Concept of *Wilayat al-faqih*," in the forthcoming collection of papers presented at the conference on *Wilayat al-faqih* in London in June 1988. For the text, and analytical and critical commentary on the events that preceded and followed this important decision by Khomeini to facilitate the government in resolving numerous outstanding issues connected with the legislature and other administrative organs of Iranian government, cf. *Tafsil wa tahlil-i wilayat-i mutlaqa-yi faqih* (Tehran: Nihzat-i Azadi-yi Iran, 1367/1988).

42. The work is entitled *al-Islam wa man tiq al-quwwa* (Islam and the logic of force) (Beirut: Dar al-Islamiyya, 1979). It was published for the first time in 1978 at the

critical moment in the political history of Lebanese Shi'ites when Imam Musa Sadr disappeared in Libya and Israel invaded south Lebanon. Iran was going through the demonstrations that culminated in the overthrow of the shah. Both these episodes led the Shi'ite leaders to adopt a radical political response.

43. In his *Khubuwat 'ala tariq al-islam* (Beirut, 1982), pp. 266ff. Fadl Allah defines the scope of *taqiyya* in the juridical injunction, critically evaluating the traditions justifying a submissive attitude.

44. These suggestions are part of the collection of essays by prominent teachers and professors of Shi'ite studies in Qum and Tehran in 1963 entitled *Bahthi dar bara-yi marja'iyat wa ruhaniyyat* (Discussion on the religious and spiritual authority [of the *marja' al-taqlid*]) (Tehran, 1341/1964).

45. Ali Shari'ati, *Tashayyu' 'alavi wa tashayyu' safavi* (Shi'ism of Imam 'Ali and Shi'ism of the Safavids) (Tehran, 1971/1350).

46. I have drawn material in this section from my article: "Ali Shari'ati: The Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution," in John L. Esposito, ed., *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). There are numerous studies dedicated to the role of Shari'ati in the revival of Islam in Iran. However, no one has considered Shari'ati's proposed program for Iranian youth in the light of his conviction that only a committed Muslim intelligentsia who could come to grips with the society's inner contradictions and totally commit themselves to remedy the socio-cultural malaise and resulting identity crisis would be effective in communicating the sociological fact of Islam to modern youth. It is thus not surprising to see that the religious leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran, after a period of discrediting Shari'ati's interpretation of Islam and its role in the mobilization of Iranian Muslim youth for the revolution, have rehabilitated him as a truly Muslim intellectual whose writings continue to exercise immeasurable influence among Muslims with modern educations.

47. See Shari'ati's speech on the occasion of the 'Ashura commemoration in the *husay-*

niyya in Mehdi Abedi and Gary Legenhau- sen, eds., *Jihad and Shahadat: Struggle and Martyrdom in Islam* (Houston: The Institute of Research and Islamic Studies, 1986), pp. 163-67.

48. Ruhullah Khumayni, *Hukumat-i islami* (Islamic government) (Najaf, 1971), pp. 24-25.

49. Arjomand, *Turban*, in his chapter, "The Revolution of February," pp. 103ff. describes how the shah's propagation of alien culture accompanied by the massive influx of foreign civil and military technology and the morale that goes with them created the new middle class, the class that could have assumed the nation's political leadership by virtue of its educational and economic resources, but did not do so.

50. In December 1978, at the peak of the revolution, following the pronouncements of some leading ulama on the intrinsic relationship between Iran and Shi'ism, the shah, in his last effort to avert his impending downfall, appealed to the Iranians by showing the exclusive relationship of the Iranian nation to Shi'ite Islam and by declaring his commitment to preserve this "sacred" relationship. Moreover, he appealed to the ulama to support him in preserving "the only Shi'ite nation on earth." The shah's speech was given much publicity in the Iranian newspapers and received much attention in foreign broadcasts. I was in Mashhad at the time, and the BBC sought my assistance as a translator when it interviewed Ayatollah Shirazi and asked him to comment on the conciliatory tone of the shah as the "protector of the only Shi'ite nation."

51. Binder, "Iran: Crisis of Political Development," pp. 18-40, has treated the political development in the sixties and seventies leading to the revolution.

52. Arjomand, *Turban*, provides a detailed sociological analysis of the political events that led to the power of the Shi'ite jurists.

53. Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 22ff.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 35-36.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 23-24.

57. Phoebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985) treats the question of divided loyalties of the Shi'ites in Iraq and uses the migration of the Shi'ite religious leaders to Iran to avoid arrest by British in 1923 as an example that confirmed the suspicions of the Iraqi politicians, without duly emphasizing the intellectual, cultural, and religious relationship that existed historically between the Shi'ite leaders of Iran and Iraq. While these migrations of the Shi'ites were understandably interpreted by Iraqi Sunni politicians as a breach of loyalty, the Shi'ite ulama on both sides of the border between Iran and Iraq regarded it as a religiously expected reaction under unfavorable circumstances.

58. Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, p. 47.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 472.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 466.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 752.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 1000.

63. See Murtada Mutalhari, "Ijtihad dar islam," in *Bahthi dar bara-yi marja'iyat wa ruhaniyyat*, pp. 25-68.

64. Chibli Mallar, "Iraq," p. 74.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77. Cf. Batatu, "Shi'ite Organizations," p. 200.

66. Batatu, "Shi'ite Organizations," pp. 179-200.

67. In the summer of 1980, when I met with Ayatollah Khu'i in Najaf, he explained the reason for his quietist approach by pointing out that the Ba'hist government was waiting for any excuse to bring the Shi'ite center of learning in Najaf to an end by expelling or imprisoning the students and getting rid of the prominent ulama.

This was the summer following the execution of the Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr.

68. Ofra Bengio, "Shi'is and Politics in Ba'hist Iraq," *Middle Eastern Studies* 21, no. 1 (1988): 6.

69. Batatu, "Shi'ite Organizations," p. 196.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

71. Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 115-17.

72. Musa Sadr's interpretation of the 'Ashura events has been reported in numerous Beirut newspapers such as *al-Nahar*, *al-Hayat*, and so on, that covered his speeches on that occasion.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

74. Cobban, "Growth of Shi'ite Power," pp. 145-46.

75. Following the tradition established by Musa Sadr, in a lecture delivered on the occasion of 'Ashura celebrations in 1977, Fadl Allah explained the political message of the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn and called upon the Shi'ites of Lebanon to defend their rights. Cf. *Afaq islamyya wa ma-wadi' ukbra* (Beirut, 1980).

76. It should also finally be pointed out that Shi'ite activism in both Iraq and Lebanon is not so much the result of frustration with the failure of foreign ideologies and value systems as it is the "realization," through modern education and mass information, of the ways in which these foreign systems and their engineers have failed to respond to the issue of social justice in an era marked by a perhaps exaggerated sense of political, social, and economic expectations.

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Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jamaat-i-Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asia

Mumtaz Ahmad

In November 1989, the Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan held a three-day national conference in the historic city of Lahore. It was an event that the Jamaat-i-Islami workers had been waiting for since 1963, the year when its last national conference had been held in the same city. The 1989 conference was attended by more than one hundred thousand Jamaat workers and supporters from various parts of Pakistan. Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluch, Pathans, and Muhajirs (Urdu-speaking refugees from India who had immigrated to Pakistan at the time of partition in 1947) mingled together and presented a rare scene of Islamic unity, especially at a time when two major cities of southern Pakistan were under twenty-four-hour curfews to quell violence between warring Sindhis and Muhajirs. While the majority of the participants were clad in traditional Pakistani dress—*shalwar kameez*—Western attire was also quite common. The meeting ground was full of banners proclaiming the inevitable victory of the Muslim freedom fighters in Palestine, Afghanistan, and Kashmir. The list of foreign guests attending the conference read like a *Who's Who* of international Islamic political movements: Dr. Muhammad Siyam of the Islamic resistance movement of Palestine, Hamas; Rashid-al-Ghannoushi of the Islamic Tendency Society of Tunisia; Mustafa Mashoor of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt; Maulana Abul Kalam of the Jamaat-i-Islami, Bangladesh; Mohammad Yasir of the Hizb-i-Islami of Afghanistan; Mahmud Nahna of the Islamic Movement of Algeria; Dr. Fazal Noor of the Parti Islam Se-Malaysia; Shaikh Issa bin Khalifa of Jamiyat-al-Islah of Bahrain; and Necmettin Erbakan of the Rafah party of Turkey. Surveying the huge crowd of devotees from an elevated platform, Jamaat-i-Islami president, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, began his inaugural address with the words: