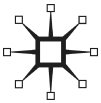
The Hojjatiyeh Society in Iran

Ideology and Practice from the 1950s to the Present

Ronen A. Cohen

palgrave
macmillan



THE HOJJATIYEH SOCIETY IN IRAN

First published in 2013 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world, this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN: 978–1–137–30476–6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cohen, Ronen.
The Hojjatiyeh Society in Iran : ideology and practice from the 1950s to the present / Ronen A. Cohen.
p. cm.
ISBN 978–1–137–30476–6 (hardback : alk. paper)
1. Anjuman-i Hujjatiyah. 2. Shi'ah—Iran—History—20th century. 3. Iran—History—Revolution, 1979. 4. Bahais—Persecutions—Iran. 5. Iran—Ethnic relations. I. Title.

BP10.A546C64 2013
297.6′5—dc23 2012035488

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: February 2013

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To my Sweet Angels
(*Taghdim be Fereshteh-haye Azizam*)
Orianne and Yair

Contents

Preface

The Development of Revolutionary Movements, Sects, and Religions

Every revolution or coup that occurred in the Middle East during the twentieth century was formed and created out of circumstances that produced protest and opposition groups and movements. In principle those who led revolutions and coups aimed to replace the current order (monarchy, republic, or other systems) with a new order, whether religious, ideological, republican, or monarchic. Most revolutionary works written by intellectuals and factors using the mass media contained spiritual elements and this is also true for those works issued by religious leaders such as Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini (Iran), Hassan al-Turabi (Sudan), Musa as-Sadr (Lebanon), and Hassan al-Bana (Egypt).

These intellectuals and philosophers were influenced by the utopian vision of the Arab and Islamic thinkers of the early twentieth century such as Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, Rifa'ah Rafi' al-Tahtawi, Mohammad Abduh, Khayer Al-Din al-Tunisy, Taha Hossein, Ahmad Lotfi as-Sayyid, and others who developed genuine religious insights both regarding Islamic and Arab world issues and measures that needed to be taken in order to lead these communities toward political and spiritual supremacy. All these intellectuals had the common aspiration of instigating a return to the pure form of Islam (Salafism), which would, they argued, provide all the vital foundations necessary to save the Muslim community and the Arab states from the destruction of their religion and character.

The spiritual presentation of these intellectuals seems far from the typical eschatology that tends to characterize religious people such as the Ulama and the clergy as those who seek to present a utopian future from an apocalyptic view. In our case the return to pure Islam was regarded as a utopian vision, that is, apparently a return to the period of the prophets—a period when Islam was being created and connected to heaven's dominion, which was the ultimate vision. It might seem that this utopian aspiration,

the return to the times of the prophets, was perhaps aiming at a renewal of the spiritual creativity and religious rule that was present during the times of the prophets and Rashidun. According to the classical approach Muslim and Arab intellectuals considered the *Umah* (nation) to be a spiritual vision that essentially represented the political and geographical completeness of Islam but, in the light of this spiritual and political completeness (preceding the Islamic conquests), this same completeness within Arab and Muslim empires has been difficult to preserve in our times.

Although Islam does not include any particular sect that tries to preach for renewal, there are a few groups that could be considered so-called sects because they seek to prove that their goal is to stimulate awareness and the aspiration to return to pure Islam. These are not "sects" in the full meaning of the word, even though they have their own visions regarding the restoration of the necessary utopian vision; thus their whole ambition is to motivate their own society and others that might appear similar to them. The aim is to implant their particular spiritual awareness as the motivator for the creation of a necessary new order. The term "revolution" is an unfamiliar one within Islam and the revolutions that have occurred during its existence have been political rather than religious. Therefore, he concludes that such movements and sects will also try to lead to a political, and not necessarily revolutionary, change in order to construct their utopian doctrines

One cannot use the term "revolution" for any renewal of the utopian Islamic order but all of this is relevant mainly to the Islamic Sunnah that has preserved its nature since the establishment of Islam. On the other hand, the Shi'a Islam represented by the Ayatollah Khomeini and by those who followed him in the Islamic Republic of Iran reflects a different kind of Shi'a Islam and relates to the one known before the Islamic revolution—especially in regard to politics and methods of government.

Unlike the Sunnah, where the utopian order or vision involves a spiritual return to the times of the prophets, the Shi'a believe in a return to the Caliphate of Ali as the real and legitimate successor of Mohammad. He is considered to be the shepherd of the Muslim community and the paver of the real Islam according to the interpretation found in the Shi'i Shari'a. This necessary return has been integrated into an eschatological-apocalyptic vision that presents the coming future as a double combination, meaning the utopian vision will only be fulfilled after the implementation of the apocalyptic vision of the return of the Hidden Imam (the Mahdi), and the rehabilitation of the world through the Shi'a way. This future return of the Mahdi implies that there will be an historical rehabilitation in which Islam will once again be led by the Prophet's descendants (from Ali and Fatimah) whose rule will be the right and legitimate one.

This utopian vision that seeks a human society that will practice divine law is neither specific nor unique to the Shi'ites or the classical religions such as Judaism and Christianity but also belongs to the Baha'i faith, which, surprisingly, is the spiritual fruit of the eschatological thoughts that have derived from expectations regarding the Mahdi. Involvement in eschatological measures and components, and the constant preparedness for the coming of the Mahdi, has created a Messianic movement, which has been devoted to the acceleration and expedition of his return (such as is the case with the Shaykhiya and Babism). This was the basis for the creation of the Baha'i religion, which theoretically represents a revolutionary doctrine with respect to the eschatological implementation of the Shi'a components of Mahdivism *without* its apocalyptic components.

The development of the Baha'i faith as an independent religion resulting from the classical Shi'a interpretation has led the Shi'a to see the Baha'i faith as an imitative religion, a misleading religion, and worse—a heretical religion. The Baha'i approach, based on the adoption of the same Mahdi as the Shi'ite, has created deep antagonism within the Shi'a and is regarded with great hostility since it provides a different rational, emotional, and religious emphasis to the classical Shi'a belief, which has never deviated from the right path in its traditional belief in the Mahdi's return.

Political and Religious Messianism—The Birth of a New Religion—The Islamic Revolution and Its Herald

One of the leading religious developments of the twentieth century was the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and the shah's fall indicated more than just a change in the regime's orientation. It also involved a change in beliefs, mainly inside the Shi'a itself, which was actually more than a revolution since it was the birth of a new religion. The Islamic Revolution's leader and founder, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, organized this revolution based on the religious needs of the Shi'a and because of the social and economic changes undergone by the Iranian people. His fervor to bring down the Pahlavi Monarchy, one way or the other, forced him to renew an old belief and some of the marginal aspects of orthodox Shi'a—especially the leadership of the community known as *Velayat-i Faqih*, the rule of the clergy—by exercising control over the regime that went beyond just advising the crown. In addition the Ayatollah Khomeini emphasized that the Shi'a's religious rituals were part of the servitude the

people were experiencing under the shah. In this way Khomeini removed the real meaning of these rituals from their historical context—the Shi'a living under the Sunni reign—and transposed them into the modern period of the shah—that is, Shi'a life under a hypocritical monarchy. From a certain point of view, this was worse than being a Shi'a under the Sunni reign itself.

When one examines the Shi'a's spectrum of beliefs and compares them to Khomeini's phenomenal success in that revolution, one can see that the emphasized aspects (which were marginal for the Shi'a and were only really debated among the Shi'a Mojtaheds, Ayatollahs, during the last two centuries) became a central issue and a way of life for the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Republic's constitution was built upon these marginal beliefs, which were reelaborated by Khomeini and his Revolutionary Council.

In the process of stabilizing the flames of the revolution Khomeini enabled the parties and the media to flourish and express their beliefs and propaganda in order to build up their popular frameworks and find their places in the new political arena. For nine months there was a real process in which democracy flourished in the new Islamic Republic. This enabled the media and the political parties to refine their accumulated thoughts for reconstituting the state under a new regime as was promised by the revolution's founders and leaders. These parties and media factors truly believed that the new regime was all about bringing about a new and positive atmosphere in Iran despite its religious orientation. Those nine months of freedom, however, brought Khomeini and his political partners, along with the Revolutionary Council, to the realization that freedom could destabilize the new foundations of the young emerging regime.

Among those political parties and others who wished to find their place in the new political scene, there was a society called the Hojjatiyeh who were very distinctive from all the old and new parties since it was more than a political party and more than just a religious entity. The story of the Hojjatiyeh, however, started long before the parties were able to flourish and was established as a movement in 1953 by Sheikh Mahmoud Halabi, a cleric who was, at first, encouraged by the Shah Mohammad Reza and carried out his political agenda. Later he was, however, banished by the shah along with other parties and movements considered by him to be a threat to his fragile monarchy just after the Mossadeq crisis. The Hojjatiyeh, it must be said, was stopped only for being a movement and not for being a religious sect. Although the Hojjatiyeh was different, radical, and nurtured by a traditional interpretation of the Shi'a, it challenged the emerging regime and the common Shi'a leaders. While their ambivalent approach was, on the one hand, a rejection of Khomeini's *Velayat-i Faqih*, it, on the

other hand, offered Khomeini the necessary support for the new regime's cadres in the renovated institutions.

Said Amir Arjomand in his incredible book *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, writes in his conclusions that in the

> adducing of traditions relating to the Mahdi, he [Hujjat al-Islam Ridvani, i.e.] added that the purpose of the march on Jerusalem [as the final success of the Iran-Iraq war] was to acclaim the reappearance of the Hidden Imam as the Mahdi, and to witness the reappearance of Jesus Christ and his final conversion to Islam by the Mahdi. It is interesting to note that the Hujjati group [the Hojjatiyeh, i.e.]—so named after the Hidden Imam as the *hujjat* (proof) of God and a powerful oppositional group within the Islamic Republic—rejects the legitimacy of Khumaini's theocratic monism because it entails the usurpation of the right of the Mahdi.[1]

Although this research will reveal the Hojjatiyeh's way of life, beliefs, and actions the main questions it deals with are: Who are the Hojjatiyeh? What aspects of Shi'a exist in them? What elements of Shi'a do they believe in and what do they represent by holding such a philosophy and practice? Is their utopian vision based on classical Shi'a elements or does it represent revolutionary and innovative thoughts? And why did they fight both the Baha'i faith and believers and Khomeini's *Velayat-i Faqih*?

This research tries to trace the connection between the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the Hojjatiyeh's methods and innovations such as radical, fundamental, and unique thoughts and paradigms. Khomeini's methods and his interpretation of the Shi'a are, however, different from the Hojjatiyeh—so these questions must be asked: Did the Hojjatiyeh delay Khomeini's revolution or did they, perhaps, speed it up while objecting to his approach? Could the Islamic Revolution have taken place before 1979?

The research is divided in three main parts. The first will deal with the Shi'a concepts and the main stream—the *Ithna A'sharia*, the Imamate, and the followers of the Twelfth Imam—the Mahdi. The main goal of this part is to provide us with the basic background of the Shi'a and its essential theology so that we can arrive at a good understanding of the appearance of the Sheikhiyya, Babism, and Bahai'sm.

The second part will deal with the appearance of the Sheikhiyya, Babism, and Bahai'sm as parts of the theological and historical background for the Hojjatiyeh's emergence. This part will deal with the foundation of the Hojjatiyeh during the early 1950s in the framework of the historical and religious background that led to that foundation and, necessarily, will refer to its leaders and followers such as the Ayatollahs Mahmoud Halabi and Borojurdi. We will discuss the causes and realities that led to the movement's banishment. This part also deals with the accusation that

the Hojjatiyeh was allegedly established mainly to fight the Baha'i believers and followers of the late Shah—Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

The third and last part will deal with the Hojjatiyeh's activities, which were prohibited from 1953 till the first year of the Islamic Republic's foundation in 1980. This part will also discuss the political machinations after the Islamic Revolution, the parties' flourishing stage, and the Hojjatiyeh's comeback in the revived atmosphere. This important part will discuss the main arguments that took place between the revolution's spiritual leader, Khomeini, and the Hojjatiyeh's leaders and followers. And last, but not least, the final chapter will discuss the emergence of the Mahdiviyat Group that allegedly separated from the Hojjatiyeh but still kept the same leadership as the Hojjatiyeh.

Acknowledgments

This book started with a paper that I submitted to the Eighth Biannual Conference of the International Society for Iranian Studies (ISIS), held in Los Angeles, United States, in 2010. There I found Professor Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi, the then president of ISIS, who believed that the Hojjatiyeh Society needed more exposure and research. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Tavakoli-Targhi who, despite the circumstances, gave me the opportunity to pursue this challenge. Next I would like to thank Mrs. Farideh Koohi-Kamali, editorial director, US Academic Books, at Palgrave Macmillan, who saw the potential of this issue as a book; and also Ms. Sarah Nathan and Ms. Sara Doskow, for their devoted assistance.

Writing on the Hojjatiyeh without obtaining any primary resources and material from Iran is an almost impossible task but, even though Israel and Iran are hostile to one another, not to mention the winds of war that are stirring day by day, it is very important to mention that the Iranian people I have met, both inside and outside Iran, do not share this hostility. The opposite is also true as many of them are logical and wise people who see reality in practical and rational ways and wish to develop and gather as much knowledge as they can despite their limited technical and political possibilities. Therefore, I would like to thank these people, who remain in the shadows and sometimes risked their lives in order to procure unique material. Unfortunately I cannot reveal their names but they all deserve our respect and gratitude for their honorable actions. If all people behaved in a similar civilized way, war between Israel and Iran would probably never happen.

I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to the Authority for Research & Development at Ariel University who supported this book from its first stages; to Mr. Ralph Amelan, from the The American Center, US Embassy in Jerusalem, a man with a research attitude, who greatly assisted me always with pleasure, a smile, and warmth; to Mr. Samuel Beris, my professional editor for his wise advice; to my colleagues, Dr. Eyal Lewin, Dr. Etta Bick, and Professor Alexander Bligh, who constantly

supported me; to Mrs. Yelena Elayev, my research assistant, who worked day and night in order to cope with the mass of material and whose admirable help was invaluable; and the many others who supported me in all my endeavors.

Special thanks go to my beloved children, Orianne and Ya'ir, who, although they could not help me academically with this challenge, provided me, and still provide me, with the spiritual power and strength to contend with all my personal and academic challenges.

Although we all aim for perfection and completion, making mistakes is part of our human nature. As Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) says: "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Chapter 7: 20). All those mentioned here can only be thanked for their support. If there is any criticism, it should be aimed at me alone.

Abbreviations

CAB	UK Cabinet
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FO	UK Foreign Office
IRP	Islamic Republican Party
IPRP	Islamic People's Republican Party
SAVAK	Sazman-e Amniyat va Atele'at Keshvar (The Organization of Information and Security of the State—the shah's Secret Intelligence office)
MEK	Mojahedin-e Khalq (also: MKO—Mojahedin Khalq Organization)
VAVAK	Vezarat-e Etelaat va Amniat-e Keshvar (The Ministry of Information and Security of the Islamic Republic of Iran)

This page intentionally left blank

Part I

The Spiritual Background to the Imamate Shi'a—*Ithna A'shariyyah* and the First Half of the Twentieth Century

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 1

The Story of the Shi'a

The Creation of the Shi'a

Shi'a Islam is the second largest stream in Islam with about 15 percent of all Muslims being Shiite compared to the Sunnah with 80 percent. The Sunni religious leaders in the Middle Ages did not consider the Shi'a to be part of Islam due to fundamental differences in religious doctrine, and the recognition of the Shi'a stream by the Sunnah took place only later at the end of the Ottoman period. The main reason for this was the active presence of Western colonialism in the Muslim states. It appears that Sunni scholars and modernists such as Muhammad Abduh and Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, who were part of the national and modernist stream, acted more with words and less by real actions in their recognition of the Shi'a as part of the Muslim community so they could have them as allies in the pursuit of their anti-Western political aims.[1] Throughout the Ottoman rule, however, even though the Shiites were regarded as "sinful" or "deviationist," they were still regarded as Muslims. Up to the mid-nineteenth century the Ottomans and the Wahhabis banned various Shi'i practices such as the 'Ashura (*ta'ziyah*) processions, or public cursing of the first three caliphs, and destroyed their holy shrines[2] but did not disrupt the functioning of the Shi'i seminaries (*madaris*). Following the Ottoman suppression of the 1843–1844 Karbala rebellion, however, the Ottomans did allow these processions and the Shiites were not required to pay the *jizya* or any other tax that non-Muslims had to pay.[3]

Recognition of the Shi'i minority also came from the Saudi Arabian regime who "in the eighteenth century considered the Shi'is as miscreant, and desecrated their shrines in Iraq, [but] now, not only treat the Shi'i

Iranian[s], at least officially, as equal Muslims but are also tolerant of their own Shi'i subjects."[4]

In the *Thawrat al-I'shrin* (the revolution of the 1920s) in Iraq against the British, the Shiites "saw themselves as at least equal partners in the future Iraqi state," and in this particular case, the Shiites were alone in their fight against the British as "only a few Sunni leaders were opposed to the British, and in fact many of them had worked closely with them and sought their support." This fight against the British had deep roots in the Shi'i opposition as they, at first, preferred to be dominated by the Sunni regime (the Ottomans), rather than by the British who represented Christian superiority over Islam. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire the Shiites believed that they would share political power with the Sunnis, but, to their misfortune, they were ultimately dominated by both the Sunni and the British.[5]

At this point there needs to be a brief review of what Shi'a is. The word "Shi'a" itself means a section, a group. Among the Shiites Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin, the husband of his daughter Fatima and the first or second after Muhammad to adopt Islam, is considered to be the fourth caliph and the sole heir of Muhammad. The power of the three first caliphs, Abu Bakr, U'mar, and U'thman, is not recognized by the Shiites as legitimate.[6] The foundation of the sect is attributed to Ali's son, Hussein, who, together with his family and supporters, was murdered by the Sunni army led by Yazid, Mua'wiyah's son, near the Iraqi city of Karbala. On his commemoration day, the day of 'Ashura, the Shiites perform self-flagellation as a symbolic mourning of his martyrdom and the history of repression imposed on the Shiites by the Sunnis. As can be seen the Shi'a's worldview in general, in fact, has remained pessimistic and gloomy. In addition to the holiness of Mecca, the Shiites have other sacred cities, the most important being Karbala and Najaf in Iraq. The Shi'a comprises several subdivisions that believe in the dynasties of various imams such as the *Ithna A'shariyyah* who expected the return of the Hidden Imam who disappeared in the ninth century and is expected to come back as the Mahdi (Messiah) at the End of Days.[7]

The Theological Differences between the Sunnis and the Shiites

The differences between the Shiites and the Sunnis are both theological and historical. From the theological aspect, it is a question of various beliefs regarding principles of Islam and concerns, for instance, the *tawhid* (the doctrine of the oneness of God), *nobuwa* (prophecy), and

imamate (leadership). They are also different in their religious emotion with the Shiites considered to be more emotional, messianic, and more populist. Both the Shiites and the Sunnis reject oral traditions that are not compatible with the Prophet Muhammad's statements. However, the Shiites reject the Sunnis' transmitters of hadith as unreliable since these traditions have usually favored Ali's opponents. The Shiites have their own transmitters and see the statements of the Imams as the genuine hadith.[8]

The Shiites believe there is just one God who is not limited in any way and who is good and just and this is why His judgment is right. According to the Shiites God relates to both the good and evil in men and He will not return evil for good or vice versa. Human beings are given the choice between good and evil and this choice will decide their future and destiny.[9]

There are also differences regarding other principles in Islam. The Shiites consider the prophets/messengers (Abraham being the first prophet and Muhammad the last) to have been appointed by God and, as such, they are perfect (in their faith, their word, their thoughts, and their acts—'*Ismah*—*Ma'sumin*). The Shiites believe that God appoints a perfect man in each era to be the heir of the Prophet and the defender of Islam. The Sunnis also believe that there are other ways to carry out Islamic leadership.[10] Mulla Muhammad Baqir, known as 'Allama Majlisi, says in his comprehensive and significant work *Bihar al-Anwar* that "*jumlat alqaul fihi—ay fi mabhuth al-ismah—an ishabna al-imamiat ajmau'a a'la ismati al-anabiai walimati salawat allahi a'lihum min al-dhunubi al-zrirati wu'l-kabirati a'mdan wa khataa wa al-nasiana qabla al-nubuwati wal-imamati wal-ba'ad huma, bal min waqti wildatihim ila an yalqaw allah ta'ali…*" (Conclusion: that is, in the study of infallibility—that our companions have unanimously agreed that the Imami infallibility of the Prophets, and the Imams' blessing of Allah be on them, not only in regard to both the deliberate small and the large sins and errors and the mistakes made before his prophethood and Imamate and after but also from the time of their birth to when they lie with God…).[11]

The Sunnah attributes an important role to the stories and traditions of Muhammad and, in this regard, the Shi'a differs from the Sunnah. The Shi'a makes a distinction between Muhammad's faithful friends and others who were also his friends but were not really faithful and invented stories and historical events. It is for this reason that the Shiites believe all stories concerning the Prophet should be rationally tested for accuracy and sources.[12]

According to the Shi'a, it is incorrect to think that it separated at a later stage or emerged from the main stream of Islam since, as per many

testimonies (among both Shiites and Sunnis), the prophet Muhammad divided his followers into those who followed the Imam Ali (Shi'a in Arabic) and those who did not. Both Shiite and Sunni testimonies show that after Muhammad's death, the Imam Ali was opposed to the government of Abu-Bakr and 'Umar. The Sunnis believe that there is nothing in the Quran or the hadith that refers to the fact that the role of the imams is part of the pillars of Islam as argued by the Shiites who emphasize the opposite and believe in the centrality of the imams. The Shi'ites consider the imam to be a divinity who is perfect and endowed with prophetic powers but they do not attribute these powers to their divinity for they are dependent on God's will.[13] In any case both groups have different arguments and definitions regarding Islam and for this reason they can be considered to be two different groups from the very beginning.

Essential Principles of the Shiite Faith

Like the Sunnis, the Shiites follow the five pillars of Islam: *shahada*, which is testimony, *namaz*, which is prayer, *zakat*, which is charity, *sawum*, which is the fast, and the *hajj*, which is the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Shi'a embraces another three pillars, some of which come from ancient traditions and sources and have new and temporary interpretations: the *Khoms* tax, which means the donation of a fifth of one's income for charity and is a very ancient costume in the Shi'a, and the *jihad*, which is a holy war for the defense of Islamic nations and is still obligatory till the return of the Hidden Imam as He is the only one who can declare jihad. The real jihad in the eyes of the Shi'a is, however, "the war against one's own corrupt desires and inclinations, and is an ever-present battle" (*dar zaman-i ghaybat jihadi nist*).[14] Rola el-Husseini states that "[t]he authority under which jihad is waged is both religious and political. In Shi'ism, a rightful jihad can be waged only under the leadership of the Imam. According to Shi'a beliefs, the Imam has been in occultation since the ninth century and no rightful Jihad can be waged in his absence."[15] 'Allama Majlisi emphasized in *Bihār al-Anwār*,[16] his hadith collection: "wila jihad ila ma' al-Imam" (there is no Jihad without the Imam), which it derives from the Quranic sentence (*Aya*) (Quran 5:54) "a'la alkafarina yujahiduna fi sabil allah…" (stern with the disbelievers, and will strive in the cause of God…).[17] However, only during the nineteenth century did Shi'i scholars permit the waging of a defensive jihad. The third and last pillar is the demand to do good (*Amr bi'l Ma'ruf*) and avoid malicious thoughts, words, and acts (*Nahy a'n al-Munkar*).[18]

The followers of the *Ithna A'shariyyah* stream believe in five fundamental principles of the Shiite faith:

1. There is only one God and Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet sent to humankind, the first prophets being Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and then Muhammad as the Seal of the Prophets (this is actually the *Shahada: lā ilāha illallāh, wa Muhammad rasūlu-llāh*).[19]
2. The resurrection of body and soul on Judgment Day.
3. Divine justice or punishment will be dispensed to followers who have acted according to their free spirit.
4. The twelfth imam, the legitimate heir of Muhammad, is the leader of the Islamic world.
5. The recommendation of making a pilgrimage to the Shi'a holy places.

The first three pillars belong both to Shiites from other streams and to Sunnis—not only to the Twelfth Shi'a stream. On the other hand, the Shi'a imam leadership is a basic concept that relates to the leader not only in concrete matters but also in a spiritual sense as the leader is responsible for translating and explaining the Quran and the Prophet's word. In addition the Shiites have added other elements that differ from Sunni Islam, such as the changing of inheritance laws, divorce, temporary marriage (*nikāh al-mut'ah*), and the obligation to conceal one's religion when in danger (*taqia* and *tawria*).[20]

The Shiites who are the followers of the 12 imams believe that they are sinless, errorless, and appointed by God after Muhammad. According to the Shi'a, the imam leadership started during Ali's times and some theories say that it already existed during the Prophet's life. After Uthman's assassination, Ali became the caliph of the Muslim community but his authority and legitimacy were questioned. Indeed the Shiites consider Ali to be the first imam and his sons Hassan and Hussein as his successors, the second and third imam, respectively. This goes on until the twelfth and last imam, the Hidden Imam who will return on Judgment Day to judge the world.[21]

Ali took part in all of the Prophet's wars but one, and the Prophet chose him to be the husband of his daughter, Fatima. The Shiites consider the close relationship between Ali and the Prophet as the foundation for the Shi'a legitimacy. When Ali was 6 years old Muhammad invited him to live by his side and the Shiites believe that Ali was the first to give a testimony of faith in Islam. Ali also slept in Muhammad's bed on the *Hijra* day when they traveled from Mecca to Medina because of the threat that Muhammad's enemies would break into the house and kill the Prophet.[22]

The Role of the Imamate

The Shi'a religion developed its theological principles along with its leadership principles and, in this respect of the Imamate, this integrates the historical and theological narratives. The historical debate between the Sunnah and the Shi'a about the identity of the community's leader shaped the character of the Shi'a, especially during the period of the fifth and sixth imams (Muhammad al-Baqir and Ja'far al-Sadiq, respectively), the worldview of the imam's role within their community, and especially the role that the imams carry out on behalf of the Islamic world—not only the world of the Shi'i.

The differences between Shi'a and Sunnah are quite substantial and, in regard to this specific issue, the Imamate is really unique and special to the Shi'a itself. In general, the Sunnis see the leadership, especially after the Prophet's death, as a "temporal leadership," since the Caliph "is a first among equals, elected ideally by consensus."[23]

On the other hand, the Shi'a sees this principle as a fateful question that has led to the deepening and constructiveness of the idealization of the Imamate that was created by the Shi'a imams and scholars. The principles that were arrived at after the debate about the first leadership following the Prophet's death created new issues regarding the leadership. From this point on, the role of leadership in the eyes of the Shi'a had both an earthly and a divine role, just as was represented by Muhammad the Prophet—and this gave the Shi'a its uniqueness and mystical-eschatological outlook.

According to the Shi'a, the Prophet designated the Imam Ali as his successor (i.e., according to the Shi'a—in the *Ghadir Khum* ceremony) and gave him the authority to designate a successor from his bloodline, which was Muhammad's own bloodline (*Ahul al-Bayt*)—and this leadership was not to depend on the Muslim community's granting of legitimacy or consensus.

The role and legitimacy of the imams as the real interpreters and divine guides is the crux of the debate between the Sunnis and the Shiites regarding the leader's function, legitimacy, and authority. The Shi'a believe that the leader's role is not only to deal with secular politics but that it is mainly to be a religious guide to the community (later this will become an essential principle in the Shi'a). The leader was not to be Muhammad's replacement but his successor, both politically and religiously.[24]

The Imamate theology created a unique and pure doctrine, which is documented and refers to the imams' traditions and hadiths and, later on, this will give the Shi'i Ulama the ability to govern the community on behalf of the imams. The importance and idealism of the religious

separation from the Sunnis psychologically strengthened the Shi'a raison d'être, which is enveloped in a messianic eschatology and their ultimate need for a religious leader (the Mahdi), something that has given the Shi'a the ability to create an idealistic (but not a really religiously legitimated) replacement of the imams.[25]

The Shi'a Religion's Traditions

In addition to the pillars of the Shiite faith, there are also a number of customs that developed in the course of time. One such custom is the month of Muharram being devoted to the holy martyrs of the Shi'a. This month is also devoted to remembering the death of the third imam, Hussein, in the heroic battle that took place in Karbala where 72 of his followers were killed for the sake of the Shi'a and their absolute conviction that Shi'a was the true Islamic religion and should lead the Islamic world. The pilgrimage made by the Shi'a holy men is a special Shiite custom wherein they visit the holy Shiite shrines, most of which are located in Iraq (and one in Iran). The Shiite believers visit these sites according to the faith that the imams buried there have the power to present their pleas to God.[26] Although the pilgrimage to Karbala and Najaf is not compulsory in Shi'ism, it is considered to be highly commendable and cherished.

Celebrations and Holidays in Islam

1. E'id al-Fitr, which celebrates the end of the Ramadan, is also called the "small holy day" and is celebrated over three days. The month of Ramadan does not always take place on the same date since the Islamic year is based on lunar months and leap year customs are forbidden in Islam. The source of the commandment to fast in the Quran is found in the second chapter—*Surat al-Baqarah* (The Cow; the longest Sura in the Quran)—and the reference is found in verses 183–187. The fast is a complete fast from morning till evening—from sunrise to sunset. There is, however, no prohibition of conjugality (but only at night), work is allowed, and eating and drinking are also permitted at night, but moderation and humility have to be preserved.[27]
2. The last ten days of the Ramadan are called the *i'ticaf* and these are days of seclusion. The devout Muslim remains in the mosque where

he prays for long hours, night and day. People exempt from the fast are sick people, pregnant women, children under 13 years old, people on a journey, and soldiers at war. The twenty-seventh night of the Ramadan is called *Lailat ul-Qadr* or the "night of power" when all destinies—for life and death—are decreed by the Creator and noted in the Book.

3. *E'id al-Adha*, the "festival of the sacrifice," marks the end of the pilgrimage period. It is celebrated over four days from the tenth day of the *Dhu al-Hijjah*, which is the last month of the Islamic calendar. The pilgrimage to Mecca takes about a week and the festival of the sacrifice is one of the religious high points among the pilgrimage ceremonies. Those that celebrate at home hold a ceremony similar to the one taking place that day in Mecca, and this ceremony is based on the offering of a lamb as sacrifice, its preparation for the feast, or giving it to the poor.

On the feast of the sacrifice, just as with other customs that have been inspired by Judaism, a link exists between the feast and the story of the sacrifice of Ishmael, which is the Muslim equivalent of the sacrifice of Yitzhak found in the Book of Genesis. The Quran mentions how Abraham was preparing to sacrifice his son (one of several biblical stories found in the Quran) and, according to Islamic commentaries on the Quran, the son was Ishmael and not Yitzhak—thus the name of the feast. In the story the prophet Abraham dreamed one night that he was preparing his son (Ishmael according to the Muslims) as a sacrifice to God (similar to the sacrifice of Yitzhak in Judaism). Abraham was willing to materialize this dream and went to the Arafat mountain (located on the outskirts of Mecca) where he was ready to slaughter his son as a sacrifice (as was the case with the biblical story of Yitzhak on Mt. Moriah—later the Temple Mount) to show the power of his faith in God. God, however, saw him and sent a sheep that Abraham slaughtered instead of his son.

Shiite Festivities

1. *The day of 'Ashura*: The source of 'Ashura derives from the word "Assor" (tenth in Hebrew). Already, in the times of the Prophet, Muhammad adopted the Jewish custom of fasting on the tenth day of the first month, which, for the Jews, is the fast of Yom Kippur in the month of *Tishrei* (the first Hebrew month). The first Muslim community adopted this custom but, after his dispute with the Jews, Muhammad changed this custom and

moved it to the tenth day of the Muharram month, which is the first month of the Islamic year. According to Shiite tradition, this is the national day of mourning, which commemorates the murder of Imam Hussein Ibn Ali. His death symbolizes martyrdom, his sense of sacrifice, and his resistance to the repression exerted by the Sunnis against the Shiites.

On the 'Ashura day of the year 61 of the Hijra (October 10, 680 C.E.) Hussein, Ali's youngest son and Muhammad's grandson, decided to claim authority over the Muslim community from the Umayyad caliph Yazīd Ibn Mu'āwiya who had seized power after Ali's assassination. Hussein's supporters were Shiites who were convinced that the caliphate should only be in the hands of Muhammad's family. Hussein led his followers to Karbala and Kufa but Yazīd Ibn Mu'āwiya's supporters sent a large army to fight against him.[28]

2. *The Shiite mourning customs*:

(a) Ta'zieh is a procession of grief in which the crowd calls Hussein by his name. These mourning congregations also protest against the Umayyad Dynasty from which Yazīd Ibn Mu'āwiya originated and against the three caliphs who preceded Ali and supposedly stole the caliphate and the rule over Islam from him. The demonstration of grief of these particular Shiites resulted in tensions between the Shiites and the Sunnis. This escalated and turned into violence during political conflicts between Sunnis and Shiites, especially in places where these communities lived side by side such as in southern Iraq and southern Lebanon. Modern Shi'a scholars have declared that self-flagellation and wounding rites are forbidden by their religion and cause damage to the image of the Shiites. The opposition of Shi'a scholars to these ceremonies of grief aimed at doing damage to the human body has not been accepted in all the Middle East Shiite communities and, today, most Shiites are very strict about preserving these rites that very clearly and symbolically distinguish between the Sunnis and the Shiites.[29]

(b) Arba'een, which means 40, is the Shiite memorial day that takes place on the twentieth day of the month of Safar, 40 days after the 'Ashura fast, the mourning day for the death of Imam Hussein Ibn Ali.[30] According to Islam this is the first memorial day that takes place 40 days after the date of the death of Hussein Ibn Ali. The Shiites dedicate the Arba'een to the courage of Hussein and his followers who marched into Karbala to face an impossible reality. The Shiites believe that the resistance of Hussein to the unjust Umayya rule and the decision to fight them, despite the fact that he knew

he would die, proved his deep devotion to justice and to the righteousness of Islam; and during the following centuries the Shiites tried to rebel against Sunni rule many times. The Arba'een was first celebrated in 681 A.C. (62 A.H.), a year after the death of Hussein in the battle of Karbala, and one of the customs of the Arba'een is the pilgrimage of the Shiites to the city of Karbala in Iraq—the third holiest city for Shiite Islam. On this day the Shiite believers crawl along the streets of Karbala or fall to their knees when they approach the tombs of Hussein and his brother Abass Ibn Ali.

(c) E'id Ghadir-Khum is celebrated on the eighteenth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah to commemorate the Ghadir-Khum that took place ten years A.H. and is regarded to be the day on which Muhammad appointed Ali as his legal successor.[31] According to Shiite tradition, on the last Hajj before his death, Prophet Muhammad accompanied his followers to the Ghadir-Khum crossroads and there, before an immense crowd of passersby, announced that his son-in-law Ali was his future heir. The Shi'a verse 67 of The Table Spread Sura (Sura 5) is the verse of investiture and verse 3 in the same Sura, the last sentence uttered by Muhammad in the Quran, is also said on this same occasion in Ghadir-Khum.

(d) Mawlid an-Nabī is the birthday of both the Prophet Muhammad and the sixth imam, Ja'far al-Sadiq, on April 20, 702 (the seventeenth day of the month of Rabi' al-Awwal, 83 A.H.).

(i) Mid-Sha'aban is the birthday of the last imam—Muhammad al-Mahdī—on the fifteenth day of Shaaban, the eighth month. This celebration is of Sunni origin and marks the day when God remembered Noah and the Ark's inhabitants and ended the deluge. On this day God decided the purpose of Man and his life on Earth and also people's destiny in life or death. In contrast, for the Shiites, it is the day of the birth of the last imam, the Hidden Imam. Only the date of his birth is celebrated because he did not die but was only taken away until the day God decides to rescue mankind.

The Mahdi and the Imamate—The Birth of a New Theological Shi'a Ontology

Who is the Mahdi?

According to the Shiite theological concept the Mahdi is the Messiah who will redeem the world from its suffering and will bring Islam to all of

humanity, but the Sunnis and the Shiites diverge on the issue of who the Mahdi is. Is he Sunni or Shiite? And on behalf of whom will he rule the world? Although the concept of the Mahdi does not appear in the Quran itself, the Shiites still adopted this concept in all its complexity.

As in Judaism, which believes in the arrival of the Messiah, and Christianity, which believes the same or, rather, in the second coming of Jesus, Shiite Islam nurtures the belief that the redemption of Islamic society in particular and of society in general will be achieved only when the Mahdi—the Messiah of the world—comes one of these days. The Quran adopted from Judaism and Christianity the idea of a Judgment Day, the notions of the resurrection of the dead, of Heaven and Hell, and the belief that before the Day of Judgment numerous wars will take place in the world (*the wars of Gog* and *Magog*); but in this case, God will be the one to judge the world and not the Messiah.

As mentioned earlier the term "Mahdi" neither appears in the Quran nor in the Sunni texts. The concept of a man who has come to save the world is not acceptable to the Sunni mainstream as they believe that Muhammad is the last prophet and it is impossible for anyone to come after him and rescue the world. They believe the world's redemption will come though the observation of the laws of the Quran and of God's commandments in the Quran. Similarly to the Jewish belief that the Messiah will be the descendant of King David and the Christian belief in the second coming of Jesus, the Shiites consider the Mahdi to be the direct offspring of Muhammad (through the imams). Some Sunni streams who believe in the Mahdi say that he has not been born yet in contrast to the Shi'a who believe that he is here hiding somewhere.

The Development of the Faith in the Mahdi as the Messiah of the Shiites—The Hidden Imam

According to the Shiite tradition the prophet Muhammad said: "The world will not end until one of my offspring, bearing my name is the master of the world. When you see a green flag coming from Khorasan, join them because God will call El-Mahdi." In order to provide this myth with shape and content, the Shi'a described him and his glory.

The story of the Hidden Imam even begins during the life of his father and grandfather when the eyes of the Abbasid Caliphate focused on the developing Shiite community in general, and on its leaders in

particular—especially on the imams. The Abbasid pressure on the Shiite imams was especially strong during the rule of the tenth and eleventh imams, Imam Ali al-Hadi and Imam Hassan al-'Askarī, respectively, and the Abbasids exiled them from Kufa where they lived and settled them in a military camp in Samarra to closely follow their activities and the community. On the other hand, the imams understood that if they did not hide or escape, the dynasty of Shiite imams would be in real danger.

The Hidden Imam is the twelfth imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi, who was born in Samarra in Iraq in 869 (according to others, in 868[32]). His mother was the offspring of a Roman ruler named Narjes Hatin[33] and, according to the Shiite faith, the baby Muhammad was hidden from the eyes of the Abbasid Dynasty, which might have harmed him, and only very few people were allowed to see the child-imam. When he was five years old (others say seven years old) his father, the imam Hassan al-'Askarī, died and, despite his young age, Muhammad was recognized as the next imam. According to the Shi'a, on the same day as his father's funeral, the new imam disappeared and the Shiites claim that the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mu'tamid, who wanted to seize the imam, sent messengers to his home to capture him but could not find him.

The Shi'a divides the Occultation of the twelfth imam into two main periods: the Minor Occultation (*Ghayba al-Sughra*) that began in 873 with the Occultation of the Twelfth Imam, and the Major Occultation in 941 when one of the Hidden Imam's messengers died (*Bab*, *Safir*). The Shiite faith says that the Mahdi was taken away by God from the eyes of mankind and that sometimes, according to masters of the occult, he comes to guide lovers of Islam and teaches them how to protect themselves from the enemies of Islam. Another belief says that the imam is alive and instructs his followers when needed.

The Minor Occultation—*Ghayba al-Sughra* (873–941)

According to another opinion, when the little eleventh imam died his followers felt the necessity to hide him from the Abbasid Dynasty but, despite the fact that he was hidden from people since the age of five, he communicated with his followers through four messengers (not simultaneously but one after the other). In opposition to the Shi'a, the Sunnis claim that the twelfth imam did not exist at all and that only the messengers, who in fact were the Shiite leaders, supposedly governed on his behalf. The four messengers (deputies) were: Uthman Ibn Sa'id al-'Amri (873–874) who governed for 1 year, Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Uthman al-A'mri (874–916)

for 42 years, Abul Qasim Husayn Ibn Ruh al-Nawbakhti (916–937) for 21 years, and Abul Hassan Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Samarri (937–940) for 3 years—a total of 67 years during the absence of the last imam.[34]

The Major Occultation—*Ghayba al-Kubra* (941–Present)

In fact there is no evidence of the death and burial of the twelfth imam and it is currently believed that he disappeared after the death of the fourth messenger. Some of the followers think that the imam ascended to Heaven and that he will return in due time when the Creator decides it is time to come and redeem the world. According to another belief, the imam never left Earth and that, if the Mahdi had not been here, the world would have already been corrupted. The Shiites are convinced that during the rule of Alī al-Hādī, the tenth imam already knew that his grandson would be hidden from the eyes of his followers and the reason why they (the last two imams) were sent away was so that the Shiite community would get used to this anticipated absence (according to Shiite belief, God did this so that the disappearance would be precipitated by the Abbasid Dynasty). Although his son, Hassan al-'Askarī, was already in a state of almost total detachment from the large Shiite community and was seen only by those very close to him, the deep chasm of the major occultation only came with his son—Muhammad al-Mahdi.

The Shiite Believer during the Major Occultation

The question that, therefore, needs to be asked is: Why didn't the twelfth and last imam save the world? The answer is that, on the one hand, the occultation was an attempt to keep Ali's seed safe from annihilation by the Abbasid Dynasty. On the other hand, however, the Shiite faith claims that the occultation was mainly meant to train the Shiite believers for the Day of Judgment, when the Shi'a, with the Mahdi as leader, would rule the world. In any case, this occultation was to be long and this was the way it was supposed to be since the Mahdi wanted to test the Shiite believers and see whether they would observe total faith on his return or just ignore him. In other words, this was to be a process of filtering out all the nonbelievers when the Mahdi ultimately joined the devout Shiite community.

One of the main issues of concern for the Shiite religious leaders, especially during the first period following the start of the major occultation period, was the following question: If there is no imam, or someone else, acting on his behalf (*Bab* or *Safir*), is heading the Shiite community in the world, then how should the Shiite believer behave? Since only the imam was considered to be the worthy and legitimate leader, the Shiite community had to deal with the dilemma of how to behave both under a hostile regime (meaning a rule that was not Shiite) and within their own community.

According to another approach, the believer should act individually to bring back the imam, for the private individual has to consider the return of the Mahdi as something that depends on his own deeds; this means following the imam's deeds such as expecting redemption, observing the commandments, giving charity, praying with devotion, and remaining faithful to the Ali Dynasty. All these acts will make the Mahdi come sooner. Moreover, on a collective basis, the Shiite community should remain passive in all that concerns government or in governing themselves. The community should remain submissive under a foreign Islamic rule (Sunni or other) and persevere in their suffering until the Mahdi comes to save them from the tyranny of the Sunni.

There is another contrasting approach that claims a passive attitude will not bring the Mahdi closer and will even keep him away. In other words, the Shiite believer and the Shiite community should be active in encouraging the Mahdi's arrival. More than that, the individual Shiite believer and his community should work together to build an autonomous Shiite entity under a Shiite rule that imposes on the Shiite community the Quran and the Sharia' authority and the religious Shiite commandments; and that this is the only way to hasten the arrival of the Mahdi. This raises the question of how it can be done. How can the Shiite community achieve these goals under a foreign or hostile regime?

Indeed this struggle is crucial. The Muslim believer, and surely the Shiite, has to consider his actions as part of the cosmic struggle of good against evil, which is an eternal, uncompromising fight against the maladies of this world. This battle will be won by defeating heresy and evil, first in the Islamic community and then in the world in general. The community has to fight against corruption (a prominent motive, e.g., in the Iranian Islamic Revolution), struggle against materialism and against economic and social exploitation in the world.

The Shi'a also know how to pinpoint the period in which the Hidden Imam will come or is supposed to come. According to the Shiite faith, the Shiite believers will suffer the burden of being under a corrupt power. Epidemics will exterminate large parts of populations, not only within

the Shiite community but also throughout the world; the world communities will become disappointed in the various regimes and ideologies—democracy, Marxism, anarchy, dictatorship, and so on; and there will be a readiness for the *tawhid* (the belief in one God). There will be unnatural changes with the sun rising in the West, loud voices emanating from the sky, the eclipse of the sun in mid-Ramadan, and the eclipse of the moon at the end of the Ramadan. After all this the Mahdi is supposed to come and bring salvation from their historical exploitation to the Shiite community and bestow the Shi'a cult on the whole world.

Another question that arises is how the reality of the End of the Days will look after the arrival of the Mahdi since the Shiite community has never experienced an ideal situation in which the imams ruled peacefully, without persecution. With the new reality of the Mahdi's arrival, how will the new Islamic community behave under a Shiite government: as is written in the Quran, or according to a new approach? Here again, in regard to this issue, the Shi'a has managed to divide reality according to concrete parameters (observing the Prophet's ways, the Quran, and the hadith) and has also established an alternative way for the Shiite scholars to rethink the reality of the End of the Days. According to the classical approach of adhering to Islam, the new reality mainly touches upon monotheistic religions such as Judaism and Christianity. This issue does not concern pagans since they shall be exterminated if they do not convert to Islam.

The first approach toward the monotheist religions is based on "life goes on," which means that if, when the Mahdi comes, the Jews and Christian do not convert, the Islamic community will behave with them as they did before. The Jews and Christians will submit to Islamic rule, will be submissive, and will pay a lump-sum tax for their right to live like this. According to this approach, the Mahdi will judge the Jews and the Christians according to their own rules (the Bible and the New Testament). The second approach claims that Islam (Shiite Islam, of course) will be offered to all monotheists and those who refuse to convert shall be sentenced to death.

What Will Happen under the Rule of the Mahdi?

The rule of the Mahdi will be neither sectorial nor local but will embrace the whole world, which will be led by Islam, and all laws will derive from the Quran and the Sharia'. During the stage of revelation all humankind will

fully believe in God and in His messengers with no hypocrisy or flattery. The concept of "nation" will be abolished and everyone will live under a worldwide Islamic regime. World wealth will be divided equally between all people and there will be no racial, language, or cultural discrimination since everybody will be Muslim. The world will be led everywhere by the Mahdi's deputies and real wisdom will be brought to the world by the Mahdi. The Mahdi himself will die after seven years (or nine or eleven or seventy) following the establishment of the new rule. (See the Baha'i concepts in chapter three.)

Shaping the Shi'a according to the Belief in the Mahdi

Sunni theologians claim that the development of belief in the Mahdi among the Shiite community derives mainly from their basic need to be dependent on a supreme being that will save them from continuous persecution by the various Sunni leaders. Beyond this global vision, the Shi'a also aimed to strengthen the spirit of the individual and thus give him the positive goals of self-salvation and the salvation of his community (while taking serious vengeance against their historical Sunni enemy) based on the total belief in the Mahdi.

The Shiites consider themselves a persecuted minority that risk extermination following any rebellion against the ruler of any country they settle in (whether Sunni or not). This is the reason why the Shiites developed this anticipation of the Mahdi, lowered the profile of their community, and maintained a reserved attitude regarding the Islamic rule of all Islamic communities. Any human revolution not led by the Mahdi would be deemed to failure and—as the Mahdi is not human and will be sent by God—no revolution led by him could possibly fail.

Until then, however, the Shiite community has had to live in a solid, but also persecuted community, and both alternatives have required other leaders to carry on the Mahdi's task till his arrival. One of the most interesting issues about which so much has been written is the question of what will happen with the religious authority of the twelfth imam, the Mahdi. Who will take the reins and lead the community until he comes? This is a fundamental question since any leadership of the Shiite community that is not carried out by a proper religious leader is an illegitimate regime. That is to say, a secular leader (or even a religious Sunni) who leads the community according to his own desires will be very close to injustice and exploitation of the individual. Any other human method of government, which is not

based on religion according to the Islamic Sharia' and the Shiite hadith, will be doomed to fail.

According to the Shiite faith, the leader (Shi'i, Sunni, or any other) should enable the Shiite community to duly observe its own customs and religion. More than that, such a leader has to obey the religious Shiite leaders, and if he does not, it is the obligation of the Shiite community to rebel and overturn him. On the other hand, the Sunnis claim that a bad Muslim leader is better than a good infidel, provided there is no anarchy where everyone does what he feels like. This approach belongs to the activist stream who state that the ground should be forcibly prepared for the arrival of the Mahdi. They believe that the Mahdi is already on Earth and is enduring the suffering of his community. In order to save the Mahdi from this injustice, the community has to act to correct the ruling and religious evils within their Shiite community, the Islamic community, and the whole world.[35]

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 2

The Revival of the Shi'a after the Qajars

Making a link between Shi'a theology and Shi'a politics, filtering this through the history of centuries, and compressing all this into a few chapters is not an easy task, but it will enable us to come to a better understanding of the evolutionary process that the Shi'a has gone through during the past centuries, especially since the collapse of the Safavid Empire. The composition of the religious and political elements of the Safavid enabled the coming religious generations to shape and sharpen the Shi'a into what we know it to be today. Nevertheless, we cannot completely ignore the Safavid period, and we shall use it as a platform to improve our understanding of the religious developments during and after the Qajari period.

Until the beginning of the sixteenth century, with the rise of the Safavid Dynasty, the Shi'a of Persia (Iran) was fighting for its survival and the avoidance of self-construction. The distance from the main events in the Sunni world, despite centuries of wars and conflicts between the Sunni Arabs of the Arab territories and the Persian-Sunni-Shi'i territories, made it possible for Iran to come more and more under Shi'a influence, especially after the collapse of the Abbasid Empire in 1258 A.D. This enabled its clerics and the Ulama of that region to expand the influence of the Shi'a over the Persian natives, and for many years they saw themselves as a contrast and as an alternative to the Arab conquerors—culturally, linguistically, and religiously.

Since we are not going to deal with the history of the Safavid in this chapter we should bear in mind the philosophical and cognitive process of maturation that the Shi'a underwent from the time of its creation till the establishment of the Safavid Empire. This maturity enabled the rulers to

share the political field with Shi'i clerics who, for the first time in Shi'a history after the Occultation, were able to hold political positions in a Shi'i state. This innovative practice was due to two main factors, the first being the reality of the circumstances that forced the Safavid rulers and the clerics to cooperate in order to build a new independent state that had to face challenges inside and outside of Persia. The second was the intellectual and religious development of thought within the religious milieu and elites that enabled them to find a religious path that would allow them to be a part of the Safavid Empire's political system. Even the declaration of Shi'a as the state's religion made a contribution at this time to self-determination as Shia was a different entity from the Sunni Arabs. This led to a sharpening of the religious consciousness as Shiites who should and could govern the state and, in reality, created a new identity.[1]

Between the Qajars and Pahlavi—Rethinking the Clergy's Place inside Iranian Society and Politics

The fall of the Safavid Dynasty brought about the weakening, and even the total rupture, of the links and affinities that had existed between religious leaders and the political system. This dynasty had established the Shi'a as a national religion and even managed to insert religious leaders into its administration, who, in fact, became state employees in a system that was very similar to the status and appointment of Sunni religious leaders within the Ottoman Empire. Under the Safavid Dynasty, the Shiite community had enjoyed both political and religious control but with the decline of the political center of the Safavid Dynasty in 1722, the Shiite community lost its political power and, as a consequence of the fall of the Safavids, the issues regarding the link between religion and state gained urgency among religious leaders. These issues were debated by two essential schools—the Akhbariyya and Usuliyya—each of whom tried to deal with the traditional Shiite concept of religion and state. While focusing on this issue they sharpened their eschatological points of view about the Imamate and the expectation of the Mahdi's arrival. Mirza Muhammad Amin Astarabadi's texts, in particular his book about the essence of the Akhbariyya—*al-Fawa'id al-Madaniyya*, were the basic writings of the Akhbariyya. On the other hand, the Usuliyya was led by the Mujtahed Nur al-Din Amili and were influenced by his book *al-Fawa'id al-Makkiyya*.[2]

The main difference between the two schools was that the Akhbaris "asserted that ordinary Muslims should read and interpret the holy texts for themselves without the need for intermediaries"[3] and denied both the rational proof (*al-adilla al-'aqliyya*) and the legitimacy and practice of *ijtihad*. Instead of this, they preferred to stress the importance of the "sole recourse in judicial arbitration to the revealed sources, especially the *akhbar* of the Imams."[4] This logic is very close to the Sunnis' understanding of the notion of "closure of the door of Ijtihad," which had been done by Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Isma'il Ash-Shāshī (known as al-Qaffāl al-Kabīr—the Locksmith). On the other side were the Usulis who rejected the Akhbari doctrine by saying "that authoritative interpretation (*ijtihad*) on the basis of reason was necessary; and required extensive scholarly training, which could only be achieved by specially talented scholars among the ulama, called *mojtaheds*."[5]

The Akhbari School was on the rise during the Safavid era and only with its collapse could the Usuli School regain and win religious leadership. As mentioned earlier, the Usuli granted the Ulama the authority to "give legal opinions (*fatwas*) and hence intervene in social areas," both theoretically and practically. Moreover, it "enabled the emergence of a powerful leadership of the Twelver ulama through the emergence of the positions of *marja' al-taqlid*, leading to the present day hierarchy involving the rank of Hujjat al-Islam, Ayatullah, and Grand Ayatullah…"[6] This method of interpretation, which relied on the use of *usul* (principle), gave the mujtaheds the ability to expand the debate on political-religious relations, which would express itself during the Qajar era.

Following the collapse of the Safavids, however, and the absence of a high authority that would install religious leaders into the government, the Akhbariyya managed to expand mostly beyond Iran's borders but, aside from a few pockets in Bahrain and southern Iraq, no trace is left today of the Akhbariyya. The Usuliyya School remained on the defensive until the arrival of the mujtahed Aqa Mohammad Baqir Bihbahani (1705–1791) who strengthened its image. Bihbahani's main treatise was in fact a contradiction of the Akhbariyya text—*al-Fawa'id al-Madaniyya*—substituting it with the *al-Fawa'id al-Usuliyya*. The main thesis of the book was that religious leaders should serve as Islamic judges as well as being in charge of the implementation of religious laws. (These same things were postulated two hundred years later by Khomeini.[7])

Zackery M. Heern in his dissertation writes that Bihbahani was the one "to put an end to the Akhbari-Usuli dispute" and is known as "the person who liberated Shi'ism from the stifling Akhbari school of thought that was dominant in Iraq for much of the eighteenth century." In his struggle against the Akhbaris, Heern writes, "Bihbihani and his followers

established the dominance of the rationalist Usuli school of thought"; Heern goes on to say that the important consequence of the Usuli victory was that the "clerics played a more central role in Shi'i society and the clerical hierarchy became more stratified."

Heern continues on to draw the following conclusions about the Usuli School Shi'ism and writes that "the powerful position of Shi'i clerics continued throughout the nineteenth century" and that "the Iranian government's [of the Pahlavis] subsequent attempts at secularizing Iranian society in the twentieth century seemed to have curbed the influence of the Usuli establishment until the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, which brought Usuli clerics to power."[8]

The Usuliyya rise in Iran was not accidental. The dialectics of power will always work in a country with three strong religious currents (Akhbariyya, Usuliyya, and Sufis). In this case, as well, the classical Akhbariyya ideology supported the concept of the religious leader remaining outside the political arena. The Usuliyya School adherents, at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, found a new momentum with the rise of the Qajar Dynasty to power. Between the Safavids' collapse and the rise of the Qajar the country suffered almost a century of religious and political anarchy and, in this situation, even the new Qajar rule, which tried to hold the country under a very tight and organized administration by receiving legitimate religious support, could not deal with the increasing strength of the Usuliyya. The Usuliyya and the Qajar held on together so as to survive and develop and, for this very purpose, the government appointed religious leaders on its behalf to be the *Sheikh ul-Islam* and the *Imam Jume*.[9]

The Usuliyya decree was crucial for the Shiite religious process and the use of the *ijtihad* (Muslim jurisprudence) provided the Usuliyya religious leaders with a spiritual and religious dimension. Thus the religious leaders considered themselves to be the direct successors of the Hidden Imam and his substitutes in religion (adjudication) and politics (Islamic law enforcement). In addition Usuliyya Islamic jurisprudence was not limited to internal community issues but also dealt with crucial global questions such as nationalism and politics.[10] While religious leaders enjoyed a special status in political life during the Safavid and post-Safavid periods, the rise of the Qajars brought about a change in their political influence, one that proved to be beneficial at the end. The initial cooperation between the political and religious leaders deteriorated during a period of separation of religion and state, but this separation brought about a religious autonomy that provided the leaders with exceptional power over the Shiite community because their strength came from the people rather than from being appointed by the Qajar Dynasty.[11]

The rise of the Qajars led the religious leaders to reconsider the legitimacy of the new regime, to examine whether it corresponded to the religious reality of the time, and, not least, to reconsider the political perspectives of the Qajar regime. The Ulama-Regime relationship was analyzed by the Ulama through two main points of view. The first concerned the current existential circumstances and the second focused on the basic recognition of the regime and its characteristics. In principle, the religious leaders believed in protecting the nation, especially from foreign invasion, and this position characterized their national views regarding the Qajar Dynasty throughout their rule (and afterward). On the other hand, this was artificial support rather than real recognition of the regime and its religious values (in other words seeing the regime's activities through a religious prism). It should be mentioned that the traditional concept of the clergy regarding government in any Shiite regime is concerned with whether it is founded on the representation of the Hidden Imam or not. Nevertheless, religious leaders supported the regime passively as long as it defended national and, of course, religious interests. The defense of the Islamic motherland was an important value according to their vision (*jihad* being a pillar of Shiite faith) and this was their way to religiously and legally describe the complexity of the monarchy as a worthwhile regime and as a defense of religious interests.[12]

In fact, throughout the existence of the Qajar Empire, there were struggles between religious leaders and the monarchy. Indeed, the power of the clergy arose from their disconnection from political institutions and, in many cases, they led public protests that forced the shah to cancel certain decrees that were not applicable to the Shiite religious nature of the Qajar nation.[13] Most of the religious leaders, if not all of them, originated from the Usuliyya School and, toward the end of the nineteenth century, the differences between the king and the religious leaders only deepened. The climax came with Ayatollah Shirazi's boycott of tobacco and, later, with the Constitutional Revolution that took place between 1905 and 1906.[14] The religious leaders used the same principles offered by the Constitutional Revolution to maintain their power within the community and to reduce the influence of the shah.

Moaddel, in his article "Shi'i Political Discourse and Class Mobilization in the Tobacco Movement of 1890–1892," mentions that the tobacco boycott of 1890–1892 resulted in the strengthening of the religious leaders and their efforts to infiltrate the political life of the Qajar nation. The article indicates the reasons for the weakness of the Qajar Empire, which left an apparent government vacuum that was ready to be filled by religious leaders. The author makes three observations regarding the rise of Shiite Islam in the nineteenth century. The first is based on the early

Shiite Islam theory stating that an Islamic and Shiite regime should be in the hands of the imams descending from Prophet Muhammed's family (or its representatives). The second involves the rise of political Shiite Islam due to the weakness of the Qajar regime (power dialectics), and the last one is "the *de facto* separation, yet mutual reinforcement, of political and Shiite hierocratic domination in the Qajar polity." Moaddel adds that the tobacco boycott was in fact a struggle of the religious leaders against British colonial domination.[15]

There is more than one reasonable explanation for this hypothesis. For instance, the religious leaders, already an autonomous religious entity enjoying the political and financial support of their community, considered the foreign British monopoly over tobacco to be a financial danger to their followers and to themselves. The *mujtaheds* (Ayatollahs) were as obligated to their community as the community was committed to them. Moreover, from the religious point of view, the administration of the tobacco industry by a foreign body, even one not considered agnostic by Islam, was deemed "impure." Another point not mentioned by Moaddel is that the rise of religious leaders was on its way well before the Tobacco Rebellion.[16] This uprising was an effective platform for, on the one hand, the establishing and strengthening of the monarchy's image and its power and, on the other hand, the refining and underlining of the rising power of the religious leaders—in particular those of the Usuliyya School that supported the political-religious-Shi'a administration of the country. The clergy could not have hoped for a better opportunity to demonstrate to the royal government where the real power was; and this was accompanied by the increasing erosion of their social and religious (apparent) authority, through the limitations placed by the government on their judicial and educational autonomy.

Moaddel tries to both classify the various opinions he presents and provide his own comment. According to him one thesis maintains that the religious leaders (the Ulama) used their power as interpreters of religion and that all their acts were based on the fact that they were Shiite religious leaders (devoid of any independent political opinions). Another thesis argues that "the Ulama are coterminous with Shi'ism, and the dynamics of Shi'a Islam, as a world religion, is reduced to the dynamics of Ulama action." Moaddel's own view is that the Shi'a and the religious leaders were two separate categories. In other words, the clergy was an interest group that was different from the Shi'a, and this was not the ideology of the Ulama or of any other group—such as the merchants, for instance.[17] Moaddel concludes that the merchants used the religious leaders to achieve their own goals.[18]

We might agree with Moaddel's argument that the Shi'a was not an ideology or that, to a certain extent, religious leaders represented an interest

group but it is more difficult to accept the separation theory regarding the case that he chose to analyze—the tobacco boycott. As mentioned, the boycott was only a tool to realize Shiite religious ideas. The increasing power of the religious leaders did not originate from this boycott but it did gain from it. The Qajar Dynasty did not integrate religious leaders into its administration so the religious leaders began advancing their religious interests by themselves acting with no governmental support and, in this way, they imposed their authority on the country's Shiite population. During the Qajar rule the religious leaders managed to convince the shah to cancel several decrees, laws, and acts opposed to their religious views and this was possible because of their autonomous power and control over the population of believers.

The debate between the religious leaders during the Qajar Dynasty and, more precisely, between the Akhbariyya and the Usuliyya was, in fact, the outcome of the contemporary discussion that focused on the actual situation of the nation. The debate extended to more fundamental issues regarding the constitutional and religious authority of each side, meaning the Hadith or the Shiite Shari'a (Ja'fari School). They diverged not on the question of "whether" but rather on "how." The Shiite conceptual split between the Shaykhiya and the Usuliyya was not totally evident as both believed that the Hidden Imam, even if not physically there, was still ruling the Shiite community and each, in its philosophy, tried to interpret the absence of the Hidden Imam with legal and spiritual instruments that would allow them to be leaders of the Shiite community. The Babism that appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century managed to momentarily unite both groups that had decided to clean the Iranian territory from this sect and this gave a different significance to the bond between the believer and the Hidden Imam. It also strived to create a very different religious-spiritual reality, which was totally different from the classical Shi'a both within the Shaykhiya and the Usuliyya Schools. Babism tried to insert a change mostly on the spiritual and metaphysical levels (see chapter three). The reunification of the religious leaders in Iran and their attempt to join the Qajar rule was the result of their fear of a far-reaching innovation proposed by Babism and later by the offspring of Babism: the Baha'i religion.

The impact of Babism on the Shiite religion in the second half of the nineteenth century was apparently more of a blessing than a curse. It emerged at a time when religious leaders in both schools came to understand that they were undergoing essential internal processes at the same time that the Qajar nation itself was going through structural, constitutional, westernizing, and modernizing changes. The theological debate between the Shaykhiya and the Usuliyya, each of which was conducting

an uncompromising struggle against Babism, and later against the Baha'i, led the entire Shiite religious community to perform a fundamental soul-searching, which culminated in their release from their political masters (the Qajar Dynasty) and from the issues concerning Iranian national identity (at least till the end of the nineteenth century).[19]

In fact, the development of Babism and then Baha'ism proves that the existing tension within the Shi'a itself regarding the dimension of the imam as emissary was the basis for these messianic movements. The readiness of the Shiite religious leaders (from the Shaykhiya) to challenge traditional thought regarding the absence of the imam triggered a chain reaction that would, on the one hand, give rise to these movements and, on the other, open up the issue of the *Vilaya*, thus developing the Usuliyya movement, which supported granting greater power and legal authority to the mujtahed.[20]

Religious leaders who lived during the Qajar period succeeded through the *ijtihad* enquiry method to reach the obvious, although hesitant, conclusion that their presence as part of the ideological political process, although impractical at that stage, derived from their status as the representatives (deputies) of the Hidden Imam on Earth. These mujtaheds found references in the Shiite Shari'a (Hadiths), which supported (but also denied) their claim to both being the messengers of the imam in the community and those who were supposed to strengthen the legitimacy of the religious authority and undermine that of the rule of secular governors and kings.[21] The origin of this debate can be found in the existence of the Qajar Dynasty, the changing reality of Persian society, and the geopolitical reality of the Middle East.

While the Qajar Dynasty, especially toward the end of its rule, tended to adopt Western content, it also remained mired in deep corruption and enslaved to the Western world by long-term loans that were used to enrich the hedonistic rulers rather than develop the Persian nation. This enslavement led the religious leaders to take the doctrinaire struggle out of the madrassa and into the streets to demonstrate to the ruling class that Iran was still led by these leaders. Their protests would become much more political a few decades later with Khomeini's demand to lead the country politically as well.

It was only natural that the constitutional protestors of 1905 would use mosques and religious sites to convince the clergy and their followers to adhere to their revolutionary concepts based on nationalism and religious essence. These, however, were rather incompatible with the royalist aspirations for changes in the country, especially in regard to the relations and favors provided to Western elements by the Qajar Dynasty. The constitutional revolutionaries and religious leaders had no direct revolutionary experience and were therefore unable to predict whether such a change

would be beneficial to the country. They assumed that the constitutional revolutions that had brought prosperity and social justice to other countries would also guarantee a similar change in Iran.

At this stage, religious leaders, identifying with the constitutional protestors (and there was no unanimity among the religious leaders about the goals of a constitutional revolution[22]), joined their public in the belief that institutional corruption should end. The issue of their partnership, either as politicians or as government counselors, was not a part of the revolutionary agenda. They considered their participation in the struggle to be a means to protect religion, strengthen the country, and ensure social welfare, protection, and due respect to the Muslim population.

Within this constitutional revolution, the clergy debated their part in this process. Some, like the Ayatollah Sheikh Fazollah Nouri, argued that importing a Western constitution to an Islamic country was forbidden while others, such as the Ayatollah Mirza Muhammad Hussein Na'ini, argued that any opposition to such a revolutionary movement contributed to the perpetuation of the Qajar Dynasty's dictatorial regime, something which was also forbidden. Some minor, although significant, religious figures argued that any constitution, whether imported or not, had to lean on the Shari'a laws and not on unknown and unfamiliar Western concepts that were foreign to Shiite and Islamic rule. Therefore the religious leaders, over and above their support, became a key factor that was likely to lead the country and its sociopolitical development based on religious elements and support. At that time, however, no one claimed that the Ulama would or could lead the country politically.[23]

Na'ini expanded this unresolved concept of the religious leaders' support of the constitutional revolution and pointed out the authority inherent in the religious leader as a long-term and powerful "deputy" or "representative" of the Hidden Imam on Earth. This was an authority that obligated him to take action regarding the establishment of a supportive and efficient regime that would grant religion its rightful place within Iranian Shiite society. He considered any government that leaned on the *vilaya* to be better than any corrupt regime even if, from a constitutional point of view, it would not be the ultimate government of the Hidden Imam. The problem was that even a regime of this kind would not be immune from corruption (since only the rule of the imam would be resistant to corruption and exploitation).[24]

Perhaps, in general, the religious leaders, especially the seniors (the *mujtaheds*—Ayatollahs), did not want to rule and did not see any obligation to be involved in the constitutional revolution or its process and to promote religious content. They preferred remaining faithful to the traditional Shiite concepts that did not mix religion and politics in the meaning

that the Ulama should take part in current politics—as they had during the Safavid rule. The Ulama at this time believed that they should not take any part in politics at least until the arrival of the Hidden Imam. On the other hand, there were autonomous religious leaders who considered themselves committed to revolutionary concepts and their implementation. At this stage, religious leaders, whether senior or autonomous, initiated a common struggle and joined the movements that were against foreign powers.

Until the collapse of the Qajar Dynasty the religious leaders had not experienced any traumatic events in respect to their status and the nation's character. The Qajar regime indulged itself in corruption and was dependent more on its links with foreign powers than on wisely and consistently introducing Western modern content into the country. The fateful signs against religious leaders and in general against religion in the country first appeared during the rule of Reza Shah who overthrew the Qajar Dynasty in December 1925. Until his ousting in 1941 he continually oppressed religious leaders and the Shiite tradition and culture, openly declaring that the nation's future did not depend on them but was linked to secular processes and modern elements unknown to Islamic ideology in general and more specifically to the Shiite conception of it.[25]

The modernization process that had already begun at the end of the nineteenth century accelerated after World War I. The rise of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and the social and political revolution that he led, along with the intensive introduction of Western and modern processes, were not to be ignored by the new Iranian king.[26] Reza Shah envied the changes introduced by Atatürk in Turkey and aspired to increase Iran's power from within and without. For this purpose, he agreed with the plans of the Iranian nationalists—*Iran Javan*—who insisted that only a secularization of the country and the reduction of the mullahs' power would enable the shah to enhance Iran's vigor and lead it toward progress and modernization.

Reza Shah was impressed by the plans presented to him by these left-wing nationalists even though these plans were not new to him. Perhaps consulting left-wing people who identified with secularism indirectly supported what he himself thought about the things that were obstructing Iran's progress and what needed to be done to achieve this progress. Moreover, despite his determination to implement his/their plans, the new shah understood that he could not achieve these goals in the short time desired by the nationalists or as carried out by Atatürk himself. The shah understood that the religious reality of Iran was different from that of Turkey regarding both the nature of the population and the religious trends of both countries since Turkey was Sunnite and Iran Shiite. Nevertheless he promised the nationalists that such changes would take place in the course of the years to come.[27]

During his reign, from the beginning of 1926 until his dismissal in 1941, the shah tried to implement the required reforms but, unfortunately for him and for his people, the economic and the political situation impaired the implementation of these changes. Reza Shah's vision was, of course, twofold: to lead Iran to full national independence while removing the burden of the British and Russian presence[28] and to optimize the impact of the reforms by combining them with secular elements such as the cancellation of the *waqf* (sanctified institution) and the Shari'a courts of justice, a reduction in religious influences on governmental institutions, and the implementation of a Western code of dress.[29]

The senior religious leaders in Iran, who aspired to preserve the status quo, protested mainly against his aspiration to turn Iran into a secular republic[30] in the image of Turkey under Atatürk, but Reza Shah's administration succeeded in overcoming their protests.[31] It should be noted that the clerics at that time had already reached a compromise with the coming shah, Reza Khan, in which the abandonment of the wish to create Iran as an image or reflection of Atatürk's Turkey would help them to declare him as shah rather than as president.

Mahmood T. Davari provides an analytic diagnosis of the religious situation in the early 1920s in Iran. According to him, at this time, the *Fuqaha* could be divided mainly into two groups by virtue of their use of philosophical techniques and religious research. The first group could be identified by their use of the *reason* (*a'ql*), which made them liberals and the second group, who preferred to use *texts only*, could be identify as *conservatives*.[32]

The religious leaders' salvation came about in 1941 when, following the shah's refusal to surrender to a British ultimatum that demanded he dissociate himself from Nazi Germany, the British expelled him to South Africa. Subsequently Great Britain occupied Iran and suspended the reform processes that the shah wanted to implement. His departure, for whatever reason, in fact triggered the growing power of the religious leaders in the country.[33]

The shah was replaced by his young son, Muhammad Reza Shah, who was only 21 years old at that time. Since the Iranian royal family was facing a new reality that required them to follow British dictates so as to preserve their royal status, the young shah was forced, among other things, to suspend the modernization process at least till after the war so as to prevent antagonism that might arise from the mostly religious community. Other reforms, not linked to religious issues, were encouraged, especially regarding the economy of the country.[34]

The dismissal of Reza Shah was welcomed by the religious leaders who were open to the political opportunities presented by the ruling powers

(Great Britain, the United States, and the USSR). Reza Shah's dismissal provided them with the opportunity to put an end to the prohibitions implemented by the former shah: the prohibition placed on celebrating the day of 'Ashura on the tenth month of Muharram, and that imposed on women against the code of dressing immodestly. The young shah had no choice but to fulfill the religious leaders' demands since he felt they were being supported by the great powers.[35]

During the rule of both Reza Shah and his son Muhammad Reza Shah, however, the Shiite religious community, led by the Ayatollah Ha'iri and his successor, the Ayatollah Borujerdi, maintained a consistent policy of nonparticipation in the regime while preserving the interests of religion through the classic maneuver of intervention in politics mostly from the outside. After World War II, the religious and political fervor of these leaders led some of them, such as the Ayatollah Abul Qasem Kashani, to a total commitment to the implementation of national political changes through their unavoidable intervention in the nation's political life.

The conduct of the Ayatollahs Hai'ri and Borujerdi, both followers of "quietism" (even though both came from the Usuliyya School) that believed it was better to avoid straightforward involvement in politics, unconsciously enhanced and renewed the old, classical debate between the Usuliyya and Akhbariyya points of view on politics (even though the Akhbariyya as a school stopped existing during the nineteenth century). These two methods had different views about both the concept of the religious leader as missionary and his religious and—if at all—political function. After Borujerdi's death in 1961 the Shiites in Iran faced the dilemma of whether the community should put its trust in the followers of Borujerdi, who focused on religious rather than political involvement, or not. A choice to do so might have obstructed the economic and social progress of the religious Shiite community as well as the autonomy of the social religious institutions. Some proposed adherence to the ancient Shiite method of the *Marjiyat*: not to submit to the authority of one leader (*Marja' Taqlid*) but to that of a collective of senior religious leaders that would become a "council of sages" in which each religious leader would have his own field of specialization and promote the economic and religious autonomy of all Shiite institutions.[36]

This dilemma reveals the reality of the Iranian Shiite community in the mid-twentieth century, namely, whether it should continue debating about the integration of religious leaders into modern politics or remain faithful to the classic Shiite tradition according to which religious leaders should not be involved in politics until the return of the Hidden Imam. Ayatollah Kashani, because of his religious political activity, reflects the essence of the dilemma and its partial solution—a subject that will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Era of Mossadeq and the Change in Shi'a Consciousness toward Community Leadership

Sayyed Abul Qasem Kashani was born in 1882 in Teheran to a family of religious scholars. In 1898, at the age of 16, he moved with his family to Najef where they all settled. In spite of the Qajar Dynasty's defeat in the tobacco boycott (1890–1892) and their decreasing popularity among the people at a time when the religious leaders were gaining more and more esteem, the Kashani family decided to make their life in Iraq, particularly for religious and scholarly reasons. At this time the young Kashani had the opportunity to become the student of both Mullah Muhammad Qasem Khorasani, one of the most prominent thinkers of the Shiite religion, and the Haj Mirza Hussein Halili Tehrani. Kashani turned out to be a prodigy and at the age of 25 was already granted the title of "mujtahid." As a religious scholar he decided to combine the abstract and the material world and, at that point in his life, chose the anticolonialist struggle over confinement within the narrow Shiite tradition.

His experience as a warrior led him to the establishment of a *madrasah*, which was an innovative institution at this time, especially within the Shiite community. The A'lavi Madrasah's curriculum included secular studies such as exact sciences, military strategies, and self-defense, and, obviously, a process of preparation to oppose future Western imperialistic invaders. Already in 1920, Kashani had become one of the pioneers who struggled against the British inside Iraq.[37]

Kashani and his followers were defeated in their anticolonialist struggle and had to escape back to their land of origin, Iran. In order to protect himself he supported Reza Khan, who later founded the Pahlavi Dynasty, and the royal regime at least until Reza Shah was expelled by the British to South Africa in 1941. During World War II Kashani founded a pro-Nazi movement that focused more on the struggle against the hated British than on the promotion of the Nazi vision. The British neutralized this pro-Nazi movement, caught Kashani, and imprisoned him for two years, at least until things calmed down or the till the end of the war. Upon his release from jail Kashani turned his hatred of the British against the Royalist regime of the shah, which he considered to be a symbol of imperialism over Iranian land, and joined the Fada'iyan movement as a spiritual mentor.[38]

The religious popular front was created when the Ayatollah Kashani returned from exile in 1946. He established links with the bazaar merchants and with popular and religious groups so as to oppose British

influence in Iran and, of course, in order to support the nationalization of the oil industry in the country. In February 1949, after Nasser Fakhr Arai's failed attempt to murder the shah at the Tehran University, Kashani was sent into exile and even while there was appointed to represent the National Front within the sixteenth Majlis. When Kashani returned to Iran he joined the Fada'iyan's leader Navab Safavi and gave the movement his blessing, expecting to gain politically from this. It is believed that the Kashani-Safavi partnership was meant to establish an Islamic government (see Safavi's *Barnameh* plan) but, after their split, Safavi would pretend that Kashani had not fulfilled his part in their agreement and had operated to set up "Islam and Faith."[39] As mentioned earlier, in 1949 Kashani was suspected of being involved in an attempt to murder the shah and was therefore expelled from Iran. A year later he returned to Iran and gave his support to Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq, the leader of the National Front party.[40]

During World War II the Ayatollah Kashani had argued that it was necessary to expel the British from Iran along with their supporters and representatives of Occidentalism and anti-Islamic views; therefore, on his return from exile, it was not surprising that he joined the Fada'iyan. The Fada'iyan, like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, aspired to set up an Islamic state based on the sources of pure Islam. For Kashani, religion and state (meaning politics) were one entity that the British tried to split in many ways. Kashani's vision was twofold: (1) to turn the Shari'a into the national constitution where religious leaders would become politicians with key roles in the administration and society; and (2) to remove the imperialistic forces from Iran.[41] Beyond that, he considered their presence, not only in Iran but in the whole Middle East, to be a greedy attempt to exploit the natural resources of the area without taking into account local populations to whom these same resources really belonged. Because of the negative situation in which Iran found itself, he believed that it would neither overcome its enemies and become autonomous, nor be able to combine popular secular and religious forces into one entity.

The *Marja'-i Taqlid* in those days, between the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, was the Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Hossein Borujerdi. He was opposed to Occidentalism but was also against the forthright integration of religious scholars into politics.[42] He believed in the classical, familiar method of operating behind the scenes in support of the existing political framework. The Ayatollah Borujerdi went even further and declared that religious leaders who became involved in political matters would not be entitled to deal with religious issues, education, or even Islamic Law.[43] Ultimately Borujerdi wanted to preserve the neutrality of religious leaders regarding the secular government, and some religious

institutions took advantage of this approach to maintain their contacts with "high ranked people."[44] It seems as if Borujerdi's decision was in fact the preapproval of the same one taken by the Ulama in Qom in February 1949 (along with Ayatollah Bihbahani), which prohibited the involvement of religious leaders in politics[45]—but it was not the same, since Borujerdi was the one to initiate this decision.

According to Homa Katouzian it was Borujerdi who led this legal process with his religious antiactivist approach to politics. Katouzian suggests that this decision was premeditated and, first of all, was aimed against Kashani's efforts to integrate religion and politics but resulted in a supportive attitude toward royalty and the political institutions. According to Katouzian, Kashani at that time represented the radical aspect of political activism while Borujerdi and Bihbahani reflected political quietism, but these were in fact two different approaches to politics rather than two different concepts related to politics.[46] It seems that the core issue for religious leaders then was to what extent they could be involved in politics. Fada'iyan-i Islam and Kashani excepted, they did not consider themselves to be leaders in the Islamic government.[47] Nevertheless, Ayatollah Borujerdi sent a letter to the shah, which supported Mossadeq's aspirations concerning oil nationalization and demanded that the shah reinforce Mossadeq in this matter.[48]

In this situation the Ayatollah Kashani had to face a dilemma that had a great impact. On the one hand he was a religious leader committed to the religious framework and attentive to the greatest figures of the generation and on the other hand he was opposed to imperialism and aware of the fact that a passive attitude would neither remove imperialism nor lead to the reinforcement of religious leaders in the country. This was a situation that was already negative with the presence of imperialistic elements and the partial adoption of Western content in the political agenda of the Qajar regime and its successor, Mohammad Rezā Shāh Pahlavi.

Kashani, while still exiled in Beirut, transmitted his protest against and irritation with Borujerdi and the Qom convention's decision. He attacked the convention claiming that they had empowered the shah to dismantle the Majlis and therefore shaped a political line that might affect the status of religion and religious leaders in the country.[49] This argument turned out to be erroneous since the shah's authority was fragile and Kashani, aware of this fact, decided to take advantage of this situation to promote the nationalization of the oil industry.

Indirectly, and in spite of this prohibition, the involvement of the religious leaders in politics might have been the real reason for the Islamic renewal in the 1950s. The Ayatollah Kashani declared that the impact he had on politics was greater than the influence of the shah[50] and since

he considered himself to be the heart of Iranian politics, Kashani associated himself with Mossadeq and managed to get elected to the Majlis even though he was still in Beirut. He was allowed to return to Tehran only in June 1950[51] to take part in the politics to which he so aspired. Upon his return he also joined the Fada'iyan-i Islam, a movement that was most actively involved in political assassinations and led a militant anti-Occidental Islamic strategy.[52] It is very probable that on returning to Tehran he became aware of the fact that the traditional religious establishment, powerfully led by Borujerdi and other Ayatollahs, was ignoring him. This was why he decided to join the Fada'iyan, an organization that, according to him, was very close to his own traditional concepts and was able to promote national and religious affairs.

As long as they remained detached from politics Kashani and the Fada'iyan could claim that their aspiration was to take part in the political system and bring it back to its Islamic sources so that it would be relevant and genuine.[53] The Ayatollah Borujerdi diverged on this point and, moreover, did not hesitate to say so. Kashani was opposed to Borujerdi and showed this by joining Mossadeq. This was for a limited time, however, and one of the reasons for the split between Kashani and the Fada'iyan was the latter's motivation to integrate politics in Iran and set up an Islamic nation (just like Kashani wanted) on the basis of the Quran and the Shari'a.

Kashani considered himself to be a fundamentalist who aspired to establish the foundations for a religious system and called upon the Shiites, in Iran and other countries, to thoroughly observe a full, traditional Shari'a life. In the meantime he protested against the secular reforms that Reza Shah and his son wanted to implement and aimed to see Iran cleansed of all external influence, especially British. Kashani insisted on the fact that according to the laws of Islam, the religious leader was the one who should rule the people in all social and religious matters. In one of his articles Kashani called upon the Shiites in Iran to unite and act together against imperialism declaring that, for the sake of Islam, Shiites should forget everything that separated them and unite. He went even further and encouraged the foundation of Islamic preaching centers that became gathering points that extolled extremism and terror to fanatic young people.[54] We may suppose that these centers were run by the Fada'iyan-i Islam organization headed by Safavi.

In the years 1948–1949, Kashani opened his struggle against the royal family by distributing protest brochures that claimed the shah was acting in favor of the Baha'is and the British. As a religious leader Kashani, who was involved in politics, argued that the shah wanted to institute his antinationalist, secular plans and thus sacrifice the honor of Iran. Kashani was also active among the bazaar merchants who were a financial source

of support for the religious leaders and asked them to mobilize and join his religious and political struggle by taking part in the protest movement against the shah, by closing their stands and organizing strikes and demonstrations. He insisted that the Iranian people had to fight against the shah and the British activities.[55] Kashani even praised the idea of a *jihad* and the purification of Iran from external elements of influence that would necessarily have an impact on internal factors that strengthened Western concepts.[56]

In May 1951 Kashani asked Mossadeq to instruct all municipalities to close all cafes, restaurants, and clubs and, in his sermons, insisted on the fact that Iranian Muslims had to preserve Islamic unity and lead Iran to become the cradle of a world Islamic civilization.[57] From an historical point of view it seems that Kashani preceded Mohammad Reza in this vision of turning Iran into the center of a world civilization with an Islamic core. This concept, it seems, was rooted in Kashani's vision rather than in Khomeini's.

Another reason for the split between Kashani and the Fada'iyan was the former's inability to enter politics the way he understood the term "entering politics," notwithstanding his willingness, especially after the nationalization of the oil industry. By then all the credit he had received from the clergy (who supported the nationalization as well) was exhausted since the oil had already been nationalized, and any activity in politics would have been interpreted by the clergy (whose support, despite his apparent activism, was important for him) as a grave deviation from their classical conservative policy.

Kazemi quotes Richard Cottam's argument describing Kashani's split from the Fada'iyan as based on ideology since Kashani opposed the rigid Fada'iyan's absolutism concerning the integration of religion and state.[58] Perhaps there were ideological disputes but the presence behind the scene of Ayatollah Borujerdi, whose interpretation of the religious-political reality differed from both Kashani and the Fada'iyan, seems to have slowed down Kashani's efforts to promote Islamic interests in the guise of "the rule of the religious leader."

The new political reality within Iran after the elections of 1949, in which the National Front Party entered the Majlis, led to a profound change in the public arena. By then Iran was already being dominated economically by the Soviet Union and, especially, Great Britain. This situation forced a real debate over nationality, independence, and the political identity of the regime, especially since Iran's neighbor states had fared comparatively better. Sovereignty and national identity are very sensitive issues and had already been discussed by Reza Shah. The prewar reality and the interests of the great powers in the Middle East, however, did not allow him and the

Iranian state to conclude the debate with a clear vision—but it reerupted at the end of the war. It is important to note that the dialectical balance of power within Iran after the expulsion of Reza Shah in 1941 saw the return to the public arena of old-new players such as the clergy, that same factor that Reza Shah had sought to remove from power. Now, after the shah's removal, the clergy felt empowered again but were very cautious in their demands and mainly occupied themselves with the fundamental issue of their attitude to politics and the place of politics in their lives. In such a situation ideological seniority was bound to be bestowed upon whoever challenged the present reality and presented a new agenda for the state, and probably the Middle East as well.

Dr. Muhammad Mossadeq, leader of the National Front, which had just entered the Majlis, was just such a person. Due to the party's great power, and the dormant national issues that they managed to foster and glorify, its leader, Mossadeq, managed to strengthen his position in the Majlis and was elected to head the Oil Committee—the parliamentary committee that presented him with an opportunity to realize his political ambitions. As is well-known Mossadeq, via this committee, succeeded in causing havoc in Iranian-British relations. An initial refusal to sign an accord with Britain and then the nationalization of the British oil firm the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company led Iran into a new political and diplomatic reality. Notwithstanding all speculations, Mossadeq's popularity rose as the crises deepened, nourished by patriotism and the sense of vengeance he had managed to instill in the Iranian people, an emotion to which they had been aspiring for decades.

Emotion and reality were, however, two different things. Iranian politics, fragile anyway, could not find comfort in intense nationalism and patriotism alone. Mossadeq was forced to pay a political price by cooperating with political forces and parties with which he would not sit around one table in normal times but, in the matter of the nationalization of oil, Mossadeq won the support of wider circles in Iranian society. Among these active and passive supporters we can find the orthodox that obeyed Ayatollah Borujerdi's dictum and refrained from joining the political parties and realizing their numerical advantage in the government organs.

As noted earlier an exception in the political arena was Ayatollah Kashani who supported Mossadeq but demanded in return a price that Mossadeq, notwithstanding his goodwill (and probably that of others), could not pay. The reason for Kashani's immediate support of Mossadeq was his conviction that the latter was struggling to achieve those same goal he had fought for in his youth in Iraq and later in Iran: the expulsion of exploitative imperialism from the Middle East and from Iran in particular.[59] Kashani joined the secular National Front as a religious faction and was

even elected to chair the Majlis, in which he never set foot, probably as a result of his apprehension about Borujerdi's religious ban (and his actual exile to Lebanon at the time). Anyway, even outside the Majlis, his role and cooperation with Mossadeq were intended to gain political influence. However, joining the seculars was actually a tactical move on his part to take on the reins of government.[60]

In 1952, following tensions between Mossadeq and the shah, the former resigned and his place was taken by Ahmed Qavam. Mossadeq's supporters, mainly orthodox followers of Kashani, started demonstrating on his behalf. Qavam's relations with the orthodox had never been warm and he publicly opposed their involvement, presence, and even their counseling in politics.[61] On July 18 Kashani helped organize demonstrations in support of Mossadeq, which forced the shah to offer the premiership to the recently resigned premier.[62]

As leader of both the religious and national struggle (identified with Mossadeq), Kashani spoke against Qavam and in support of Mossadeq saying that "the separation of religion and state has been a centuries old British plan. They strove to maintain the ignorance of the Muslim people for their (the British) own advantage. The traitors, who have implemented British policies for centuries, overthrew Mossadeq's government because it obstructed the fulfillment of their aims…"[63] The British did not remain silent and, in a very long letter sent to the cabinet, their Charge d'Affairs, Sir James Bowker, described the latest developments in Tehran. Bowker was under "the impression that his [Mossadeq] megalomania is now verging on mental instability." Kashani, identified by the British diplomat as a dominant factor in Mossadeq's "National Front," was targeted for an even harsher criticism and was described as "a sly, corrupt and anti-Western demagogue." In view of these observations Bowker claimed that the only way to save Persia from falling into the hands of the communists was by organizing a coup d'état.[64]

Kashani was not a political leader in the narrow sense of the word or in the Western sense. He was a political-religious leader who had not experienced parliamentary activity and was regarded by the average Iranian as a religious-spiritual leader in addition to partly being, especially during Mossadeq's period, no less a religious leader than Ayatollah Borujerdi. Kashani represented a pan-Islamic view even before Khomeini and spoke for Islamic unity all over the Middle East. This was the reason he was anti-British and anti-imperialist in a Middle Eastern sense and Iranian nationalism was for him only a step up the ladder leading to pan-Islamism.[65] While Kashani viewed the political role of the clergy as a religious duty[66] Khomeini, on the other hand, was a nationalist until 1970 and, only then, started to develop the idea of pan-Islamism. Kashani did not find these

ideas incompatible since for him nationalism was a necessary evolutionary step toward the more meaningful pan-Islamism. In spite of their agreement on such issues as nationalization and full Iranian sovereignty, however, Kashani and Mossadeq squabbled over the centers of power in the state.[67]

In any case Kashani supported Mossadeq's nationalization of the oil industry, thus gaining political power and the status of a national-religious leader but, in his attempt to gain more authority, he encountered Mossadeq's opposition. Following statements in a pro-Kashani newspaper that claimed Mossadeq had become a dictator and which, in fact, called for his assassination, the latter dismissed Kashani from his post as chairman of the parliament.[68] Kashani also eyed the premiership or at least strove to gain political power by virtue of his presence in a sensitive political situation—for he had actually become the pivot for political balance. The British had already identified General Zahedi as a potential replacement for Mossadeq but their hopes depended on the general's ability to gain Kashani's support.[69] Moreover, Kashani's political maneuvering and his secret conferring with the Tudeh party were a source of anxiety to Mossadeq and his colleagues in the National Front. All parties had an interest in the nationalization of the oil industry but, in their disputes with the British, Kashani and the communists were more forceful. The British viewed Kashani as a more extreme nationalist then Mossadeq, in fact the most extreme of all nationalists at that time, and, in their eyes, Kashani, who had driven Mossadeq toward nationalization, was the real threat.[70]

The CIA, which had identified Kashani as a member of Mossadeq's coalition, also viewed him as an independent figure who was striving for a higher post and they also feared that independent elements from the National Front would turn to the Tudeh communist party. Mossadeq was already known as anti-Soviet and Kashani as anti-British (but not necessarily anti-Soviet). Fearing a split in the National Party and a drift toward Tudeh,[71] the Americans viewed Kashani as the sole possible replacement for Mossadeq (although the British preferred Zahedi) in the case of the latter's failure to maintain his government or his death. In any case the Americans figured that Kashani was building his political power in order to take over from Mossadeq. From any perspective the Americans were apprehensive about the growing political power of the communists, especially since Kashani was viewed as more extremist than Mossadeq in his opposition to the West.[72] Even after a long time following Mossadeq's dismissal (1955), Kashani (notwithstanding his quitting politics) was viewed by the Americans as a potential threat to Iranian politics.[73] The Americans' assumption regarding Kashani's political power and his being a possible replacement could have come from their lack of familiarity with

Iranian politics and a mistaken interpretation of the current political situation. Nevertheless, at that point, Kashani still had a strong influence on Iranian politics.

At the beginning of August 1953, Mossadeq proposed holding a referendum on reducing the authority of the Majlis. By then Ayatollah Kashani had already become a bitter enemy of the prime minister and called for a ban on the referendum. As he put it: "Participating in the destructive referendum, run by foreigners, would arouse the rage of the 12th Imam, which is '*Haram*' (forbidden). And no Muslim patriot should be a part of it."[74] This kind of pronouncement was exceptional in both the religious and political arena. Until now Mossadeq had been considered a friend but, from now on, he would be a "foreigner." Here one must also note that there is a particular Shiite period of chaos during which the Hidden Imam will arrive "to set things straight," and this will be a unique combination of a patriotism identified as nationalism of the first degree combined with "Islam" (which negates the term nation in the first place). This, however, was not the case according to Kashani who, as mentioned earlier, saw nationalism as an evolutionary step toward pan-Islamism.

Kashani versus Mossadeq—A Battle of the Giants

In their struggle against the USSR, the Americans saw Mossadeq as someone who preferred the West over the Soviet Union, but since an Iranian prime minister (Razm-Ara) and a former prime minister (Hazhir) had already been murdered, an American intelligence evaluation assumed the possibility of Dr. Mossadeq's murder by fanatic devotees of oil nationalization. In such an eventuality the Americans assumed Ayatollah Kashani would replace Mossadeq as head of the National Front and become prime minister.[75] The State Department, busy discussing the future of Iran without Mossadeq, were not concerned about the future of British assets, but about who would replace Mossadeq and what his agenda toward the United States might be. American diplomats were apprehensive about the possibility that Kashani might strive to diminish American influence in Iran but not to the point of demanding the withdrawal of all American forces.[76]

The Americans, perhaps because they were ignorant of his religious views, were not bothered about Kashani's religious aspirations or his will to form an Islamic government nor did they discuss it. In fact, beyond the issues of nationalization and the potential fall of Iran into Soviet hands,

the Americans did not bother themselves with the politics of religion in Iran at all.

As they understood it, Kashani had joined Mossadeq due to the rise of nationalism and the opportunity they had both seen to use nationalism as a vehicle in the struggle to drive the British out of Iran. Kashani, who had exploited nationalism to arouse the anti-British sentiment all over Iran, which finally led the Majlis to nationalize the oil industry,[77] represented an uncompromising stand in matters involving oil and the foreign presence—and this limited Mossadeq's freedom of action. From the American point of view Kashani's internal policy was negative as well for, by inflaming the peasantry and landowners against the agrarian reforms, he was creating unrest in the country and playing into the hands of the communists.[78]

The Americans had come to the conclusion that should Mossadeq lose power (unless in a military coup) Kashani, as the second most powerful man in Iran, would replace him. They were, however, apprehensive that in such a case Iran's situation would worsen and that the communist party, the Tudeh, would try to seize power. In their estimation, however, they did believe that Kashani would be able to deal with the Tudeh since he was not sympathetic to their aims.[79]

The Americans were attentive to Kashani's presence and activities in Iran's political arena since his representation of the religious community testified to the rising power of the clergy in Iran.[80] (They were, however, not aware of the internal debate concerning its involvement in politics.) As far as they were concerned Kashani was backing Mossadeq and unifying religious interests around the issue of oil nationalization.[81] A report to the American president pointed out that "one of the main difficulties in negotiating with Mossadeq was the influence exerted on him by advisers and colleagues belonging to the political left wing, and by anti-British advisers first and foremost Kashani."[82] The Americans were not alone in estimating that Kashani was a rising star in Iranian politics for Mossadeq also saw him as a potential threat.[83]

The Americans also reported on the influence of the clerics under Reza Shah who preferred European culture and dress codes. They claimed that the power of the orthodox had deteriorated and that the shah had kept them away from the religious and legal institutions. Since his dismissal in 1941, however, the clerics had regained their influence, but this did not surpass that which they had had before Reza's regime. They saw Kashani as a representative of the Ultimate Mulla, opposed to foreign presence in Iran, to communism (because of its secularity), and to all aspects of westernization and secularism, which the deposed shah had tried to impose on Iran.[84]

In any case, Mossadeq rejected Kashani's and the Fada'iyan's efforts to run the government in an Islamic manner (despite their apparent noninvolvement in politics) and told them to try their luck with another government, not his.[85] We may agree with De Groot's claim concerning some religious elements, especially among Borujerdi's adherents, who rejected politics as something secular by nature[86] and accepted the joining of Borujerdi to Kashani by supporting the coup against Mossadeq "because they disliked what they saw as Mossadeq's secularising tendency and the influence of the Tudeh."[87] We must, however, also assume the presence of other elements such as Kashani and the Fada'iyan-i Islam, which sought to sanctify politics in an Islamic manner. Some suspect that Kashani and the Ayatollah Muhammad Bahbani were bribed by the CIA to desert Mossadeq's party, the National Front, in what was known in the bazaar as the "Bahbani's Dollars" affair.[88]

After the coup Kashani quit public life since many thought that he was actually a British agent, and the media continued ignoring him notwithstanding his efforts to draw attention to himself. The affair, however, did not diminish the influence of the clergy but, on the contrary, their political power even increased after August 1953. In contrast to its treatment of the communists and the nationalists the regime did not harass the clergy since most, but not all, clergy kept a low profile. During the month of Ramadan in 1955, the famous preacher Muhammad Falsafi attacked the Baha'is, accusing them of being "traitors and Western agents." He claimed that "the military regime (Zahedi's) urged the Baha'is to halt their propaganda (meaning the dissemination of their religion) which is rousing the public."[89]

As noted earlier the struggles between Kashani and Mossadeq led the former to quit the political system and withdraw his political and religious support of the prime minister.[90] Mossadeq had taken a misguided gamble by assuming the religious sector to be an anemic group seeking to use its alleged, and unproven, power to gain political profit (but at his expense). While it is important to note that, at the time, this might have been a correct decision time would prove it wrong. At any rate the gamble cost Mossadeq his premiership—and led to the crisis named after him. Mossadeq had apparently failed to understand that Kashani and the Fada'iyan support had helped him in his election and that the lack of their support would probably have its own political consequences.

In any case, Mossadeq's gamble had its own logic since the clergy and their supporters never used their influence to gain political power, which he might have interpreted as a threat to his position. The removal of their support not only failed to prevent the Mossadeq crisis and Operation Ajax, it brought it about. The clerical support of Mossadeq could not have

prevented Ajax but it could cause its failure. For years after this operation the Shiite clergy seemed to shy away from politics and kept their distance from it, and, although Kashani's contacts with Mossadeq hurt his standing with the clergy and the religious seminaries,[91] after his separation from him Kashani was presented as a royalist, notwithstanding his religious orthodoxy.[92]

Kashani's main goal in joining the Mossadeq National Coalition, and his net gain, was the nationalization of the oil industry. The secondary goal he hoped to achieve by his "virtual" presence in the coalition was the promotion of religious affairs in the state and, via this, to encourage the clergy to first make political moves and infiltrate the political system later. However his meteoric rise in politics cost Kashani a fast burnout, which led to the tension with Mossadeq. The man who tried to mediate between the two was Sheikh Mahmud Halabi, founder of the anti-Baha'i Hojjatiyeh Society, a charismatic speaker, a supporter of Mossadeq during the nationalization struggle, and a failed Majlis candidate but his failure to reconcile the two put an end to his political career.[93]

With the departure of Kashani, Mossadeq ruled both the religious and secular sections of his party, and Kashani rejoined the Fada'iyan but was not the leader of the party and only took part in the deliberations over its identity and decision-making. The Fada'iyan's orientation was very similar to that of the Sunni's Moslem Brotherhood of Egypt since both movements understood that staying out of politics would not advance their religious concerns. In contrast to the Brotherhood, however, the Fada'iyan was not a mass movement and thus failed to realize its political potential. In any case they still managed to meddle in Iranian politics at least until the end of the 1940s.[94]

Though not a single political entity the Fada'iyan and Kashani were among the first to urge the clergy's political involvement in Iranian politics. Each side came from opposite social backgrounds. On the one hand, the religious establishment and the rich merchants clung to each other in an attempt to rid themselves politically of the regime's intervention in their social, religious, and economic status. On the other hand, the low classes were poor and religiously fundamental. Neither Kashani nor the Fada'iyan had a structured political credo and both were political novices (except for Safavi's *Barname*, which had an eclectic theory for the creation of a Muslim society). Their only messages were the rejection of imperialism and the augmentation of the clergy's influence in the state.

Kashani did not preach a political/religious vision that saw Iran being led solely by the clergy such as was the case with the *Velayat-i Faqih*, which was introduced by Khomeini three decades later. The political reality of his time was not yet ripe for such clerical governments for the clergy were

still busy trying to safeguard their present status. What Kashani was trying to achieve in the political arena, despite Borujerdi's total ban, was the revival of the old power and role of the clergy in a restored Iranian community, something Borujerdi would not have opposed.

Following the Mossadeq crises and his fall, the shah nominated General Zahedi to head the government. Kashani, whose passive opposition had contributed to Mossadeq's fall, hoped for a reward but the expected embrace of the shah's government did not materialize. What did come from Zahedi's government were false accusations that labeled him and his supporters as "[t]raitors helped in their undermining actions by foreign agents." Kashani, whose credentials as an anti-Imperialist were well-known, was offended.[95] While he was in the government he did negotiate with the Americans who were trying to pave the way for a British reconciliation with Mossadeq, and it is probably this that gave rise to the false rumors about bribes. Zahedi's accusations were thus intended to achieve other objectives.

This page intentionally left blank

Part II

The Baha'i Faith and the Emergence of the Hojjatiyeh

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 3

The Baha'i Faith and Its Origins in Shi'a Islam and Despair

The Sheikhiyya

The Sheikhiyya movement, whose name is derived from its founder Sheikh Ahmad Ibn Zayn al-Din ibn Ibrahim al-Ahsa'i (1753–1826), developed in Iraq at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. At first its doctrine dealt mainly with the relations between the Creator and His world and later with the essence of the belief in the twelfth imam and the expectations for the return of the Mahdi. Sheikh Ahmad was succeeded by two Shiite scholars: Sayyid Kazim Rashti (1793–1843) and Karim Khan Kirmani (1809/1810–1870/1871).

Sheikh Ahsá'í's contribution to the Sheikhiyya was the doctrine of the Perfect Shi'a (*Shi'a al-Kamil*) according to which the Perfect Shi'a is the means by which God bestows his glory upon his creatures and is the intermediary between the imams and the believers. This was the way the Sheikhiyya solved an ancient Shiite theological dilemma concerning the way believers could communicate with the imam who was in occultation for many years.[1] The Sheikhiyya did not invent the concept of the Perfect Shi'a but were able to shape it to the current situation in the Shi'i world. Sheikh Ahsá'í used the historical precedent of the Ismai'li and Sufi interpretations of the term "Perfect Shi'a" in order to present their Perfect Shi'a while emphasizing the need "of the perfect guide in the course of man's spiritual evolution." In this way the concept of the Perfect Shi'a, which is the vice-regency (*Wilaya*), became the Fourth Pillar of Shi'a Islam, after the unity of God, prophethood, and the recognition of the Imam. This

renewed concept helped the Sheikhiyya to handle the question of how the revealed meditation of the deputy (i.e., the mediator between the Hidden Imam and the Shi'i community who was called the Bab and could also be the senior Ulama) could function as a reflection of the word of the Hidden Imam and as his representative.[2]

The Sheikhiyya (as in all monotheistic religions) denies the possibility of there being any human understanding of the essence of God, for God, by definition a being that man cannot contain, is essentially inconceivable as a nonmaterialistic entity and, therefore, there can be no possible relationship between God and man. What then constitutes the link between God and His creatures? And what is its temporal manifestation?

Sheikh Ahmad was able to reintroduce the idea "of the mystical philosophy (*hikmat-i ilahi*)" due to the emergence of the Usuli School that enabled the use of legalism and jurisprudence,, and this helped Sheikh Ahsá'í to "push mystical philosophy even further to the edge of the world of Twelver Shi'ism." The adoption and use of Usuli methodology to provide mystical interpretations of the Shi'a's main essence as the Imamate and Occultation was with far-reaching consequences for the Usulis who insist "that truth should be obtained by *ijtihad* and through rational processes."[3]

Fortunately the Imamate came to the rescue for, according to Sheikh Ahsá'í, God created the eternal light (*Noor*), which passed through the prophets from Adam to Prophet Muhammad himself. With his death the light was passed on through the imams and his descendants to the twelfth imam, the Mahdi. This light was the source of all creation and, through his association with the imam, the believer learns this concept of God.

The Sheikhiyya gained the support of certain Shi'a clergy and posed a challenge to the traditional interpretations of certain basic Islamic/Shiite concepts such as the resurrection of the dead, the meaning of paradise, and the post-Mahdi reality. These interpretations were harshly criticized by other clerics, who totally negated Ahsá'í's attitude for attributing ungodly qualities to God and for deviating from classical Shi'a concepts of the millennium and the resurrection of the dead.

The Sheikhiyya did not disappear with Ahsá'í's death but gained more adherents among Shiites in Iraq, Iran, and other locations in the Middle East. Ahsá'í's successor as spiritual leader, Sayyid Kazim Rashti, had to face issues within the sect as well as social changes and a Shi'a revival all over the area. The revival coincided with the approach of the year 1260 to the *Hijra*, which, according to Shi'a tradition, would be the one thousandth anniversary of the Mahdi's disappearance.[4] At that time during the first half of the nineteenth century many Iranians were ready for the messianic call.[5] They were fertile ground waiting for the right seed.

At this time theory was transforming itself into deed and the abstract discussions about the Mahdi within the Sheikhiyya were turning into the

theology of his imminent return. Sayyid Kazim Rashti, who was outspoken about the event, ordered his followers in his will to actively seek the Hidden Imam and, following his death in 1843, they excitedly tried to carry out their mentor's will.[6]

The Babi Faith

Sayyid 'Alí-Muhammad was born in 1819 to a family of merchants in Shiraz but soon afterward his father died and he was raised by his maternal uncles. Notwithstanding his broad education, which consisted of the traditional religious education as well as learning classical Persian and Arabic, the language of the Quran, he followed in his family's tradition and became a merchant. He did not, however, desert religion and went on many pilgrimages to the Shi'a holy places. Sayyid 'Alí-Muhammad made Kazim's acquaintance in 1841, was attracted to the latter's teachings, and, since the Sheikhiyya was mostly centered in Iraq, he too traveled to the Shiite holy places in that country. There he attended many of Kazim's lectures about the Shi'a and was deeply influenced by his ideas about the Imamate.

After Kazim's death (December 31, 1843) his followers went looking for the Hidden Imam in the belief that their mentor's will was prophetic. Sayyid 'Alí-Muhammad returned to his business in Shiraz, and there he was transformed. While searching for the imam one of Kazim's senior pupils, Mullá Hussein, reached Shiraz and there he encountered Sayyid 'Alí-Muhammad, who broke the news that the search was over for Hussein had found the Hidden Imam. At this stage 'Alí-Muhammad entitled himself "Bab," which literally means "Gate" and, within the Shi'a tradition, may be interpreted as a "gate" to the Hidden Imam, literally a medium between the believers and the imam, or even the imam himself as a medium between the believers and God.

From this moment, May 22, 1844, the Sheikhiyya began emerging into a new reality, that of the discovered Mahdi (The Bab). 'Alí-Muhammad, with his new title, started surrounding himself with believers, the first among them being Sheikh Kazim's followers and others who were expecting the reappearance of the Mahdi at that time. Reality, however, was not as utopian and clear as it seemed to the Bab and his followers. Many, especially among the Shiite clergy, not only opposed the idea of him as the new Mahdi but also demanded that the Qajar authorities oppose him and that they put an end to his activities.[7]

The Qajar regime, notwithstanding its traditional policy of separating religion from the state, sought to preserve its religious legitimacy, especially

in consideration of the opposition to the new movement among the senior clergy,[8] and tended to join those who condemned Babism and its hold on society in Iran. The Bab was arrested and his many followers, who were gathering to take part in the materialization of history, were denied access to their leader.[9]

Even in jail, however, the Bab continued his activities and his religious writings reached his followers who disseminated them among the public. His magnum opus, written in jail, was the *Bayan* (Interpretation), a book that marked out the border separating the new movement from traditional Shi'a and made the claim that the *Bayan* was in fact the new Divine Law replacing the Quran and annulling Muhammad's prophecy. From then on, the Bab claimed to be not only the Mahdi, Muhammad's successor, but the true revelation of God upon earth.[10]

Babism was considered to be a new religion, born of the general social unrest and the yearning for the Mahdi. The senior clergy in Iran and later in Iraq, realizing the danger, started condemning the sect theologically as well as physically wherever it spread among Shi'a believers.

Among the tenets of Babism stipulated in the *Bayan*, there were many essentially different religious innovations, especially considering their emanation from a rigid religion such as the Shi'a but also when seen from the wider angle of cosmopolitical and social realities. First and foremost among them was the declaration of gender equality, which was in contradiction to all shades of Islam and even to the reality of the times everywhere on earth. This gender equality resulted in the practical annulment of all the strict rules about impurity contained within the Shi'a, which removed women from all social and economic activities. The *Bayan* annulled the ban on forbidden foodstuffs such as pork but kept the one against alcohol and drug consumption.

The Bab strove to innovate and challenge in the area of theology as well. The *Bayan* ruled against all the classical material interpretations, Shiite as well as Sunni, of heaven and hell. These, it maintained, ran counter to common sense and therefore were invalid. As a new religion Babism sought to distance itself from its Shiite sources in practice as well and the Bab ordered a reduction in the number of daily prayers and even canceled public prayer. On the other hand, the Bab did not seek to void all previous religions and saw them as links in a long chain of prophesies and religions sent from God to humanity, whose recurrences did not come to an end with his appearance. According to him, he was just pioneering a new prophetic phase, which would continue for generations to come.[11]

Since he was only heralding a new chain of prophesies within a new religion, the Bab, like his predecessor Sheikh Kazim who had ordered his followers to seek the Hidden Imam, foresaw the emergence of future prophets

who would introduce humanity to new modes of God's revelations. As he, the Bab, had abolished the dogma of his mother religion so would his successor prophets and he urged his followers to give them their full support.

Soon enough a circle of ardent followers formed around the Bab and they drank in his every word and sought to broaden both his eschatological teachings and the number of his followers. From that circle there emerged a council of 18 members[12] who busied themselves with the study of the new prophet's teachings and their distribution. Among them there two Persian half brothers: the elder, Mírzá Hussein-'Alí Núrí, and the younger, Mírzá Yahyá.

In 1848, Sayyid 'Alí Muhammad Shírází, the Bab, was arrested by order of the shah but, throughout the Bab's incarceration in jail, his followers continued to disseminate the new religion. The Qajari Shah, incited by the Shi'a clergy, decided to put an end to the new movement and religion. At the same time some members of the new sect acquired arms and organized themselves to act against the shah's army thus upholding the Bab's vision of establishing a political entity which would implement the laws of the new religion. The shah, urged by the Shi'a clergy, was determined to crush the Babis' rebellion.

Even after crushing the rebellion in Sheikh Tabarsi (September 1948–May 1849),[13] the regime, assisted by the Shi'a clergy, continued to persecute the Bab's followers all over the country. Believing that eliminating the Bab would cause the whole movement to collapse, the Shi'a clergy urged Shah Nasr al-Din to execute him and, in July 1850, the Bab was executed. He mysteriously survived the first volley of shots, was found back in his cell, and was shot again. His body and that of one of his followers were thrown to the dogs and were secretly buried later by some of his followers.[14]

The Bab's clandestine and persecuted community needed a new temporal and spiritual leader as have all followers of the great prophets who studied at the feet of their mentors and in time became their successors and leaders of communities. By virtue of the fact that those who studied first hand with their prophets could pass on both the written and unwritten doctrines the Babis' were similar to all other prophetic religions.

The two figures that attracted most attention among members of the sect were Mírzá Hussein-'Alí Núrí, and his half brother Mírzá Yahyá. The latter was closer to the Bab and expected to become the natural leader but, due to Yahya's youth and inexperience, his brother Mírzá Hussein took the lead. Meanwhile the Qajar regime continued its persecution of the Babis using such pretexts as "failed attempts" against the regime and even against the shah himself. Finally the shah decided to rid himself of Babism and twenty thousand of their number were subsequently cruelly killed within a short time.[15]

The rest of the Babis and followers had no choice but to run for their lives, otherwise they and their religion would both perish.[16] Mírzá Yahyá, the younger half brother, was one of the refugees but the older Mírzá Hussein-'Alí Núrí turned himself in. Claiming that he had nothing to do with the failed attempt on the shah's life did him no good, and he was sent to jail. His imprisonment signifies a crucial turning point for the movement since, although Mírzá entered jail as a Babi, he left it as something totally different.[17]

The Baha'i Faith

Imprisonment, whether a person is guilty or not, isolation from family and society, from freedom, the inability to act as one wishes, and more, all these may break the spirit of a man and may even lead one to take one's own life. Mírzá Hussein-'Alí Núrí was a member of the upper classes of his country and, as such, perhaps losing his physical freedom was even more difficult; however he was determined not to lose his spiritual freedom.

Mírzá was incarcerated in Tehran's "Black Pit," which, in mid-nineteenth century, was one of the most notorious dungeons in the Middle East. Once the underground reservoir of a public bath its only exit was a single passage up three steep flights of stone steps. Prisoners huddled in their own bodily wastes in the pit's inky gloom, languishing in the subterranean cold and stench-ridden atmosphere.

Such circumstances can easily cause one to lose one's mind or, even worse, plunge one into deep introspection or, alternatively, to develop insights that are perhaps impossible to reach elsewhere. Mírzá Hussein-'Alí Núrí was endowed with great spiritual strength and during his time in jail he experienced many mystical visions, in one of which he was visited by the "Maid of Heaven" who informed him that he was "The Chosen."[18]

Nearly every historical event has its own defining moment, a kind of exit from the known reality into the unknown, at least at first. Such moments are imprinted as spiritual and cultural assets, something that is created of itself and which serves as a bridge from the abandoned past to the welcoming future. The prophet and the event communicate with two realities—one that is losing its relevance and is therefore coming to an end, and the other still a possibility, even utopian. Such was the moment when Abraham circumcised himself (and his sons) in the defining, creative event that transformed Abram the "Everyman" into Abraham, "The Father of Monotheism." Such was the Revelation on Mount Sinai, when a still predominantly pagan people became "the Chosen People," and such was the conquest of pagan Mecca by Muhammad and its Islamisation.[19]

Unlike Sayyid 'Alí-Muhammad the founder of Babism, who received the message of revelation from his mentor Sheikh Kazim, Mírzá Hussein-'Alí Núrí received his from a spiritual entity: "The maid of Heaven." The term is unclear since up till then neither Judaism nor Islam had ever concerned themselves, in writing or orally, with such female entities. Therefore the event represented two new phenomena: a superhuman revelation and a female angel.

Mírzá Hussein-'Alí Núrí was informed that he was "The Chosen," and consequently believed that God was incorporated in his physical and spiritual being, that he was the vehicle through which God had chosen to be revealed to his creations. At this stage of his spiritual development it is obvious that Mírzá was still thinking in terms of classical Shi'a, although Babism had already detached itself from the Shi'a and considered itself on a higher religious level. In other words, notwithstanding the abandonment of the Shi'a theology in favor of that of the *Bayan*, Hussein-'Alí continued nurturing the notion of the cosmic identity of the Mahdi. Moreover, his divinely revealed self-definition was intended to place him above the Shi'a and Babism since, according to Babism, the Mahdi is the "gate" (Bab) between God and his creation, certainly not the incarnation of God because nothing can rise to the level of the creator.[20] Even the Bab never claimed to be an incarnation of God and was content with being the Mahdi, at least according to the Shi'a.

After completing the mystical experience and receiving the tidings of his mission, Mírzá Hussein-'Alí Núrí became a different man. He had entered the prison as Mírzá Hussein-'Alí Núrí, a Babi, but left it with a new name—Baha'u'llah[21] and—a new set of spiritual conceptions that, by definition, could not be less than those offered by the Bab. Meanwhile his family acted to secure his release and, in 1853, the Baha'u'llah was set free, not to his home but to exile.

The Baha'u'llah could not endanger himself or the divine message that he was carrying by revealing himself in Iran or even in Iraq, his new place of exile. First of all he had to take care of his own safety and to reorganize the devotees of the Babi community. We may assume that the Baha'u'llah chose to concentrate his efforts on that community, where he was known as an authority on the Bab's teachings and was one of the 18, rather than try to organize a new one away from his natural Persian environment.

Most members of the Babi community escaped from persecution in Iran to Iraq. The Baha'u'llah was exiled in 1853 from Iran to Baghdad where he joined his younger half brother Mírzá Yahyá who was leading the Babi community, although from a distance, and was probably aware of his brother's delicate situation and the danger of persecution. In any case, with the return of the older brother enveloped in the aura of having

survived the hardships of prison and the grave accusations against him, the other members of the community accepted the Baha'u'llah's spiritual and temporal leadership.[22]

In 1854 the Baha'u'llah quit Baghdad, detaching himself from the Babi community there and moved to Kurdistan, where he stayed for two years at a Sufi monastery. In 1856 the Babis of Baghdad, fed up with his brother's failed leadership, asked the Baha'u'llah to return to them, but without stating this explicitly, they declared him to be their spiritual leader. Within a short while the Baha'u'llah's popularity among the Babis rose especially in his role as an interpreter of complicated issues of dogma.

The years 1856–1863 were crucial for the Baha'u'llah's spiritual independence. Being the "mentor" and the person most informed on Babism endowed him with the unprecedented legitimacy and spiritual authority to take Babism in the direction most suitable to him, in fact to transform it into a new religion. Aside from his daily activities within the community, the Baha'u'llah turned to writing (mainly the Persuasion book and "*Kitáb-i Aqdas*"), thus fulfilling the basic requirement of any new religion, namely, the provision of a written doctrine that would distance the new religion from its sources.[23]

His main thesis was that the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures is the privilege of prophets and none other, thereby implying that he, the Baha'u'llah, was a prophet, for who, beside a prophet, can make such a claim? Moreover, it also implied that the clergy were superfluous for who can dare overrule any saying of the prophet? Another implication was that the prophets were not presently being heard because the believers were too attentive to the clergy who were distorting the scriptures in order to tighten their hold on the believers. Therefore, in order to be exposed to the word of the living God, the believers needed to listen directly to the prophet.

Within the Shi'a, from which Babism emerged, the sanctity of the clergy was an axiom since the imam's Occultation had endowed them with the temporal powers of interpretation. Therefore the Baha'u'llah's new claims hinted at two things: (1) by using their status to control the Shi'a community, the clergy had failed in their temporal mission; and (2) that he, the Baha'u'llah, leader of the Babis, and not his predecessor, the Bab, was the Mahdi, the true messenger or the "incarnation of God."

The Bab revealed himself in 1844, the year 1260 to the Hijra, and the one thousandth anniversary of the birth of the "Hidden Imam" who was born in the 260 to the Hijra. The Bab sought to validate an ancient Shi'a tradition by his appearance on this date for this was the day that the Mahdi would reappear. Nineteen years later (1279 to the Hijra and 1,019 years since the birth of the Mahdi) the Baha'u'llah decided to reveal himself, first among a small group of adherents and later to the entire

community. The number 19 was not coincidental and in the years to come it acquired a spiritual significance among the Baha'is.[24]

The Baha'u'llah's revelation coincided with the Ottoman authority's decision to again exile him from Baghdad to Istanbul because, due to his presence, Babism was flourishing again after his brother's lukewarm leadership. This forced separation in fact led to the development of the Baha'i religion for at this stage the physical separation was, unknown to the Ottomans, also a spiritual one from Babism.[25]

The year 1863 was one of wandering and from Iraq the Baha'u'llah and his small flock were exiled to Istanbul and from there, like hot potatoes, to Edirne. From then on the Baha'u'llah and his brother Mírzá Yahyá quarreled over the leadership of the sect until the former decided in 1866 that the time was right to declare himself publicly as the Mahdi, the one that "God will reveal at the appropriate time," as promised by the Bab. The Ottoman authorities were not happy with the brothers' sojourn at Edirne and both were sent to Acre, then considered to be a place of exile.

The struggle between the Baha'u'llah and Mírzá Yahyá, now entitled "Subh-i-Azal" (morning of eternity), intensified over time for the younger brother also now claimed to be the Mahdi. This led to confusion among their adherents for each had a claim to the prerogative of using this title, the older because of his erudition and the younger because of his long proximity to the Bab. Sometimes what is needed to decide what to do with two disputants is a higher authority and, in this case, it was the Ottomans.

The Ottomans chose a course of "divide and rule" between the brothers with the older being kept in custody at the fortress of Acre and Subh-i-Azal being sent with his flock to Cyprus. Subh-i-Azal may, at first, have enjoyed keeping a distance from his rival brother, however, of the two locations, Cyprus was the real land of exile. Subh-i-Azal found himself isolated there because of his lack of means, and because the island did not offer any possibility for communication with the other Babi communities. The Baha'u'llah, on the other hand, could communicate with his followers, especially those residing in Iraq and Iran. Given this situation, it became quite clear who would be able to leave his mark on history by creating a new religion out of the ashes of the abandoned one.[26]

The Tenets of the Baha'i Religion

Like all religions Baha'ism was not created out of nothing. The religious origins of a new religion bequeath some of its tenets and rules to the new religion and these may be adopted warmly and adapted to become

new and abiding rules. In such a manner Judaism adopted animal sacrifices, Christianity adapted some basic Jewish tenets, and Islam embraced pre-Islamic customs such as the Hajj, and so on. Baha'ism grew out of a messianic religion and therefore it was easier for its founder, a cleric who had both the power and the knowledge to decide what was and what was not necessary. Thus he was able to take whatever suited his vision from its predecessor and to give up what did not.

As mentioned earlier, a new religion that seeks to challenge its predecessors and gain popularity must create its own written and oral law such as the Torah, The New Testament, the Quran, Avestā, and so on. The holiest book of the Baha'i faith, and the source of its vitality, is the *Kitáb-i Aqdas*, the book of laws written by the Baha'u'llah. The book covers a wide range of topics including laws and principles of personal conduct and the governance of society, as well as mystical writings dealing with the progress of the soul and its journey toward God. The Baha'is recognize, although on a lower level, the sanctity of the Bible, the Quran, and the holy texts of the world's other revealed religions.

The Theological Development of Baha'ism

The *Kitáb-i Aqdas*, which contains the basic tenets of the Baha'i religion, was published in 1868, the same year in which the Baha'u'llah proclaimed himself a prophet of a new religion and claimed that The Bab was merely his harbinger.

In the following years, the Baha'u'llah and his son Abbas developed the basic tenets of the new religion, according to which every prophet represented a religious development unique to his own generation. Baha'ism, however, sanctifies all historical prophets including the last of them, Muhammad, and the Baha'u'llah even argued that there would be other prophets who would appear after him and it is this that led to the essential contradiction between Baha'ism and Islam.

What is the Purpose of Prophesy?

Islam postulates that Muhammad was the last prophet; so whoever prophesied after Muhammad was by definition a pretender and thus an opponent of Islam. Baha'ism did not see any contradiction between this concept and its own claim concerning the Baha'u'llah, since Muhammad was the

last prophet of a certain cycle, the last in a series of true prophets. The Bab and the Baha'u'llah signified a new cycle of prophesy of which they were the harbingers and who would be followed by other prophets. Therefore, Baha'ism claims, it contradicted neither Islam nor any other religion.[27]

According to Baha'ism all the prophets strive to unify all religions into one moral, universal religion and aspire to a human fraternity based on religion and morality. In his books, *Kitáb-i Aqdas* and *Kitáb-i Iqan*, the Baha'u'llah developed these moral-social universal values, which defied Islam, and even his teacher the Bab, by introducing specific laws that contradicted those of Islam. His fundamental innovation was his total objection to war and anything that had to do with *jihad* (one of the main tenets of the Shi'a even though, under the Shi'a, the right to declare *jihad* belonged only to the Hidden Imam and, until then, *jihad* was to be seen as a private struggle against one's desires). He actually ruled against all kinds of violence, except in the case of self-defense; thus the Baha'is were forbidden to serve in any army (they are pacifists) and certainly not as combatants.

The Baha'u'llah went even further and demanded social equality—the abolition of all social classes—and was among the first in the world to express socialist concepts in the age of capitalist development at the expense of feudalism. He called for the abolition of public prayers, except at funerals, and encouraged his followers to pray privately so that each believer would face his creator without middlemen, each setting the content, timing, and form of his own communication with God. As a consequence of this the Baha'u'llah abolished the "Qibla," praying toward Mecca, and replaced it with Acre where he lived and died. He abolished the Shi'a laws of impurity and cleansing but requested that his followers be strict in matters of cleanliness and hygiene.

In fact the Baha'u'llah abolished most Islamic prohibitions, allowing the believers to do anything as long as it did not infringe on common sense. He abolished the clergy and all their functions and concentrated all jurisdiction in the Baha'i religion into the hands of the Prophet himself (For Shi'a-Baha'ism table of diversities, see Table 3.1 on page 63).

The Baha'u'llah was succeeded by his eldest son, Abbás Effendi, who created the second circle of Baha'ism. While he limited his activities to a closed circle of followers Abbás, now titled 'Abdu'l-Bahá (servant of Bahá), concentrated his efforts on the west in order to transform Baha'ism into a universal religion. He traveled in Western Europe and the United States recruiting many new adherents who contributed the money necessary to establish the institutions of the new religion. These centers became shrines of meditation and peace of mind, surrounded by greenery and flowers, in which the soul of man could be one with nature and therefore with God.

Baha'ism in fact targeted itself at all religions and many people deserted their religions to become Baha'is. As a part of the universalizing process, Abdul Baha decided that a common language was needed and, at first, adopted Esperanto and, later, English. To this day English is the official language of Baha'ism.

The Theology and Spiritualism of Baha'ism

The Baha'u'llah taught that there is only one God whose historical revelations have brought the world its cultural and spiritual life and that, over the years, "God's messengers" have founded separate religions whose sole purpose has been to instill spiritual perfection in man. The Baha'u'llah's new spiritual contemplation brought about the following commandments.

1. *The abandonment of all prejudices.* The Baha'u'llah emphasized the need for all peoples to abandon their prejudices in order to live in harmony for, according to him, all nations, religions, and cultures should live in mutual understanding. There should be one human race (therefore the Baha'is are allowed to marry into all religions) and no nation or race should consider itself above others. All prejudices based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and social status are forbidden and humanity should advance toward peace and a global, righteous society. The Baha'u'llah not only demanded that his flock abandon all prejudices but also that they should respect each and every culture and religion.
2. *The status of women.* The emancipation of women and total equality between the sexes is seen as a crucial step on the road to world peace since any denial of such a world order is an injustice toward at least 50 percent of the human race. Equality should start at home, advance to the workplace, and then to politics and international relations. There is no moral, practical, or biological justification for the inequality of the sexes and world peace and tranquility depend on the full integration of women into all kinds of human activities. Civil society must reorganize itself so that all the faculties that women have can be fully expressed, because "[a]lways and forever, Man and woman are equal before God." It is important to note that full equality for women was not prescribed in the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* and that it was the 'Abdu'l-Bahá who righted this wrong.[28]
3. *A universal religion.* The principle of the "unity of religion" is central to Baha'ism. According to the Baha'u'llah, religion developed just

like a human being, from a baby into a grown, intelligent person. This means that humanity started out as a primitive social collective but now has matured and is ready for a union of all communities. An individual human being develops along the lines of the education he receives from his parents, teachers, and society in general. As for humanity in general, it grows as a result of the influences of the religions of revelation. Why? Because God, the creator, always has and always will intervene in the course of human history (indeterminism). This intervention is embodied in the messengers who divulge His law to humanity and these messengers were the founders of the great religions—Abraham, Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, Muhammad, and so forth. The laws that they have brought from God over the generations have created an international morality that leads the world toward unity. These messengers are in fact the educators of humanity. God intends to unite all religions into a universal one—the religion of the Lord. This is to be an evolutionary religion and each previous religion is a step in the ladder of its evolution bequeathing to humanity its eternal scriptures—and Baha'ism itself is a step toward the evolution of this unified religion. The Baha'u'llah did not claim to be the last prophet but, according to him, the next and greater prophesy would only be revealed to humanity in a thousand years. Regrettably, at present all religions are competing with each other, each claiming to be the only true one. Judaism claims Christianity to be false, Christianity vilifies Islam, and so forth. Baha'ism, in contrast, believes in the unity of all religions and in the equality of all the great prophets.

4. *A ban on the economic extremes of poverty and riches.* Unity, according to Baha'ism, is based on justice and one of the evident signs of injustice in the world is the grave inequality in the distribution of riches. A small percentage of humanity holds most of the riches while the great masses are poor. This gulf exists within the nations and among them. What does Baha'ism offer in exchange? First of all it offers a different mental and emotional conception of material things—one that is religious. Accordingly all the present economic philosophies are contrary to the true nature of man since all the ingredients of economy are divine by nature and bound to the world in heart and spirit. The "sickness" prevailing in the world is the lack of love and altruism. Economic injustice is contrary to divine intention and a heinous crime in the eyes of God. All natural resources should be distributed equally among mankind and this can only be achieved through the cooperation of all nations and the economic institutions of each nation. Even within a cooperative society, however, Baha'ism

still recognizes the right to private property and economic entrepreneurship. The Divine Economy does not specify an equal distribution of wealth among all and recognizes that there are natural, social, and cultural differences in needs. While Baha'ism supports a minimum salary that will satisfy the basic needs of all and requires society to take care of the basic needs of those who are unable to achieve this by themselves, it also supports the concept of a maximum salary in order to prevent undue enrichment.

5. *Universal education.* Baha'ism sees the acquisition of knowledge as humanity's added value and a general duty. Knowledge plays a crucial role in the shaping of human and social life and its impartation from generation to generation is what constitutes culture. Baha'ism urges governments to support education because the development of any nation depends on the education of its individual citizens. It believes that scientific development leads to equality and to the disappearance of prejudices, and that it is a basic requirement for the success of each nation. Baha'ism calls on international agencies and organizations to assist in the education of women in particular because educated mothers are a precondition to the development of all aspects of human society.
6. *An independent inquiry of the truth.* Baha'ism believes that each human being is required to seek knowledge and to see the truth "through his own eyes." One of the main causes of confrontations in the world is the fact that people follow religions, cultures, habits, and opinions blindly and uncritically. God has provided everyone with the intelligence to examine, understand, and distinguish between right and wrong. Whoever clings to unexamined habits and opinions becomes intolerant toward those whose opinions differ from his and such differences may lead to confrontations and wars. Baha'ism believes that history testifies that these occur as the result of misunderstandings and misinterpretations of God's decrees and that he who seeks knowledge by himself will be able to understand the reasons for his attachment to a sect or an ideology. The belief of Baha'ism is that one religion and one reality will finally lead humankind to a compromise and union, which will culminate in the discovery of the truth.
7. *Establishing an international community—globalization.* Baha'ism's main goal is the establishment of peace among humanity. The Baha'u'llah urged all the world leaders to settle all their differences and pave the way to a world where there would be no borders and the whole world would be one territory with all humanity as its citizens.

The vision would be achieved by the establishment of international institutions common to all human beings (such as the UN), which would prevent confrontation between peoples and nations. From a practical point of view Baha'ism prescribes:

- a judicial authority that would enjoy full juridical power and would guarantee proper representation to all in an international court of law to judicially settle all international disputes and an executive authority that would implement the verdicts and orders of the judicial one;
- these organizations would be in charge of world peace and order and would safeguard the autonomy of nations and their ancient traditions, the freedom of man, and his enterprising spirit.

8. *The union of religion and science.* According to Baha'is the source of all disunity and confrontation in the world is the current view that postulates that a basic antagonism exists between science and religion and that people need to choose one over the other. Baha'ism, however, believes in the existence of one truth and the possibility of a total

Table 3.1 Baha'ism and Shi'a—the adoption and repudiation of religious principles [29]

	Baha'ism	**Twelfth Imam Shi'a**
Calendar	361 days per year, 19 months per year, 19 days per month	354 days per year, 12 months per year, 29–30 days per month
Clergy	Do not have	Have
Public prayers	Forbidden except during funerals	Obligatory on Fridays and holy days
Qibla	Acre	Mecca
Fasting	The month of 19 days	The month of Ramadan
Charity	Nonobligatory	Obligatory, one of the *Arkan al-Islam*
Marriage and divorce	Full accord of both sides[30]	Women have inferior status especially regarding divorce
Interest taking	Allowed	Forbidden
Alcohol consumption	Forbidden	Forbidden
Laws of impurity	None	Very strict
Forbidden foods	None	Forbidden

harmony between the two because, they argue, nothing is scientifically right yet religiously false and vice versa. According to 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

> If religious beliefs and opinions are found contrary to the standards of science, they are mere superstitions and imaginations; for the antithesis of knowledge is ignorance, and the child of ignorance is superstition. Unquestionably there must be agreement between true religion and science. If a question be found contrary to reason, faith and belief in it are impossible, and there is no outcome but wavering and vacillation.

And the Baha'u'llah affirmed that man's intelligence and reasoning powers are a gift from God: "This gift gives man the power to discern the truth in all things, leads him to that which is right, and helps him to discover the secrets of creation."[31]

Baha'u'llah's Attitude to the Shi'a Clergy

As mentioned earlier the Baha'u'llah opposed all clergy and claimed that the Prophet alone can interpret God's truth. He was especially wary of the fanaticism of those clerics who felt they were under attack from opinions refuting their dogma.[32] In the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* he foresaw being attacked by the Shi'a clergy because of their ignorance and erroneous study methods. He predicted their vilification of him and his teachings and urged his believers to ignore the clergy. There was, however, much more than this that made him anathema in the eyes of the Shi'a.

Chapter 4

The Hojjatiyeh Society

The Iranian Clergy versus the Baha'i Faith: The Background to the Foundation of the Hojjatiyeh

The roots of the Shi'a clergy's burning hatred of Baha'ism, the offspring of Babism, can be found in Sayyed 'Alí-Muhammad's assumption of the title "Bab," which means the gate to the Hidden Imam. The Ulama challenged his very contention and finally brought about his execution in 1850. Babism, unlike the Baha'u'llah's teachings, did not call for the abolishment of the clergy but it did challenge their domination within the Shi'a community and hinted that, following the imminent reappearance of the Mahdi, their historic role would be altogether annulled. Ideologically, from both the Shi'a's and the Sunnah's points of view, Islam was to be the last religion given by God to humanity and there was no way a new religion could claim to inherit Islam and simultaneously recruit the Shi'a's Mahdi to its service.[1]

The Baha'is, moreover, believe the Shi'a's hostility stems from the fact that the Baha'i believe the appearances of the Bab and the Baha'u'llah in fact realize the Shi'a's own prophecy regarding the reappearance of the imam.[2] The persecution of the Baha'is began at the beginning of the twentieth century and intensified with the rise of the Pahlavi Dynasty. In 1933 the regime banned the publication of Baha'i literature, Baha'i marriages were not recognized, their spiritual center was set on fire, and 50 Baha'i schools in Iran were forced to close down.[3]

Following the downfall of Mossadeq in 1953, it was evident that Kashani and his supporters, the Fada'iyan-i Islam, were among the agitators that had brought this about. They had joined the incitement and demonstrations calling for his resignation, and had actually formed the nucleus of the chaos and public disorder that resulted in his downfall. In their opinion, Mossadeq's "crime" was his support of the communist party, the Tudeh, who were suspected of atheism (but who also shared their hatred of the British), and this support made it very difficult for Kashani and his flock to keep supporting and legitimizing Mossadeq.[4]

Despite their quitting the political arena, the influence of the clergy surprisingly rose at the royal court in the years following Mossadeq's downfall. The shah realized that due to his shaky political situation and the danger posed by the clergy to his regime, he should embrace them—at least until the stabilization of his rule.

Mutahhari and Bazargan created a plan for the establishment of an Islamic state only after the Mossadeq crisis,[5] probably as a consequence of the temporal blossoming of religious affairs and the interest of the clergy in politics. Although Davari notes that the following were four religious organizations that emerged in the decade following Mossadeq's fall[6] he never mentions the Hojjatiyeh (or any other of their names or variations such as *Anjuman zad Bahayt*)[7]:

Anjuman-i Islami-yi Muhandisin (The Islamic Association of Engineers 1957–1958, by Bazargan and others)
Anjuman-i Islami-i Mu'allimin (The Islamic Association of Teachers 1958–1959)
Anjuman-i Mahanih-yi Dini (The Monthly Religious Association, 1960)
Anjuman-i Islami-i Pizishkan (The Islamic Association of Physicians, 1960–1961, by Mutahhari, Bazargan, and Ali Raja'i—the latter was a Hojjatiyeh member). Many of its members would be among the Islamic regime's rank-and-file.[8]

As noted in chapter two, after the fall of Mossadeq's government, the clerics believed that their dissociation from government had assisted the shah and his associates and so expected to be rewarded. At that stage they sought to convert their apparent political power into a reality that would advance their religious goals in the country. Their immediate targets were the Tudeh party, which represented secularism and atheism, and the Baha'is, which represented a fundamental distortion of classical Shi'a and the Imamate doctrine.[9]

The *Marja' Taqlid* of that period, as mentioned earlier, was the Ayatollah Borujerdi who was well aware of the changing times and his new political

and religious options. Borujerdi was not interested in politics, which he despised, but hoped to revive the ancient political tradition whereby the senior clergy ruled the country behind the scenes.

In a letter sent in June 1955 Borujerdi demanded that the prime minister, Hossein Ala', take action against the proliferation of the Baha'i religion in the country because it was the antithesis of Shi'a Islam. Borujerdi demanded that the government shut down all the Baha'i places of worship and employ in its service only members of recognized religions. The Ayatollah reminded the prime minister of a clause in the Iranian Constitution that prohibited the employment of members of unrecognized religious minorities in the civil service.[10]

In addition to the letter Borujerdi instructed Muhammad Taqi Falsafi, a popular radio broadcaster and one of his collaborators, to include anti-Baha'i propaganda in his broadcasts. Falsafi, after discussing the matter with the shah, who authorized the project, aired the broadcast during the month of Ramadan in 1955, and it was very damaging to the Baha'i minority.[11]

The propaganda campaign of Borujerdi and Falsafi, under the auspices of the shah and his regime, led to the destruction of the main Baha'i places of worship. Representatives of the regime were present at the destruction (General Nader Batmaglich and Tymor Bakhtiar), and Shiite leaders such as the Ayatollahs Borujerdi and Bihabani sent the shah letters of congratulations and support for his actions.[12]

Among Borujerdi's messengers to the shah concerning the persecution of the Baha'i was Khomeini who served as Borujerdi's "chief of staff" in the 1950s. The shah agreed to the clerics' demands and, in 1953, he initiated the establishment of a semi-clandestine religious organization called the Hojjatiyeh Society (which, in 1957, came under the auspices of the internal security organization, the SAVAK) whose sole purpose was the persecution of the Baha'is.[13] The move was interpreted in religious circles as a reward to the clerics who had sided with the shah during and after the Mossadeq crisis.[14]

The persecution of the Baha'is continued unabated at least until 1962 on the eve of the declaration of the shah's White Revolution. The shah, aware of his weakness vis-à-vis the religious establishment, submitted to all their whims and the Hojjatiyeh, protected by the regime, operated virtually at their own will[15].

Even after the insurrection of July 5, 1963, the anti-Baha'i organization continued its activities in the public arena as well. Most of its open activities were ideological despite the fact that the regime was actually pro-Baha'i. While other religious groups played an active role in the struggle against the corrupt regime, the Hojjatiyeh rejected any participation in politics

and the regime therefore did not feel threatened by its activities. For this reason the Hojjatiyeh operated freely in Iran and in some cases the regime even assisted them through the SAVAK.[16]

With the declaration of the White Revolution and the encouragement of secularism in the state, the shah disengaged himself from the clerics and, from being partners of convenience, they became bitter enemies. This struggle would unite the clerics against the shah and his caprices[17] and in this war there was ultimately only one victor—the Ayatollah Khomeini.

The Foundation of *Anjoman-i Imam-i Zaman*—The Hojjatiyeh Society

In his book *Hezb-i Qaadin-i Zaman (Mawsum be Anjoman-i Hojjatiyeh)*[18] I'mad al-Din Baqi claims that the Hojjatiyeh Society was established because of two reasons: the feebleness and corruption of the Qajar regime and the British, Russian, and, later, the American presence, which promoted the development of Baha'ism by allowing its propaganda to spread. Baqi claims that the colonial powers conspired to promote Baha'ism "in order to misrepresent Islam and prevent the revival of Islamic religious thought and movements," that is, the revival of the Islamic movements along with the national and political movements.

The Hojjatiyeh Society was established before the American coup of August 19, 1953 (the 28 Mordad coup), and was, at first, named *Anjoman-e Khariyeh Hojjatiyeh Mahdiviyeh* up until the coup. Its founder, the Iranian cleric Sheikh Mahmud Halabi, used to broadcast daily on the state radio station of Mashhad, which, according to Baqi, suggests that the society might have been established even earlier than this—in the late 1940s.[19]

Sheikh Mahmoud Halabi Khorasani claimed to be born in Mashhad in 1902 (probably 1900) but he certainly died in 1998. His name, Halabi, was a nickname shortened from Halabi-Saz—tinsmith—but he was actually called Zaker-Hussein after Hussein, the third imam. He studied philosophy and ethics with Mullah Sadra[20] who was also known as Mahmud Zakerzadeh Tavalai.[21] Halabi established the Mahdiviyat, based upon the extreme philosophy of the Hojjatiyeh, which claims to have strong links with the Revolutionary Guards.[22] Halabi died on January 16, 1998 (Dey 26, 1376/Ramadhan 17, 1418), the anniversary of the shah's expulsion from Iran.[23]

The clerics noticed that in the years previous to the American coup (Operation Ajax), Baha'i propaganda was spreading and gaining influence over public opinion (in Iran and, perhaps, all over the Middle East), but

what drew most of their attention was the anticlerical tone of that propaganda. Sheikh Mahmud Halabi was suspected of having been exposed to this propaganda along with Mirza Mehdi Isfahani and of having a secret relationship with the Hidden Imam—the Mahdi. They had a third wing—Sayyid Abbas Alavi—and they all were exposed to Baha'i propaganda. As a result of this exposure Alavi converted to Baha'ism and wrote one of their most popular propaganda books. Halabi, on the other hand, saw the great danger of Baha'ism and, while reading their writings and studying in their company, he became aware of two other Shi'a clerics who had been influenced by Baha'ism: Muhammad Taqi Shariati and Amir Pour. Later he arrived in Tehran where he collected information about the Baha'i attempts at infiltrating Shi'a religious centers and convinced the Ulama of the danger they posed and of the necessity to combat Baha'ism and Baha'i propaganda. It was, however, a "divine call" that urged Halabi to found the society as in 1953, or so he claimed, the *Imam-i Zaman* "appeared" to him and ordered him to fight Baha'ism.[24]

The act of establishing the society as an anti-Baha'i movement is, in itself, not really anything new since already during the 1940s movements of this kind had appeared. The circumstances that made it possible for its establishment were mainly the removal of Shah Reza in September 1941 and the growing feeling among the clerics that Baha'i propaganda was beginning to influence the nature of the state. Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi points out that there were at least four different organizations that actively opposed the Baha'is, either through propaganda or through directly influencing the Iranian government to take action against them by discharging them and removing them from state institutions and centers of influence. The organizations that were established in the 1940s were *Anjoman-i Tablighat-i Islami* (1942), *Jami'yat-i Ta'alimat-i Islami* (1945), *Jami'yat-i Madhab-i Jafari* (unknown year of foundation), and *Jami'yat-i Hiyat-Morvijan-i Madhab-i Jafari* (1947).[25]

According to Tavakoli the *Anjoman-i Tablighat-i Islami* was very active against the Baha'is especially during 1950–1970 and, during the two decades preceding the Islamic revolution (i.e., the 1960s and 1970s), this society was mostly known as *Anjoman-i Zad-i Bahayat* (the Anti-Baha'i Society) and the Hojjatiyeh Society.[26] According to another supporting text the Hojjatiyeh were known as the *Anjoman-i Tablighat-i Islami* (the Society for Islamic Propaganda) before the Islamic revolution and their aim was to reduce the influence of the Baha'is in Iran.[27] Although the Hojjatiyeh as an anti-Baha'i society was established *after* the Mossadeq crisis (and not during the 1960s and 1970s as Tavakoli claims) it considered it important to keep the respected name Hojjatiyeh. Even if the name "The Anti-Baha'i Society" (*Anjoman-i Zad-i Bahayat*) was considered to

be noble and true other names were also known such as the aforementioned Hojjatiyeh and "The Party of Those Who Sit and Wait for the Coming of the Mahdi" (*Hezb-i Qaedin*). Anyway, and under any name, the whole purpose of establishing the organization was to fight against the Baha'is.[28]

The movement known since the 1980s as the Hojjatiyeh, however, was actually the *Anjoman-i Imam-i Zaman*, which means the "imam of the generation"[29] and was established, as noted earlier, in 1953 by Sheikh Mahmoud Halabi of Mashhad shortly after the Mossadeq Crisis.[30] Although ordered from "above" the actual permission to establish the society was received from the senior ayatollah of the period, the Ayatollah Borujerdi. The name given to the society was an act of defiance against Babism and Baha'ism and their understanding of the Mahdi, the Messiah.[31] Differing opinions claim that the movement under the name of *Anjoman-i Zad Bahayat* (The Anti-Baha'i Society) or *Anjoman-i Sahib ul-Zaman* (The Society of Lord of the Age) was established in 1954 and was later joined by the *Anjoman-i Ta'alimat-i Islam* (The Society for Islamic Teachings) who maintained schools, run by Haqqani and Alavi, whose graduates formed most of the society's supporters and later were the backbone of the Islamic Republic's leadership.[32] At that time the Haqqani School had a great reputation and when one looks at the Hojjatiyeh one can see that the principles of the Hojjatiyeh transferred naturally to the students some of whom would later join Iranian politics after the Islamic Revolution. Anoushiravan and Zweiri in their book *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives; the Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution* say that the Haqqani School

> was established by Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi, Ayatollah Dr. Beheshti, Ayatollah Janati and Ayatollah Sadoughi. The reason [for] establishing such a school was to train clerics with both traditional and modern curricula [that included] secular [courses] such as medicine, politics, and western and non-Islamic philosophy. Many of the influential figures in Iranian politics today graduated from [this] Haqqaniya School.[33]

This could explain the Hojjatiyeh's tendency toward modernism despite their conservative appearance.

In one of the footnotes to Abbas Amanat's book *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shi'ism*, he notes that "there is a confusion regarding the terms relating to the establishment of the organization," and "it is safe to assume that Hojjatiyeh was the original name of the organization comprising Islamic activity and Anti Baha'ism fanaticism." In the 1960s and 1970s it was known as *Anjoman-i Ta'alimat-i Islami* (The Society for Islamic Teachings), and the anti-Baha'i ingredient of the society was masked.

Amanat supports this thesis, adding that the name Hojjatiyeh gained popularity after the Islamic Revolution.[34] Another source claims that prior to the revolution the Hojjatiyeh were known as *Anjoman-i Tablighat-i Islami*, whose main goal was the reduction of Baha'i influence in Iran.[35]

The "Anti Baha'i Society," as it was called, wished to be known by the more prestigious name of Hojjatiyeh, along with other names such as "'the party of the sitters' [i.e., anticipators]—*Hezb-i Qaedin*" or the *Kalkhawarej*. Anyway, regardless of the name it was known by, it is important to note that its sole purpose was to combat the Baha'i minority.[36]

Prior to the revolution the Hojjatiyeh were known as *Anjoman-i Tablighat-i Islami* and, as noted earlier, their sole purpose was to combat Baha'ism. In 1953 the shah's regime encouraged the establishment of the society and, in 1955, gave it its full support for, by encouraging the society's activities against Baha'ism, the shah was ensuring the Shi'a clergy's support in his struggle against the communist party—the Tudeh.[37] Only after the revolution did the society change its name to Hojjatiyeh, giving itself an Arabic aura by adopting a derivative of another of the Hidden Imam's names: *Hojjat Alla ala Khalqi* (the evidence/proof of God's existence).[38]

Ayatollah Ahmad Janeti linked the Baha'is and their propaganda to the earlier presence of Americans and Israelis in Iran. The Hojjatiyeh saw Baha'ism as an arm of the United States and Israel and, as such, a danger to Islam since they were seen as linked to Imperialism and Zionism.[39] It is very possible that the Hojjatiyeh's hatred of the Baha'is derives from their globalizing vision and the presence of their main centers in Israel with the Baha'i temple in Haifa and the Baha'u'llah's shrine in Acre.

The name of the society, as far as it stems from its goals, is a different matter. We may safely assume that a society, which some argue was established by the SAVAK (established only in 1957), and whose main purpose was to combat Baha'ism, would assume a clear and significant name, such as *Anjoman-i Imam-i Zaman*, rather than "The Anti-Baha'i Society," for example, which could only serve one specific goal of the society. The use of the name *Anjoman-i Imam-i Zaman* symbolizes a generic agenda in order to emphasize their eschatological Shi'a views and purposes along with their goals and intentions regarding Bahai'sm.

It, therefore, seems that the other name clearly stating the society's aims was probably invented by the Baha'i. For its secondary mission, the intellectual struggle against Khomeini's messianic notions (during the 1970s and the first years of the Islamic Republic foundation), the society assumed a different name—the Hojjatiyeh, which, ironically, makes the opposite statement—devotion to the messianic aspect of the Mahdi's cult. The Hojjatiyeh were not truly antimessianic for they were devoted to the idea of the Mahdi's return to his believers but, nevertheless, opposed

the precipitation of this event. In principle they were against creating an Islamic society through participating in politics, for this, historically, was to be the exclusive function of the Mahdi.[40]

Anyway, the original name, *Anjoman-i Imam-i Zaman*, was clearly an anti-Baha'i declaration; in fact it was a "declaration of war" against Baha'ism, which stands for the immediate implementation of the "Mahdi era," since they believe that the Baha'u'llah is the Hidden Imam, the messiah of our times. In their earlier incarnation the Hojjatiyeh, who opposed any messianic tendencies, turned against the Baha'is and, only later on, in the 1960s and 1970s, would they turn most of their attention to opposing Khomeini's messianic tendencies. In return Khomeini's supporters would oppose the Hojjatiyeh and its ideology.

In fact, by formulating the idea of clerical rule in the present, Khomeini postponed the implementation of the messianic ideal even further into the future than traditional Shi'i thought required. After all, they argued, if the perfect kind of government existed now, there would be no need to hasten the coming of the Mahdi. On the other hand, if Khomeini's belief meant the eventual return of the Hidden Imam, then the entire Shia would be considered to be messianic, and therefore, at that stage, there would be no differentiation between Halabi and Khomeini.

It is more likely that the Hojjatiyeh were established in 1953 in Mashhad, where Mahmud Halabi was known as a respected and influential preacher[41] although other sources claim that the society was established in Tehran and not Mashhad.[42] Following the Mossadeq crises the shah permitted Halabi, an enthusiastic supporter of the former, to move forward on condition that the society would persecute the Baha'is. It seems that, due to the sensitive political situation, the shah intended to enlist the Ulama on his side, realizing that the clerics' influence in the country was on the rise.

World public opinion, especially in the United States, hindered the shah from fully realizing his alliance with the clerics and he was forced to officially condemn the persecution of the Baha'is but he closed his eyes to sporadic clerical attacks against them such as the destruction of their main temple. In view of the shah's pullback from his intended policy the Ayatollahs Halabi and Borujerdi published a *fatwa* banning all commercial ties between Shiites and members of the Baha'i minority.

It is important to note that Halabi, unlike the Ayatollah Kashani, was apolitical and, like other clerics, favored a militant stance in the struggle against the Baha'is. During those years Khomeini too was a fierce opponent of the Baha'is.[43] In any case, Halabi and his supporters viewed the Baha'is as enemies of Islam and Iran and established their society with the SAVAK's blessing. They were allowed to raise donations and money

from the merchants of the bazaar to finance armed militants and persecute the Baha'is openly, "as civilians," all under the protective umbrella of the regime.[44] The Hojjatiyeh, however, claimed that their weapons in the struggle against Baha'ism were purely theological.

The Islamic resurgence in Iran at the beginning of the 1950s was due to the growing interest of the clergy in politics and the advantages it might provide them. Things went so far that the Ayatollah Kashani claimed that his influence in politics was greater than the shah's. It is important to note that Kashani was influential over the Fada'iyan-i Islam who were responsible for many political assassinations and were leading a militant Islamic and anti-Western policy.[45] Another reason for the awakening was the shah's embrace of those less militant among the clergy who were less of a threat to his regime than the Fada'iyan-i Islam and were helpful in his struggle against the communist Tudeh party.[46]

The Grand-Ayatollah Borujerdi, sure of the power of the clergy, did not hesitate to make demands, which, with others—especially concerning the Baha'i minority—were implemented by the shah's regime. Borujerdi, aware of the respect accorded to him by Mossadeq, made demands of the prime minister who tried to placate him with legislation, and one of the reasons for the Ayatollah Kashani's abandonment of Mossadeq was his conviction that the latter was more attentive to Borujerdi's interests than his.[47] Until 1962 the shah had to give in to some of the cleric's demands such as the persecution of the Baha'is in 1955 that was led by the Hojjatiyeh with the regime's backing.[48]

During the 1960s and 1970s, at the height of the White Revolution, which brought about economic prosperity while suppressing religion and reinforcing secularism, the Hojjatiyeh were an apolitical nongovernmental society that declared their total objection to Shiite messianism in its Khomeinistic guise, and presented an antirevolutionary stand. In later years when the shah wished to weaken Khomeinism, he took advantage of the dispute to attack the messianic revolutionary trend and to demonstrate sympathy toward Baha'ism.[49] This sympathy makes sense considering that the shah's prime minister until 1977, Amir-Abbas Hoveyda, was a Baha'i (who had converted to Islam). On the other hand, the link between the shah and the Hojjatiyeh concerning this "sympathetic attitude to Baha'ism" demands clarification. The question is why, at the beginning of the 1950s and with the backing of the senior Ayatollah Borujerdi, Halabi formed an anti-Baha'i society. What was so urgent? How is it that an anti-Baha'i society in the 1960s and 1970s ignored its Baha'i stance, and what was the price they paid or got for this stand?

Sheikh Halabi who knew that such a society needed the support of the senior ayatollah of the period, Borujerdi, soon secured it and was, perhaps,

even motivated by the latter. However, a society such as the Hojjatiyeh needed adherents, supporters, and, of course, financial support, which Halabi got from the merchants of the bazaar and the clergy—all of whom rejected governmental intervention in the economy.[50] Needless to say following the Mossadeq crises the economic situation was very grave and for a long time no foreign currency was coming in and the economy was on the verge of collapse. The government had to revive the economy and the task fell on the shoulders of the lower classes and the merchants, most of whom were influenced by the clergy.

In order to spread its ideology against Baha'ism and for classical Shi'a the society established branches and opened schools whose curriculum was based on their ultraconservative outlook. Together with their struggle against Baha'ism the Hojjatiyeh developed as a religious movement sponsoring religious reforms and even modernism,[51] which, according to the classical Wahabi *Bida'* (Novelty Banning) outlook, was fine as long as modernism did not clash with Islam and served to popularize the movement among the believers.

The combination of religion and science was not easily adopted by the Hojjatiyeh since, unlike the Ussuliya, for whom the Quran and Hadith were insufficient as sources of law and needed the addition of intellect (*'aql*) and consensus (*ijma'*), the Hojjatiyeh in their philosophy (which will be discussed later on) favored the classical notion according to which the Quran and Hadith were the only sources of Divine law. Although the Hojjatiyeh were not Akhbaris in this respect they adopted Akhbari practices.

In spite of this, according to Fariba Adelkhah in her book *Being Modern in Iran*, where Baqi is used as a source for the following citation, the Hojjatiyeh "initially intended to combat 'the Baha'i heresy,' [and] this approach resembles a movement for religious reforms and modernization, although it is rather quietist and politically conservative."[52]

To add a mystical note to the establishment of the Hojjatiyeh, Halabi claimed to have had a dream in which the Hidden Imam ordered him to combat the "Baha'i Movement."[53] Four other members of the clergy joined Halabi: Sayyid Reza Rassul, Sayyid Hussein Sadjari, Muhammad Gholam-Hussein, and Hajj Muhammad Taqi-Tajar.[54] One man who did not join was Mirza Mahdi Esfahani whose innovative ideology represented antiphilosophical fanaticism and Akhbari prejudices and he was suspected of being the main ideologist of the Hojjatiyeh ideology. The anti-Baha'i segment of the society's ideology was actually a minor part of Esfahani's complicated set of ideas.

Returning to the era after the Mossadeq crises, the clergy kept a distance from politics, which had apparently been taken over by the shah

who nominated General Fazlollah Zahedi as his premier. During this time Halabi left Mashhad for Tehran in order to expand the newly formed society in the big city. As mentioned earlier his primary target was the Baha'is and, in order to confront them ideologically, Halabi devised the "Scientific Defense of Islam"[55] program, later called "The Halabi Program." The program anticipated the return of the Baha'is to Islam but those who failed to do so would be included in a "black list," which even allowed for their murder without punishment.[56]

The Hojjatiyeh sought to create an image of itself as an anti-Baha'i society when in fact it was a beehive of ideas and religious notions. Although the regime treated the society leniently the Baha'i agenda was intended to lessen the regime's suspicions. Prior to the Islamic Revolution Khomeini was aware of the society's ideology and activities but did not consider them to be threats or adversaries.

The society's first years, at least until Khomeini's revolution, were dedicated to combating the Baha'is but, at that time, when the Hojjatiyeh were split by the Islamic Revolution, some of its members deserted the society to join Khomeini's party. In view of their belief in the Hidden Imam as the sole motivator of political change, the Hojjatiyeh was officially apolitical and Khomeini's supporters actually saw it as an antirevolutionary society bent on preserving the status quo.

The Hojjatiyeh's set of rules stated that "the movement would not involve itself whatsoever in politics," and "[t]he association intends to combat the Baha'i religion who cast religious doubts," and "is inviting youth wishing to combat these doubts." Many clerics were not enthusiastic about the anti-Baha'i tendencies of the society and interpreted them as an excuse to avoid participating in political discussions or politics altogether.[57] Needless to say, although the Hojjatiyeh believed that they were practicing the real Shi'a and that these clerics should act like them, this well-known accusation against the society ignored the fundamental Shiite opposition to participation of clerics in politics in general.

The turning point in the society's history came at the beginning of the 1970s, when some students converted to Baha'ism at the theological seminary of Qom, which apparently was an embarrassment to the entire religious establishment, and Sheikh Halabi, who served as an "inspector" at the religious seminaries,[58] saw this as a personal failure. According to the "directive" received in his dream, Baha'ism had to be uprooted everywhere as a precondition to the imam's return. The society, by then, had spread to Pakistan and India, where small Baha'i minorities were being harbored, and, because they were concerned about its growing popularity, members of the Hojjatiyeh began infiltrating other Islamic organizations in order to spread its influence within Iran's Shiite population.[59]

In any case, the Hojjatiyeh did not oppose the shah's regime and were well connected within the administration, which gained them the SAVAK's favor. They continued their activities against the Baha'is and gained many new adherents. However their influence in politics and society was minor in comparison to the Tudeh Party and other political and clandestine associations.[60]

The Hojjatiyeh's Ideology

It is obvious that the Hojjatiyeh's ideology was mainly targeted against the Baha'i faith and minority. Baqi says that, after the Islamic Revolution, the Hojjatiyeh espionage networks were all destroyed but for a small number, which constituted an underground group. The Hojjatiyeh's failure to destroy the Baha'is undermined their ideology and forced the movement to change its direction in order to continue its activities.

Baqi says that "like other anti-revolutionary groups, they gained from the liberty and freedom of the initial years of the revolution, spreading their tentacles into organizations and institutions . . . And since the Baha'i issue could no longer serve as an excuse for the continuation of their activities, they made Marxism and the Tudeh Party their main issues."[61]

The Hojjatiyeh concentrated their thinking on the actual issues of the generation such as whether the believer should promote the second arrival of the Mahdi or wait for him; whether the sins of the generation were so grave as to delay his coming or the opposite; what the function of the senior clergymen of the generation was and whether they should act to both preserve the national and religious integrity of the nation and act against the enemies of Islam.

The Hojjatiyeh, who stood for the separation of religion and state, concluded that they should stay out of politics. Many of the religious leaders, early supporters of Khomeini such as the Ayatollahs Mohammad Ali Raj'ai and Sayyid Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti, however, attacked the Hojjatiyeh, and described them as a "marginal religious group," opponents of the Islamic Revolution and supporters of the shah. In addition, because they were continuing their struggle against the Baha'is (although the shah actually promoted the Baha'is rights) and pitted Shiites against Sunnis, these leaders of the revolution saw them as undercover subversives, leaders of the opposition, and "dangerous to society."

Halabi, their foremost ideologist and himself a cleric, rejected the use of philosophy to reach the truth or God's knowledge. He denied the human mind's ability to reach any conclusions concerning God's existence or

complexity. God, according to Halabi, is outside philosophy's boundaries. Philosophers and mystics cannot reach the proper level required for the understanding and embodiment and incorporation of God's essence.[62]

The theory of *Maktabi-i Tafkik* was "a new hermeneutical theory in religious studies which emerged and soon became a powerful and dominant movement in the seminary [Mashhad]. The theory was later called *Maktabi-i Tafkik* (segregation) which defended the independent understanding of Quranic knowledge (*ma'arif-i Quran*) from allegorical and rational inferences of Islamic texts, and firmly rejected Islamic philosophy and mysticism." An Iranian scholar, Muhammad Reza Hakimi, writes:

> [T]he aim of this school [of thought] is the purification of Quranic knowledge, to remain unmixed and to be understood clearly, without using any *Ta'vil* [allegory] and mixing with other thoughts and schools, without using *tafsir-i bi ra'y* [interpretation by personal opinion] and analogy, to protect revealed facts and the principles of knowledge from mixing and being tainted with human thought and talent.[63]

The founder of the *Maktabi-i Tafkik* was Mirza Mahdi Isfahani who was the Mirza Muhammad Husain Naini's student (1860–1936) and who was a *Usuli*. While the majority of the Ulama at that time (the early 1920s) tended to be antirationalists (e.g., anti-*Usulis*) Isfahani went the opposite way (toward Akhbarism). Finally, the Islamic theoretician, the Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari, who influenced the development of Islamic thought on Modern Shi'i politics, chose his way and "preferred the rational and analytical sciences to other Islamic sciences"[64]; in other words, he chose to become a *Usuli* rather than an *Akhbari* or *Tafkiki*. According to Davari, even Borujerdi himself was divided between *Akhbarism* and *Usulism*, but found a way of compromise between them.[65]

There are some differences between *Maktabi-i Tafkik* and *Akhbarism* (traditionalists) for while "Akhbarism opposes Usulism (rationalism) in the field of *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) the *Tafkiki* doctrine in theology is in contrast to philosophy and mysticism."[66]

Halabi was one of the Ayatollah Mirza Mahdi Isfahani's followers, and was infatuated with his master. The school of *Tafkik* (literally, separation/segregation) had a lot of disciples and each one of those disciples had his own method of promoting the ideas and thoughts of the Ayatollah Isfahani. Some disciples wrote their own notes in the master's class and published them and others made speeches in the mosques and among the people. The main denominator, however, of most of the *Tafkik* School's ideas was their opposition to Islamic theosophy and Islamic philosophy, and the major turning point in their speeches and stories was when they emphasized the

importance of abstaining from traditional Islamic philosophy and theosophy and embracing Islamic science, which included the rational and analytical sciences. Of all Isfahani's disciples, Halabi was the greatest promoter of his ideas and thoughts and always tried to broaden his methods.[67] Islamic science means logic, philosophy, and Gnosticism all of which are alien to Quranic teachings.[68]

Among the components of the Hojjatiyeh's ideology was the issue of anticipation—the expectation of the coming of the Hidden Imam.[69] It appears that this doctrine was not unique, but is an essential Shiite tenet (*Entezar*), which was given prominence by the Hojjatiyeh prior to the Islamic Revolution. Khomeini, like all Shiites, was also "expecting" (*Entezar*) but, being a Usuli who believed Islam to be an all-encompassing civilization, he was an activist, striving to hasten the return of the imam by conducting a proper Islamic society where clerics received their due respect and ran all aspects of life, including politics.

In contrast the Hojjatiyeh did not see politics as the essence of all things but as a secular matter from which the clergy, especially the senior clergy, should keep a distance and all members of the Hojjatiyeh took an oath not to get involved in politics. Perhaps this clause was forced on them by the shah's regime; nevertheless it was deeply ingrained within the Hojjatiyeh's way of life and ideology, as firmly set out by its founder—Halabi.

The Hojjatiyeh's ideology, despite their opposition to philosophy and mysticism (which contradicts Halabi's dream regarding his mission to fight the Baha'is), was also a dialectical one with a thesis, an antithesis, and so forth.[70] Halabi employed this method to create a linear idea within which there are seemingly no discussions or contradictions; thus Halabi accepted God's words "as is" without investigating any further. For him, total belief in God's words was the cornerstone of Shiite Islam and any question was an undermining of belief.

For him the existence of cosmic realities alongside human existence was a fact inexplicable by belief and the investigation of cosmic procedures would not alter them because man cannot participate in God's inexplicable deeds. Halabi postulated that the world should function as it was created by God and man should conduct himself in accordance with religion's spiritual standards. What then, according to this ideology, is man's responsibility for social development? Is he a part of society but only partly responsible for society—if at all?

All this debate led them to the conclusion that members of the Hojjatiyeh should not wish to take on any social responsibility, through politics or otherwise. Thus they apparently did not see themselves as parts of society but as individuals whose sole purpose was the pursuit of personal purity. Opponents of the society deduced from this that the Hojjatiyeh advocated

corruption and social injustice as a way to hasten the return of the Mahdi, the future reformer of a corrupted world and introducer of Shiite order into the world. To Khomeini and his adherents this personal attitude was anathema since they maintained that the individual cannot interpret religion correctly but requires the guidance of the clerics in his everyday personal and social life. According to them, society (or the regime representing society) is corrupted and cruel toward the weak. The Hojjatiyeh did not see themselves as responsible for society's defects and refused to act to correct them, believing this to be the Mahdi's task, since no cleric, great as he may be, could accomplish this.[71]

We therefore conclude that the open confrontation between the two schools of thought, Halabi's and Khomeini's, was fundamental. According to Khomeini their avoidance of social participation led the Hojjatiyeh away from the necessity for social rectification and, even more, excluded them from certain basic Islamic tenets stated in the Quran and the Hadith. Khomeini's adherents reminded the Hojjatiyeh of their opposition to combative jihad, seen by the latter as a spiritual dialectical ideal and as a path to one's individual intellectual progress (the "pure" meaning of the term)—as something that did not endanger the innocent.

From the Hojjatiyeh's point of view, any armed struggle, not excluding the struggle against the shah's regime, was superfluous and, in reality, not all of Khomeini's adherents took part in the armed struggle but took control of the government organs only after the revolution. The Hojjatiyeh, on the other hand, infiltrated these organs, including the violent ones such as the police and the revolutionary guards, and were very active in the eight-year-war against Iraq. The true meaning of "jihad," according to Khomeini, however, was the encouragement of society and each individual within it to act externally so as to force Islam upon the non-Shiite Islamic world and to broaden its boundaries.

The Hojjatiyeh's perception of jihad was derived from their understanding of the true meaning of the expectation of the Mahdi, and the religions, social, private, and collective consequences of his future coming. The jihad, from their point of view, but from Shi'a's point of view as well, was that it is a religious decree that obliges the individual and the community to accept a true Shiite principle, namely, the passive expectation of the Mahdi and the necessity to fight one's individual desires (see extensive details in chapter one). Khomeini, on the other hand, broadened the meaning of "jihad" to include martyrdom and a struggle to the death for the Islamic state and ideal represented by his regime. The Hojjatiyeh excluded all verses and content dealing with jihad or martyrdom from their writings and, as far as they were concerned, nothing was worth dying for, certainly not someone who represented both an opposite perception of

messianism, and the character of the Islamic state to be led by the Mahdi himself or his envoys—the clerics.[72]

After the success of the Islamic Revolution, the Hojjatiyeh tried to isolate themselves and to find a pragmatic solution that would allow them to continue their struggle for the idea of separation of religion and state. Therefore, they started to oppose Khomeini's ideas (mainly the *Velayat-i Faqih*) and Khomeini, on his part, responded by trying to neutralize the Hojjatiyeh's "poisonous ideologies" by giving speeches that exposed their diverting actions. Khomeini's speeches caused many Hojjatiyeh veterans and experienced followers to renounce their Hojjatiyeh beliefs despite the secrecy of the Hojjatiyeh. This was probably a maneuver to allow them to continue their activities and, today, some are again claiming that the Hojjatiyeh has restarted their activities and those interpolations of their thoughts and ideas are being published in books but with different titles.[73]

The ancient struggle between Sunnah and Shi'a also appears in the Hojjatiyeh ideology notwithstanding the guarded distance it has kept from the Sunnah, and Khomeini's adherents have not hesitated to blame them for this connection too, as if the Hojjatiyeh had not emerged from a Shiite society that regarded the Sunnah as the source of all its troubles. The hypocrisy of Khomeini's adherents probably derived not so much from the historical Sunnah-Shiite struggle as from Khomeini's postrevolutionary policy and his intention to reestablish Iran's relations with the Arab world from which the secular shah had kept his distance.

Of course, Khomeini's adherents falsely claimed that the Hojjatiyeh's classical interpretation struck at the unity of Islam, as if such unity had ever existed, and that their political attitude and their refusal to hasten the return of the Mahdi was actually an attempt to preserve the traditional Sunnah-Shiite animosity. Khomeini's supporters created an image of the Hojjatiyeh as a radical sect that was representative of a traditional pernicious Shiite tendency to hate their Sunnah "brothers."[74]

The Hojjatiyeh presented their platform prior to the return of the Mahdi in their written propaganda. Among other things in their set of rules, published before the revolution, it is stated that:

> Scientific activities and study are for the public welfare, our vision is to educate the public for a higher knowledge of the Shiite *Jafari* Islam, to nurture the talents of the orthodox people, and to improve the material and spiritual paths of the public. All this until the return of his highness "The Imam of our Generation"…however, our plans will be implemented according to the actual needs of our time, based on the protection of the general aims…spreading Islamic and *Jafari Madhab* [propaganda] and protection of these with respect to the present circumstances.[75]

In certain aspects the Hojjatiyeh ideology represents an extreme and apocalyptic form of Shiite Islam and they have been accused of believing in the "chaos [that] must precede the return of the redeemer of the world [the Mahdi]." Therefore, or so it has been claimed, after the revolution, many Hojjatiyeh members joined the revolutionary committees and guards and took part in the most violent and bloody activities.[76] We should place doubt in this claim since we know that the Hojjatiyeh have declared that they are against violence and anti-jihadists.

In the inner circles of the Hojjatiyeh we find that many of the society's leaders never married but none of them was a mullah or wore religious garb (except for Halabi who wore a turban) and they were nicknamed the "Soldiers of the Imam Zaman (the generation)."[77] Their avoidance of religious garb had two reasons: first, most of them were not clerics, although they were well-versed in the Shi'a as well as the Baha'i sources; second, being dressed as civilians made it easier for them to infiltrate the Baha'i religious centers and disrupt their worship. In addition to the Baha'is the Hojjatiyeh fought the Sunnah and the communists (the Tudeh party) who claimed to have an atheistic agenda, which was as much an anathema to them as Baha'ism.

In order to achieve its goals the society had to create several theoretical and practical organs, all undercover because, although this was not illegal, it was not altogether legal. During the 1960s and 1970s the Pahlavi regime was aware of the society's existence and activities but since it was not attacking the regime (and later would even cooperate with it) it was treated leniently. During the 1960s the society sent its members and supporters into the universities, mainly to learn management,[78] and, although they were very traditional ideologically, the Hojjatiyeh took advantage of the most modern methods and, in their classrooms, tables and chairs replaced the traditional carpets. Its activists adopted Western garb and haircuts so as not to attract attention especially among the Baha'is,[79] and Isfahani and Halabi's visions were translated into action by some of their committees.

The Hojjatiyeh was an extensive, complicated, and experienced society and this was only natural after having had almost 30 years of organizational experience, mainly in activities directed against the Baha'is, and it was the methods of opposition used by the society that ensured that they would gain many advantages over this "espionage cult" (the Baha'is) and the *taghot*[80] government. Opposition to them, however, required that they be a closed, coherent, and complicated society and the presence of elements of the SAVAK, which had organizational and intelligence experience, in the Hojjatiyeh provided the society with a strong organizational advantage.

The Functioning of the Hojjatiyeh Inner World

The Hojjatiyeh (which were initially called the *Hezb-i Qaedin*) had various committees, called *Comiteh* or *Guru*, such as those for teaching (*Tadris*), espionage and research (*Jasusy va Tahqiq*), writing (*Negaresh*), guidance (*Ershad*), conferences, foreign networks, and public debates.[81]

The *Guru-ye Tadris* (The Teaching Committee)

This committee had the duty to recruit young, inexperienced, active people or students and give them organizational training. The immediate source was the schools where the movement's agents, particularly its instructors and teachers, looked for intelligent students. Their first goal was to develop friendly relationships with local figures in order to entice them into their society. The movement preferred not to take lazy and slow-witted students since, to maximize efficiency, they needed a young, smart force to form a strong framework, which would enable the movement to train them while they were completing their own classical studies.

The movement's mentors were told to use false titles such as "doctor" and "engineer," probably to give the movement a prestigious appearance. The second reason for using these false titles was to enable the mentors and the movement rank-and-file to hide behind them and not expose their own private names or positions within the movement. This particular action of hiding their names by using false titles mainly took place at the time when there was opposition to the shah's anticlerical policies,[82] probably, during the mid-1950s and early 1960s.

The Hojjatiyeh preferred to recruit wealthy and well-connected students such as the sons of rich and famous families, and police and official figures in order to use their influence as connections when necessary. In the future, these relationships would help the members occupy important positions in government offices. The movement used to act carefully in order not to draw the attention of the government, police, and the secret service when recruiting and absorbing these young people. In any case these relationships helped the movement to solve problems that arose by using the influence and connections of these high-ranking families.

The *Guru-ye Tadris* had three levels: elementary (*Payeh*), particular (*Vizheh*), and advanced-excellent (*A'ly*).

1. *Payeh* (elementary). The time spent on the elementary level was in most cases about 18 months, 7–8 months of which were devoted to

learning about the creeds such as *Tawhid* (unity of God), *Nabovat* (the prophecy of Muhammad), and receiving a brief introduction to "Babiyat" (Babism) and "Bahayat" (Baha'ism). The students would study the *Usul-e Eteqadat* (principles of faith) by way of frontal lectures or using tape-cassettes provided by the movement, which were predominantly the speeches of Sheik Halabi, the leader of the movement himself. The duty of the students in these lectures was to take notes. The syllabi of the movement for this stage contained books such as *Afaridegar* (the creator) and the *Afaride* (the creation), both by Dr. Mohammad Sadeqi, and *Esbat-i Vojud-i Khoda be-Kalame Chehel-i tan az Daneshmandan-i Jahan* (proof of the existence of God by the forty greatest world scientists) by John Cloor Monsema.

The criteria for proof in the realm of *Usul-e Eteqadat* and *Tawhid* were dominantly based on the methods of *Mutekalemin* (theologians—*Ilm al-Kalam*) and not of the *Hukuma* (wise men). This was mainly because of the movement's antagonism toward the *Hukuma* and philosophers in general. This policy was guided by Sheikh Halabi who said "Do not listen to them, neither *Hekmat* nor philosophy. Neither *Erfan* (Gnosis), nor *Tasavof* (Mysticism) and follow the *Fuqaha* (Jurists) and [the] *Mohadethin* (*Hadith* tellers)." According to the view held by Halabi and other mujtaheds, *Erfan*, *Hekmat*, and philosophy were against *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) and the Hadith. The main purpose of the *Usul-e Eteqadat* was to teach the students debating skills when confronting believers in the Baha'i faith. These skills helped the students to infiltrate the Baha'i centers after they had joined the espionage section of the movement, but this could only be done when they had sufficient familiarity with the style of the dissident critics on *Tawhid* and were able to deny *Tawhid*.

2. *Vizheh* (particular). On this advanced and massive level the *Massai'l* taught Baha'i principles and theories at a high level that integrated practical work. This level contained learning of the Arabic language, *Ahkam* (provisions, judgments), critical approaches to Marxism, and the study of recommended books and rhetoric. Among the aforementioned studies the movement invested a lot of time in the teaching of the English language so that its members would be able to study the literature and articles published by Baha'i scholars since English was the Baha'i's global language. Along with English they taught Arabic and this enabled the members to deal with the Arabic texts of the Baha'is.

The movement developed a very strict schedule for this level, which helped them to quickly teach materials such as: Quranic science—one hour; the practice and study of Quranic science at home—90 minutes;

lessons about *A'qaed* (ideas and thoughts)—one hour, and its practice at home one hour as well; the practice of presentation—15 minutes and another hour at home; basic Arabic—30 minutes and one hour at home; *Ahkam* from the textbook of Mr. Khouei—30 minutes and at home 30 minutes (as homework); *Akhlaq* (morality)—around 30 minutes; critical approaches to Marxism—30 minutes; prayer and recess—60 minutes. This totaled a steady 6–7 hours per day and sometimes continued from 5 or 6 in the evening to midnight in addition to the same amount of hours for homework. This was exactly like the method used by other political parties to fill up their members' free time in order to prevent them from finding opportunities to study other subjects.

3. *A'ly* (advanced-excellent). In this particular group, students and members were initially tested on the previous two levels in order to be selected for training on this prestigious level. This group was the human reservoir of the movement's cadres and was known as the *Naqd-e-Iqan*[83] group after a criticism written by Sheikh Halabi on Bahullah's *Iqan*, which used the name of *Naqd-e Iqan*.[84]

The movement reserved the right to dismiss any students on any level who did not accept and agree with the movement's methods and ideas.[85]

The *Jasusy va Tahqiq* Committee (The Espionage and Research Committee)

This committee was divided into three subgroups: research or espionage of type one, type two, and type three.

1. The type one researcher had to join the Baha'i religion and attend the Baha'i center, which held meetings and talk with the candidates. In this way he could become a part of the Baha'i faith and community.
2. The second type was more complicated and intricate as it contained two subgroups of five–six people who did not know each other. These individuals (members of both groups) were only accountable to the head of the group and the members used only fake names in order not to reveal who they were and what their real names were. The "spies" went to the Baha'i people and announced that they were Baha'i born and that their parents were Baha'i preachers in other countries. Their statements were documented and backed up with fake identity cards, birth certificate, addresses, and so on.

3. The third type was believed to be a high-level group that performed espionage and infiltration. It is said that the members of this group behaved and conducted themselves like born Baha'is, and, ostensibly, they were no longer agents of the movement in the Baha'i organizations but vigorously defended themselves against the movement. For example, whenever Baha'i friends wanted to come to their homes for the party, they would find all the walls and doors covered with slogans like *"Ya Bahullah bahi"* and *"Asalam-u-a'liak ya Bahaullah"* and pictures and portraits of the Baha'is' religious leaders.[86]

The *Negaresh* Committee (The Writing Committee)

The third committee was the *Negaresh* or writing committee (the authorship group) and they had the duty to write papers about the Mahdi—the Hidden Imam—and manifestos rejecting the Baha'i religion. These papers and manifestos were actually repetitions of previous old issues and added nothing new suited to the present time nor paid any attention to the other more important Islamic principles.

The *Ershad* Committee (The Guidance Committee)

The guidance committee was divided into two parts: (i) surveillance and maintenance; and (ii) discussion and debate.

The Surveillance and Maintenance Section

This group's duty was to observe and follow the Baha'i people using cars and motorbikes. It is said that this group was created because some of the instructors who were affected by Islamic and revolutionary ideas were expressing themselves about political issues that were adverse to the aims of the movement; so this group was created in order to control them. They gathered the instructors from the other provinces in a special center and presented them with specific ideological instructions. Sometimes they went to their classes unexpectedly and, by examining and evaluating the students, found out about the situation of the teachers and the topics they were covering.

The Discussion and Debating Section

This group was taught methods of debate and discussion and its members were provided with booklets and pamphlets. They were taught two methods of discussion: (i) the argument thwarting method and (ii) the provision

of solutions methods. The argument thwarting method was used to try and prevail over rivals by using their own reasoning, ideas, and beliefs while the provision of solutions method was the one in which they tried to confute the thinking mistakes and errors of their rival and, by using their own reasoning, tried to refute the rival's ideas. The group first had to practice thwarting argument and then "provide solutions." The other method they recommended was starting with nondiscussion methods to gain the attention of the Baha'i novice[87] and this was considered to be more suitable.

The *Artebat ba Kharej* Committee (The Committee for Foreign Networks and Public Debates)

The fifth committee was the *Artebat ba Kharej* committee, which was responsible for "communication outside of Iran" and was called the Ministry of the Anjoman. It had relations with countries such as Holland, United States, United Kingdom, Austria, Australia, and other countries and even established branches in these countries for activities.

The *Conference-ha* Committee (The Conferences Committee)

The sixth committee was the *Conference-ha* committee but nothing special can be said about this group, which we can assume was responsible for arranging conferences so they could present their own agenda and religious point of view. This group was active till after the Islamic Revolution and, like the others, was disbanded when the movement went underground.[88]

Aside from the training and propaganda units and sections, the Hojjatiyeh had libraries and archives as well. The most talented of its activists, the "*Mobarez*," were sent to the discussions and debating teams but they also had spokesmen (*sokharenan*), mentors (*modares*), and intelligence operatives (*mohaqeq*), all of whom attended weekly meetings.[89]

The Hojjatiyeh Secrecy and Intelligence Methods

The reasons used by the members of the Hojjatiyeh for dealing with others were always based on their interorganizational training. For instance, they

were taught that "if someone outside of the Anjoman asks you, [if] you are the people of Anjoman, you [must] deny it vigorously and strongly." As a result the members of the Hojjatiyeh could remain unidentified because of these deceptive methods and their denials.[90]

Other members of the clergy, although not members of the Hojjatiyeh, also took part in the struggle against Baha'ism and, in 1955, pushed the Zahedi military government into taking action against the heretical sect. The Ulama, sure of their power, and knowing that the regime was attentive to their wishes, decided to take advantage of the opportunity to push for changes that conformed to their religious aspirations. A hundred years earlier, when the clergy pressed the regime to act against the anti-Shiite messianic movements (such as Babism and Baha'ism), they succeeded in convincing the Qajari regime to do so, and now they were determined to succeed again. Then, during the mid-nineteenth century, they convinced the regime that these sects constituted a danger both to the regime and the Shiite clergy and laity. They were right concerning Babism since the Bab had declared in the *Bayan* his intention of replacing the ruling dynasty with a Babi rule. On the other hand, the Baha'is who were internationalists after all did not wish to establish a kingdom of their own, and so the present regime did not have this reason to act against them. The clerics, threatened by the many conversions to Baha'ism and by the growing political and economic influence of the Baha'is, argued that the Baha'i ideology was an imperialist plot aimed at serving the interests of the west whose sole intention was the destruction of Islam, particularly its Shiite version.

On May 9, 1955, the Iranian press reported on the destruction of the Baha'i temple by the army in Tehran and, on May 17, the same thing happened in Shiraz. Among those leading the attack were the chief of staff Batmanjlidich and the Tehran military governor, Bakhtiar, but the Ayatollah Bihbahani also praised the regime for its action. The shah's personal doctor, Abdul Karim Ayadi, who was a Baha'i, was asked to leave the country and move to Italy where he spent nine month and 70 Baha'i officers were forced to resign from the army. The Baha'is reacted by pulling their funds out of the bazaar, which caused several bankruptcies.[91]

The Ayatollah Bihbahani, a grand ayatollah himself, sent a telegram to the leading *marja'* of the time, the Ayatollah Borujerdi, congratulating him on the destruction of the Baha'i center in Tehran. Borujerdi, anticommunist as well as anti-Baha'i, also involved Khomeini in the persecution by sending him to persuade Shah Muhammad Reza to suppress the Baha'i as his father had.[92] In his response Borujerdi wrote: "The Baha'i have been systematically trying in the last hundred years

to destroy Islam," and expressed his regret about the still "lenient" treatment of them by the regime, which, he suggested might perhaps be even supporting them.

Following the destruction of the Baha'i center in Tehran, these two ayatollahs were received together by the shah who refused to commit himself to further persecution of the Baha'is but tried to reach an understanding regarding the Baha'i "plot" against the Ulama and his regime. This was lip service and the shah, knowing that the situation was temporary and understanding the sensitive politics and the ayatollahs' attempt to take advantage of it, refused to commit himself to action and placated the pair with words.

The Iranian Parliament (*Majlis*), most of whose members were controlled by the shah and his proxy General Zahedi, introduced legislation to prohibit Baha'ism and its kind since they were threats to the security of the country. Anyone belonging to the sect was to be sentenced to up to ten years in prison, their property was to be distributed among institutes promoting Shiite Islam, and all government agencies were to be cleansed of any Baha'i presence.[93] Needless to say this law was not enforced.

Following the Islamic revolution in 1979 the new regime ordered the persecution of the Baha'is. The Islamic constitution did not refer to the minority and so the leaders of the revolution used the parliament and government to turn on them. In September 1979 the Bab's house and the Baha'i temple in Iran were destroyed and in November 1979 Baha'i teachers were required to resign from their posts and return their salaries to the state.[94] Many Baha'i leaders were executed or imprisoned, many were forced to quit the universities, and others lost their property or were forbidden to leave the country.[95] The persecution resumed in July 1983[96] on the eve of the final rift between the Hojjatiyeh and the ruling party and the end of the political existence of the society. Sensing their end was approaching the Hojjatiyeh perhaps sought to finally settle their accounts with the Baha'is. Others assume that the *Maktabis* were those who stirred up the animosity between the Hojjatiyeh and the Baha'is thus forcing the government to suppress the political activity of the former.

The persecutions of the Baha'i minority continued well into the 1980s but mainly targeted the Baha'i leadership. The regime justified the bloodshed by declaring that "[o]nly peoples of the book are recognized by the Quran as religious minorities." Therefore whoever was not Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, or Jewish was, by definition, pagan and deserved to die.[97]

The Hojjatiyeh and the *SAVAK*: The Relationship between Kingship and Those Who Believe in the Apocalypse

Iranian sources (books, blogs, etc.) that discuss the Hojjatiyeh[98] meticulously tie the society and its activities to the SAVAK, the notorious secret police of the Pahlavi regime. It makes sense that all these sources, whether for or against the society, by the very mention of both organizations in the same breath aimed to destroy any legitimacy the Hojjatiyeh may ever have enjoyed with the people or the regime. This was the way the revolutionary supporters of Khomeini treated all their rivals. The vilification of other revolutionaries, considering that the Hojjatiyeh were not necessarily such, urges us to inquire whether the society was really cooperating with the shah or not, and what the reasons for this cooperation were. Such an accusation, for instance, was considered to be an indelible stain upon anybody who ever applied for an official or managerial job in Iran; thus the degradation of the Hojjatiyeh by the "yes men" of the Islamic regime makes sense because it made jobs available to their supporters.

Even among the many lies told about the Hojjatiyeh, however, we may find some grains of truth, which were developed into fantasy and mythology. Based on vague assumptions about the ties between the leaders of the Hojjatiyeh and the old regime, a whole structure of false history was built, which, due to the total control by the present regime of all the media in Iran, is impossible to refute. However, we may pose a few questions and point out a number of inconsistencies. It has been asserted that the Hojjatiyeh Society was established in 1953 by the SAVAK but the latter was only established in 1957. Then it was alleged that the society cooperated with the SAVAK, but, in reality, any organization that did not oppose the regime was apparently considered to be cooperating with the shah's regime. It seems, however, that the Hojjatiyeh, as mentioned earlier, did not wish to change the existing regime and, worse, did not see Khomeini's *Velayat-i Faqih* as an ideal form of Islamic government.

The revolutionaries and all those who opposed the shah and his regime viewed the Hojjatiyeh negatively, not least because of its contaminating links to the SAVAK. According to their opponents the society's public activities (lectures and other gatherings) were intended to collect information about opponents of the regime, which was duly passed on to the SAVAK, and all this was done under the guise of the struggle against the Baha'is.

It is believed that this good relationship with the SAVAK caused the Hojjatiyeh to become an apolitical group. Sheikh Mahmoud Halabi alleged that he used to inform the SAVAK about their (the Hojjatiyeh's) own methods of activities in their meetings and speeches all over the country. According to Hojjatiyeh adherents, this relationship "originated from the nature of member's activities which was fighting with the Baha'is." Since the Hojjatiyeh were afraid that the regime would stop their activities, they felt that they needed to provide some guarantees to the government, and so, before holding a meeting, they would inform the SAVAK about it.

According to some SAVAK documents, which show that Halabi corresponded with the SAVAK, Halabi had a training program and every Friday would train a few youths in his house in how to challenge the Baha'is. In one of this letters, Halabi announced his "readiness to give all kinds of information regarding the *Anjoman* activities to the security societies." The content of some of the documents does show the satisfaction of both sides but it would be hard to conclude that the Hojjatiyeh were dependent on the government. On the other hand, it is a fact that the continuity of their cultural lives and activities were among their main concerns in matters regarding their relationship with the government.

After Khomeini's arrest in 1963, some members of the clergy from Iranian cities came to Tehran to protest against the shah's regime. At this time Sheik Halabi stated that they were at a crossroads and faced a great dilemma. On the one hand, they had to follow the rules of the Sharia and maintain solidarity with the clergy while on the other, they still had to carry on the struggle against the Baha'is who controlled the SAVAK and, with the excuse that they were interfering in political matters, were constantly trying to stop their adulation and defense of the twelfth imam.

Some of the documents stressed that the shah had given orders that "the continuation of Anjoman [Hojjatiyeh] activities had to depend on the promise of the Ayatollah Khansari that Anjoman activities must only involve religious affairs." Ostensibly, after his promise was given, all limitations on the continuation of the society's activities were removed.

Among the available documents regarding the Hojjatiyeh's activities, there is only one document that deals with the support given to groups that opposed the shah's regime. This document declared that there was a radical religious group (probably the Hojjatiyeh) and some opponents who, under the cover of struggling against the Baha'is, were holding political meetings and trying to provoke radical elements against the government and encouraging sabotage. This letter suggested that the head of SAVAK should recognize that there were elements trying to provoke people against the government and should encourage "penetration into their meetings," "recognizing the clergies and religious elements who expedite these

provocations," "find out about expansion of their penetration and arrest their elements in charge of acting against national interest," and promote the "prosecution and arresting of the people who want to overthrow . . . the government and who are trying to recruit people for the sabotage operation" as well as "arresting their people even though there is not any evidence for their guilt and deliver them to the social security commission in order to expedite their exile."

Some of the documents show that at the end of the shah's reign, some of the Hojjatiyeh's members had developed a good relationship with the revolutionary elements of Khomeini and tried to find an opportunity to carry out revolutionary acts and fight against the government, but that the "heads of Anjoman" were strictly against such an approach and, as has been said, the "Anjoman does not allow its member to take part in political activities." As a result some members who had relationships with the revolutionary groups split from the Anjoman and resigned with most of them joining the developing Revolutionary Guards and Revolutionary committees.[99]

Some of the accusations against the Hojjatiyeh, such as the existence of good relations between its leader Halabi and the SAVAK, come from the SAVAK's files, which contain no information concerning meetings with the Baha'i that the Hojjatiyeh allegedly passed on to the security organ. Halabi's aim, apparently, was to curb the influence of the Baha'i propaganda and literature and to establish a "solid Islamic front of philosophical, scientific, literary and moral values" to combat its danger to Islam.

The reports indicate that close cooperation existed between the two organizations and that the Hojjatiyeh apparently believed that the link would help with their survival and activities. In other words, in order to survive, the society was ready to cooperate with the regime. The SAVAK, for its part, was impressed that the Hojjatiyeh were more concerned with other religious groups wishing to enter politics than with the Baha'is while the shah, for his part, encouraged both their "anti-revolutionary," and "civil religious" activities. It is difficult to conclude from the documents whether the Hojjatiyeh acted on its own initiative when it reported to the SAVAK or was guided by the security organization. In any case, its opponents interpret these links as sure proof of cooperation.

Concerning their battle with the Baha'is, we may deduce from the SAVAK's documents that the Hojjatiyeh succeeded in mapping out the Baha'i threat and in planning proper ways to find them. First of all they "diagnosed" the danger and harmful provocation, then the targets of the Baha'is, and so on and afterward the society developed its combat plans against the "enemy."[100] Some of the SAVAK reports indicate that the regime saw the Hojjatiyeh as an apolitical organ that was loyal to the shah.[101]

The society maintained good relations with the secret police of the shah and was even "authorized" by the state to act against the Baha'is since the state apparently aimed at creating splits and quarrels among the different religious sects, thus weakening them. At a certain stage Halabi himself opposed Khomeini and the revolutionary movement apparently as a result of the close cooperation that existed between the Hojjatiyeh and the shah but, after the Islamic Revolution, some claimed that the Hojjatiyeh tried to destroy evidence of their cooperation with the shah as accomplices of the SAVAK.

From the SAVAK reports we learn that the Hojjatiyeh provided detailed reports regarding the Baha'i threat to the peace and integrity of Iran, and urged the state to combat the Baha'i "affliction." They were adept at using "security" and "intelligence" ingredients to attract the attention of the SAVAK and other security organs to the Baha'i danger.[102]

The SAVAK repaid the Hojjatiyeh and its leaders for the services rendered to the regime by protecting Halabi, whom it viewed as a "defender of Islam" who was trying to bring the Baha'is back to the fold. By doing this the SAVAK believed it was helping to guide Islam onto its true path thus preventing "hostile" forces (mainly the Baha'is and other revolutionary Islamists) from damaging the legitimacy of the shah's regime.[103]

Another assumption is that the shah employed the Hojjatiyeh to indirectly combat the revolutionary clergy (such as the Ayatollah Khomeini) and the communists.[104] Historically this assumption concerning the group is problematic since the *Velayat-i Faqih* was only developed in the 1970s. Indeed Khomeini had been objecting to the regime since 1963 with the beginning of the shah's White Revolution that included the agrarian reform, which the Hojjatiyeh objected to as well because of its close relations with the bazaar merchants and the landowners. The Hojjatiyeh's objection to the *Velayat-i Faqih* dates only from the beginning of the 1970s when it was published by Khomeini, but, at this stage, the Hojjatiyeh were not serving the interests of the shah and were certainly not acting against Khomeini, who was in Iraq at the time, or against his supporters in Iran. It was only after the revolution that the society cooperated with the shah's regime and presented itself as a nonprofit, apolitical organ.[105]

Contrary to claims by opponents of the Hojjatiyeh, there were other organizations, religious and nonreligious, that also cooperated with the SAVAK to either advance their interests or under compulsion. Within the SAVAK the "Ulama section" was in charge of relations with the Hojjatiyeh, which issued directives according to which the Hojjatiyeh was ordered to humiliate intellectuals and other opponents of the regime in their sermons. Apparently they identified underground operatives and opposition clergy in the mosques and delivered their names to the SAVAK (not unlike

Saddam Hussein who planted informers in the mosques for the same reason). Another person they attacked was Ali Shariati, a thinker and ideologist who promoted nationalistic and antiroyal ideas.[106]

In conclusion, at the beginning the Hojjatiyeh was limited by the SAVAK and some of its members were even arrested but later on, after being pressured to become acquainted with the Baha'i danger, these prisoners were released. Although the SAVAK itself was also active against the Baha'i and encouraged the Hojjatiyeh to be like them, it was actually more of a balancing power supervising both.[107]

The Hojjatiyeh and the Belief in Dreams

Baqi in his book says that "belief in dreams was among the subjects which the Hojjatiyeh used for preserving the organization and this helped them face many difficult questions like; 'Why you are opposing the Imam Khomeini?' or 'Why do you believe that politics is distinct and divided from religion?'" According to him, "[T]he Hojjatiyeh used to quote dreams from someone who dreamt that the 12th Imam accepted Mr. Halabi or Anjoman as his followers." One of the dream/stories describes how one of the brothers who was separated from the Hojjatiyeh before the revolution said that it seems that they spent no time awake but always go to sleep to see the Imam Zaman in order to receive his revelations.

Baqi said that the "Dreams Project" was so urgent and essential to the Hojjatiyeh that in the years 1971–1972 the movement's members were dispatched from Tehran to the provinces to quote the dreams and record the narratives on audio tapes. One of these famous dreams was about a woman who was visited by the twelfth imam who put several coins into her hands so that she could give it to the Hajj pilgrims. That story continues and says that the imam told her: "I will see you there during your visiting Hajj." The woman, however, forgot about her dream until she went to Makah where she wore the clothes she had worn during the first visit of the imam. In short the story says that in Makah the imam visited her again and reminded her about the dream. The woman checked her pockets and found the coins the imam had put there. Then the imam made an appointment with her in Madina where he brought her to the market and bought her a dress and then they went to Baqi cemetery and found the honored grave of Zahra. At the end of the meeting, the imam said to her: "Say hello to your son (who was a military officer) for me and tell him that he is one of my followers and tell him to respect the organization (the Hojjatiyeh) which you are member in, and advise the others to do the same."

Baqi said that not all took these dreams seriously and had their doubts about them. According to him the Ayatollah Madani was among those ayatollahs who tried to investigate these dreams and who asked for the audio tapes in order to disprove the phenomenon. After he refuted these dreams, it is said that the Hojjatiyeh members started to slur his name instead of answering his questions. These actions allowed the Ayatollah Madani to prohibit the Hojjatiyeh celebrations in Hamedan in the middle of Shaaban (the birthday of the twelfth imam).

Baqi accused the Hojjatiyeh of using these dreams as a method "in order to continue to recruit people and sometimes to provide proof of the Imam's existence and of soliciting this kind of story which was an abuse of people's sentiments and a pretense that the 12th Imam steadily approved of Anjoman."

Baqi believed that the Hojjatiyeh had adopted the Baha'is method of using dreams. According to him,

> [The] Baha'is also do not have a scientific, philosophic and logical infrastructure and it is, in fact, an ideology full of fabrication[s] and lying . . . its followers are also unable to find stability in this cult . . . therefore the Baha'is try to arouse the sentiments of people through the narration of dreams depicting the Baha's divinity and the narration of heroic stories in an attempt to keep hold of its followers.

Baqi goes on to say that

> also if someone has a disease or has died the Baha'i's try to assume that he has died because he has been infected with the faith of "Jamal-i Mubarak" . . . "and this is not unlike the methods of Anjoman [The Hojjatiyeh] who say that, when a bad thing has happened to one of its opponents, that it happened because he/she denied the 12th Imam (in fact Anjoman)."[108]

Part III

Postrevolution Era and the Hojjatiyeh as a Counterrevolutionary Movement

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 5

Danger Ahead: Challenging Khomeini

The Ideological and Theological Differences between Khomeini, the Revolutionary Council, and the Hojjatiyeh's Mojtaheds

When Khomeini suggested his *Velayat-i Faqih* (the rule of the clergy), he wasn't really familiar with the practice of this methodology and only had one obvious goal—the ousting of the shah and his monarchy. Khomeini and his Revolutionary Council, who established themselves in France in late 1978, unanimously declared that Iran under their rule would establish a new regime based on a new constitution and a codex of laws derived from the Quran and Shari'a including the interpretations of Khomeini and other Shi'i mujtaheds.

This kind of regime, as other well-known Ulama and mujtaheds saw it, would be led by one big party in a multiparty system that would provide the new and old political parties with an opportunity to share in the leadership of the Iranian people and would include the complex vision of the *Velayat-i Faqih*. But Khomeini had another vision. According to his political point of view based on the Shi'a only one party would lead the people on behalf of the Shi'a and Islam. Khomeini's own Revolutionary Council was divided between radicals who praised the line of the imam (*Hatt-e Imam*) and Khomeini and others who thought that a rule according to the *Velayat-i Faqih* would enable the participation of other parties in the rule as well.[1]

Khomeini's main opponent was the Ayatollah Shariatmadari who represented the moderate line inside the Shi'i mujtaheds in Iran and was a great opponent of Khomeini's *Velayat-i Faqih*. Shariatmadari's interpretation of the Shi'a was different from Khomeini's, except in regard to the concept that there was only *marja' taqlid* and one *rahbar* (guide) for the people. In his political worldview, however, Shariatmadari opposed clerical rule and advocated the restoration of the 1906 constitution, which would give the clergy a supervisory role but would leave the shah in his place. In response to Khomeini's supporters who established the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) in April 1979, Shariatmadari's followers established a new party named the "Islamic People's Republican Party" (IPRP).[2] Without siding with the Hojjatiyeh, Shariatmadari's thoughts on politics were similar to the Hojjatiyeh's political point of view, regardless of his desire to return to the 1906 constitution, because he wished to see the clerics out of politics.

Moreover Ayatollah Shariatmadari, who was opposed to the *Velayat-i Faqih* as Khomeini interpreted it, implicitly praised the Hojjatiyeh ideology but never sided with them clearly. Shariatmadari described the present need for the *Velayat-i Faqih* as something "temporary and important only when the present ruler cannot *rule* for various reasons." In such times, "the Vali takes temporary control in hand aside (from) his religious activities when possible." Accordingly the role of the Vali was to be more religious than political.[3]

Khomeini's followers, who were reluctant to agree with this move, passionately attacked Shariatmadari as someone who was weakening the strength of the revolution. It should be mentioned that, at this time, the new regime was being led by both Mehdi Bazargan, Khomeini's appointee as prime minister, and the Revolutionary Council together and that, at this stage, they allowed freedom of speech, freedom of organization, and freedom of political activity as long as the organizations and the speeches made did not criticize the new concept led by Khomeini. This mainly applied to the Revolutionary Council Committees and less to Bazargan's government.[4]

The *Hezbollah* (and later the Revolutionary Guards) and IRP followers were involved in many clashes with the IPRP and these led to persecution by Khomeini's followers. At this stage there was no doubt that the IRP (mid-1979) could not live peacefully with other competitors, especially look-alike parties bearing names that were very similar to the IRP itself. Khomeini wanted the revolution to maintain a full head of steam and this could only be achieved by stressing his uniqueness and prestige as the revolution's guide (*rahbar*) and founder. No one else was to be permitted to harvest his fruit.

Abul Hassan Bani-Sadr's presidency was neither the ultimate nor desired choice for Iran's new revolution. His orientation with the liberal-democratic wing, despite his closeness to Khomeini, did not help him to advance his political views since there was a lack of political support from the Revolutionary Council and inside the IRP itself. As a matter of fact, the tension between Bani-Sadr, Iran's first president, and the Revolutionary Council, who were the de facto rulers of Iran, gave Khomeini and his followers the opportunity to sharpen their criticism and use Bani-Sadr as a foil for their own mistakes and goals.

In late 1979 the IPRP threatened Khomeini and declared that they would take over Azerbaijan (probably as Peshvari had taken it over in December 1945 just after World War II) but Khomeini was ambiguous and dismissed Shariatmadari's IPRP as a political party. Some leaders of IPRP were executed and others were put in prison. This led to a deep silence and the stripping of the title of *Marja'a Taqlid* from Shariatmadari but did not halt other criticisms of Khomeini and his political party—the IRP.

Back to Life, Back to Reality

According to another point of view an old-new organization, the Hojjatiyeh, came to life and awareness in response to the increasing power of the IRP. This group was originally formed by Sheikh Mahmud Halabi in the 1950s to fight Muhammad Reza Shah's soft and liberal attitude toward the Baha'i minority. An example of this was the shah's appointment of a Baha'i (who had converted to Islam), Mohammad Abbas Hoveida (who had been his premier's minister of the treasury), to be Iran's longest serving prime minister. Besides being anti-Baha'i, this group finally, and unwillingly, adopted the methods of the *Velayat-i Faqih* concept—the approach that had led Khomeini to force Sheikh Halabi to leave Tehran for Mashhad and which had cut him off from his own political power base—the Hojjatiyeh.[5]

The Islamic Revolution was in fact the result of Shiite ultraconservative activity (as reflected by Khomeini who had led a revolution inside the Shi'a itself) and antiroyalist forces who had combined their efforts to topple the Pahlavi monarchy. Nevertheless events after the revolution revealed that the implementation of Khomeini's new theological concept—*Velayat-i Faqih*—and, in fact, the process of the Islamization of political institutions in the country as a whole was counteracted by extremist religious leaders who, presumably, were supposed to stand with Khomeini. One of these was the Sheikh Mahmoud Halabi, the leader of the Hojjatiyeh Society.

According to Khomeini, only a senior religious leader—a theologian (*Marja'-i Taqlid, rahbar*)—could lead the Shiite nation until the arrival of the Mahdi; in other words, Khomeini would only be the "deputy" of the Hidden Imam. In contrast Halabi argued that only the Hidden Imam—the Mahdi himself—could be the legal ruler of the Shiite community and any other leader would be illegal, and thus he adhered to the old Shiite interpretation concerning the leadership of the community. Halabi even said that he was receiving messages from the Hidden Imam,[6] which was something he probably used to draw a very clear line between him and Khomeini and, perhaps, to declare his religious superiority over Khomeini. There seems to be two possible meanings to the following statements made by Halabi: "I do not listen to Khomeini's sayings and he is not as great or important as the Hidden Imam"; and "I am a more prominent religious leader than Khomeini as I am the one who receives signals from the Hidden Imam." It is worthwhile mentioning that Halabi believed that the leadership should not be in the hands of religious leaders especially not in the way conceived and implemented by the Ayatollah Khomeini.[7]

Halabi's argument was inspired by the Shiite theological belief that the Hidden Imam had not really disappeared but was living among human beings and was revealing divine secrets to his supporters and followers and especially to the religious leaders of the Shiite community. This same thing was also said by the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad when he claimed that he too received messages from the Hidden Imam—and this statement carries a double meaning as well.

It would be more precise to say that the Hojjatiyeh, in the first stage after the Islamic Revolution, supported the constitutional changes and that their leader Halabi was mostly concerned by the increasing number of religious leaders who held high politically ranked positions after 1980. He considered that in the Occultation of the Hidden Imam, it would be illegal for religious leaders to be involved in the government since their role was to fill the gap regarding community guidance and to take care of the followers. He held that religious leaders should leave politics in the hands of professionals who were not religious scholars since the rule by clerics was illegal (only the Hidden Imam's rule could be legal).[8]

Halabi and his movement hoped that the Islamic Revolution followed by a new constitution for the Islamic Republic would lead to the prohibition of the communists—the Tudeh party—and their activities and to the expulsion of party members from the army and government institutions. Many other Islamic militants hoped for the same thing but the Iranian regime took other measures. Only in 1983, four years after the revolution and three years after the establishment of the republic, did the regime start acting against the Tudeh party and their members and arrested many

communist party members who they expelled from the country. It was then supposed that Khomeini was attentive to the Hojjatiyeh's appeal and was trying to please them by fulfilling their primary request to destroy the Tudeh party. The Hojjatiyeh loathed the Tudeh for its communist-atheist identity and thought that they, like the Baha'i, had no place in the cultural or civic space of Iran and even less in the religious and political sphere of the nation.[9]

The Hojjatiyeh's Theological Approach to Khomeini

Generally all the terms mujtahed, *ijtihad*, *Marja'*, *Marjia't*, and more are rather new in the Shi'a. They were created by religious adherents to the Usuli stream especially at the start of the Qajar dynasty (end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth). Religious scholars at this time considered these terms not to be necessarily new but terms that had been learnt from Shiite history and theology. The need for these terms and the content that is derived from them originated from the religious leaders' will to find theological solutions to the Occultation of the imam and to the linkage of issues involving questions of religion and state. The rise of the Ussuliya derived from an intense need to find meaning for the Imamiya and the Shari'a based on the tools offered by the Ussuliya so that people could study this material and put it into practice. At this stage, the Ussuliya stream understood very clearly that the mujtaheds (ayatollahs—which is also a new concept) who were the senior ranking religious leaders and religious commentators/interpreters in fact were supposed to act as (temporary) substitutes for the imam.[10]

Ayatollah Hajj Sheikh Murtaza Mutahhari Farimani (1920–1979), who was a student of Khomeini and a university professor of Islamic philosophy, divided the development of the question of *Velayat-i Faqih* in Shi'a into four periods:

1. 874–1501: The period when Shi'a jurisprudence developed especially in matters concerning the individual and his conduct inside the community.
2. From 1501 till the Constitution Movement during the late nineteenth century when Shi'a was recognized as Iran's state religion and the power of the clergy increased. In this period, the *fuqaha* took part in the social and political life of the country and during this time the Ayatollah Muhaqqiq Karaki developed the notion of

Velayat-i Faqih for the first time in the Shi'a religion. Mutahhari also divided the development of *Velayat-i Faqih* into periods starting with Karaki who developed this notion from its beginning. Karaki noticed that up till his time the *fuqaha* had limited themselves to cases of punishment and death (*hudud*) probably because they considered the ruler as the one responsible for such cases. Karaki explains that the Ulama, would have special responsibilities during the occultation period and would be authorized to act as deputies of the Imam in matters of community life. The *fuqaha* would have the power of enforcement not only in matters concerning the private life of the individual but also in community affairs. According to Karaki, such authorized Ulama would actually be appointed by the imam to be his deputies (*nueb*). Mutahhari concluded that it was not clear whether Karaki meant to create an Islamic state that would be led by the *fuqaha*. While the history of the theory of *Velayat-i Faqih* started with the Mujtahid Muhaqqiq Karaki (d. 1533) who divided the Ulama's responsibilities into three aspects—authority, sovereignty, and legitimacy—the Ayatollah Mutahhari interpolated the *Velayat-i Faqih* of Karaki into issues of responsibility, obligations, and other aspects as follows:

a. The relationship between the ruler and the ruled.
b. The kind of Islamic rule that is necessary.
c. The need for the enforcement of Islamic law (Shari'a).
d. The necessity for the just *vali* to be a *faqih*.
e. The role of the clergy in political affairs.
f. The attitude toward secularism.
g. The need to protect the Islamic Republic from secularism and imperialism.[11]

3. Mulla Ahmad Naraqi (d. 1832), a mujtahed who lived during the Qajari rule and followed in Karaki's footsteps, expanded the *Velayat-i Faqih* theory in his remarkable *Awaid al Ayam* volume and was the first to authorize the *fuqaha* to manage the entire life spectrum of the community. He expanded even more what Karaki had already expanded. In his book, Naraqi makes the first mention of the political responsibility of the *fuqaha*, but never gives details of the theory and practice. The next figure in this evolutionary chain, who dealt with the *Velayat-i Faqih*, was Mohammad Hassan Najafi who claimed that, up till Naraqi, there had not been any real and deep discussion of the *faqih*'s responsibilities, and that its immediate establishment would make them the imam's *representatives* or "his *deputyship*." Naraqi's student and adherent, Sheikh Murtaza Ansari

(d. 1864), was the next in the chain to present a "critical view of his teacher's arguments."

4. Starting from the Constitutional Revolution and the uprising of June 5, 1963, the *fuqaha* had to deal with new political and social matters and became more and more involved in political affairs that had never been part of their original practice. During this period there was a conflict between the traditionalists who were against any change in the political and social structure and the modernists who wanted to change and formulate the current situation and to integrate the Shari'a into the constitution. The grand ayatollah at this time was Naini who thought that the *fuqaha* should also have the authority to supervise the legislative body of the ruler and to inspect the parliament's activities and laws. Ayatollah Borujerdi, who was against the jurisprudence arguments involving the *Velaya-i Faqih*, did, however, agree to the theological basis of this theory. He claimed that religion was part of politics but never implemented these concepts when he became a *Marja' Taqlid* and, in Khomeini's period, was the first person in Shi'a history to succeed in establishing an Islamic government. In fact Khomeini's influence originated from Naraqi's approach regarding the *Velyat-i Faqih*.[12]
5. In the transition from the rule of the Safavid to the Qajari, one of the leading senior religious scholars (as well as others from the Usuliyya stream), Mullah Ahmad Naraqi (1771–1829), was considered to be an anticolonialist precisely at the time that Russia and Great Britain were beginning to see that they had joint interests in the Qajar state. A review of the literature of the Shiite texts over the last few centuries shows that he was the initiator of the concept *Velayat-i Faqih*, the authority of the religious leader, that was later used by Khomeini to define the role of the religious leader in the Shiite political world.[13]

In his book *Awaid al-Ayam*, Naraqi tried to define the role of the Shiite religious leader in his time. One of his main conclusions revealed that the religious leader, the *faqih*, had the commitment to guide the community during the Occultation Period (*Ghaybat*). One new idea here was that the *faqih* should play a role in state and defense matters but less in issues regarding the administrative function of governmental roles. Nevertheless, most of his theology was inspired by study and reference to the Quran and Hadith even though, at this time, it was not usual to link the role of the religious leader with politics. As long as the imam was absent Naraqi considered the *fuqaha* to be his deputies and the leaders of the community and he vigorously defended the right of the mojtahed to act on behalf of

the imam as his empowered deputy. Rather than being a statement regarding compulsory conduct, his arguments created an ideological debate since Naraqi redefined the religious commitment of the Shiite religious leader as one who played a role and influenced the community.[14]

Obviously, the religious leaders of the community enjoyed great authority and were indeed considered to be the representatives of the imam but, as they were also believers, they regarded their religious task and function was to provide immediate solutions to daily issues. The question of being involved in government and politics was not something that came up. Naraqi was innovative in his definition of the religious leader's task as he took into account the fact that their power and impact (rights and obligations) derived from the Hadith and historical references and also that religious leaders were worthy of being part of the regime and trusteeship. In any case the answer to the question of whether Naraqi believed in a sole leadership (instead of the secular regime) or in a leadership together with the secular government remains unclear.[15]

The real argument between the Hojjatiyeh and Khomeini focused on the *Ghaybat*—the Period of Absence—and who was supposed to lead the Shiite community during the Occultation Period. According to the Shiite faith, since the Occultation of the twelfth imam, the Mahdi, the Shiite community had had no spiritual leader and his place would not be filled until his arrival. They realized that the lack of a religious leader might weaken the religious force of the community and this is the reason why there had to be a temporary substitute that would lead the community until the arrival of the Mahdi. In the course of time the mojtahed came to be considered the leader but then, as there were a number of Shiite communities scattered throughout the country, there was a need for more than one mojtahed. Because of this and through consultation with senior religious leaders trying to find a practical and acceptable solution, the Hojjatiyeh came to the conclusion that they preferred a collective leadership for the religious community and were opposed to the integration of religious scholars in "secular" politics.[16]

Until the publication of his *Velayat-i Faqih*, Khomeini himself believed in a collective leadership and the Usuli method in which the religious leader is only a consultant within the existing regime and not a politician. Moreover, according to this, he should not take part in politics and has to consult the sages of his time when a collective solution is required to solve a problem for the Shiite community. In contrast the Hojjatiyeh, as mentioned earlier, rejected the idea of the clerics' intervention in politics and only agreed to a role of consultation. As long as Khomeini was alive, the conservatives' religiopolitical approach was very similar to that of the Hojjatiyeh, which meant they should only have a role of consultation and

the "watchful Guardianship role" of the Ulama. Only after Khomeini's death did the situation change.[17]

Nevertheless, Khomeini's *Velayat-i Faqih* brought about a deep change as it praised the involvement of a religious leader in politics and not only as a consulting figure but much more as a ruler. The Hojjatiyeh, on the other hand, adhered to the idea of a collective leadership meaning they were deeply opposed to Khomeini's method. They believed the ancient Shiite method to be what was needed and that, instead of acting to rid the shah and his regime of the enemies of Islam—which they considered to be the role of the Mahdi—religious leaders should intensify religious faith in the Shiite community.

According to the Hojjatiyeh system:

1. Only a collective leadership should be at the head of Shiite society.
2. The Ulama should avoid any intervention in state administrative matters so as not to endanger their statutes.
3. There should be an extensive cultural process of Islamization (and in this case it should be even stronger than the one advocated by Khomeini).
4. The agrarian reform and the nationalization of international trade (Islamic support of private property) had to be opposed and, in this specific case, it was also against the White Revolution reforms of Mohammad Reza Shah.
5. The revolution should not be exported. The Islamic revolution should embrace other Shiite populations but not through oppression or at any price.
6. The Hojjatiyeh should not be categorical in its approach to the pan-Islamic reality but, on the other hand, it should refuse to see nationalism from an ideological point of view.[18]

The Hojjatiyeh who had adopted the most radical form of the Shiite interpretation of Islam wished to implement religious laws as written in the Quran and the Shari'a (and that would portray them as followers of the Akhbari School). Politically the movement mainly focused on preventing social and economic reforms and on extirpating unacceptable content from projected laws.[19]

Since their original founders and supporters came from the bazaar merchants and ayatollahs that were very rich and influential, the Hojjatiyeh supported the free market system and were against the radical policies of the Islamic government who wanted to nationalize trade and industry and the distribution of land.[20] They were also opposed to the economic changes proposed by the regime and initiated the debate regarding the

principle of private ownership.[21] The Hojjatiyeh's criticism of religious leaders involved in politics came together with their development as an opposition to the regime party (especially the *Maktabi* stream) that was interested in the implementation of government controls over the economy and international trade.[22]

According to the Hojjatiyeh, until the arrival of the Hidden Imam, spiritual power should be separated from governmental power, which was only temporary. Religious leaders were to be those who regulated the religious spirit of the followers and the government was to be responsible for everyday matters and practical issues. The belief, according to the Hojjatiyeh allegedly, was that the arrival of the imam would be closer if there were chaos, social disorder, corruption, and injustice among the people and government (which is incorrect). The texts, however, argued that during the waiting period society should be led by religious leaders (*fuqaha*). The Hojjatiyeh condemned the enemies of Islam who were communist and liberals, and their texts expressed hatred against the political enemies of religion such as the United States.[23]

In spite of their aspiration to become religious leaders, to lead to the setting up of an Islamic republic and to deal with the harsh difficulties experienced by Iran in the first years such as the attempt to stabilize the political system, fix the bad state of economy, combat social anarchy, and manage the war against Iraq, the real problem at that stage was the Hojjatiyeh themselves as religious people opposed to the Ayatollah Khomeini's republican system. Khomeini was blocked by the right wing of the religious stream and was forced to delay the legislation of some religious laws. The ultraorthodox stream, especially those who came from Qom (from which Sheikh Halabi's concepts came, as he originally came from Mashhad), saw the legislation of divine laws in a more complex way, a way that, in the beginning, challenged the religious-political path of Khomeini who wanted to delegate and empower the new system to deal with its problems. Those who were familiar and close to both Khomeini and Halabi saw Khomeini's level of religion to be like that of Karl Marx when compared to Halabi. Halabi in turn denigrated the religious authority of Khomeini as he claimed that he himself was the one who received religious decrees from the Hidden Imam. Another criticism uttered by Halabi was that the new regime was renewing its contacts with the communist Tudeh and this was a reason to act against atheism and heresy.[24] For Halabi this matter might have been like déjà-vu from the 1950s when Mossadeq had preferred the secular loyalty of the Tudeh to the reluctant support of the religious leaders and mostly Kashani and his fragile coalition. At this stage Khomeini was promoting the Tudeh and strengthening his bonds with them rather than with other religious groups such as the Hojjatiyeh who, like Kashani in the

past, offered political support for the administration of state issues but, in contrast to Kashami, outside of any political framework.

The Hojjatiyeh were considered to be in the category of harsh line religious fundamentalism in Iran and essentially against the Baha'is, communists, and *Velayat-i Faqih*.[25] The Hojjatiyeh considered Russia (but neither France nor Great Britain) to be the second evil after the United States who remained the Great Satan.[26] Their anticommunist hatred, on one hand, and their anti-Western approach, on the other, left them isolated from any non-Islamic country. Khomeini's approach to the Baha'is was ambivalent but taking no measures against them would lead the Hojjatiyeh to say that he did not respect religious laws and this would undermine his authority; thus it is very hard to say that Khomeini was pro-Baha'i. Moreover any step he took in favor of the Baha'is would be considered as fawning to public opinion worldwide.[27] In any case, according to the Hojjatiyeh, the Quran's command was to maintain good relationships with the people of the book, *Ahal-al-Kitab*, whether they were Jewish, Christian, or Muslim—but never with atheists.[28]

The removal of the first president of the republic, Abul Hassan Bani Sadr, led to a change in the regime's approach to opposition groups including those that existed side by side with them like the left-wing parties and the Tudeh who were subjected to political and even physical oppression. This extreme measure was a characteristic of 1981–1983 as the impact of the anticommunist Hojjatiyeh group within the regime was becoming very clear.[29] Other parties in the Majlis, such as Bazargan's Freedom Movement and the Tudeh, were also fiercely criticized for their activity and clear orientation based on an Islamic Republic.[30]

The Ideological Split inside the IRP

The IRP consisted of a number of rival divisions with diverging views regarding the purposes of the revolution. The regime party, the IRP, included five groups of loyal followers of Khomeini, the main ones being the Maktabis and the Hojjatiyeh (who were against Khomeini's approach but later sided with him). The veterans of the Hojjatiyeh were conservative but more innovative about the *Velayat-i Faqih*. It is important to note that the Hojjatiyeh was not an organic, autonomous group and it would be more accurate to say that it had a number of autonomous representatives some of whom were more conservative than others.[31] It is not easy to identify the leading group of the Hojjatiyeh but it comprised the Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Mahdavi-Kani (who was president for a short time after the death of

Ali Raja'i)[32] and the cabinet included some of the organization's supporters such as Foreign Minister Ali Akhbar Velayati, Qarazi, the Minister of Petrol Faro Varesh,[33] the minister of labor, Ahmad Tavakoli, and other members who also took part in the Guardian Council (*Shura-ye Negahban*).[34]

The murdered president Ali Raja'i, one of the Hojjatiyeh supporters, was also among the leadership members of the Islamic Republic[35] as was another well-known figure, the spiritual leader of Iran, the Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i.[36] This statement raises several questions concerning Iran's spiritual leader such as: Is Khamene'i still a member of the group? Why did Khomeini allow him to continue in his office, and later showed preference for him as his successor? If, on the other hand, Khamene'i left the Hojjatiyeh, when did this happen, and why? A positive answer to the first question might mean that the Hojjatiyeh actually controls Iran today. However, there is another opinion that claims that Khamene'i was precisely part of the Maktabis stream (the Imam Line) as was the ex-prime minister, Mussavi, and his statements obviously show to which stream he belonged.[37] The latter opinion seems to be the right one as it is supported by Baqi who, in his book *Hezb-i Qaadin–i Zaman (Mawsum be Anjoman-i Hojjatiyeh)*, cites Khamene'i's statement against the Hojjatiyeh in which he compares the approaches of the Maktabis (*Ruhanian*) and the Hojjatiyeh toward religious matters. Khamene'i states:

> [O]ver the last decades we can see two main streams that, if looked at carefully, can be seen to be only one. This stream is the old traditional thinking [of the Shi'a], and there is probably a kind of (and I'm saying this carefully) misrepresentation of the intellectual way of thinking… but, there is another stream [the Hojjatiyeh] who have a long history and they are widespread among the people… they talk about the Tawhid, the Nabawa, Imamat, Imam-i Zaman, Entezar among other issues… this stream is neither traditional, nor reactionary, nor deceptive… once they used to govern the people. I think that the Hojjatiyeh is built upon very complex and old reactionary methods… no more than that [i.e., meaning the other streams parallel to those of the Maktabis as abovementioned].[38]

In this specific statement Khamene'i does not use harsh words or denounce the Hojjatiyeh. This does not make him a member or even a sympathizer of the Hojjatiyeh, but could give us the impression that he sees them as a group that has lost its way over the past decades and has chosen to stagnate while the other religious movements and groups have chosen to challenge their faith and become revolutionaries, especially concerning Shi'i thinking.

The struggle between the Maktabis (the Imam Line) and the Hojjatiyeh was one of essence and both groups had a great impact on the shape of the revolution. Beyond that, and in addition to the spiritual differences

between these two groups, they also had disputes regarding concrete issues such as the agrarian reform, the relations between the landowners and the land leasers, and so on. Moreover they fought for control over the guardians of the Islamic Revolution within the army and religious institutions and did not agree even in matters such as the limitation of freedom of expression. Regarding foreign relations, there were differences of opinion about the relations between Iran and the United States, Russia and the Third World countries, about the export of the revolution, regarding the war with Iraq (with the Hojjatiyeh praising the end of the war and the peacemaking process),[39] relations with the Gulf countries, and the Iranian contribution to revolutions in process. As for ideological and spiritual matters, there were differences regarding the *Velayat-i Faqih*, the approach to the issues involving the Hidden Imam and the date of his arrival, and the process of Islamization and its limits. The Hojjatiyeh were more conservative in their religious vision while the Maktabis (Imam Line) were more innovative in these matters.[40]

One of the most fascinating disputes between the Maktabis and the Hojjatiyeh was the question about the rule of the *vali* or the spiritual leader. The Makatbis who were scholars believed in the Khomeini's *Velayat-i Faqih* system according to which one religious leader had to be at the head of the political pyramid of the country and lead the country with no separation between religion and state. His religious supremacy was not less important than his political supremacy. On the other hand, if the Hojjatiyeh could choose between a one-man leadership and collective rule, they would surely choose the latter. The Hojjatiyeh believed (especially after the Islamic Revolution) that if the clerics were supposed to lead the country they should do it in the old tradition way—as counselors—and not be involved in "secular" politics.[41] The Hojjatiyeh was against any direct intervention of religious leaders in politics and this, of course, undermined the *Velayat-i Faqih* issue.[42]

The Hojjatiyeh were also opposed to the appointment of one unique successor after Khomeini as they were against the *Velayat-i Faqih* system in principle.[43] The Hojjatiyeh together with the Imam Line supported the idea of an Islamic country but did not encourage the export of the revolution while the Imam Line wanted to promote it. Nevertheless, according to foreign diplomats, the struggle between the two movements (or so it seemed to them) was not likely to endanger the stability of revolutionary Iran (although this seems to have been otherwise as Khomeini pushed away the Hojjatiyeh).[44]

The vision that dominated the first years of the Iranian Republic was that the regime was in fact a temporary phase until the coming of the Hidden Imam. The republic had not yet reached its highest religious

achievement as the Hidden Imam had not yet arrived. In the meantime the task of the republic was the inculcation of religion and the removal of all antireligious factors. The Hojjatiyeh, while rejecting the *Velayat-i Faqih* and its content, argued that the religious leaders, especially the most senior, should distance themselves from repulsive politics. At the same time those members of the Hojjatiyeh who did join politics under the guise of being moderate implemented the religious order in a very strict way.[45] In fact from the summer of 1981 onward the Hojjatiyeh increased their power more and more. Some argued that they represented a third of the Majlis members including their presence in the various committees and ministries.[46] The Hojjatiyeh, who were the right wing of the IRP in power, were also opposed to holding religious positions or acting as functionaries. (Later on this chapter will explain why the Hojjatiyeh, despite their belief in not taking part in politics, eventually joined the new Iranian political arena at the very highest of echelons.)

The Hojjatiyeh also believed that the *Shura*—religious council(s)—that existed within workers' associations or anything else that was related to labor-state–capital (as argued by the Maktabis wing) did not belong to Islam. They considered power came from God through the imam who was the intermediary and, in his absence, through a secondary intermediary who was the imam's deputy and this belief led to the non- Islamization of the councils. At the start of the 1980s, the minister of labor, Ahmad Tavakoli (who replaced Bani-Sadr's minister of labor, Mohammad Mir Sadeqi, and was a follower of the Hojjatiyeh), said that "Islam does not recognize the *Shura* system. According to Islam, the government belongs to Allah, to the Prophets and to the Imams, and in their absence, to the substitute of the Imam (*Nueb*)."[47] This same Tavakoli, in 1981, prohibited the setting up of new religious councils for a year but the workers' protest brought about the cancellation of the prohibition. In contrast to other cases, this time Khomeini praised the Hojjatiyeh system regarding the religious councils.[48]

In an interview with the magazine *Ettelaa't* in May 1983, Tavakoli changed his mind regarding the *Shura* when he stated that the way Islam related to the council institutions was different from the system of the councils that existed in Marxist societies. According to him, "[T]he administrative system is not supposed to be elected (from bottom to top) [like in democratic societies], it is not the Islamic way, but the whole idea of the *Velayat-i Faqih* and in our case the *Velayat* (government) is the authority (from top to bottom) [from God to the imam and his deputy]."[49]

In July 1983, the prime minister of Iran, Mir-Hossein Moussavi, vehemently attacked the Hojjatiyeh calling them the "guards of the bazaar" who were social and economic criminals and turned to the courts to prosecute them. According to Moussavi, the religious leaders of the Hojjatiyeh gave strong support to the people of the bazaar and other economic factors

opposed to the government's economic reforms. The attack and threats expressed by Moussavi against the Hojjatiyeh opened up a new front between the followers of Khomeini and the Hojjatiyeh in the struggle for power in the regime itself.[50]

Another issue of debate between Khomeini and the Hojjatiyeh followers was the question regarding the time of the arrival of the Hidden Imam. Khomeini's followers argued that Khomeini himself was the Hidden Imam although Khomeini never called himself this nor declared himself to be the Mahdi, but the reality of the revolution was based on messianic longing.[51] The reasons for the dispute were based on the fact that Khomeini considered himself to be the deputy of the imam (*Nuab-i Imam*), the one who was supposed to set up an Islamic government to prepare the coming of the imam. On the other hand, according to the Hojjatiyeh, the Mahdi's coming was dependent on the extent of injustice and cruelty that existed and they believed that the coming of the Mahdi was not immanent (as the conditions for his arrival had not yet been achieved according to the eschatological and apocalyptic, classical Shiite theology) and that they did not recognize Khomeini as his deputy.[52]

Realizing That the Revolution Could Serve the Hojjatiyeh's Aims

Following Mohammad Ali Raja'i's rise to the presidency after the deposing of his predecessor Bani-Sadr, the anti-Baha'i persecution in Iran increased. Other minorities such as Jews and Christians also suffered (despite the legal protection promised in the constitution), but the Baha'is suffered the most. Many were fired from their places of work and were exposed to all kinds of physical harassment and then the government announced that their rights would be returned if they converted to Islam.[53] The Hojjatiyeh announced that their hands were clean of this since Sheikh Halabi was a pacifist and stood for nonviolence.[54]

The Hojjatiyeh were surprised by the success of the 1979 revolution and now hoped to realize their influence as individuals. In order to do this they infiltrated the revolutionary institutions and centers of power (the Revolutionary Guards and the Revolutionary Committees, the military intelligence, and the Council of Guardians), and exploited them to combat their longtime enemies: the communists, the Mojahedin, and mostly the Baha'is.[55]

Fearing a communist takeover during the Islamic Revolution (1978–1979) Halabi ordered his followers to temporarily abandon the movement's ideas about collective leadership and a secular government in

order to be integrated into the organs of the revolutionary government.[56] Understanding the necessity to be integrated into the new government, Hojjatiyeh members took up senior positions in Iranian politics, especially in the education, labor, and commerce ministries. One of them was Muhammad Ali Raja'i who became minister of education, and immediately fired all Baha'i teachers in the state. He became president on August 2, 1981, and was assassinated on the thirtieth of that month, probably by the Mojahedin-i Khalq.[57]

The Attitude toward the Communists and the "Tudeh"

According to the communists (mainly those from the Soviet Union) the Hojjatiyeh were responsible for most of the anticommunist propaganda in Iran since they considered them to be a front for the Americans. The communists claimed that the Hojjatiyeh used their ties within the administration to remove the Tudeh from the parliament, and even persecute them. The communists saw the Hojjatiyeh as a fifth column that served the imperialists and anticommunist interests in Iran.[58]

For a time the Tudeh was the only secular party allowed to exist and its members even served in the parliament. Meanwhile the Hojjatiyeh did their utmost (openly) to have the communist party outlawed. In 1983 all party members were arrested on the charge of spying for the USSR and all their newspapers were closed. Later, on May 5, 1983, the party was outlawed and its members were declared to be Soviet agents.[59] The Hojjatiyeh were suspected of leading the move.[60]

To the protestations that came from abroad were added those from within. Members of the wing of the ruling party that followed the Imam line, the IRP, claimed that the Hojjatiyeh were not only emissaries of American imperialism who were criminally working to outlaw the Tudeh, a party that represented a wide section of Iranian society, but were, in fact, intending to destroy the regime in order to establish a capitalist state. The Imam Line called upon the Iranian people to choose the right political position and to beware of the Hojjatiyeh, which was a representative of the CIA and a supporter of foreign intervention into Iran.[61] These same supporters of the Imam Line, however, were also partners in outlawing the Tudeh while simultaneously striving to drive the Hojjatiyeh out of politics. Even following the Hojjatiyeh's abandonment of politics the representatives of the regime did nothing to bring the communists back to politics.

The Hojjatiyeh as a Real Threat to the Islamic Republic of Iran

After the revolution the movement *Anjoman-i Imam-i Zaman* changed its name to Hojjatiyeh (followers of the imam in Arabic)[62] and it seemed as if Sheikh Halabi's change of name was an innocent Arabization, but in fact the new name was an act of defiance against two enemies: the Baha'is who were pretending to be the real representative of the imam and Khomeini who, after the revolution, had adopted the title of imam or deputy imam (*Nueb-e Imam*).

As an enthusiastic follower of the senior Ayatollah Borujerdi, Halabi belonged to the stream that objected to the forcing of the coming of the Hidden Imam and believed that this would only occur when the world was saturated with sin and moral decay.[63] At that time the ground would be ready for the reappearance of the Mahdi, who would restore the world into a moral state and impose Shi'a theology and practice.[64]

Khomeini's posing as the imam or deputy imam represented a theological dilemma for the Hojjatiyeh since there was a gap between the present situation in which there was the "posing of heavens on earth" as Khomeini implemented this ideal,[65] and the classical theory that foresaw world chaos as a precondition to the reappearance of the imam who would convert the entire world to Shiite Islam and be its sole ruler. From the Hojjatiyeh's point of view the Islamic Revolution of 1979 did not fulfill this basic precondition; therefore the movement rejected the creation of an Islamic society through the involvement of the clergy in politics. This task belonged only to the Mahdi and would have to wait for his reappearance.[66] Thus Khomeini's political theory, the imposing of the Shi'a on politics, was not only wrong in itself but was actually *delaying* the second coming of the Mahdi.

In that situation, Halabi and his supporters had no choice but to view Khomeini as a *Bab* (a gate), just as the Baha'is saw the *Bab* as a herald of the coming of the Mahdi.[67] Moreover, now, not only did they have to prepare themselves for the coming of the Mahdi, just as the Bab had asked his followers to do (in a posthumous letter), they had to continue opposing the Baha'is out of the Shi'a classical position, which denied the reappearance of the Mahdi in the incarnation of the Baha'u'llah.

In contrast Khomeini believed that a legitimate Islamic government could only be established by clerics and led by a spiritual leader who would mold the spiritual tenets of that government. The Hojjatiyeh thought that such a government would only be established by the Mahdi himself and therefore they objected to the clergy's active, as opposed to advisory, involvement in politics—specifically to Khomeini's *Velayat-i Faqih*.[68]

Because of these ideas members of the Hojjatiyeh and their followers suffered persecution from the Revolutionary Guards who were fanatic followers of Khomeini and were intolerant of any opposition. According to the Guards, by objecting to the *Velayat-i Faqih*, the Hojjatiyeh had proved itself to be supporters of the shah, and therefore deserved to die. A secondary argument against the Hojjatiyeh was that by clinging to their faith in the future reappearance of the imam as opposed to the successful *Velayat-i Faqih*, they represented "earthliness" while a truly "spiritual" attitude was being exhibited by Khomeini's supporters, the true representatives of classical Shi'a.[69]

Members of the Hojjatiyeh, however, suffered less physically (but not from the damage done to their image by the propaganda) than members of the Mojahedin or the Tudeh party (who both suffered physically from the propaganda) for the following reasons:

1. They were a part of the extreme religious current that had overthrown the shah's regime, and had become followers of Khomeini notwithstanding their opposition to the *Velayat-i Faqih*.
2. By entering the governing organs, the IRP and the Revolutionary Guards, members of the Hojjatiyeh had demonstrated their loyalty to the revolution and had gained some control over these organs' activities against their own movement.
3. As an integral part of the orthodox Iranian people the Hojjatiyeh Society had distinguished itself during the Iran-Iraq War, and had therefore gained the regime's gratitude.[70]

The Hojjatiyeh was among the many movements and a party that, from a propagandistic point of view, was suppressed after the revolution but whose excellent organization enabled it to be integrated quickly into the new political spectrum, notwithstanding its passive and adaptive stance. In other words, in the new political reality where the clergy were in control of the state, they had to decide whether they should stand aside or take an active part in politics.

In the first year of the revolution, prior to the first presidential and parliamentary (Majlis) elections, the Hojjatiyeh, as already noted, objected to the *Velayat-i Faqih*, which Khomeini was actualizing. The new political reality and the danger from the left wing of the political arena (the Tudeh party, the Mojahedin, or, God forbid, the Baha'is), however, forced them to align themselves with Khomeini and his party and, in the referendum that took place in December 1979, they reluctantly obeyed their leader Mahmud Halabi and voted for the new constitution.[71] In exchange, several members of the Hojjatiyeh, who were also members of the IRP, gained

entrance to the Majlis and even to the cabinet. However they paid dearly for this.

The crises came in 1983 as it became clear that the war against Iraq was far from any conclusion and the Hojjatiyeh started criticizing the Islamic Republic for its inability to end the war or bring about necessary social changes. Although the criticism was delivered quietly Khomeini disliked it in spite of the fact that it came from a senior and more experienced cleric Sheikh Halabi.[72]

But this criticism of the government's inability to end the war was different a year before, when Halabi sent Khomeini a letter that glorified the winnings of Iranian Army in the battlefield:

> In the name of God I would like to express my congratulations to Ayatollah *al-Ozma* (Grand Ayatollah) [Khomeini] the great leader of the Revolution and the founder of the Islamic Republic, praised by God, for the recent precious victory of the brave Iranian soldiers in the battle front. And I also congratulate this victory to the Iranian citizens who are very religious enthusiasm in our dear Iran.[73]

Khomeini declared that any clemency toward sin in expectation of the Mahdi's coming was unacceptable, that all clerics should act to minimize sin and that his critics (without pointing any finger) should reconsider their positions. It was inconceivable to him that they should complain about the situation and denigrate the Islam represented by the Islamic Republic as worthless. In this way, he claimed, they were justifying the pseudo-Islam of the shah and, in the present state of the revolution, anything represented by the shah, pseudo-Islam included, was reprehensible. Khomeini in this way subtly referred to the Hojjatiyeh and other groups, emphasizing that factionalism was antipatriotic and the source of all evil.[74]

Khomeini's supporters interpreted his criticism as an opportunity to blame the Hojjatiyeh for trying to create chaos in order to hasten the second coming of the Mahdi. Since there already was a Shiite notion allowing for the deliberate creation of such chaos what might have been interpreted as a simple accusation of criminal behavior was in fact a sign of an internal religious struggle.

In view of this, the leader of the movement, Halabi, decided to cease all activities declaring this to be his "religious duty." The movement, however, did not disperse but went underground.[75] Nevertheless, Khomeini's supporters continued their attacks for, from their point of view, the Hojjatiyeh might be revolutionaries or even anarchists, and by removing their support from Khomeini they must now, by definition, be antirevolutionary adherents of "adaptionism."

From this we can come to three conclusions (two regarding the Hojjatieis and one the Khomeinis):

1. The Hojjatiyeh, as adaptionists, viewed any political and Islamic activity prior to the reappearance of the Hidden Imam as a heresy. Therefore they "abstained" from any such activity in the struggle between the shah and the Islamists.
2. They did not see Khomeini as an object of emulation (*Marja'-i Taqlid*), who deserved to be *Vali Faqih*, the heir of the imam or his representative and substitute.
3. If they did not want Khomeini, and did not act against the shah, they must be for the separation of religion and state, and were therefore accomplices of the SAVAK. Following the revolution, the expression of such an idea could only lead to the outlawing of the Hojjatiyeh.

Following the organization's outlawing Khomeini's followers used the entire arsenal of criminal charges to denounce them, notwithstanding their passivity. The Hojjatiyeh thus became "imperialists," objectors to the war against Iraq, and "anarchists" whose only goal was the return of the imam, and so on.[76]

Baqi in his book about the Hojjatiyeh provides a further interpretation for the Hojjatiyeh "threat." His hatred of the Hojjatiyeh, probably on behalf of the clerical circles that supported the Islamic regime, is obvious and blind but when one analyzes his attitude and reads between the lines, one discovers that the Hojjatiyeh's opposition to the high-ranking Islamic clerics and the imam (Khomeini) was obvious and constant. Some issues posed by them were legitimate by their standards but Baqi says that their methods of response to these issues were neither logical nor moral.

The Hojjatiyeh used to brandish the names of Ayatollah Khouei and Ayatollah Shariatmadari who accepted and cooperated with the movement and, according to Baqi, these actions gave the Hojjatiyeh power to "oppress the people who asked questions by showing the papers of acceptance from religious leaders and Imam(s)." After the revolution, Baqi writes, "they have announced that the Ayatollah Khazali is an agent of the Imam (Khomeini) in the Anjoman (Hojjatiyeh) and is collaborating with us and so the Imam has also accepted us . . . Mr. Halabi loves the Imam Zaman (12th) and any meeting he organizes is acceptable."

Baqi presents more quotations from the movement on behalf of Khomeini and, according to him, Khomeini also said: "Do not be sad about the people who oppose you, your opponents are stupid and if they oppose you intentionally they oppose your master the Imam Zaman (12th)."

Due to this evidence that the Hojjatiyeh had good relations with some grand ayatollahs, or could quote Khomeini in support of their cause, Baqi believes that "the methods of solving problems were not logical and wise but they deprive the right of thinking from the people and made them a slavish people . . . their methods of solving problems were not logical and wise for they deprive people of the right to think and make them slaves." He then emphatically writes that

> some Ayatollah[s] who have accepted the Anjoman [Hojjatiyeh] were not aware of its falsity and it was for this reason that the Bahai's were growing . . . and [that] the Anjoman people said we are fighting against the Baha'is and this was the reason that some Ayatollahs valued and accepted the Anjoman . . . if these Ayatollahs were aware of the real nature of the Anjoman, they [would] change their ideas about them.

Baqi attacks the Hojjatiyeh and accuses them of an arrogance that has led them to treat the people as stupid and infidels. They discouraged the asking of questions and when pushed would answer thus: "[A]re you a religious leader that interferes in these issues?" The questions that were asked even caused quarrels between people and people who were arrested and tortured by the SAVAK would say that "this happened because of 12th Imam's anger or because he is deprived of God's mercy."

According to Baqi, the Hojjatiyeh claimed that their efforts to advance the coming of the revolution were greater than those of the guerrillas. In the early stages of the revolution, the Hojjatiyeh also mentioned the name of the Mojahedin and claimed that most of the fighters or leftist guerilla groups were members of the movement. Their main claim was indeed that "we looked after the Muslims and the religious youth so they could join the revolutionary forces," and that "a lot of fighters and Islamist government officials were raised in the Anjoman." Baqi writes that before the revolution the Hojjatiyeh was a party that included fundamentalists and "fanatics" and, because of this, orders were issued based "on avoiding conflict, nonintervention in politics and consideration of governmental interests by the leadership and chiefs of staff."

Baqi finds three types of political elements that existed in the movement:

1. The people who accepted the role and ideology of the movement with all its deficiencies and political vision.
2. The people who were revolutionaries and followers of the imam (Khomeini) who used the movement as a cover for fighting and carrying out their religious duties. In order to identify themselves as

members of this group when arrested and to gain the confidence of the SAVAK they allowed them to conceal their identities.

3. After the revolution these people went their separate ways and many left the movement and from this point onward the movement became a homogeneous group made up of those who were blind believers and who had joined it after the revolution. These people neither understood nor were familiar with the movement's nature and tried to hide this by pretending to be revolutionaries.

Another way the Hojjatiyeh treated members was by placing spies among them and controlling them in parallel with their pursuit and control of the Baha'i people and carrying out espionage for the SAVAK. They did not do this to stop the entrance of anti-Islamic and antirevolutionary people into the *Anjoman*, but in order to learn which people were actively opposed to their organization, were uncommitted, or were reading prohibited books such as those written by Dr. Ali Shariati. Whenever such people were discovered the spies informed the *Anjoman* immediately that they were deviant.[77]

Khomeini versus Halabi as Rival Luminaries

Ideological and religious struggles do not take place devoid of issues involving ego, prestige, and dignity. The greatness of leaders, thinkers, preachers, and intellectuals stems from their personalities and the inner energies they employ in order to transform their theories into practice, to turn their visions into reality. These thinkers do not operate in a void or under laboratory conditions; social reality is their field of action and the battlefield of their ideas.

Charisma is made up of personality, appearance, the structure and tone of speech, and the momentum of action but may get weaker or stronger with the circumstances. To the charismatic religious leader are added his religious mission and the ability to move a mass of fanatic believers for an extended period of time. The religious leader or preacher is surrounded by many rivals wishing to capture some of the believers for themselves.

In the social, political, and religious reality of Iran, Khomeini and Halabi represented polar opinions between which everyday Shiites could not tell the difference. As far as the man in the street was concerned turning theory into practice was what mattered and he would support the leader that seemed most capable of doing this.

When Khomeini launched his political career Halabi was already a veteran in the field. Khomeini employed his rhetorical prowess as a religious persona to recruit potential followers who would flock to him and be his adherents. Until the end of the 1960s, Khomeini, like Halabi, spoke about the Shi'a from the "adaptionist" point of view but Halabi remained anonymous and did not search out the limelight of public consciousness. In the 1950s Halabi was known publicly as the founder of the Hojjatiyeh and was a very familiar personality in religious circles. At that time Khomeini was also beginning to be well-known in these circles since he had already published his first book and had become an ayatollah in 1943—but he still poured water on the great ayatollah Borujerdi's hands. Only in 1963 did Khomeini burst into the public consciousness with his scorching criticism of the White Revolution imposed by Muhammad Reza Shah.

Following the shah's ban on the activities of the Hojjatiyeh and the consequences of these political constraints and international pressure, the Sheikh Halabi returned to anonymity—which suited him better anyway. His organization did not disperse but it lost all political influence and thus disappeared from the social and religious consciousness. Until the arrival of Khomeini there was a vacuum of religious-consciousness for at least a decade and he conquered center stage in Iran even though, as a religious scholar, he was not superior to Sheikh Halabi.

By the time of the revolution Khomeini already had a huge arsenal of supporters ready to give their lives for him while Halabi could only count on some twelve thousand Hojjatiyeh supporters,[78] most of whom were lower-class clergy with some seniors nurtured by the ayatollah for many years. By the time of the revolution, in 1979, there were some three hundred religious associations in Tehran alone, most of which were controlled by the Hojjatiyeh. These associations, aside from of their charitable activities, supplied teachers and mentors for various gatherings of youth who were easy prey for propaganda either in support of the shah's White Revolution or anti-royalists. Khomeini's rhetoric served to prove to these youth that the Shi'a represented innovation and was adaptable to the spirit of the times and its challenges.[79] Those Hojjatiyeh members who participated in the meetings, even when they disagreed with Khomeini's rhetoric, could not stem the influence he had on the audiences, some of whose members would later form the Revolutionary Guards.

Although Halabi disliked Khomeini, the rising star, and his far-reaching interpretation of the Shi'a, and despite claims to the opposite by Khomeini's supporters, the Hojjatiyeh joined the attacks against the shah especially when he proposed ameliorating the social status of the Baha'is.[80]

In fact, after the revolution the Hojjatiyeh's power increased because now they could act freely against their old enemies, the Baha'is, and they

sought to expand their influence within the new administration. Thanks to their wide network of supporters spread all over the country, the Hojjatiyeh captured many important positions in the new civil administration and parliament. Unlike Khomeini, Halabi kept his distance from the limelight and directed his followers from his home in south Tehran but his voice was heard condemning Khomeini's "Imamate" pretensions.[81]

Prior to the revolution Khomeini made references to all the other revolutionary and antirevolutionary sections of the public, including the Hojjatiyeh, which he saw as an antirevolutionary movement that sought the separation of religion and state. They were suspected of being proroyalists, and Khomeini wondered: "How is it possible to remain indifferent to the sale of alcohol, to the debauchery and corruption [of the shah's regime], in expectation of the just reign of the Imam?"

In response to these accusations Halabi replied: "The SAVAK knows us, and knows our aim, that we are far from the political factions . . . We support the Ayatollah Khomeini . . ." But that was before the revolution and the hatred between the two schools would come mainly after the revolution. Despite this the Hojjatiyeh were identified as an opposition, antirevolutionary movement, not only as one that was pro status quo but as a movement that was leading the opposition parties that favored the continued repression of religion. They were, in fact, seen as an Islamic opposition to Khomeini and the revolutionary movement that was striving to change the Islamic society of the state. Khomeini's supporters claimed that by preaching that religion is a private matter, the Hojjatiyeh's were advocating the secularization of the state.[82]

Following the revolution, Khomeini's aides wished to remove the Hojjatiyeh from all positions of power in the state administration, particularly from the Ministry of Education and from the schools, lest they implement their programs and alter the character of the revolution.[83] Like other authoritarians, Khomeini was very sensitive to the role of education and schools being responsible for shaping the next generation of the revolution. Therefore letting such institutions fall into the hands of "antirevolutionary" elements meant the waiving of future power. No wonder the Islamic constitution removed all elements that threatened the religious and political system from the educational system, especially those, such as the Hojjatiyeh, who were suspected of having had ties with the previous regime.

Opponents of the Hojjatiyeh who were supporters of the ideology Khomeini offered regarding the function of the clerics within the political system during the Occultation of the imam saw the association's view of the Hidden Imam as pure fatalism. Khomeini supporters emphasized the need to heal society even during the imam's absence and that this was only possible by turning for guidance to the sages of each generation.

Of course, the Shiites still kept expecting the return of the imam but believed that society must function within frameworks fixed by the spiritual leader of the generation whom they did not see as a replacement for the imam but as a proxy who, in the meantime, was working to correct society. The Hojjatiyeh were seen as fatalists who stuck to the classical ideal of expecting the imam and the consequent correction of the world that would take place only after his arrival. Any alternative to this was seen as unrealistic, illegitimate, and even something that would diminish the expectation.[84]

Khomeini and the Banishment of the Hojjatiyeh

According to David Menashri, until August 1983 not much was said in the official Iranian media about the Hojjatiyeh and the challenges they posed to Khomeini's ruling ideology. However for two weeks of that month they became the preferred target of the media and the regime. These attacks took place simultaneously with the establishment of the "Council of Guardians," which was to decide who would be Khomeini's heir, a matter of crucial theological importance to all sides concerned.

In the summer of 1983, in order to minimize the Hojjatiyeh's influence, parts of the ruling party—the IRP, began a negative propaganda campaign that presented the movement as deviating from the true path of Islam and Khomeini himself spoke about the Hojjatiyeh's "Illegitimate Path."[85] The first volley against the Hojjatiyeh was shot by the National Iranian Radio in June 1982. According to the announcer the Hojjatiyeh were exploiting their Islamic identity to undermine the Islamic Republic and their opposition to the Imam Line was designed to overthrow the republic. They claimed that their anticommunism made them suspect of being "yes men" of the United States, that they were raising hatred among the people against the revolution, and were treating their opponents everywhere violently. Their only aim was the creation of chaos and therefore they were as hateful as the Americans.[86] In April 1983 Radio Iran attacked the Hojjatiyeh fiercely claiming that under the guise of Islam, the movement was allowing itself to be self-righteous and arrogant and to smear its opponents. Their anticommunist stance counted for nothing because, by presenting them as atheists, they were ignoring the great contributions the Tudeh party had made to Iran ever since the 1950s. The Hojjatiyeh who pretended to be surrounded by "foreign agents" were such themselves, agents of the CIA and the Mossad who were running the state as their

puppets.[87] This was exactly the sort of thing that could be heard on the Soviet radio.

In July 1983 Khomeini spoke to the Guardians Council and stated that "the Islamic Republic has enemies from within—enemies among clerics who constitute the most serious threat against the Islamic Republic of Iran." For those in the know it was clear that Khomeini was attacking Halabi. What bothered the former by then was not the war with Iraq but disunity among the clergy, a situation that would affect the people's belief in the clergy who were its leaders.[88]

According to the state radio the West had decided to combat Iran by employing members of the clergy who were apparently identified with the revolution (meaning the Hojjatiyeh, the supporters of the capitalist merchants of the bazaar). The radio noted that Khomeini not only regarded these clergymen as false and promoters of American interests in Iran but that they were Islam's and the Shi'a's greatest opponents and a threat to the stability of the regime. This organization was accused of hindering the execution of economic programs and other revolutionary plans, of shaking the foundations of the revolution, and even of calling for an Islamic monarchy.[89]

The radio continued to interpret Khomeini's declarations as statements that painted the opponents of the republic as pro-American and pro-British and that the Hojjatiyeh association objected to the Islamic constitution and was looking for support in its efforts to hinder the development of the Islamic Republic.[90] In July 1983 this propaganda against the Hojjatiyeh and its members, including cabinet ministers and members of parliament, resulted in a wave of popular protest against the movement and the interior minister, Nateq-Nuri, who was received in his hometown with cries of "Death to the Hojjatiyeh."[91]

In a reply to these attacks, on July 27, 1983, a member of the Hojjatiyeh published a document relating to Khomeini's speech in the council, which intensified the tension between the Maktabis and the Hojjatiyeh. The document declared that, following Khomeini's criticism and in view of the hostile atmosphere, the organization had decided to suspend its activities "for the sake of Islam." They regarded this as their religious duty but were not abandoning their beliefs or the religious goals of the movement. In fact, with this letter the Hojjatiyeh determined their fate. They decided to go underground and cease their activities, understanding that Khomeini would not permit rival theologies to live in the Islamic space of Iran.

The counterresponse was quick; Khomeini's loyalists were offended by what they construed as an attack against their leader. They claimed that "the Hojjatiyeh presented themselves as better Islamists than Khomeini," and

"instead of assisting the Republic they were turning against the regime." At this stage the attacks against the Hojjatiyeh gained intensity and the attackers claimed that "the movement is in fact pro-royalist" (beginning in 1970 Khomeini insisted that the monarchy was un-Islamic), and "they did not act against the Shah, thus revealing themselves to be his supporters." From all this they deduced that the Hojjatiyeh objected to Khomeini and his *Velayat-i Faqih* and never saw him as a *Marja'-i Taqlid* (an object of emulation).

In addition the Maktabis claimed that the Hojjatiyeh supported the separation of religion and state and that their sole religious interest was the suppression of the Baha'is and the communists. They accused them of cooperating with the SAVAK, of being supporters of imperialism, objectors to the war against Iraq, and finally, since the establishment of the republic, that they had encouraged violence, corruption, and suppressed public morality. It is important to note that such accusations were also directed against all opposition movements such as the Mojahedin, the Tudeh, and so on.

The Maktabis then claimed that "suspending their activities" was actually ordered by Halabi, meaning that, in the eyes of the Hojjatiyeh, he was the superior authority in Iran and that they blamed Khomeini for creating an "unhealthy atmosphere" there. Next they accused the Hojjatiyeh of not being any different from the Mojahedin-i Khalq who had "suspended" their activities in 1981 (meaning they intended to continue their activities against the republic from the underground); and last, by saying that the Hidden Imam would prove them right, the Hojjatiyeh were actually claiming that Khomeini was not being guided by the imam.[92]

Following their self-suspension, there were political elements in Iran who estimated their power and influence over the regime to be much more than it actually was. Leftist organizations, such as the Tudeh, claimed that the Hojjatiyeh were the driving power of the revolution, especially behind the scenes. Currently it is assumed that despite their apparent disappearance, the Hojjatiyeh still have their own agenda in revolutionary Iran.[93]

Four years after the revolution Khomeini forced the Hojjatiyeh, who were afraid of being violently repressed, to outlaw itself. The split between the regime and the organization occurred as a result of a fierce theological dispute between Khomeini's political activism and Halabi's passivity.[94]

In spite of the deep ideological chasm, many members of the Hojjatiyeh joined the ruling party and some became leaders of revolutionary Iran.[95] One must ask why they joined a party that negated their organization politically as well as ideologically while they still denied the *Velayat-i Faqih* concept.[96] Did they hope to change the IRP from within, or were they acquiescing to the religious demand, to commit *Taqia*?[97]

The regime and the Maktabis movement were apprehensive of the Hojjatiyeh and other revolutionary movements; since they feared that they might start a popular movement against the Islamic Republic, they sought to uproot their presence from the political and the educational systems. They believed that future generations of politicians must develop through an educational system loyal to the regime so in 1988 the Majlis set out rules to guide all the madrasas in the land. They had to be Islamic, teach Islamic subjects, be committed to the *Velayat-i Faqih* and to the constitution, not teach about the previous regime, and their principals had to be at least 30 years old with no background in any banned association such as the *Monafeqin* (related to the Mojahedin) or the Hojjatiyeh.[98]

In 1989, after the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq War, the regime launched a new cycle of political cleansing in government ministries and state-owned companies. The victims were mostly those who had lived in the United States or had relatives there, as well as the remaining members of the Hojjatiyeh[99]; 615 of them were arrested, 15 of whom were senior managers in the national petrol company. The excuse for their arrests was their opposition to the religious and political lines of the regime.[100]

Going Underground

The Hojjatiyeh, as was their habit from the mid-1950s to the revolution, chose to commit *Taqia* in order to save their skins as well as their ideology. However, even if politically the organization's voice is hardly heard now, they are still very active among the people and outside politics. Since being outlawed and going underground in 1983 the organization has been thriving and, according to rumors, the Ayatollah Muhammad Mesbah-Yazdi and his pupil, the president of the republic Muhammad Ahmadinejad, are among its members.[101]

After being outlawed and after dissolving the Society on August 12, 1983,[102] Halabi returned to Mashhad but other members of the Hojjatiyeh continued serving the government. They joined the Islamic Coalition Association, *Jamiyat-i Motalifihi-ye Islami*, which was a coalition member and one of the most fanatical and orthodox associations in Iran.[103]

Mutahhari studied his advanced curriculum in Mashhad at the *Hauzih-yi Ilmih-i Mashhad* (the Traditional Educational Centre of Mashhad). This *Hauza* was equivalent to the Qom and Najaf *Hauzahs*[104] and it is thought that Halabi himself studied at this particular *Hauzah* of Mashhad.

Many preachers (*Imam-i Jume*) warned the crowds attending the Friday services about the renewed activities of the Hojjatiyeh and Ayatollah Abbas

Amini Masharud accused them of recruiting people within the Mosques[105] (which made sense since they were open to the public while all the educational institutions were supervised by the government).

In 2002, the minister of intelligence and security, Hojjat ul-Islam Unasi, announced the arrest in Qom of several people suspected of supporting the Hojjatiyeh. The Iranian newspaper *Keyhan* (September 2002) claimed the Society was the equivalent of the Reformists and the *Khordad* Group, two groups suspected of aspiring to separate religion from the state. According to this organ of the government both groups not only objected to an Islamic government and aspired to a secular state but members of both groups were among the wealthy and objected to the *Velayat-i Faqih*.

The newspaper portrayed the Hojjatiyeh as proponents of anarchy, sin, and social corruption and, like the reformists, by arguing that the democratic system allowed them all kinds of freedom—even the freedom to behave corruptly—they were themselves corrupt; in fact their anti-Marxist stance alone made them Westernizers. This "anti-Marxist" argument, at a time when Marxism had already been greatly discredited throughout the world, indicates how out-of-touch the regime was. Later, when these propagandists realized the absurdity of their arguments, they started arguing that the Hojjatiyeh were anti-Sunnah.

Following the ban on the Hojjatiyeh in the 1980s its members "disappeared" into the Islamic Coalition Society (*Mutalifah*), which was backed by the merchants of the bazaar and, according to rumors, this neo-Hojjatiyeh society directs its activities at inflaming Shi'a-Sunnah hostility. This was the accusation leveled at them in 2004 by *Baztab*, a Persian Internet site, which accused them of publishing anti-Sunnah literature in Arabic under the pretense of doing this in Beirut.[106]

On the other hand Ayatollah Abul Qasem Khazali, a former member of the Council of Guardians, protected the Hojjatiyeh and rejected the rumors about the renewed activities of the Society when he said: "I know these people very well, they are not active, and I know that their activities are pro-Islam. Therefore all accusations regarding their renewed activities are lies."[107]

Ayatollah Khazali (who was a Hojjatiyeh member) explained the issue of the extension of Islam, something that was very important to the Muslims, and why the Hojjatiyeh did not take part in the revolutionary activities since they did not imagine that the revolutionaries would prevail and the revolution achieve its goals. The Hojjatiyeh did not allow their members to participate in political activities because, if they did so, the Hojjatiyeh would be eradicated and never be able to continue extending their religion. In regard to spiritual matters, they had Ayatollah Khouei's *fatwa* that allowed them to stay out of politics without committing sins. This method

of being apolitical came to be the main challenge and cause of tension between the revolutionary forces and the Hojjatiyeh during and after the Islamic Revolution.[108]

The Iranian Radio station *Farda* claimed that the Hojjatiyeh were supporting Ayatollah Ali Sistani who was living in Najaf, Iraq, and, like Halabi in Mashhad, stood for the separation of religion and state. Here we can see that there was religious rivalry between Qom (i.e., Khomeinistic methodologists), which stood for the union of state and religion, and Mashhad, which supported the separation of state and religion. This expressed the essential difference between the Khomeini-Qom axis and the Halabi-Mashhad one.

Sistani, like the Hojjatiyeh, objected to the *Velayat-i Faqih* and the fact that the government was apprehensive about an organization whose religious-political agenda might undermine its legitimacy is clear. According to the Iranian media, the Hojjatiyeh, realizing that its anti-Baha'i message had lost its relevance, was still clinging to its anti-*Velayat-i Faqih* line and was using the new anti-Sunnah line of propaganda in order to infiltrate Iranian society.[109] We should keep in mind here that, as a matter of course, the Iranian regime always delegitimizes and hunts all opposing movements from the Mujahidin to the Greens.

Apprehension about the Rise of the Hojjatiyeh and Increased Propaganda against Them

Following the defeat of Muhammad Khatami by Ahmadinejad in the elections of 2005, the former president said that his downfall was engineered by a "powerful organization" but refrained from naming it. This statement might reflect the thoughts of those among the designers of the Islamic Revolution who see the present regime in Iran as an ultraorthodox creation that might be ascribed to the Hojjatiyeh. In this case, Khatami had intended to rely on the higher authority of Khomeini, who objected to the Hojjatiyeh for the reasons mentioned earlier, and he attacked these "shallow conservatives" who stood behind Ahmadinejad's regime, implying they were Hojjatiyehs.

Ahmad Tavasoli, a former aide of Khomeini's, argued that both the Iranian government and the Revolutionary Guards had actually been hijacked by the Hojjatiyeh, and were therefore controlling Ahmadinejad as well. Other unidentified elements argue that Ahmadinejad's rise to power was actually a coup engineered by conservative Revolutionary Guards who

saw the election as a way to put an end to the eight years of reform led by Khatami and suspect that the Hojjatiyeh were behind the coup that explains why the West is so interested in the organization.

These reformists, anticonservatives, and anti-Hojjatiyeh critics argue that "among the 21 members of Ahmadinejad's cabinet members, three are former Hojjatiyeh members": Hojjat ul Islam Gholam Hossein Mohssani-Ajakhii—head of the intelligence who is a graduate of the Haqqani School (identified with the Hojjatiyeh); Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah-Yazdi, an ultraconservative cleric who is said to have issued a *fatwa* obliging the two million members of the Basij to vote for Ahmadinejad; and the interior minister—the conservative Mostafa Pur-Mohammadi, who is also a graduate of the Haqqani School.

Muhammad Sadri describes the inner political struggle associated with the Hojjatiyeh: "[T]his particular form of mud-slinging that disappeared a quarter of century ago—when the secular left accused the religious establishment of having clandestine Hojjatiyeh affiliations—is gaining currency again in the new battle of titans over ideological hegemony in Iran i.e. the battle between the traditional right-wing and the revolutionary right-wing clerical establishment."[110]

Ali-Akbar Mohtashmi-Pur (a senior clergy member and member of the Militant Clerics Society) has attacked the Hojjatiyeh, saying:

> Two groups were supported by the SAVAK prior to the revolution: The Baha'is and the Hojjatiyeh. The Hojjatiyeh's basic tenet was that members of the clergy were not allowed to mix in politics. Whoever deviated from this rule was thrown out of the movement . . . They believed that the struggle against the Shah was illegal and supported the opposition to the Imam Movement (Khomeini) . . . During the Shah's regime, they shared the religious-nationalist platform of the secular parties.

According to Mohtashmi-Pur:

> While investigating the nature of the movement we find that already Khomeini distinguished between two types of Islam, one of Mohammad the Prophet, the other American . . . prior to the revolution the Hojjatiyeh and the Mahdiviya objected to the true leadership [of Khomeini], this group, American Mahdiviya objected to the pure ideology of the Imam Khomeini. However, following the revolution it changed its tactics and decided to infiltrate the regime and gain power within the center of the government.

He added that:

> [A]fter the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the head of that movement [Mahmud Halabi] informed Khomeini about the availability of

> 15–16 thousand educated and orthodox Muslim youth able to run the country . . . The Imam rejected the offer, stating that only those who took part in the revolution (namely supporters of the Imam) would rule the state . . . Although the Hojjatiyeh pretended to be non-violent, and lenient to the opposition, they were very violent, accused their opponents of heresy, and physically "got rid" of those they could lay their hands on.

Mohtashmi-Pur added that the "Hojjatiyeh tried to stain the supporters of the Imam as communists . . . And that the violent group is growing again today." Regretfully, "this group's voice is heard everywhere, they are engaged in a 'witch hunt' and even blame our youth . . . they are promoting the same American ideology of the pre-revolution period."[111]

In answer to a question regarding local and national elections Mohtashmi-Pur said that, to his regret, "there is a new practice concerning the elections to the Council of Experts. From now on the Council of Guardians will approve candidates to the other Council of Experts . . . " In the past he had said that "the Mojtaheds and the heads of the religious seminaries were responsible for the ratification of candidates, not any government agency, since electing the leader is above the government . . . If a leader is elected like a president or a member of parliament then his post becomes a governmental one." In his opinion, article 110 of the constitution states that there are two aspects of the leadership—religious and governmental—and that the leader's spiritual and scientific investiture must be ratified by the clergy, not by public servants.

According to Mohtashmi-Pur:

> A movement (he probably means the Hojjatiyeh) which is part of an organized sect is working to take hold of the Council of Experts . . . this by encouraging young people [to enter that council] (probably supporters of Mesbah-Yazdi). If successful, the Council of Guardians will ratify these candidates and will enjoy a huge majority in the Council of Experts . . . Some people think that, lacking popular support, this sect (the Hojjatiyeh) will not pose a threat to the system, but I believe otherwise. A movement as sophisticated as the Hojjatiyeh is always a threat to the people and the regime.[112]

Other notables, such as Mohsen Karbalai attacked the Ayatollah Mohtashmi-Pur for linking the Hojjatiyeh to the Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi when he said that Yazdi was the one attacking the sectarianism represented by the Hojjatiyeh and that their undermining the prevailing order assisted the reformist camp; so, in the light of this, who could call Yazdi the "leader of the Hojjatiyeh sect?"[113]

Majid Ansari, also of the "Militant Clerics Society," argues that

> some 40–50 years ago expectations for the return of the Mahdi resulted in the establishment of the Hojjatiyeh . . . they met and recited the *Nodbeh* (a prayer for the return of the Mahdi) . . . basing their faith on their struggle against the Baha'is . . . meanwhile promising the SAVAK to keep a distance from politics or any opposition to the Shah. All members, because of their love for the Mahdi, swore never to enter politics . . . thus while they were a success religiously they were a failure politically.

"Today," according to Ansari, "the other face of the Hojjatiyeh enters the field, fighting the ideology of 'pure Islam.' Their Islam is violent and extremist . . . they do not accept any interpretation of Islam but their own, which is a total distortion . . . "

Ansari added:

> [T]hey [The Hojjatiyeh] tell the story about that man [Sheik Halabi] who saw the Mahdi and another man who saw him and all of these stories are insults to the Imam Zaman (of the generation), the Mahdi, and abuses the religious and emotional sentiments of the believers; the political system's duty is to beware of them since its responsibility is to spread pure and unadulterated Islam.[114]

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 6

The Evolution of Extremism

The Birth of a New Branch—the Mahdiviyat

From its beginning Islam has witnessed divisions, splits, and the appearance of new groups such as *Khawarej*, the Shi'a, *Zaids*, and others. It appears that the common denominator for most of these groups splitting away has been political reasons. Most of the ideological and theological developments that later arose have been an appendix to the split and not its motive and in the distant future would reflect the uniqueness of these groups and movements. The history of Islam is sown with a factionalism that has created unique groups in Middle Eastern history and presented Islam as a religion built on a wide basis that has allowed religious and political interpretation.

From the beginning the Hojjatiyeh movement presented itself as antirevolutionary and apolitical. Its tendency not to associate itself with the revolution's leaders could be seen externally in its religious-theological disconnection from Khomeini—but not exclusively in it. Their apolitical point of view actually identified them as a movement that did not want to take part in the current political system but did not brand them as an antipolitics movement. The exact semantic phrase cannot be sufficiently precise in this research, but it is true to say that the way the Hojjatiyeh sees politics is through a religious lens (and perhaps not too differently from the way Khomeini saw it), but the activation and application of this political view is conditioned by timing. The Hojjatiyeh's leaders and followers have, in general, wanted to remain closer to the old Shi'a monolithic texts and wait for the right moment for the ultimate implementation of the right politics—not the compromising politics of Khomeini.

The Hojjatiyeh saw revolutionary politics in Iran as impure, the kind of politics that led the believer away from the true and real historical path that the imams and the Ulama of the previous centuries had created. This misdirection, they believed, prevented the believer from concentrating on the Shi'a's historical aspirations and the total belief that the Mahdi would finally come. This specific interpretation categorized them as antirevolutionaries and was a category that helped Khomeini shape and build his own revolution. The mirror effect that the Hojjatiyeh supplied for Khomeini, not intentionally of course, presented him as a traitor who had abandoned a centuries old path and provided a religious alternative—ironically in the name of the Hidden Imam.

As written in the previous chapters, the split that the Hojjatiyeh experienced began on the eve of the revolution at the time when some of the Hojjatiyeh's followers saw an opportunity to ally themselves with the new entity that Khomeini was creating. These members of the Hojjatiyeh did not abandon the Hojjatiyeh's way completely but only wanted to exploit the opportunity to exercise their religious power and perhaps advance their own mission. We can conclude that, in the first stages of the revolution, it was hard to know the direction in which the wind was blowing. Khomeini never revealed his intentions or gave any exact operational orders but let things happen and navigated them for his own purposes just as an experienced warlord would manipulate a battle to achieve a great victory. This approach helped Khomeini to not make promises to any of the revolutionary groups and helped him to shrewdly analyze the political components of the Islamic Revolution.

When the revolutionary fervor grew many of the Hojjatiyeh's members left the society and joined the radical groups close to Khomeini and his followers, and this was mainly because the leaders of the Hojjatiyeh refused to join the revolution's instigators. Those who left the society called themselves "*Sadeqis*" after the sixth imam, Jafar a-Sadeq, and this divided the society into two groups: The Hojjatiyehs (most of whom came from Mashhad) who adopted the classical, traditional way of Shi'a interpretation; and the *Sadeqis* (most of whom came from Qom) who preferred interpretation built on inference and logic, something which also helped them to find their way out of the Hojjatiyeh.[1]

Before the Islamic Revolution, in 1977, the Hojjatiyeh changed their name from *Anjoman-e Zad Baha'i* to *Anjoman Hojjatiyeh Mahdiviyeh*.[2] The reasons for this action could be interpreted in three ways: first—to announce that they were still there, living and breathing; second—to indicate a change in their aims and goals; and finally—to grant recognition to the current atmosphere, to the popular voices that were calling for the removal of the current regime of the shah, and to open themselves to the

revolutionary winds blowing from the direction of Khomeini and its influence on the social and religious life of the Iran of the late 1970s. In one way it could be understood from the new name that the Hojjatiyeh was the Mahdiviyeh. In the 1990s, however, although the Hojjatiyeh split again into the Hojjatiyehs and the Mahdiviyeh some claim that they still could be recognized as one entity[3]—but is this assumption true?

The reason for the change of the society's name and the addition of a new name (Mahdiviyat) is neither clear nor well understood. The name change could be understood as their wish to bring about a real change in essence but this could have been only a semantic change that did not necessarily indicate any desire to change anything in their ideology. Many groups and organizations change their names, so what is the real difference here? It seems that only the facts we can collect about the Hojjatiyeh after their name change can provide us with the real reason for this new look. When a veteran and recognized society such as the Hojjatiyeh changes its name, it needs to undergo major changes in order to adjust to the new reality. In this case, and at first, it seems that this society changed from being a Baha'i chaser, one that could only be recognized from its previous name as an anti-Baha'i sect, to an organization that wanted to change its old name, the Hojjatiyeh—and add an essential part, Mahdiviyeh, which would establish a new, albeit unclear, identity for the movement. On the other hand, however, and perhaps this was an outcome of the year 1977 when Khomeini finished sowing the seeds of revolution that would be harvested two years later, one must consider the fact that the shah dismissed his loyal prime minister of a dozen years—Abbas Hoveyda. He was of Baha'i origin but had converted to Islam and, after the revolution, would be executed by the Hezbollah who were the first and unofficial version of the Revolutionary Guards.

The name "Mahdiviyeh" is reminiscent of the first name of the movement: the Hojjatiyeh, which is its best-known name and literally means "the Followers of the Mahdi." Ze'ev Maghen suggests two possible reasons for the use of this name. The first is the use of the name "Hujja," which means "the proof," one of the many names of the Mahdi, and the second—the act of choosing this name was knowingly to declare that the organization was "against any intervention in the political life of that world."[4] After the dissolution of the Hojjatiyeh in 1983 many of its members joined the *Jamiyat-e Motalifeh-ye Islami*—the Islamic Coalition Society—and continued to serve in their governmental positions.[5]

Sheikh Ali Davani, one of the prominent ayatollahs of the mid-twentieth century, developed a theological interpretation of Borujerdi's interpretations of the "*Bihar al-Anwar*." His main interpretation was introduced as something that was a dialogue between the Shi'a and the Baha'i about

their claims in regard to the messianic vision. He also compared prophecies from other religions about the Messiah/Mahdi's arrival with these interpretations and, inter alia, also pointed out the apocalyptic element and its character from these religions. According to Davani Shi'a was a universal religion very similar to what the Bahaullah claimed about the Baha'i faith and later on the Mahdiviyat followers would adopt this universal approach for all the Messiah-Mahdi believers all around the globe.[6]

The Bah'a'ullah, the founder of the Baha'i faith, claimed that his appearance had opened up a new chain of prophecy to the world and that even after him, other prophets and messengers would appear. It may be said that Davani's theological confrontation with the Bah'a'ullah's doctrine was what the Baha'u'llah had done with the Bab's *Bayan* (who, for a short time, also saw himself as the Mahdi). In fact engaging in an argument with the Baha'is could be recognized as an acceptance of the Baha'u'llah's cosmic notion about the chain of prophecy and his claim that, even after him, the prophecy would continue. It is possible that the Mahdiviyat, at one and the same time, based itself upon the Baha'i' faith while resisting it as a kind of negation of the formula that had apparently created both of them. Either way, the Mahdiviyat was a group that wanted to utilize the Shi'a sentiments and feelings concerning the Mahdi and thus ignite the old longings of the people for their Mahdi.[7]

Violence in the Name of the Mahdi

The second split inside the Hojjatiyeh at the end of the 1990s led the extreme faction, the Mahdiviyat, to engage not only in verbal violence in their literature but even in violence that was directed against actions that they suspected were delaying the Mahdi's arrival. In principle we can say that the Hojjatiyeh saw Khomeini and his followers as those who were delaying the arrival of the Mahdi; hence it seemed, at least theoretically, that the adherents of the Hojjatiyeh should take violent steps against Khomeini and his followers, but they chose not to do this—at least not physically. The extreme and violent part of the Hojjatiyeh, however, which could be recognized as the Mahdiviyat, ultimately did choose to take part in violent action. In 1999 the Hojjatiyeh was charged with taking part in assassination attempts against several government officials and 34 of the Hojjatiyeh and Mahdiviyat were arrested.

The Iranian regime saw the Mahdiviyat as having an anti-Sunni orientation and as those who had tried to assassinate the former presidents Khatami, Rafsanjani, and the justice head Mohammad Yazdi,[8] but the

confusion that existed as a result of the regime not being able to clearly distinguish between the Hojjatiyeh and the Mahdiviyat led it to proclaim that the Hojjatiyeh were behind the assassination attempts. Many in Iran identified Sheikh Mahmoud Halabi as the founder of Mahdiviyat (but not the leader), and thought that they had good relations and links with the elite Revolutionary Guards.[9]

The Iranian Intelligence Office, however, announced that it was terminating the Mahdiviyat since all its members, 34 in number, had been arrested. A few of these members were charged with attempting to assassinate high-ranking officials and the group was accused of having many links with neighboring countries. They suspected that there had been an assassination attempt on Justice Head Ali Razini in January 1999 and, in this particular case, officials of the Intelligence Office were divided between blaming the Mahdiviyat and the Hojjatiyeh but eventually decided on the former.[10]

The accusation of attempting to kill Razini was directed at the Mojahedin-i Khalq and the daily newspaper *Hamshari* reported that the Mojahedin had claimed responsibility for this attempt,[11] but official reports say that other opposition groups had tried to kill Razini and it was not necessarily the Mojahedin. Between January and May 1999 there were other assassination attempts that led to a group named *Babak Khoramdim*, composed of retired officers, being accused of responsibility for assassinations of several officials. The main turning point that took place in this investigation, however, belongs to Mohammad Ali Jafari, the head of the *Basij*, who claimed that "there is a secret religious sect, known as Mahdiviyat, which is responsible for the assassinations of people [official figures], in the belief that these people are responsible for the delay of the Hidden Imam's appearance." Jafari said that the Mahdiviyat were responsible only for the attempt to kill Razini and not for the other attempts[12] and that their leader was Hassan Milani (probably a descendent of the cleric Ayatollah Mohammad Hadi Milani, who had died before the Islamic Revolution).[13]

The reason that the Intelligence Office declared that the Hojjatiyeh were not behind the assassination attempts might have been because many of the Hojjatiyeh members were serving in governmental positions. The similarity between the Hojjatiyeh and the Mahdiviyat was confusing and many mistakenly saw Halabi as the Mahdiviyat leader when the Mahdiviyat leader was no less than a cleric named Milani.[14]

In the first days of the revolution the enthusiasm about its success soared and Khomeini's followers saw his return to Iran as the reappearance of the Hidden Imam, and that is what they called him—"imam"; but it must be said that Khomeini never called himself imam. The

Hojjatiyeh's followers, however, were more sober and realistic. As Ze'ev Maghen has clearly noted in his accurate and interesting article: "[T]his organization [members of the Hojjatiyeh] chanted this slogan [*Mahdi biya*!—Mahdi come!] immediately after the revolution *specifically in order to undermine the popular feeling that the Imam was already present in the person of Khomeini*…" This means that, in their eyes, the imam had not yet come.[15]

We must bear in mind that the Hojjatiyeh were antirevolutionary *even before* the revolution and not because they could not find their own way in the upcoming new political system. Shouting out in protest against the idea represented by Khomeini's return or even against his religious credibility does not make the Hojjatiyeh anti-Mahdivism. For them, the appearance of the Islamic Revolution and its undesirable product, the establishment of the Islamic Republic, was preventing the reappearance of the Hidden Imam. The existence of an Islamic entity that purported to represent the Hidden Imam and the real religion of Islam (the Shi'i version) was considered by them to be a big misunderstanding of the future reality of the Shiite eschatological belief. On the other hand, Khomeini, and especially his followers, tried to present the Hojjatiyeh as antirevolutionaries (which was true) and especially as those who held an anti-Mahdivistic approach. And this was a real misconception.

The Hojjatiyeh, however, went back underground and their way of belief and practice in the postrevolutionary era was seen as the old, classical Shiite approach that believed in the historical expectation of the Mahdi (and this made them similar to the Shi'a found in Iraq). As Maghen emphasizes, "It advocates, in perfectly traditional, orthodox Twelver fashion, the pious and passive practice of 'awaiting' the Savior, but specifically *discourages and condemns as heretical* any active effort to hasten his arrival."[16] This way of life in revolutionary Iran was unacceptable and, in the eyes of the regime, weakened the strength of the nation and its representatives.

These "representatives" (the founders of the Islamic Republic) accused the Hojjatiyeh of many things, starting with their rejection of Khomeini's *Velayat-i Faqih* methods (but the truth is that while they did recognize the Islamic Republic as a political authority they did not recognize it as a legitimate Shi'i-religious rule) and their nonacceptance of the regime as a legitimate entity that wished to see Khomeini as the Hidden Imam. Other accusations made were that they represented a Western approach that advocated the separation of religion and had expressed their desire to disconnect themselves from the *Marj'iyyat* (the religious authority), and so on.[17] As noted earlier the Hojjatiyeh chose to dissolve their activities and go underground. This may have silenced their criticism against the regime

but it did not silence the internal and other factions that searched for ways to express their ideas and ways of life.

It is very hard to find evidence of the debates inside the Hojjatiyeh circles but, from their practices, we can conclude what the main debates concerning their way of life and how to preserve their beliefs and ideas were.

The Hojjatiyeh could be characterized by their belief in nonintervention in the state and politics and in training its disciples to stay out of politics in their own lives. The revolutionaries, however, saw themselves as those who were bringing about the global government of the Mahdi and prohibited the monolithic practices and ideologies of the Mahdiviyat (the creed of the Mahdi). For the revolutionaries the religious stand of the Mahdiviyat (not to say the Hojjatiyeh) was fundamentally wrong and based on an apocalyptic approach that wished to hasten the arrival of the Mahdi. The revolutionaries, on the other hand, saw the time of the Mahdi's return not as a one-step thing but as an ongoing process that they had initiated and practiced and were preserving.

During the Islamic Revolution the Hojjatiyeh tried to continue their policy and wished to establish their own ideas that saw the government as illegitimate, inefficient, and lacking in belief in the Hidden Imam. Hence they advocated the separation of religion and state until the arrival of the Hidden Imam. The Ayatollah Khomeini, both before and after the Islamic Revolution, described the ideology of the separation of religion and state as a "poison for real Islam" and demonstrated a rigid response to this deviation in thought, which was represented by the Hojjatiyeh.[18]

Khatami's and Ahmadinejad's Presidency Periods—Back to the Flashlights?

During the 1980s, the Hojjatiyeh tried to find their way into the current order without asserting their presence and their rivalry with Khomeini. Unlike the other factions and others in Khomeini's party they adopted a quiet approach, which helped them to assimilate themselves into the current order of politics. In this way the Hojjatiyeh blended into Iranian politics without leaving any traces and bold declarations that could draw criticism and, perhaps, the deadly attention that they did not want and probably were unable to deal with.

We might have thought that this situation would change when a so-called liberal and reform spirit developed in the Iranian political atmosphere during the pragmatic and reformist presidency of Mohammad

Khatami (1997–2005).[19] Apparently during this period, however, the Hojjatiyeh were still underground or were probably highly assimilated in Iranian politics and we see that, despite the "reformist" atmosphere during Khatami's era, the Hojjatiyeh were unable to rise up and make any comeback into the Iranian consciousness.

Since we know that the Hojjatiyeh had a firm and unchanging agenda, we might have expected them to rise against reformism during Khatami's time but not in favor of the Islamic Republic. The fact is, however, that we can conclude from this that the Hojjatiyeh still existed somehow in some format and consciousness that was clear and significant. The suspicious facts and figures apparently come from the high echelons of Iranian politics (the presidency) and from the religious sector (the ayatollahs). The latter will be dealt with first as it is more relevant to uncover the fragments of the Hojjatiyeh's existence in this sector rather than in the political one.

Thus by dealing with religious issues that are not necessarily in conflict with the Hojjatiyeh's political (or apolitical) beliefs, but are part of the coherent framework of the Shi'a belief, we shall find where the Hojjatiyeh assimilated if not the real traces of their presence.

From the first days of the reformist government led by the President Mohammad Khatami, the Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi-Mesbah Yazdi attacked it and the public figures who put these issues into the headlines for dealing with many "liberal" issues. Yazdi, as a radical conservative cleric, saw these issues as a form of foreign intervention in Iranian politics and also attacked the so-called reformists agenda that had deeply rooted connections with the enemies of Iran, without mentioning the United States and the Zionists. Yazdi was against anything that looked or smelled like "democracy" in Iran because, according to him, "the leaders of global colonialism [i.e., United States and the West] believe democracy is a secular regime which is not compatible with religion" and that "such an interpretation of democracy has no place in religion, and is totally opposed to Islam…"[20] Khatami on his part said that "freedom and diversity of thought do not threaten the society's security" but "rather, limiting freedom does so" and that "criticizing the government and state organizations at any level is not detrimental to the system, on the contrary, it is necessary."[21]

As a reactionary, Yazdi called upon the defenders of Islam to take action and not only by words against those who insult Islam. This attack by Yazdi was a well-constructed criticism by the hardline clerics who saw Khatami's prodemocratic reforms as a real threat to the Islamic foundation of the Islamic Republic. Khatami himself, however, also enjoyed some hardline clerics' support and the clash that took place was mainly above his head

and was about conserving the real orientation of the Islamic Republic as Khomeini saw it.[22] Yazdi, who belonged to the right-wing conservatives, tried, together with other supporters, to capitalize upon public religious sensibilities that would lead to "pitting different tendencies in the senior religious leadership against each other."[23]

The Islamic Iran Participation Front—a reformist group headed by Khatami's brother Reza—chanted a few slogans such as "Iran for all Iranians," which were taken from the prerevolution period. This slogan was even chanted during the shah's time and angered the leading conservative ayatollahs such as Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, who claimed that the slogan meant that all "Iranian Moslems, including jurisprudents and Baha'is[?]" should be equal.[24] In rejecting this phrase, Ayatollah Yazdi stated:

> Is it for people to set forth their wishes, even though these are contrary to Islam? [Does it mean] Iran belongs to all Iranians and everyone is equal? Does it mean that a Baha'i is equal with a religious authority [a mullah]? Today they are trying to recognize the Baha'is with the slogan "Iran belongs to all Iranians." Is not a Baha'i considered an Iranian? Don't we have first and second class citizens? Are people considered equal and, therefore, the citizens should also be considered equal and of the same rank? Does it mean that a Baha'i can become a president because he is a human being and an Iranian? Are these considered human rights? Are we defending these kinds of human rights? Is this the purpose of our Revolution?[25]

He also described the reform movement as being more dangerous to the republic than a military coup, since it promoted "greater freedom for Iranians to write, read and behave as they wish."[26] Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi stressed that the Iranian Muslim community "must be governed by religious values and instructions" and "must observe divine worship."[27] The "2nd Khordard movement" did not step aside with their criticism of the ayatollah. The reformists' newspaper attacked him especially when he talked about the "CIA expenditure for creating tension in Iran."[28] This was due to Yazdi's accusations that the CIA was "infiltrating the reformist government."[29]

Mesbah-Yazdi, who believed in very hardline conservatism and saw himself as a defender of the revolution, served as a chief judge from 1989 to 1999 and a member of the Guardian Council of the Constitution (*Shura-ye Negahban-i Qanun-i Assassi*). He claimed to be the one who saw underground waves of opposition in those who were trying to shake the revolutionary foundations by allowing the reformists and other forces to criticize the revolution and spread their philosophies and religious pluralism "and the idea of having more than one state religion in this country." He attacked this desire to replace "two of the revolution's vital ideological

pillars (which were) the religious convictions and Islamic values governing our individual and social behavior, (and which) are under serious danger from the enemies of Islam."[30]

After representing him as a hardline cleric and a defender of the revolution, I would like to point out the claim that the Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi is the spiritual mentor of President Ahmadinejad and has been accused of being involved with the Hojjatiyeh. There are claims that Ahmadinejad is "at this time [after the revolution]…inclined toward the shadowy Islamic sect of Hojatieh, which was devoted to revering Shia Islam's missing Twelfth Imam…" Kasra Naji claims that this involvement with the Hojjatiyehs has created an intellectual dilemma for Ahmadinejad, since he himself has struggled internally with whether he should stay with the Hojjatiyehs and not throw himself into the revolution's boiling water, or join the revolution. However, his dilemma was solved by Khomeini himself who banned the Hojjatiyeh activities.[31] In this respect, note 13 of Naji's claim that Ahmadinejad was a follower of the Hojjatiyeh relies on an "interview with a top reformist politician who did not wished to be named." This can provide a small hint that the claim that Mesbah-Yazdi was Ahmadinejad's mentor[32] could be true, as Yazdi is one of the reformists' biggest rivals. Apparently, however, there is no other valuable and documented sources that make the claim that neither Ahmadinejad nor his mentor were Hojjatiyeh members or followers.

Naji does not explain how this dilemma was solved for Ahmadinejad by banning the Hojjatiyeh since members or supporters of the Hojjatiyeh did not stop being such when the Hojjatiyeh dissolved themselves. For example, their belief that the clerics should be out of politics still existed and Ahmadinejad (if he really was a member or follower/supporter of the Hojjatiyeh) behaved the same way as other members did after the outbreak of the revolution when they joined the pro-Khomeini Islamists in order to find their way into the new order and politics.

Another study by Shimon Shapira and Daniel Diker titled "Iran's 'Second' Islamic Revolution: Its Challenge to the West" is more decisive in its methods and concludes that Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi and his pupil President Ahmadinejad are members of the Hojjatiyeh and are trying to implement the Hojjatiyeh's messianic approach by being actively involved in Iranian politics.[33] A review of the sources used by Shapira and Diker reveals that these sources discuss the new politics of the mentor-pupil (Yazdi-Ahmadinejad) and the fear that arises from their current association with the rumor of being members (or maybe leaders) of the Hojjatiyeh. We can be easily captivated by this assessment as both of them, Ayatollah Yazdi and President Ahmadinejad, represent, each in his own profession, a kind of supreme radicalism. The first, Ayatollah Yazdi, blindly defends

the *Velayat-i Faqih* and its components and Ahmadinejad expresses the wish that "Israel must be wiped off the map." The implications and connection between the two could lead us to one conclusion—that there is an unwelcome treaty of free radicals.[34]

However, even without them declaring themselves as members/followers of the Hojjatiyeh, we can conclude from their deeds that they look like or perhaps have an orientation toward Hojjatiyeh beliefs. Let us return to Ayatollah Yazdi, a hard-line conservative whose statements remind us of those made by the Ayatollah Halabi, especially when he spoke of Islam and anti-Baha'ism[35] as mentioned earlier. This, however, is certainly not true in regard to his statements supporting the Islamic Republic and his rejection of all the reformist forces who (from his point of view) are trying to weaken the Islamic Republic.

Like Halabi, who claimed that he was in contact with the Mahdi through dreams or other means, Mesbah-Yazdi himself sees his student Ahmadinejad's success as being "due to 'the special kindness of the Mahdi.'"[36] Other similarities that can indicate his assumed connections with the Hojjatiyeh are:

1. The spreading of Shi'a both inside and outside of Iran, which is a Hojjatiyeh belief and mainly the Islamic Republic's agenda and practice.
2. That Mesbah-Yazdi was a director and lecturer at the Haqqani School,[37] the school that many of the Hojjatiyeh's members established[38] and studied in.
3. Disdain for democracy since he sees that the "Supreme Leader takes his legitimacy from God and not from the populace."[39]

Yazdi, however, seems to be more affiliated with and actually sided with the Khomeini line and in this he was unlike Halabi who preferred a collective rule of the clerics. He saw this is as a second option and not as a primary target as Khomeini wanted (and fulfilled). Yazdi referred to the role of the *Velayat-i Faqih* and the *Vali*, whether this be Khomeini or his successor Khamenei, as the leaders of the Muslim society and the one who could lead them toward understanding God and His creed. According to Yazdi, "[T]he Islamic Republic is in line with the implementation of Islamic principles . . . the Muslim and revolutionary people of Iran continue to listen to the command of the leader of the revolution . . . and implement their duties"[40] and "only in the Islamic Republic of Iran could the marja'-e taqlid [the Spiritual Leader, i.e., Khomeini and Khamenei] freely express his views about issues and problems related to the Muslims [Sunnis and Shi'is all together, inside and outside Iran]."[41]

Let us now return to Ahmadinejad who deeply believes in the return of the Hidden Imam. This matter has been dealt with extensively by the newspapers inside and outside of Iran and yet this particular emphasis has made him look weirder and stranger than any other political or religious leader in Iran even though this is a fundamental Shi'a belief. This messianic approach is, however, different from others as he, Ahmadinejad, would like to do everything needed in order to "hasten the return of the Mahdi."[42] Although we are not dealing with Ahmadinejad and his government's preparations for the Mahdi's arrival[43] it is still important to separate the messianic approach from relating to the rumors that Ahmadinejad was once a member of the Hojjatiyeh.

This line of thought, especially considering that Ahmadinejad has surrounded himself with ministers and vice presidents who are deeply associated with the Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi (who repeatedly claims to have some connection with the Hidden Imam—as Halabi did), leads us to weigh the possibility that the very high echelons of Iranian politics is being led by the Hojjatiyeh sympathizers. This is a claim that can never be proven by any means, especially since the word "Hojjatiyeh" is despicable[44] and sometimes compared to the *Monafeqin* (hypocrites and nickname for the Mojahedin-i Khalq).[45]

Aside from this the split within the Hojjatiyeh Society, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, led to the creation of the Mahdiviyat movement that was terminated by the Iranian regime. As mentioned, this group was blamed for the failed attempt to assassinate Ali Razini, a hard-line judge, but it also planned to assassinate other key figures such as Presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami and Ayatollah Yazdi as well.[46] This plan makes it impossible to associate Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi with any part of the Hojjatiyeh neither from his side nor from the Hojjatiyeh itself as they are basically pacifists and a nonviolent group.

More than this, and as we have tried to show since the Hojjatiyeh's annihilation from 1983 till today, the name Hojjatiyeh is still part of Iranian consciousness and awareness. Since they had no structured organization that could survive the Khomeini's rough treatment, they went underground without leaving any clear traces, but they did not disappear completely. Iranian politicians and the political bodies rejected any affiliation with the Hojjatiyeh due to Khomeini's demands but those same people who rejected the "Hojjatiyehs" were probably Hojjatiyehs themselves.

As has been mentioned in the previous chapters, during the first days of the Islamic Republic the Hojjatiyeh represented a third of Khomeini's party, the IRPI, and a third, whether they were 20, 30, or 50 people, cannot disappear in one or two days. Their infiltration into the well-constructed

political bodies has allowed them to influence politics without raising the Hojjatiyeh banners above their heads. We should, however, take into account the fact that the rest of Iranian politics is composed of Khomeini supporters who cannot be counted as Hojjatiyeh members and therefore their importance, whether because of their number or influence, is much greater than the Hojjatiyeh ever had. Despite this the Hojjatiyeh were nevertheless annihilated because of their influence and power and, knowing this, they found themselves unable to give up this power, a power that perhaps is expressed in the political and spiritual dialogue of the very highest echelons in Iran.

This page intentionally left blank

Conclusions

The Hojjatiyeh Society was founded in 1953 after Mossadeq's fall, which could be traced back to the religiopolitical climate that had arisen in 1941 especially following the impeachment of Reza Shah. At this time many religious and political movements that wished to gain influence within the fragile political framework that existed at the time of the inauguration of the new shah, Mohammad Reza Shah, reemerged or started to flourish. Among these movements there were many that found this to be the right time to take revenge upon the Baha'i minority and exclude them from the political and social arena. The question of what the real difference between the movements that arose during the 1940s and the Hojjatiyeh Society, established only after the Mossadeq crisis, was, however, remains. What made the Hojjatiyeh Society unique and special in comparison to these other movements?

The differences between the Hojjatiyeh and these movements were not only very large but also essential, even though the fundamental cause for the emergence of all these groups was similar—to fight the Baha'i minority. The real difference was that although these movements grew by leaps and bounds and were strongly motivated against the Baha'is, they had no coherent religious agenda and, compared to the Hojjatiyeh who were dependent on political power to achieve their goals and purposes, were more emotional than logical. Moreover, whereas they survived for only a short time, the Hojjatiyeh has survived for at least three decades.

Apart from its anti-Baha'i nature and orientation the Hojjatiyeh had a very strict religious creed concerning the Baha'i issue and their involvement in political questions. Their agenda, when compared to the original message of the Shi'a concerning the involvement of clerics in politics, actually seems to be more classical and traditional than not. The other groups had a different and clearly focused agenda, that is, the struggle against the Baha'is, but the more complex agenda of the Hojjatiyeh helped them to survive under the Pahlavi reign since, by presenting themselves as having an apolitical point of view, they did not represent any political opposition to the shah, which, later, was not the case with Khomeini and his *Velayet-i Faqih* creed.

Although the Hojjatiyeh were very similar to other anti-Baha'i movements by nature, they were a movement that looked at the anti-Baha'i issue from other aspects. For them, being an anti-Baha'i group was a philosophy and theocratic task and not only a political or violent one. They, however, decided that in this matter they would coordinate an apolitical approach with a nonviolent and pacifistic agenda. To achieve this the Hojjatiyeh concentrated its power in order to build a coherent and comprehensive philosophy that would help them fight the Baha'is in the cognitive field, although some of its members transgressed and employed violence against the Baha'is.

This innovative method of the Hojjatiyeh against the Baha'i faith and community inside and outside Iran was different and unique when compared to the other groups and movements that were fighting against the Baha'is at that time and before and after their appearance. The main objection they had against the Baha'is was the issue involving the Mahdi, the Hidden Imam, and his arrival. The Baha'is built their faith around the appearance of the Mahdi who, for them, is the Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i faith. The Baha'u'llah saw himself as the Mahdi who would complete the old chain of prophecy with his arrival and open a new chain of prophecy.

The Hojjatiyeh, when it was founded, had another name—the *Anjoman-i Zad-i Bahayat*—but the other name they used—Hojjatiyeh—actually reflects its essence and methods more clearly, in spite of the fact that its initial name was more technical and descriptive. This essence was expressed in the activities of its sections and units, from the leader and founder, Sheikh Mahmoud Halabi, down to the grassroots members whose task was to "fight" the Baha'i believers in their own field—by gathering information from debates and lectures held within the Baha'i halls and meetings. This would then be used to intellectually debate them and embark upon missions of persuasion to convince the Baha'is to reconvert to the real faith of the Mahdi—the Twelver Shi'a.

The Hojjatiyeh represented a very hard-line and traditional Shi'a orthodoxy and believed that the religious leaders and the clerics should stay out of politics. This approach has been a very fundamental belief and practice in classical Shi'a since the fifth and sixth imams—Muhammad al-Baqir and Ja'far as-Sadeq, respectively. They do believe in the influence and the legitimacy that the clerics need to give the ruler as long as he protects the Shi'a faith and the nation from foreign threats. This is a kind of system of compromise since, according to the Shi'a belief, only the Mahdi has the legitimate right to rule and no one can or should replace him during his period of absence.

The fact of the imam's absence created a reality forced upon the Shi'a, which the community had to face. The reality of, on the one hand, being persecuted, and, on the other, being secluded was quite common for them, but the reality of not having the leadership of the imam was less familiar. These circumstances made the clerics realize that although they were prohibited from holding leadership positions because they were reserved only for the imam, they must nonetheless participate in some form of leadership in order to promote their everyday and spiritual affairs. Therefore, during the Safavid period, we find more and more clerics associated with advising the government and even holding official positions but, on the whole, this same form of authority could not be called a government based purely on Shi'a Islam. This reality was challenged by the Ayatollah Nimatollah Salihi-Najef-Abadi, who came from a circle of clerics of the Usuli School, which regarded religion as having a more pragmatic function in addition to its spiritual function, and offered more tools for religious inquiry than was the case with the Akhbariyya School approach.[1] For them reality was a necessity to build a process of ideological activism, which would form the basis for creating practical activism, in terms of constructing a government based on religious leaders to serve as deputies of the imam on earth.

The debate between the clerics of the aforementioned schools was essentially a theological discussion about the source of the imam or Faqih's authority. The first, the orthodox approach, claimed that the imam or Faqih received his legitimate authority from God and not from the people (but also because of his attributes, his perfection, and being without flaw and sin); the second claimed that the imam or Faqih also received his source of authority from the people (according to the existing agreement between them). The conclusion thus arises that according to the second approach, the imam is like all men, imperfect and capable of sin, and, in such a case, if the imam or Faqih does not serve the good of the people, the people can depose him and appoint a replacement.

In any case, the Shi'as have always believed that the "sword of state" over the Muslim community must only be in the hands of the descendants of Ali, who, in fact, are the descendants of Prophet Muhammad.[2] Must then the Faqih who rules over the Shi'a community be also a descendant of the Prophet? Not necessarily. The Faqih's power derives, first and foremost, from his educational virtue and popularity among the Shi'a community. The power of the clerics actually came into being as a result of the disappearance of the Hidden Imam and not as a result of rejecting the established order, that is, the Shi'a community's position as a possible, although static, opposition to the Sunni leadership was actually what led to the creation of the Shi'a clergymen.

From the tenth century till today the authority of the clerics has been preserved and this is because they draw their religious and leadership powers over the community from the disappearance of the imam.[3] The Shia's abandonment of the option of a revolution against the Sunni was due to pragmatic considerations of the differences that existed in force and strength, as well as the belief (which developed in retrospect) that such a revolution would be led by the Hidden Imam—the Mahdi himself. Regardless of this, until the Mahdi's arrival, the Faqih's sole task in the community was to be used as a spiritual channel and guide, and in a theological sense to be a sort of deputy to the imam, a type of spiritual surrogate.

Unlike during the Safavid Empire, which maintained the clerics' powerful status by including them in the government, and during the Qajar period, when even if the clerics were not part of the administration they received the proper respect as advisors to the government, toward the end of this period, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the clerics became less and less influential in government circles and lost their high and powerful positions. Their stature, however, was safeguarded more in the Shi'a community itself despite the lack of clerical presence in any governmental institution and their being denied the position of giving counsel, all of which exposed and opened the Qajar government to the many changes that were taking place in the world and particularly in the Middle East.

These changes led not only to the Qajar government's adoption of Western governmental ideas, which were foreign to the medieval-like regime traditional in Iran, but even to social and economic ideas that were in contrast to the religious and cultural values of the Persian people. The intention of these changes was actually to reduce the cleric's power, and not only that which remained in governmental institutions, but also to subvert its grasp on the community. This enraged all the clerics in Iran who began to express their disapproval of these adjustments more and more.[4]

It was during this time, at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth, that the clerics realized that without a fundamental change of perception in understanding their role in the political, social, and economic system of the state, the situation would only get worse. The essential dilemma for them at this point was how to support or influence an illegal government (since any government not led by the imam was illegal), while not acting to replace it with a government of religious character. This dilemma in fact, as ironic as it may sound, led them back to the same dilemma, which the Shi'a community had had to deal with in the past, at least until the rise of the Safavids (1501). Should they oppose the existing order or try to influence it?

It was in answer to this question that the main philosophy of Khomeini was conveyed in its expression of a revolutionary thesis, that is, the replacement of the existing order with a religious order in the form of the "Rule by Jurisprudence." In essence such a government had to be composed of two main layers. First, it had to be nothing less than a religious Islamic government and second, the government had to be built on majority opinion.[5] In Khomeini's view, such a government would not, on the one hand, purely represent or replace the rule of the imam but, on the other, it had to implement divine law.

While there is a huge difference between the roles of the clerics (*fuqaha*) and the imams the *fuqaha* still function by virtue of God's will even though all their authority stems from the functional and practical aspects that are similar to what Prophet Muhammad and a dozen imams had. The sole difference between them is found in those attributes passed down from Prophet Muhammad to Ali and the rest of his imam descendants.

The Hojjatiyeh, although dissolved in the late 1950s, have never stopped existing since they then separated into two groups (*Anjoman-i Tablighat-i Islami* and *Anjoman-i Zad-i Baha'i*) albeit without any central unit that connected them. These groups represented the Hojjatiyeh especially in two main ways—by the preservation of apolitical aspirations and by continuing their fight against the Baha'i minority. By the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, Khomeini had developed his *Velayet-i Faqih*—a notion that already appeared in the Shi'i literature of the last three centuries. Khomeini's innovative thoughts were based on famous and respected scholars and utilized the historical momentum to change the image of the Shia especially in regard to the essential issue of the participation of clerics in politics.

The Hojjatiyeh thought that the clerics should stay out of the political system but, if necessary, should counsel the political bodies. Although they did not see things eye to eye with Khomeini they eventually managed to find their way within his new political system. Before jumping onto Khomeini's bandwagon, however, they stepped aside, believing that this revolution neither belonged to them nor to any religious movement.

The Hojjatiyeh's fear of the establishment of a worse political system than that of the shah, however, urged them to take part in the revolution despite their apolitical agenda and beliefs. Since the Hojjatiyeh members and supporters came from the middle class and also had secular educations (as they had learned English and held relatively more white-collar professional positions than Khomeini's mainstream supporters did) they ended up holding many political and administrative positions within the new political system.

Still, joining the political framework did not cancel or dissolve their fundamental debate with Khomeini. This was certainly true in regard to

all the interpretations concerning the *Velayet-i Faqih* that neither corresponded with their Shi'a perspectives nor reflected the Shi'a mainstream. This debate with Khomeini's approach actually sharpened the political and religious identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the Hojjatiyeh's members could express their religious ideas alongside, and sometimes instead of, Khomeini's.

The Hojjatiyeh did not abandon their belief that the clerics should stay out of the political system. Its members who took part in Khomeini's political system were not, and did not see themselves as, religious leaders and even less as clerics. This probably helped them to have their cake and eat it too, so to speak—to grasp political opportunities in order to promote their agenda against both the Baha'is and against Khomeini at one and the same time.

Until their exclusion from the political field in 1983, the Hojjatiyeh succeeded in charting a religious path that the Iranian regime has been following ever since. "[I]t is possible to suggest that its ideology is more influential today than in the past and that it is very popular amongst the new conservative forces and is enjoying a renaissance."[6] The debate between the conservatives and the reformists concerns issues involving their own power and its legitimacy regarding the question of whether to give the spiritual leader power over the Majlis and the Council of Experts or vice versa. As we know, the Hojjatiyeh were against the theory of the *Velayet-i Faqih*, which gives the spiritual leader extensive authority over the collective leadership (the Council of Experts). We can therefore conclude that even though nowadays we might not find members of Hojjatiyeh in Iranian politics, we can surely find their theological and political/apolitical approaches deeply embedded within this fragile political system.

Notes

Preface

1. Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam; Religion, Political Order, and Social Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1984), 270.

1 The Story of the Shi'a

1. Hamid Enayat, "Shi'ism and Sunnism," in *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thoughts, and Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), 79–80; Rudi Matthee, "The Egyptian Opposition to the Iranian Revolution," in *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, eds. Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 248; Michael Axworthy, *Iran, Empire of the Mind—A History from Zoroaster to the Present Day* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 201–203.
2. Axworthy, *Iran, Empire of the Mind*, 178.
3. Karen Barkey, "Islam and Toleration: Studying the Ottoman Imperial Model," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, vol. 19, no. 1/2 (December 2005), 10; Bruce Masters, "The Treaties of Erzurum (1823 and 1848) and the Changing Status of Iranians in the Ottoman," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1/4 (1991), 7–8; R. I. Cole and Moojan Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism in Iraq: The Rebellion of Ottoman Karbala 1824–1843," *Past & Present*, no. 112 (August 1986), 116; Juan R. I. Cole, "'Indian Money' and the Shi'i Shrine Cities of Iraq, 1786–1850," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 22, no. 4 (October 1986), 470.
4. Enayat, "Shi'ism and Sunnism," 80.
5. Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi'a—The Forgotten Muslim* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 94–95.
6. Bernard Lewis, "The Shi'a in Islamic History," in *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, ed. Martin Kramer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 21.
7. Richard Yann, *Shi'ite Islam; Polity, Ideology, and Creed* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1995), 28–31.

8. A'llamah Tabataba'i, "The Shi'i Interpretation of Hadith Literature," in *Shi'ism, Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 34–36.
9. Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 176–177.
10. Ibid., 153–156.
11. Seyyed Hamid al-Idrisi, *Al-Fadhiha leMadhhab al-Shia al-Imameya* ([?]: Maktabat al-Radhwan, 2007), 15–16. Retrieved from www.waqfeya.com/book.php?bid=6113 (February 29, 2012).
12. Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, 173–174; Lewis, "Shi'a in Islamic History," 29–30.
13. Enayat, "Shi'ism and Sunnism," 71–75.
14. Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, 179–180; Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "Une absence remplie de présences. Herméneutiques de l'occultation chez les Shaykhiyya (Aspects de l'imamologie duodécimaine VII)," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, vol. 64, no. 1 (2001), 8.
15. Rola el-Husseini, "Resistance, Jihad, and Martyrdom in Contemporary Lebanese Shi'a Discourse," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 62, no. 3 (Summer 2008), 401. See also Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *The Just Ruler (al-sultan al-adil) in Shi'ite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 105.
16. The full name is: Mulla Muhammad Baqir bin Muhammad Taqi bin Maqsud, *Bihar al-Anwar al-Jama't lildarar Akhbar al-Imat al-Athar* (Taba't Tehran, Dar al-kitab al-Islamia).
17. Majeed al-Khalifa, *Gharaib Fuqahiya I'nd al-Shi'a al-Imamiya,* 44; http://www.dr-majeed.net.
18. Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, 179–180.
19. The Shi'a adds another part to its Shahada: "Ali is a Vicegerent of God."
20. Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, 181–183; "The Doctrine of the Imamate," *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*, http://www.karbala-najaf.org/shiaism/289–316.htm.
21. Marvin Zonis and Daniel Brumberg, "Shi'ism as Interpreted by Khomeini: An Ideology of Revolutionary Violence," in *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, ed. Martin Kramer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 50.
22. Mahmud Shahabi, "The Roots of Shi'ism in Early Islamic History," in *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 15–20; Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, 11–12.
23. Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, 147.
24. Ibid. Seyyed Hamid al-Idrisi, *Al-Fadhiha leMadhhab al-Shia al-Imameya* ([?]: Maktabat al-Radhwan, 2007), p. 11. Retrieved from www.waqfeya.com/book.php?bid=6113 (February 29, 2012).
25. For further information, see chapter two and also Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, 197–199.

26. Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, 181–182.
27. Ibid., 239, 285.
28. Ibid., 30.
29. Ibid., 240–242.
30. Ibid., 239.
31. Ibid., 15, 82.
32. Ibid., 161.
33. Yann, *Shi'ite Islam*, 41.
34. Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam,* 162–165. Some sources diverge as to the year of the twelfth imam First Occultation—873 or 874?; but this is a difference of barely one year. Shiite sources claim 873. For more details on the Minor Occultation and Major Occultation during the Imamate Period and not only regarding the twelfth imam, and the Ulama's power in the ancient Shiite society, please refer to the fascinating article: Said Amir Arjomand. "The Crisis of the Imamate and the Institution of Occultation in Twelver Shiism: A Sociohistorical Perspective," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4, vol. 28 (2009): 491–515.
35. Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam,* 162–171. For further explanation about the imam's purity and his duties among the Shi'i community, see: Allamah al-Hilli, "Shi'i Theology," in *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thoughts, and Spirituality,* ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 1988), 91–99.

2 THE REVIVAL OF THE SHI'A AFTER THE QAJARS

1. For further detailed information, see: Peter Jackson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran—The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, vol. 6 (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 191–198, 646–658, 661–663; Michael Axworthy, "Shi'ism and the Safavids," in *Iran—Empire of the Mind, A History from Zoroaster to the Present Day* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), chapter 4 (123–145); Said Amir Arjomand, "The Clerical Estate and the Emergence of a Shi'ite Hierocracy in Safavid Iran: A Study in Historical Sociology," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 28, no. 2 (1985), 169–219; John Foran, "The Long Fall of the Safavid Dynasty: Moving beyond the Standard Views," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2 (May 1992), 281–304; Ernest Tucker, "Nadir Shah and the Ja'fari Madhhab Reconsidered," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 27, no. 1/4, Religion and Society in Islamic Iran during the Pre-Modern Era (1994), 163–179.
2. Peter Avery et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume 7; From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 712.
3. Axworthy, *Iran—Empire of the Mind*, 174.
4. Andrew J. Newman, "The Nature of the Akhbari/Usuli Dispute in Late Safawid Iran," Part 2: The Conflict Reassessed, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, vol. 55, no. 2 (1992), 254.
5. Axworthy, *Iran—Empire of the Mind*, 174.

6. Moojan Momen, "Usuli, Akhbari, Shaykhi, Babi: The Tribulations of Qazvin Family," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3 (September 2003), 317–318.
7. Ibid., 712–713; Denis MacEoin, "Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy in Nineteenth-Century Shi'ism: The Cases of Shaykhism and Babism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 110, no. 2 (April–June 1990), 326; Juan Cole, "Shi'i Clerics in Iraq and Iran, 1722–1780: The Akhbari-Usuli Conflict Reconsidered," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1 (Winter 1985), 18–23; Momen, "Usuli, Akhbari, Shaykhi, Babi," 320.
8. Zackery M. Heern, *Usuli Shi'ism*: *The Emergence of an Islamic Reform Movement in Early Modern Iraq and Iran*, dissertation submitted to the faculty of The University of Utah, Department of History, University of Utah, August 2011, 49–50. In this chapter we will not discuss the significant socio-political ramifications of the Usuli doctrine. Heern's dissertation, among other respectable books and scholars, deals with this important issue. Our goal in this chapter is therefore to show the main dispute between the Usulis and the Akhbaris in order to present the religious debate concerning the interpretation of the role of the Shi'a and especially the role of the clerics in the community and politics.
9. Mansoor Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," *Theory and Society*, vol. 15, no. 4 (July 1986), 522–523.
10. During the Qajar period, the clergy of all currents, especially the Usuliyya, succeeded in separating Shi'a jurisprudence into two levels: the U'rf, referring to the customs and practices of a given society; and the Shar', which covered civil law.
11. Avery et al., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 714–715.
12. Abdul-Hadi Hairi, "The Legitimacy of the Early Qajar Rule as Viewed by the Shi'i Religious Leaders," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 24, no. 3 (July 1988), 271–279.
13. Nikki R. Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 4, no. 3 (April 1962), 289–292; Ervand Abrahamian, "Oriental Despotism: The Case of Qajar Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (January 1974), 12.
14. Avery et al., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 714–715.
15. Mansoor Moaddel, "Shi'i Political Discourse and Class Mobilization in the Tobacco Movement of 1890–1892," *Sociological Forum*, vol. 7, no. 3 (September 1992), 450–452.
16. For further details, see Moaddel's article: "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," *Theory and Society*, vol. 15, no. 4 (July 1986), 519–556.
17. Moaddel, "Shi'i Political Discourse," 452.
18. Ibid., 465.
19. Avery et al., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 728–731.
20. MacEoin, "Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy in Nineteenth-Century Shi'ism," 329.
21. Hairi, "The Legitimacy of the Early Qajar Rule," 283.
22. For further details, see Said Amir Arjomand, "The Ulama's Tradionalist Opposition to Parliamentarism: 1907–1909," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2 (April 1981), 174–190.

23. Seyed Reza Mousavi, "La religion et le système politique en Iran: étude comparative des révolutions de 1906 et 1979," *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique*, vol. 32, no. 2 (June 1999), 347–353, 356–357, 365; Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," 531; Avery et al., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 732–734; Fereshte M. Nouraie, "The Constitutional Ideas of a Shi'ite Mujtahid: Muhammad Husayn Na'ini," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 8, no. 4 (Autumn 1975), 237–239.
24. Nouraie, "The Constitutional Ideas of a Shi'ite Mujtahid," 240.
25. Avery et al., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 737–739.
26. H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*; *The Liberation Movement of Iran Under the Shah and Khomeini* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 16–18.
27. Avery et al., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 740; Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah* (Los Angles: University of California Press, 2009), 21–22.
28. Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah*, 64–66, 69–72.
29. Ibid., 18–19, 204; Soli Shahvar, "Iran, 1925–1946," in *The Middle East between World Wars*, Book E, Part Two (in Hebrew), ed. Hagai Erlich (Raanana: The Open University of Israel, 2003), 255–259; David Menashri, *Iran: Between Islam and the West* (in Hebrew) (The Ministry of Defense Publishing, 1996), 91–102; Mohammad H. Faghfoory, "The Ulama-State Relations in Iran: 1921–1941," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 19, no. 4 (November 1987), 426–428; "The Impact of Modernization on the Ulama in Iran, 1925–1941," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3/4 (Summer–Autumn 1993), 282–292.
30. Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," 534; Faghfoory, "The Ulama-State Relations in Iran," 416–418.
31. Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah*, 366; Menashri, *Iran: Between Islam and the West*, 94–95; Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," 535.
32. Mahmood T. Davari, *The Political Thought of Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari; An Iranian Theoretican of the Islamic State* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 34.
33. Amir H. Ferdows, "Khomaini and Fadayan's Society and Politics," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2 (May 1983), 241.
34. Avery et al., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 744–745; Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah*, 81–84; Menshari, *Iran: Between Islam and the West*, 104.
35. Avery et al., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 745.
36. Perhaps, following Borujerdi's death in 1961, Khomeini felt less dependent on the very orthodox current represented by his mentor, for within a short period of time he changed his views concerning religious activism.
37. Yann Richard, "Ayatollah Kashani: Precursor of the Islamic Republic?," in *Religion and Politics in Iran: Shi'ism from Quietism to Revolution*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 105–106. There is good reason to assume that the Hojjatiyeh imitated Kashani's system of mixing religious and secular studies.

38. For further information about the Fada'iyan's foundation, see: Farhad Kazemi, "The *Fada'iyan-e Islam*: Fanaticism, Politics and Terror," in *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, ed. Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 158–176. Also about its exact year of foundation, see footnote 1 in ibid., 174.
39. Sohrab Behdad, "Islamic Utopia in Pre-Revolutionary Iran; Navvab Safavi and the Fada'ian-e Eslam," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1 (January 1997), 48–50.
40. Elie Kedourie, "The Iraqi Shi'is and their Fate," in *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, ed. Martin Kramer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 151–152.
41. Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 252.
42. Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," 537; Michael M. J. Fischer, "Becoming Mollah: Reflections on Iranian Clerics in a Revolutionary Age," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1/4 (1980), Iranian Revolution in Perspective, 96.
43. Richard, "Ayatollah Kashani," 120. Theoretically, Borujerdi's refusal to grant Mossadegh clerical support stems from his opposition to the latter's political direction. See Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," 538.
44. Elena Alekseevna Doroshenko, *Shiitskoe dukhovenstvo v sovremennom Irane* (*The Shi'ite Clergy in Modern Iran*) (Moscow: Nauka, 1985), 82.
45. David Menashri, *Iran between Islam and the West* (Israel: Ministry of Defence, 1996), 109.
46. Homa Katouzian, *Mosaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1990), 159–160.
47. Amir H. Ferdows, "Khomaini and Fadayan's Society and Politics," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2 (May 1983), 243.
48. CIA Document: "Analysis of Iranian political situation, topics include: popular support of Mossadeq's government; collapse of British position in Iran; Soviet position in Iran," Issue date: October 12, 1951.
49. Katouzian, *Mosaddiq and the Struggle for Power*, 160.
50. He claims that this argument is backed by American and British documents.
51. Ibid., 160.
52. Elgin Groseclose, "Crescent and Sickle; The Revival of Islam and Its Significance," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 10, 1951, 20.
53. Kazemi, "The *Fada'iyan-e Islam*," 165.
54. Doroshenko, *Shiitskoe dukhovenstvo v sovremennom Irane*, 82–83.
55. Ibid., 82.
56. Ibid., 89–90.
57. Ibid, p. 93.
58. Kazemi, "The *Fada'iyan-e Islam*," 165.
59. R. K. Ramzani, *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1988), 201; Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," 538.
60. Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie (eds.), *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 72; Abdulla Ahmad Qasir, *Qaraa fi al-faker al-Siasiya lilImam al-Khumeini* (Najaf: Harakat al-Tajdid wa ul-Istanahadh, 1987), 13, 95–97.

61. Albion Ross, "Ghavam Says Iran Seeks Oil Accord," *The New York Times*, July 19, 1952, 1.
62. A. W. Samii, "Falsafi, Kashani and the Baha'is," research notes in Shaykhi, Babi and Bahaa'i Studies, vol. 2, no. 5 (August 1998): http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/notes/vol2/falsafi.htm (accessed November 13, 2008).
63. Albion Ross, "Rioters Challenge New Iran Premier; Army is Called Out," *The New York Time*, July 20, 1952, 1.
64. CAB/129/54. H.M. Charge d'Affairs, Tehran, to the Foreign Office, July 28, 1952.
65. Albion Ross, "Frail Little Moslem Leader of 80 Holds Balance of Power in Iran," *The New York Times*, August 2, 1952, 4.
66. Ferdows, "Khomaini and Fadayan's Society and Politics," 245.
67. Polyzoides, "New Crisis Perils Iran Trade Hopes," *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1953, 24.
68. The Associated Press, "Mossadegh Forces Oust Kashani For New Iranian Speaker in Feud," *New York Times*, July 2, 1953, 1.
69. CAB 129/55—CABINET; Persia: Internal, Political Situation, October 17, 1952.
70. CAB 128/25—CABINET; Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet, December 4, 1952.
71. CIA: "Probable Developments in Iran in 1952 in the Absence of an Oil Settlement," Secret, National Intelligence Estimate, NIE-46, February 4, 1952. Item Number: IROO274.
72. CIA: "Probable Developments in Iran through 1953," January 9, 1953. Secret, National Intelligence Estimate, NIE-75/1. Item Number: IROO303. CIA: Office of Intelligence Research, Division of Research for Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Report No. 6126. Secret, January 9, 1953. Moyara de Moraes Ruehsen (July 1993) "Operation 'Ajax' Revisited: Iran, 1953," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3, 477.
73. CIA: "Probable Developments in Iran through 1955," Secret, National Intelligence Estimate, NIE 34–35, December 7, 1954. Item Number: IROO325.
74. Kennett Love, "Moslem Puts Ban on Iran Plebiscite," *The New York Times*, August 2, 1953, 19.
75. CIA: "Increasing Communist Threat in Iran," Department of State, Secret, Office of Intelligence Research, Division of Research for Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Report No. 5735. January 10, 1952. Issue Date: January 10, 1952, 9.
76. CIA: "Probable Developments in Iran through 1953," Issue Date: January 9, 1953, 2–5.
77. CIA: "Iran, Basic Factors Leading to the Nationalization of the Oil Industry in Iran," Office of Intelligence Research, Division of Research for Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Report No. 5683. March 6, 1952, 10.
78. National Security Council, Top Secret, "Current Policies of the Government of the United States of America Relating to the National Security": Volume I, Geographical Area Policies: Part V, Middle East—Iran. Issue Date: November 1, 1952, 2.

79. CIA: "Prospects for Survival of Mossadeq Government," Report, Secret, Issue Date: October 14, 1952, 1.
80. Department of State, Secret, "Fedayan Islam," Am Emb Tehran, Despatch No. 20. July 7, 1951. Issue Date: July 7, 1951, 1–2.
81. Department of State, Secret, "Increasing Communist Threat in Iran," Office of Intelligence Research, Report No. 5716. November 23, 1951, 8.
82. Department of State, Secret, "Luncheon Meeting with Prime Minister Mosadeq," Transmittal Memorandum, Dean Acheson, Secretary of State to the President. Issue Date: October 22, 1951.
83. Doroshenko, *Shiitskoe dukhovenstvo v sovremennom Irane*, 93.
84. Department of State. Confidential. Office of Intelligence Research, Report No. 4849. January 28, 1949, 110–111. Department of State. Secret, "Fedayan Islam," Am Emb Tehran, Despatch No. 20. Issue Date: July 7, 1951, 2.
85. Sayed Mohammad Ali Taghavi, "'Fadaeeyan-i Islam': The Prototype of Islamic Hard-liners in Iran," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 40, no. 1 (January 2004), 153–154.
86. Joanna De Groot, *Religion, Culture & Politics in Iran, From The Qajars to Khomeini* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 230.
87. Axworthy, *Iran—Empire of the Mind*, 245.
88. A. W. Samii, "Falsafi, Kashani and the Baha'is," Research Notes in Shaykhi, Babi and Bahaa'i Studies, vol. 2, no. 5 (August 1998); http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/notes/vol2/falsafi.htm (accessed November 13, 2008). Suspicions of this can be found in: Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The CIA Looks Back at the 1953 Coup in Iran," *Middle Eastern Report*, no. 216 (Autumn 2000), 4–5. Katouzian says that it was only Kashani who was bribed by the Americans.
89. Ibid.
90. Abbas Milani, *The Persian Sphinx; Amir Abbas Hoveyda and the Riddle of the Iranian Revolution* (Washington: Mage Publication, 2009), 121.
91. Venessa Martin, *Creating of an Islamic State* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 132; Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam,* 252. The Shiite tendency to stand aside from historical events probably stems from their role in the Abbasid revolution, which overthrew the Umayyad Caliphate. At that time they were employed to attack the Umayyads, but later the new regime took advantage of them, and they were even persecuted because of their primeval obsession with restoring the rule of the Prophet's offspring, the only legitimate regime in their eyes.
92. Kennett Love, "Iran's Crisis Prolonged by Political Maneuvers," *New York Times*, April 19, 1953, E4.
93. Mahmoud Sadri, "Shaikh Mahmud Halabi," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, http://www.iranica.com/newsite/.
94. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*, 116–117; Martin, *Creating of an Islamic State*, 18–19.
95. Kennett Love, "Zahedi's Cabinet Gibes at Kashani," *The New York Times*, February 22, 1954, 6.

3 THE BAHA'I FAITH AND ITS ORIGINS IN SHI'A ISLAM AND DESPAIR

1. Mansoor Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," *Theory and Society*, vol. 15, no. 4 (July 1986), 525.
2. Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal—The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844–1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 54–55.
3. Moojan Momen, "Usuli, Akhbari, Shaykhi, Babi: The Tribulations of Qazvin Family," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3 (September 2003), 322–323.
4. Denis MacEoin, "Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy in Nineteenth-Century Shi'ism: The Cases of Shaykhism and Babism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 110, no. 2 (April–June 1990), 325. The Hijra took place in 622; the twelfth imam disappeared in 873; therefore, according to the Shi'a, the Hidden Imam should have appeared in 1873.
5. Juan R. I. Cole, "Iranian Millenarianism and Democratic Thought in the 19th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1 (February 1992), 21.
6. Moshe Sharon, *The Baha'i Faith and its Holy Writ; The Most Holy Book (al-Kitab al-Aqdas),* in Hebrew Translation (Jerusalem, 2005), 53–64; Peter Smith, *An Introduction to the Baha'i Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3–6.
7. Siyamak Zabihi-Moghaddam, "The Babi-State Conflict at Shaykh Tabarsi," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1/3 (Winter–Summer 2002), 96–102. For further details concerning the Babi Movement's formation, see Abbas Amanat's outstanding work, *Resurrection and Renewal*, 109–152.
8. Some historians assume that the clergy feared losing their influence with the reappearance of the twelfth imam who would lead the masses by himself.
9. The followers of the Bab interpreted his imprisonment as a reoccurrence of events in the Mahdi's life, for he, like his father and grandfather before him, was imprisoned by the Abbasids.
10. Juan R. I. Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium; The Genesis of the Baha'i Faith in the Nineteenth-Century Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 26–29; Peter Avery et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume 7; From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 726–729; Nikki R. Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 4, no. 3 (April 1962), 267–268.
11. This thesis was to be developed within Baha'ism who saw Babism as its forerunner and wished to unify all religions into one.
12. Messengers also spread the Gospel of Christianity and the Druze.
13. While the persecution of the Babis by the Qajar regime may make sense, since Babism wished to replace it by replacing the Qajari rule with a Babi

theocracy, the persecution of other sects is less understood because the Sufis and the Shaykhis did not challenge the regime at all. For further details, see: Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," 522–525; John Walbridge, "The Babi Uprising in Zanjan: Causes and Issues," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3/4 (Summer–Autumn 1996), 339–362; Siyamak Zabihi-Moghaddam, "The Babi-State Conflict at Shaykh Tabarsi," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1/3 (Winter–Summer 2002), 87–112.

14. Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal*, 394–404; Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran," September 2008, 47–49.
15. Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question," 40.
16. This motive is typical of the Shi'a, which is a persecuted religion seeking its salvation through proselytizing faraway from its cradle.
17. Sharon, *The Baha'i Faith and its Holy Writ*, 65–81; Smith, *An Introduction*, 4–16.
18. The moments of revelation are crucial to the development of prophecy; they signify the transformation of an ordinary man into "The Chosen," sent by God to represent Him on earth, such as Moses, the shepherd, Jesus, the carpenter, and Muhammad, the merchant.
19. Mírzá Hussein-'Alí Núrí's transforming event can be explained in terms of his willingness (like Moses facing the burning bush or Muhammad in the cave) or his compulsory isolation in jail.
20. A similar argument concerning the sanctity of the Quran, whether it was created by God or was eternal like God himself, raged between the Ash'ariyya and Mu'tazila.
21. Bahá'u'lláh means "Glory of God."
22. Juan R. I. Cole, "Iranian Millenarianism and Democratic Thought in the 19th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1 (February 1992), 4.
23. Smith, *An Introduction*, 16–18. Cole, "Iranian Millenarianism," 3–6.
24. In Arabic numerology, "one" is 19 and can be interpreted either as the oneness of God, or as "the one that God will reveal in the right time."
25. Sharon, *The Baha'i Faith and its Holy Writ*, 82–91; Smith, *An Introduction*, 23–24; Soli Shahvar, *The Forgotten Schools; The Baha'is and Modern Education in Iran, 1899–1934* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009), 5; Cole, "Iranian Millenarianism," 4.
26. Sharon, *The Baha'i Faith and its Holy Writ*, 92–98; Cole, "Iranian Millenarianism," 6.
27. Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran," September 2008, 50.
28. For further information, see Moshe Sharon's book: Moshe Sharon, *The Baha'i Faith and its Holy Writ; The Most Holy Book (al-Kitab al-Aqdas)* in Hebrew Translation (Jerusalem, 2005).
29. Sharon, *The Baha'i Faith and its Holy Writ*, 106–116; Denis MacEoin, *Rituals in Babism and Baha'ism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994), 37–69.

30. On Baha'ism's attitude to women, see Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium*, 163–187; Janet A. Khan (Janet Adrienne) and Peter Khan, *Advancement of Women: A Bahá'í Perspective* (Baha'i Publication, 2003).
31. http://info.bahai.org/article-1–3-2–18.html.
32. Sharon, *The Baha'i Faith and its Holy Writ*, 112.

4 THE HOJJATIYEH SOCIETY

1. Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), 76.
2. *Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* (The history of the foundation of the Hojatieh Society) at http://www.nasirboushehr.com/journal-01-issue33–398.html. Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran," September 2008, 51.
3. Ibid., 42.
4. Moojan Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 252.
5. Mahmood T. Davari, *The Political Thought of Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari; An Iranian Theoretican of the Islamic State* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 34.
6. Ibid., 34.
7. Even Halabi was never mentioned in this remarkable book even though he was one of the key figures in the Mashhad seminars and Madrasas.
8. Davari, *The Political Thought of Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari*, 34.
9. Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectualls and the West; The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 96; Behram Choubine, "Suppression of Baha'is of Iran in 1955," 6, in http://www.kavehroom.com/books/23years/dashti1.pdf.
10. Choubine, "Suppression of Baha'is of Iran in 1955," pp. 11–13; M. J. Michael Fischer, "Repetitions in the Iranian Revolution," in *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, ed. Martin Kramer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 96.
11. Choubine, "Suppression of Baha'is of Iran in 1955," 9; *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* (September 11, 2003), "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya (Hojjatiyeh, Hojjatiyeh or Hojjatiyyeh) Society," IRN41774.E
12. Choubine, "Suppression of Baha'is of Iran in 1955," pp. 9, 14–15; Samii Bill, "Iran va Jahan. Is the Hojjatieh Society Making a Comeback?" *Radio Free Europe* (September 13, 2004).
13. Choubine, "Suppression of Baha'is of Iran in 1955," p. 24. The claim that the Hojjatiyeh were founded by the SAVAK is totally incorrect, since the Hojjatiyeh were established during 1953, while the SAVAK was founded in 1957. Concerning the foundation of the SAVAK in 1957, see: Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran; Roots and Results of Revolution*, Updated Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 134; Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 126.

14. Sharough Vaziri, "Les Groups Dominants et le Jeu Politique Islamique en Iran" (Switzerland: Centre D'etude et de Documentation Iraniennes, 2000), 2–3; Nazila Ghanea-Hercock, "Ethnic and Religious Groups in the Islamic Republic of Iran," *University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies*, October 2004, 9.
15. Richard Yann, "Le Rôle du clergé: tendances contradictoires du chi'isme iranien contemporain," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, vol. 28e, no. 55.1 (January–March 1983), 5–8.
16. Political Parties and Groups (from 15th Khordad uprising to the victory of the Islamic Revolution), in http://www2.irib.ir/worldservice/imam/hadith%20bidari/2.htm (accessed November 9, 2008).
17. Mansoor Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," *Theory and Society*, vol. 15, no. 4 (1986), 539.
18. The following resource is a book (probably, a version of the author's dissertation) based on Baqi's work and he cites him, occasionally word for word, in this context and in other issues: Zia'ul-Din, Owliya-Nasab, and Salman Alavi-Nik, *Jaryan shena'si-ye anjoman-e hojjatiyye* (Methodology of Hojjatiyeh Society) (Qom: Zalal Kowsar, 1375/2006), 12–13.
19. Imad al-Din Baqi, *Dar Shenokht hezb Qa'idin-e Zaman (Mowsum Be Anjoman-e Hojjatiyeh)* (in recognition of Qaedin Party—to be known as Hojatieh Society) (Tehran: Neshar Danesh Eslami, 1362/1984), 28–29; *Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh*; *Qesmat Davam* (The history of foundation of Hojjatiyeh Society): http://nasirboushehr.com/01/journal456.html.
20. Mahmoud Sadri, "Shaikh Mahmud Halabi," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, http://www.iranica.com/newsite/.
21. UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya Society," IRN41774.E, September 11, 2003; Sharough Vaziri, "Les Groupes Dominants et le Jeu Politique Islamique en Iran" (Switzerland: Centre D'etude et de Documentation Iraniennes, 2000), 2–3.
22. UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya Society," IRN41774.E, 11 September, 2003.
23. Sadri, "Shaikh Mahmud Halabi"; Abbas Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shi'ism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 224, http://www.arja.blogsky.com/1388/11/21/post-144.
24. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 30–31.
25. Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, "Anti-Baha'ism and Islamism in Iran," in *The Baha'is of Iran: Socio-historical Studies*, eds. Parviz Brookshaw and Seena B. Fazel (United Kingdom: Taylor Francis Ltd., 2010), 206–212. The article was originally written in Persian by Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi, "Baha'i-i Satizi va Islam-i garay dar Iran," banyad-i Matalat-i Iran, at http://fis-iran.org/fa/irannameh/volxix/anti-bahaiism
26. Tavakoli-Targhi, "Anti-Baha'ism and Islamism in Iran," 206.
27. UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* (September 11, 2003); "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya

(Hojjatiyeh, Hojjatiyeh or Hojjatiyyeh) Society," IRN41774.E, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,IRBC,IRN,403dd1f914,0.html (September 11, 2003).

28. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 29–30.
29. Following the Islamic Revolution many movements and parties flourished, among them the *Anjoman-e Imam-e Zaman*, which changed its name to Hojjatiyeh, meaning "followers and adherents." See Fischer, "Repetitions in the Iranian Revolution," 117–132.
30. *Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* (The history of foundation of Hojatieh Society) at http://www.nasirboushehr.com/journal-01-issue33–398.html; H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*; *The Liberation Movement of Iran Under the Shah and Khomeini* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 127.
31. M. J. Michael Fischer, "Repetitions in the Iranian Revolution," in *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, ed. Martin Kramer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 127.
32. Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam*, 222–225; Oliver Roy, *The Politics of Chaos in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 131. Translated from French by Ros Schwartz.
33. Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Zweiri Mahjoob, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives; the Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 92.
34. Roy, *The Politics of Chaos,* 278, n3.
35. *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* (September 11, 2003) "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya (Hojjatiyeh, Hojjatiyeh or Hojjatiyyeh) Society," IRN41774.E
36. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 29–30.
37. UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya Society," IRN41774.E, September 11, 2003.
38. Mehdi Abedi and M. J. Michael Fischer, "Autobiographical Stories of Mehdi Abedi: The Anti-Baha'i Society," in *Debating Muslims: Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition*, ed. M. J. Michael Fischer (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 48.
39. Ibid., 33.
40. Kasra Naji, *Ahmadinejad, the Secret History of Iran's Radical Leader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 15; Abedi and Fischer, "Autobiographical Stories of Mehdi Abedi," 48; Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran," September 2008, 40. Dean T. Olsen in his book *Perfect Enemy, The Law Enforcement Manual Islamist Terrorism* (Illinois: [?], 2009) says that the Hojjatiyeh was established in the 1950s, were named the "Charitable Society of the Mahdi" (Anjoman-e Khayriaya Hujjatiyeh Mahdaviyat), and was led by Sheikh Mahmud Halabi. Anyway, he mentions that they were extremely anticommunist, anti-Marxist, and antiatheists but does not mention that they were anti-Baha'i. He does, however, mention that their main goal was

to prepare the world for the Mahdi's immediate appearance and that chaos and an apocalypse would hasten the Mahdi's arrival (331–332). Mahmoud Hayati, *Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* (The history of the foundation of the Hojatieh Society) at http://www.nasirboushehr.com/01/journal481.html.

41. David Menashri, *Iran in Revolution* (Tel Aviv: HaKibutz HaMehuhad, 1988), 62.
42. Baqer Moin, *Khomeini, Life of the Ayatollah* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), 66.
43. Ibid., 66–67.
44. Amir Taheri, *The Spirit of Alla* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), 19;. Menashri, *Iran in Revolution*, 62.
45. Elgin Groseclose, "Crescent and Sickle; The Revival of Islam and Its Significance," *Christian Science Monitor* (1951), 20.
46. *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada*, "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya (Hojjatiyeh, Hojjatiyeh or Hojjatiyyeh) Society" (September 11, 2003), IRN41774.E
47. Behram Choubine, "Suppression of Baha'is of Iran in 1955," 22. http://www.kavehroom.com/books/23years/dashti1.pdf.
48. Yann Richard, "Le Rôle du clergé: tendances contradictoires du chi'isme iranien contemporain," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 28e Année 55.1 (1983), 5–27.
49. Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam*, 222.
50. Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State; Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 211.
51. Fariba Adelkhah, *Being Modern in Iran* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 92; Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives; the Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 64–65.
52. Fariba Adelkhah, *Being Modern in Iran* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 92.
53. After the revolution Halabi claimed he had communicated with the Hidden Imam in a dream. (This will be discussed in the chapter dealing with the confrontation between Halabi and Khomeini.) He probably kept the dream a secret until the death of Ayatollah Borujerdi, known as the "spokesman" of the imam, in 1961. *Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh*; *Qesmat Davam* (The history of foundation of Hojjatiyeh Society) at http://nasirboushehr.com/01/journal456.html.
54. http://www.oursouthazerbaijan.com/english_hoj.htm. *Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh*; *Qesmat Davam* (The history of foundation of Hojjatiyeh Society) at http://nasirboushehr.com/01/journal456.html.
55. Mahmoud Sadri, "Shaikh Mahmud Halabi," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, http://www.iranica.com/newsite/; Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran" (September 2008), 50; *Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh*; *Qesmat Davam* (The history of foundation of Hojjatiyeh Society) at http://nasirboushehr.com/01/journal456.html.

56. Nazila G. Hercock, "Ethnic and Religious Groups In The Islamic Republic of Iran," University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies (October 2004), 9–10.
57. *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh; Tashkilaty-e Sad Chehreh* (Hojatieh Society, a Hypocritical Society) at http://mehrabeandishe.blogfa.com/post-42.aspx.
58. Mahmoud Sadri, "Hojjatiya," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater 4, vol. XII, 427–428.
59. Ibid., 427–428; Bill Samii, "Iran: Resurgence of Religio-Political Society Raises Concerns," *Radio Free Europe, Radio Library*, July 11, 2006; Ganji Babak, "Iranian Strategy: Factionalism & Leadership Politics," Conflict Studies Research Centre, Middle East Series 07/06, *Defence Academy of the United Kingdom* (2007), 2–3.
60. Ahmad Ashraf and Ervand Abrahamian, "Bazaar and Mosque in Iran's Revolution," *Middle East Research and Information Project* (1983), 18.
61. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 194.
62. *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh; Tashkilaty-e Sad Chehreh* (Hojatieh Society, a Hypocritical Society) at http://mehrabeandishe.blogfa.com/post-42.aspx.
63. Davari, *The Political Thought of Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari*, 7.
64. Ibid., 9.
65. Ibid., 18.
66. Ibid., 8.
67. Mohammad Reza Ershadi-niya, *Az Madreseh-ye Ma'aref ta Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh va Maktab-e Tafkik* (From the School of Ma'aref to the Hojjatiyeh Society and its Separation Ideology) (Qom: Muwsasa Bustan-e Ketab, 2005), 20–25.
68. Davari, *The Political Thought of Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari*, 8.
69. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 194.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., 194; Abdulhossein Tavalay (2010) *Hojjatiyyeh binash ya tashakel* (Hojjatiyeh, insight or Society) at http: //www.boshgoh.net/pages-17231.html.
72. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 194.
73. Ershadi-niya, *Az Madreseh-ye Ma'aref ta Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh va Maktab-e Tafkik*, 20–25.
74. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 194.
75. Ibid., 38.
76. Jerry Guo, "Letter from Tehran: Iran's New Hard-Liners; Who Is in Control of the Islamic Republic," *Foreign Affairs*, www.foreignaffairs.com /print/65429, http://www.oursouthazerbaijan.com/english_hoj.htm.
77. Abedi and Fischer, "Autobiographical Stories of Mehdi Abedi," 54.
78. Sadri, "Hojjatiya," 427–428.
79. Ibid., 427–428.
80. *Taghot* means "tyrant" and is the word applied by mullahs to the shah's regime.
81. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 180.
82. Ibid., 181; Hayati, *Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* (The history of foundation of Hojatieh Society) at http://www.nasirboushehr .com/01/journal481.html.

83. The *Iqan* is a book written by Mirza Hosseinali Nuri known as *Bahullah*.
84. Criticism of *Iqan*.
85. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 182–187.
86. Ibid., 187–188.
87. A beginner was one who had recently been absorbed into the Baha'i faith.
88. Ibid., 188–193.
89. Sadri, "Hojjatiya," 427–428; http://www.oursouthazerbaijan.com/english_hoj.htm.
90. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 188–193.
91. A. W. Samii, "Falsafi, Kashani and the Baha'is"; http://www.h-net.org/-bahai/notes/vol2/falsafi.htm (last modified November 13, 2008).
92. Behram Choubine, "Suppression of Baha'is of Iran in 1955," http://www.kavehroom.com/books/23years/dashti1.pdf.
93. Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 77–78.
94. Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran," September 2008, 43–44.
95. Caryle Murphy, "U.S. Bahais Denounce Abuses," *The Washington Post*, July 6, 1983, A1.
96. International, United Press International, July 27, 1983.
97. Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran" (September 2008), 44–45.
98. It's very surprising that Baqi, who was the first to write on the Hojjatiyeh, does not mention their relationship with the SAVAK. The assumption is that when he published his book (1983) the SAVAK files were still unpublished and one should assume that he (probably among others) did not know about such a relationship with the SAVAK. On the other hand, one of the Persian sources claims that "from the first days of Islamic revolution, Anjoman [the Hojjatiyeh] in order to destroy the documents of its dependence and close ties with the SAVAK, targeted the SAVAK offices and destroyed all the documents. The Islamic republic of Iran's national documents center was in the hands of Hojjatiyeh people until 1362[1984]." In http://www.arja.blogsky.com/1388/11/21/post-144. This could explain Baqi's lack of SAVAK sources.
99. "Anjoman-e Hojjatiyeh va Savak," http://www.askquran.ir/showthread.php?t=4615.
100. *Anjoman-e Hojjatieh; Tashkilaty-e Sad Chehreh* (Hojatieh Society, a Hypocritical Society) at http://mehrabeandishe.blogfa.com/post-42.aspx. *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh va Savak* (Hojatieh Society and the SAVAK [shah's intelligent service]) at http://www.askquran.ir/showthread.php?t=4615; Fatah Gholamy, *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* va Savak (Hojatieh Society and the SAVAK [shah's intelligent service]) at http://www.bashgah.net/pages-550.html (accessed June 21, 2010).
101. Zia'ul-Din Owliya-Nasab and Salman Alavi-Nik, *Jaryan shena^si-ye anjoman-e hojjatiyye* (Methodology of Hojjatiyeh Society) (Qom: Zalal Kowsar, 1375/2006), 120.
102. *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh; Tashkilaty-e Sad Chehreh* (Hojatieh Society, a Hypocritical Society) at http://mehrabeandishe.blogfa.com/post-42.aspx.

103. Ibid., 129–130.
104. Mokfi Mazyar and Recknagel Charles, "Could Ahmadinejad's Mix Of Mysticism and Politics Lead to a Power Grab?," *Radio Free Europe, Radio Library*, August 5, 2009.
105. Sadri, "Hojjatiya," 427–428.
106. http://www.oursouthazerbaijan.com/english_hoj.htm. UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya Society" (September 11, 2003) IRN41774.E. *Muhtashemy Pur: Pusht Sar Tamam Fateneh-hay-e Ke Rakh Dadeh, Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh Ra my-binam* (Hojjatiyeh Society is behind of (cause of) all intrigues) at http://www.parlemannews.ir/?n=8522.
107. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 35.
108. Ibid., 198–201.

5 DANGER AHEAD: CHALLENGING KHOMEINI

1. Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam, The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 290.
2. Ibid., 291.
3. Said Amir Arjomand, "History, Structure, and Revolution in the Shi'ite Tradition in Contemporary Iran," *International Political Science Review*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1989), 113.
4. Ibid., 292.
5. Ibid., 293–296.
6. "Mullahs Divided; Right-Wingers vs. Khomeini," *Time Magazine*, Section: World; Iran (December 7, 1981), 49.
7. Shireen T. Hunter, "Iran's New Power Struggle," *The Christian Science Monitor* (July 27, 1983), 22.
8. Eric Hooglund, "The Gulf War and the Islamic Republic," *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*, no. 125/126 (July–September 1984), 33.
9. "Holier than Khomeini," *The Economist*, Section: International (February 19, 1983), 50; Hunter, "Iran's New Power Struggle," 22.
10. Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, "The Establishment of the Position of Marja'iyyt-i Taqlid in the Twelver-Shi'i Community," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1 (Winter 1985), 35–38.
11. Mahmood T. Davari, *The Political Thought of Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari; An Iranian Theoretican of the Islamic State* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 7.
12. Ibid., 123–125.
13. Hamid Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire* (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2008), 46. For further details, see David Menashri, *Iran in Revolution* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hamehuhad, 1988), 55–57.

14. Hamid Algar, *Governance of the Jurist*, The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, International Affairs Division (Tehran, [?]), 4; Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, "The Establishment of the Position of Marja'iyyt-i Taqlid in the Twelver-Shi'i Community," *Iranian Studies*, vol. XVIII, no. 1 (Winter 1985), 40–44; Mehran Kamrava, *Iran's Intellectual Revolution* (Cambridge, 2008), 106–107; Moussavi, "The Establishment of the Position of Marja'iyyt-i Taqlid," 40.
15. Moussavi, "The Establishment of the Position of Marja'iyyt-i Taqlid," 41–44. It seems that Khomeini saw the replacement of the secular regime by the clergy while the Hojjatiyeh saw the clergy as equal to the regime.
16. Bill Samii, "Iran: Resurgence of Religio-Political Society Raises Concerns," *Radio Free Europe, Radio Library*, July 11, 2006; David Menashri, "Iran (Jumhuriyye Islamiyye Iran)," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, The Shiloh Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, vol. VI, ed. Colin Lugum (1981–1982), 535–537; Mehdi Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univcersity Press, 2002), 59–60.
17. Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 60, 269.
18. Menashri, "Iran (Jumhuriyye Islamiyye Iran)," 62.
19. BBC, Literaturnaya Gazeta: "'Islamic Despotism' in Iran," SU/7372/A4/1, June 29, 1983.
20. Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 59–60; G. H. Jansen, "Iran's Divided Mullahs Pursue a Zigzag Path on Internal Reform," *Los Angeles Times* (September 16, 1984), E2.
21. Sami Zubaida, "An Islamic State? The Case of Iran," *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*, no. 153 (July–August 1988), 6; Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 60.
22. Eric Hooglund, "The Gulf War and the Islamic Republic," *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*, no. 125/126 (July–September 1984), 33.
23. Sharough Vaziri, "Les Groupes Dominants et le Jeu Politique Islamique en Iran" (Switzerland: Centre D'etude et de Documentation Iraniennes, 2000), 2–3; John von Heyking, "Iran's President and the Politics of the Twelfth Imam," Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs at Ashland University: http://www.ashbrook.org/publicat/guest/05/vonheyking/twelfthimam.html (accessed October 25, 2010).
24. World; Iran, "Mullahs Divided; Right-wingers vs. Khomeini," *Time Magazine* (December 7, 1981), 49.
25. Claude van England, "Factions in Iran Ready for Power Struggle after Khomeini," *The Christian Science Monitor* (October 12, 1982), 3.
26. Claude van England, "Iran Finds Its Self-Isolation Gets a Cool Reception Abroad," *The Christian Science Monitor* (October 27, 1982), 5.
27. "Iran's Persecution of Bahai's," *The Christian Science Monitor* (July 14, 1983), 24.
28. International, "Iran; Holier than Khomeini," *The Economist* (February 19, 1983), 50.
29. Thom Workman, *The Social Origins of the Iran-Iraq War*, PhD Candidate Paper (Ontario: Centre for International and Strategic Studies: York University, March 1991), 24.

30. IRNA, "Denunciation of Bazargan's Freedom Movement," ME/7154/A/1, October 12, 1982.
31. Maziar Behrooz, "Factionalism in Iran under Khomeini," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 27, no. 4 (October 1991), 601; R. W. Apple Jr., "Khomeini's Grip Appears at Its Tightest," *The New York Times* (November 21, 1982), 1.
32. William J. Olson, "The Succession Crisis in Iran," *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Summer 1983), 156–[?]. Mahdavi-Kani replaced Raja'i as president from August 30, 1981, to October 13, 1981, and served as prime minister from September 2, 1981, to October 31, 1981, instead of Mohammad-Javad Bahonar who was assassinated. He was replaced as prime minister by Mir-Hossein Moussavi, and as president by Ali Khamene'i.
33. Vaziri, "Les Groupes Dominants et le Jeu Politique Islamique en Iran," 2–3.
34. Fred Halliday, "Year IV of the Islamic Republic," *Middle East Research and Information Project—MERIP* (March–April 1983), 4.
35. John Kifner, "Khomeini Faction Challenged by More Conservative Group," *The New York Times* (April 13, 1982), A1.
36. Geoffrey Godsell, "Resolution of Iran's Power Struggle Hinges on Outcome of Iran-Iraq War," *The Christian Science Monitor* (May 12, 1982), 7.
37. Barry Rubin, "Iran, the Ayatollah, and U.S. Options," *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Summer 1983), 144–152.
38. Imad al-Din Baqi, *Dar Shenokht hezb Qa'idin-e Zaman (Mowsum Be Anjoman-e Hojjatiyeh)* (In recognition of Qaedin Party [to be known as Hojatieh Society]) (Tehran: Neshar Danesh Eslami, 1362/1984), 125–126.
39. Jansen, "Iran's Divided Mullahs Pursue a Zigzag Path," E2.
40. BBC, Free Voice of Iran, ME/7371/A/1 (June 28, 1983).
41. Godsell, "Resolution of Iran's Power Struggle," 7; Claude van England, "Khomeini Shifts to Political Sidelines," *The Christian Science Monitor* (September 4, 1984), 13.
42. Hunter, "Iran's New Power Struggle," 22.
43. Jansen, "Iran's Divided Mullahs Pursue a Zigzag Path," E2.
44. Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Piety and Power; Iran's Clerics Tighten Grip by Instilling Islam in Every Detail of Life," *The Wall Street Journal* (December 1, 1982), 1.
45. John Kifner, "Khomeini Faction Challenged by More Conservative Group," *The New York Times* (April 13, 1982), A1.
46. Jonathan C. Randal, "Iran's Clergy Divided By Succession Battle," *The Washington Post* (April 16, 1982), A20.
47. Assef Bayat, "Workers' Control after the Revolution," *Middle East Research and Information Project—MERIP* (March–April 1983), 20.
48. Assef Bayat, *Workers and Revolution in Iran* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1987), 156; Assef Bayat, "Labor and Democracy in Post-Revolutionary Iran," in *Post-Revolutionary Iran*, eds. Hooshang Amirahmadi and Manoucher Parvin (London: Westview Press, 1988), 51.
49. Bayat, *Workers and Revolution in Iran*, 192 (n13).
50. BBC, Radio Iran, "Iranian Prime Minister on the Economy: 'Dark Gangs' in the Bazaar," ME/7383/A/1 (July 12, 1983).

51. Arjomand, "History, Structure, and Revolution in the Shi'ite Tradition," 113.
52. BBC Hanley, Free Voice of Iran, ME/7371/A/1 (June 28, 1983).
53. Charles J., "Militant Iranians Prosecute Bahais," *Los Angeles Times* (September 21, 1980), 4.
54. Mahmoud Sadri, "Hojjatiya," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. XII, Fascicle 4, edited by Ehsan Yarshater, 427–428.
55. Vaziri, "Les Groupes Dominants et le Jeu Politique Islamique en Iran," 2–3; International, "Iran; Holier than Khomeini," *The Economist* (February 19, 1983), 50; Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran" (September 2008), 40.
56. Samii, "Iran: Resurgence of Religio-Political Society Raises Concerns."
57. Geoffrey Cameron, "The Denial of Higher Education to the Baha'is of Iran," published as: "Baha'is in Iran," Oxford Forum, vol. 7, (2007): http://www.theoxfordforum.com/latest_issu.html.
58. BBC, Moscow in Persian, "Hojjatiyeh members 'CIA Fifth Column,'" SU/7456/A4/1 (October 5, 1983).
59. Reuters, "Iranians Dissolve Communist Party," *The New York Times* (May 5, 1983), A1.
60. International, "Iran; Holier Than Khomeini," *The Economist* (February 19, 1983), 50.
61. BBC, National Voice of Iran (in Persian), "Advice to Iranian Revolution Guards," ME/7390/A/7 (July 20, 1983); Hunter, "Iran's New Power Struggle," 22; BBC, Soviet Television, "US Links with Iran," Su/7409/A4/3 (August 11, 1983).
62. For further details regarding the Hojjatiyeh names, see chapter four in this volume.
63. Michael M. J. Fischer, "Repetitions in the Iranian Revolution," in *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, ed. Martin Kramer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 128.
64. Two attitudes: one, the Mahdi will return when the world is in a state of chaos, the other, it is necessary to create artificial chaos.
65. Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival; How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 133.
66. Kasra Naji, *Ahmadinejad, The Secret History of Iran's Radical Leader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 15.
67. Fischer, "Repetitions in the Iranian Revolution," 128.
68. Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State; Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 121.
69. Fariba Adelkhah, *Being Modern in Iran* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 93.
70. Ibid.
71. Baqer Moin, *Khomeini, Life of the Ayatollah* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), 254–256.
72. Ibid., 256.
73. Ayatollah Halabi's letter to Khomeini, 6–8 Farvardin 1361 (March 26–28, 1982).

74. Moin, *Khomeini, Life of the Ayatollah*, 256.
75. Menashri, *Iran in Revolution*, 139; Mahmoud Hayati, *Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* (The history of the foundation of the Hojatieh Society): http://www.nasirboushehr.com/01/journal481.html.
76. Menashri, *Iran in Revolution*, 140.
77. Baqi, *Dar Shenokht*, 201–205.
78. Amir Taheri, *The Spirit of Alla* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), 191.
79. Joanna De Groot, *Religion, Culture & Politics in Iran, from The Qajars to Khomeini* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 58.
80. Taheri, *The Spirit of Alla*, 192.
81. Ibid., 285.
82. *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh; Tashkilaty-e Sad Chehreh* (Hojjatiyeh Society, a Hypocritical organization): http://mehrabeandishe.blogfa.com/post-42.aspx.
83. Ibid.
84. http://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/130960/ارزیابی-افروغ-از-رابطه-مکتب-ایرانی-و-حجتیه
85. Eric Hooglund, "The Gulf War and the Islamic Republic," *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)* no. 125/126 (July–September 1984), 33.
86. BBC, "The 'So-called Islamic Association,'" *National Voice of Iran* (in Persian), ME/7061/A/8 (June 25, 1982).
87. BBC, National Voice of Iran (in Persian), "Comparison of Persecution under the Shah and Khomeyni," ME/7297/A/9 (March 29, 1983).
88. "Iranian Leader Worried about Disunity among Ruling Clergy," *Xinhua General News Service* (July 20, 1983), Item No: 072029; Samii, "Iran: Resurgence of Religio-Political Society Raises Concerns."
89. BBC, *Tehran home service*, "'American-Style Islam the Greatest Enemy' of Iranian Revolution," ME/7391/A/1 (July 21, 1983).
90. BBC, "Pro-Western Faction Reported within Iranian Leadership," *National Voice of Iran* (in Persian), ME/7756/A/1 (September 24, 1984).
91. BBC, Radio Iran, "Interior Minister's Speech Disrupted," ME/7386/A/1 (July 15, 1983).
92. David Menashri, "Iran (Jumhuriyye Islamiyye Iran)," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, The Shiloh Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, vol. VII, ed. Colin Lugum (1982–1983), 519–521.
93. Sadri, "Hojjatiya," 427–428.
94. Ibid.; Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran" (September 2008), 50; http://www.oursouthazerbaijan.com/english_hoj.htm; Mohammad Mohaddessin, *Islamic Fundamentalism, the New Global Threat* (Washington: Seven Locks Press, 1993), 57.
95. Sadri, "Hojjatiya," 427–428; Baha'i International Community, "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran" (September 2008), 50: http://www.oursouthazerbaijan.com/english_hoj.htm; Mohaddessin, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, 57.
96. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, 55, 150.
97. *Taqia*—hiding religion or opinion in times of danger.
98. BBC, "Iran Majlis ratifies Draft Bill On Non-Profit Making Schools," *Tehran home service,* ME/0084/A/1 (February 25, 1988).

99. BBC, *Voice of the Kaviyani Banner of Iran*, ME/0443/A/1 (April 1989).
100. Ibid.
101. Mazyar Mokfi and Charles Recknagel, "Could Ahmadinejad's Mix of Mysticism and Politics Lead to a Power Grab?," *Radio Free Europe, Radio Library* (August 5, 2009); Babak Ganji, "Iranian Strategy: Factionalism & Leadership Politics," Conflict Studies Research Centre, Middle East Series 07/06, *Defence Academy of the United Kingdom* (March 2007), 4–5. See further details in chapter six.
102. Baqer Moin, *Khomeini, Life of the Ayatollah* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), 256.
103. UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya Society," IRN41774.E (September 11, 2003).
104. Mahmood T. Davari, *The Political Thought of Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari; An Iranian Theoretican of the Islamic State* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 7.
105. Bill Samii, "Iran va Jahan. Is the Hojjatieh Society Making a Comeback?," *Radio Free Europe* (September 13, 2004).
106. "Shi'ite supremacists emerge from Iran's Shadows," *Asia Times Online* (September 9, 2005): http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GI09Ak01.html (accessed October 25, 2010).
107. Samii, "Iran va Jahan."
108. http://www.arja.blogsky.com/1388/11/21/post-144.
109. Samii, "Iran va Jahan."
110. *Asia Times*, "Shi'ite Supremacists Emerge from Iran's Shadows from a Special Correspondent" (September 9, 2005).
111. BBC, "E'temad" website (Tehran, in Persian), "Iran Press: Senior Cleric Comments on 'American Islam'" (September 18, 2005); *Muhtashemy Pur: Pusht Sar Tamam Fateneh-hay-e Ke Rakh Dadeh, Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh Ra my-binam* (Hojatieh Society is behind of [cause of] all intrigues): http://www.parlemannews.ir/?n=8522.
112. BBC, "Aftab-e Yazd" website (Tehran, in Persian), "Iran Press: Senior Politician Criticizes Some Reformists" (August 26, 2006).
113. BBC, "Kayhan" website (Tehran, in Persian), "Iran Press: Letter Defends Reformist Cleric Who Attacked Hardline Ayatollah" (London: September 4, 2006); "Resalat" (Tehran, in Persian), "Iran Press: Commentary Defends Mesbah against Claim of being 'Sect' Leader" (August 29, 2006).
114. BBC, "E`temad" website (Tehran, in Persian), "Iran Press."

6 THE EVOLUTION OF EXTREMISM

1. Sharough Vaziri, "Les Groupes Dominants et le Jeu Politique Islamique en Iran" (Switzerland: Centre D'etude et de Documentation Iraniennes, 2000), 2–3.

2. Ibid.
3. Ze'ev Maghen, "Occultation in Prepetuum: Shi'ite Eschatology and the Iranian Nuclear Crisis," Institute for Policy and Strategy (Herzliya, 2007), 25.
4. Ibid.
5. *Middle East News Items*, "Mahdaviyat Group another Scapegoat" (November 29, 1999).
6. Abbas Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shi'ism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 223.
7. BBC, Iran News Agency, "Information Ministry Says it has Crushed Extremist Group Plotting to Kill President" (November 27, 1999), ME/D3703/MED.
8. UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya Society" (September 11, 2003), IRN41774.E.
9. Ibid.
10. *Middle East News Items*, "Mahdaviyat Group Another Scapegoat" (November 29, 1999); *Associated Press Worldstream*, "Iranian Authorities Arrest Group Suspected of Planning Assassination" (November 25, 1999); *Agence France Presse—English*, "Assassination Plot against President Smashed: Iran" (November 25, 1999); *Los Angeles Times*, "Iran Says It Thwarted Plot To Kill Khatami" (November 26, 1999), 36; BBC, *Iran News Agency*, "Information Ministry Says it has Crushed Extremist Group Plotting to Kill President" (November 27, 1999), ME/D3703/MED.
11. BBC, Iran News Agency (Jan 7, 1999) 'MKO Group Reportedly Claims Responsibility for Assassination Attempt', ME/D3426/MED.
12. *The Iran Brief*, "Messianic Group Said to Be Behind Assassination" (May 3, 1999); *Associated Press Worldstream*, "Iran Blames Failed Assassination Attempt on Secretive Group" (April 24, 1999).
13. *Agence France Presse—English*, "Iran Blames Fundamentalist Group for Attack on Judicial Official" (April 24, 1999); BBC, *Iran News Agency*, "Guards Commander Blames Extremist Shi'i Group For bid to Kill Judicial Official" (April 24, 1999), ME/D3518/MED; *The Record (Bergen County, NJ),* "Messianic Group Blamed for Attack On Judge in Iran" (April 24, 1999), A17; *Chicago Tribune*, "Cleric's Kin Arrested For Attack on Judge" (April 24, 1999), 15; BBC, *Tehran Times*, "Iranian Paper Says Razini's assailant Extradited from UAE" (August 20, 1999), ME/D3618/MED.
14. *Middle East News Items*, "Mahdaviyat Group Another Scapegoat."
15. Maghen, "Occultation in Prepetuum," 26; italic in the source.
16. Ibid., p. 25.
17. Said Amir Arjomand, *Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 157–158.
18. Mohammad Reza Ershadi-niya, *Az Madreseh-ye Ma'aref ta Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh va Maktab-e Tafkik* (From the School of Ma'aref to the Hojjatiyeh Society and Its Separation Ideology) (Qom: Muwsasa Bustan-e Ketab, 2005), 20–25.

19. "Second of Khordad Frond" is the date when Khatami won the presidential elections in 1997.
20. BBC, Iranian Newspaper Hamshari (Tehran, in Persian), "Iran: Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi Says Islamic Ruler 'Appoints' the President" (December 7, 1998).
21. *The Washington Post*, "Iran's Khatemi Asks for Tolerance of Free Expression" (November 26, 1998), A51.
22. *Associated Press Worldstream*, "Khomeini Never Intended to Have Rushdie Killed, Cleric Says" (August 26, 1999); *The Iran Brief*, "Rafsanjani to Succeed Khamene'i?" (October 4, 1999); BBC, Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, "Iran: Yazdi Urges Judiciary to 'Take Action' against 'Mercenary Writers'" (September 18, 1999).
23. *Meed Quarterly Report- Iran*, "Iran: Political Outlook" (November 5, 1999), 5; *Meed Quarterly Report—Iran*, "Iran: Political Outlook" (October 26, 1999).
24. *Mideast Mirror*, "Iran Reformists Shoot for 'Another Second of Khordad'" (February 11, 2000), vol. 14, no. 29.
25. Arya newspaper, Tehran, reprinted in Keyhan, London edition, no. 794, February 10, 2000.
26. Susan Sachs, "Runoff Voting in Iran Tests Majority Hope of Reformers" (May 6, 2000), *The New York Times*, 6.
27. BBC, Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, "Iran: Yazdi Urges Judiciary to 'Take Action' against 'Mercenary Writers'"; Ann Elizabeth Mayer, "The Universality of Human Rights: Lessons from the Islamic Republic; Iran," *Social Research*, vol. 67, no. 2 (June 22, 2000), 519.
28. BBC, Jomhuri-ya Eslami' website (Tehran, in Persian), "Iran: Paper Links CIA Director's Comments to 'Attacks'" against Mesbah-Yazdi" (February 5, 2000); *Agence France Presse—English*, "Iranian Conservative Claims CIA Infiltrated Government" (January 27, 2000); Metthew Mcallester, "Cartoonist Draws Political Heat Jailed, Banned for Being Critical of Iranian Cleric" (February 17, 2000), *Newsday*, A22.
29. *Agence France Presse—English,* "Iranian Conservative Claims CIA Infiltrated Government" (January 27, 2000).
30. BBC, "Resalat" (Tehran, in Persian), "Iran: Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi Vows to Continue Fight against USA" (October 18, 2000).
31. Kasra Naji, *Ahmadinejad, the Secret History of Iran's Radical Leader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 15.
32. Ibid., 46, 80, 265–266; Mazyar Mokfi, Charles Recknagel, "Could Ahmadinejad's Mix Of Mysticism and Politics Lead to A Power Grab?": http://www.rferl.org/content/Could_Ahmadinejads_Mix_Of_Mysticism_And_Politics_Lead_To_A_Power_Grab/1793312.html (August 5, 2009); "The Return of the Hojatieh": http://bahairants.com/the-return-of-the-hojatieh-81.html (December 14, 2005).
33. Shimon Shapira and Dan Diker, "Iran's Second Islamic Revolution," in *Iran, Hizbullah, Hamas, and the Global Jihad: A New Conflict Paradigm for the West* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2007): http://jcpa.org/text/iran_page_44–61.pdf: 44, 48, 56–57, 59. Following the relevant notes

inside this research (3, 102, 103, 105, and 122) does not bring to the surface sufficient facts to reveal that neither the Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi nor President Ahmadinejad are members or were members of the Hojjatiyeh. Only one source, albeit nonacademic and very affiliated with the Baha'is, suggests that they were members and are due to try to implement the Hojjatiyeh's methods inside Iranian politics especially in regard to all that is related to creating chaos in order to hasten the arrival of the Hidden Imam. This is a claim that is not true and has no evidence in the sources and history of the Hojjatiyeh.

34. The cybernetic atmosphere is totally packed with these assessments and "must read" information. We cannot be sure of both of the assessments—that Yazdi and Ahmadinejad are or are not members of the Hojjatiyeh. We can only assume from their deeds whether they are close to employing any Hojjatiyeh methods and still this will only be an assessment and not factual deeds. Moreover, their deeds can easily confuse us with the numerous societies and organizations that we can assume Yazdi-Ahmadinejad is related to.
35. Naji, *Ahmadinejad*, 58.
36. Ibid., 98.
37. Afshin Valinejad, "Iran's Leading Journalist Says Former Intelligence Minister Ordered Murder of Dissidents" (November 30, 2000), *Associated Press Worldstream*.
38. Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives; the Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 65.
39. Naji, *Ahmadinejad*, 92.
40. BBC, Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran network (in Persian), "Pilgrims Perform Ceremonies in Mina despite Saudi Obstruction" (May 26, 1994), ME/2006/MED.
41. BBC, Islamic Republic News Agency, "Judiciary Chief Comments on Source of Emulation, Prisons and the Pope's Remarks" (December 8, 1994), ME/2173/MED.
42. Naji, *Ahmadinejad*, 92.
43. For further details, see ibid., 93–98.
44. Anoushiravan and Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives*, 64–65.
45. BBC, "Iran Majlis Ratifies Draft Bill on Non-Profit-Making Schools," Tehran Home Service, The Middle East, ME/0084/A/1, February 25, 1988.
46. *Associated Press Worldstream*, "Iranian Authorities Arrest Group Suspected of Planning Assassination" (November 25, 1999); *Agence France Presse—English*, "Assassination Plot against President Smashed: Iran" (November 25, 1999); *Los Angeles Times*, "Iran Says It Thwarted Plot to Kill Khatami" (November 26, 1999), 36; BBC, Iran News Agency, "Information Ministry Says it has Crushed Extremist Group Plotting to Kill President" (November 27, 1999), ME/D3703/MED; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Middle East News Items, "Mahdaviyat Group Another Scapegoat" (November 29, 1999).

CONCLUSIONS

1. The ideology of Ayatollah Salihi was supported by Ayatollah Montazeri who was a candidate to replace Khomeini. Montazeri was stripped of this candidacy because of his statements against the repressive methods employed against the Islamic regime's opponents, and probably not due to unwelcome remarks against the idea of the "Velayat Faqih" led by Khomeini. For more about Montazeri and the question of Khomeini's inheritance, see Saskia Gieling, "The Marja'iya in Iran and the Nomination of Khamene'i in December 1994," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 33, no. 4 (October 1997), 777–787. And also David Menashri, "'The Rule of the Clergyman' in Iran Standing the Test of Post-revolution Criticism," in *Iran, Anatomy of a Revolution* (in Hebrew), eds. David Menashri and Leora Hendelman-Baavur (Tel Aviv, 2009), 32–33. On the Usuliyya and Akhbariyya Schools, see Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, "The Establishment of the Position of Marja'iyyt-i Taqlid in the Twelver-Shi'i Community," *Iranian Studies*, vol. XVIII, no. 1 (Winter 1985), 35–51. And also Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "Remarques sur les critères d'authenticité du hadîth et l'autorité du juriste dans le shi'isme imamate," *Studia Islamica*, no. 85 (1997), 5–39.
2. The Ayatollah Khomeini filled this criterion since he was a Sayyid, which is in fact a descendant of the Prophet.
3. Therefore, the Shi'a preserve a deep resentment toward the Baha'i, who virtually cancelled religious worship and the need for clerics.
4. The entrance of Russia and Britain into Persian territory, together with the weakness and suppleness of the Qajar government, led the same powers to reach political and economic management of the country, which inevitably led to religious antagonism. Among the events in this period were the Tobacco Rebellion (1897) and the Constitutional Revolution (1906–1907).
5. A democratic term, but at this stage, it can be a confusing term in itself.
6. Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Zweiri Mahjoob, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives; the Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 65.

Bibliography

Books in English

Abrahamian, Ervand. *A History of Modern Iran.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Adelkhah, Fariba. *Being Modern in Iran.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Afkhami, Gholam R. *The Life and Times of the Shah.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Akhavy, Shahrough. *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran; Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi period.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980.

Amanat, Abbas. *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shi'ism.* London: I. B. Tauris, 2009.

———. *Resurrection and Renewal—The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844–1850*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Arjomand, Said Amir. *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam; Religion, Political Order, and Social Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890.* Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1984.

Axworthy, Michael. *Iran, Empire of the Mind—A History from Zoroaster to the Present Day*. London: Penguin Books, 2007.

Baqir, Muhammad bin Muhammad Taqi bin Maqsud. *Bihar al-Anwar al-Jama't lildarar Akhbar al-Imat al-Athar*. Taba't Tehran: Dar al-kitab al-Islamia, 1698.

Bayat, Assef. *Workers and Revolution in Iran*. London: Zed Books Ltd, 1987.

Boroujerdi, Mehrzad. *Iranian Intellectuals and the West; The Tormented Triumph of Nativism*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996.

Chapin Helen, ed. *Iran, a Country Study.* Library of Congress: Federal Research Division, 1989.

Chehabi, H. E. *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*; *The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Cole, Juan R. I. *Modernity and the Millennium; The Genesis of the Baha'i Faith in the Nineteenth-Century Middle East.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Cole, Juan R. I., and Nikki R. Keddie, eds. *Shi'ism and Social Protest*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Dabashi, Hamid. *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire*. London: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2008.

De Groot, Joanna. *Religion, Culture & Politics in Iran, from the Qajars to Khomeini.* London: I. B. Tauris, 2007.

Doroshenko, Elena Alekseevna. *The Shi'ite Clergy in Modern Iran* (*Shiitskoe dukhovenstvo v sovremennom Irane*). Moscow: Nauka, 85.

Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, and Mahjoob Zweiri. *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives; the Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2009.

Fuller, E. Graham, and Rend Rahim Francke. *The Arab Shi'a—The Forgotten Muslim.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Gheissari, Ali, and Vali Nasr. *Democracy in Iran, History and the Quest for Liberty.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Heern, Zackery M. *Usuli Shi'ism: The Emergence of an Islamic Reform Movement in Early Modern Iraq and Iran*. A dissertation submitted to the faculty of The University of Utah, Department of History, University of Utah, 2011.

al-Idrisi, Seyyed Hamid. *Al-Fadhiha leMadhhab al-Shia al-Imameya* ([?]: Maktabat al-Radhwan, 2007). Retrieved at www.waqfeya.com/book.php?bid=6113 (February 29, 2012).

al-Khalifa, Majeed. *Gharaib Fuqahiya I'nd al-Shi'a al-Imamiya*. http://www.dr-majeed.net.

Katouzian, Homa. *Mosaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran.* London: I. B. Tauris, 1990.

Keddie, Nikki R. *Modern Iran; Roots and Results of Revolution*, updated edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Martin, Vanessa. *Creating an Islamic State; Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*. U.K: I. B. Tauris, 2003.

Menashri, David. *Iran between Islam and the West*. Israel: Ministry of Defence, 1996.

———. *Iran in Revolution* (in Hebrew). Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hamehuhad, 1988.

Milani, Abbas. *Eminent Persians: The Men and Women Who Made Modern Iran, 1941–1979*, vol. 1. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008.

———. *The Persian Sphinx; Amir Abbas Hoveyda and the Riddle of the Iranian Revolution*. Washington: Mage Publication, 2009.

Mohaddessin, Mohammad. *Islamic Fundamentalism, the New Global Threat.* Washington: Seven Locks Press, 1993.

Moin, Baqer. *Khomeini, Life of the Ayatollah.* London: I. B. Tauris, 1999.

Momen, Moojan. *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

Moslem, Mehdi. *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran.* New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002.

Naji, Kasra. *Ahmadinejad, the Secret History of Iran's Radical Leader.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thoughts, and Spirituality.* New York: State University of New York Press, 1988.

Nasr, Vali. *The Sh'ia Revival; How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.
Olson, Dean T. *Perfect Enemy; The Law Enforcement manual of Islamist Terrorism.* Illinois: Charles C Thomas, 2009.
Ramzani, R. K. *Revolutionary Iran; Challenge and Response in the Middle East*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1988.
Roy, Oliver. *The Politics of Chaos in the Middle East*. Translated from French by Ros Schwartz. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
Sachedina, Abdulhussein Abdulaziz. *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of Mahdi in Twelver Shi'ism*. Albany: New York Press, 1981.
Smith, Peter. *An Introduction to the Baha'i faith.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
Sookhdeo, Patrick. *Global Jihad; The Future in the Face of Militant Islam.* U. K.: Isaac Publishing, 2007.
Taheri, Amir. *Holy Terror, The Inside Story of Islamic Terrorism.* London: Sphere Books Limited, 1987.
———. *The Spirit of Alla*. London: Hutchinson, 1985.
Thom, Workman. "The *Social Origins of the Iran-Iraq War*." PhD candidate paper, New York University, 1991.

Articles in English

Abedi, Mehdi, and Michael M. J. Fischer. "Autobiographical Stories of Mehdi Abedi The Anti-Baha'i Society." In *Debating Muslims: Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition*, edited by Michael M. J. Fischer, 48–54. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.
Abrahamian, Ervand. "Oriental Despotism: The Case of Qajar Iran." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5, no. 1 (1974): 3–31.
Agence France Presse—English. "Assassination Plot against President Smashed: Iran" (November 25, 1999).
———. "Iran Blames Fundamentalist Group for Attack on Judicial Official" (April 24, 1999).
———. "Iranian Conservative Claims CIA Infiltrated Government" (January 27, 2000).
Angeles Times. "Iran Says It Thwarted Plot To Kill Khatami" (November 26, 1999), 36.
Apple Jr., R. W. "Khomeini's Grip Appears at Its Tightest." *The New York Times* 1 (1982).
Arjomand, Said Amir. "History, Structure, and Revolution in the Shi'ite Tradition in Contemporary Iran." *International Political Science Review/Revue internationale de science politique* 10 (1989): 111–119.
———. "The Ulama's Traditionalist Opposition to Parliamentarianism: 1907–1909." *Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no. 2. (1981): 174–190.

Arya newspaper, Tehran, reprinted in Keyhan, London edition, no. 794, February 10, 2000.

Ashraf, Ahmad, and Ervand Abrahamian. "Bazaar and Mosque in Iran's Revolution." *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)* (1983): 16–18.

Asia Times. "Shi'ite Supremacists Emerge from Iran's Shadows" (2005). http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GI09Ak01.html (accessed October 20, 2010).

Associated Press Worldstream. "Iran Blames Failed Assassination Attempt on Secretive Group" (April 24, 1999).

———. "Iranian Authorities Arrest Group Suspected of Planning Assassination" (November 25, 1999).

———. "Khomeini Never Intended to Have Rushdie Killed, Cleric Says" (August 26, 1999).

Avery Peter, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Merville, eds. From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic. *The Cambridge History of Iran* 7 (1991).

Babak, Ganji. "Iranian Strategy: Factionalism & Leadership Politics." *Conflict Studies Research Centre*, Middle East Series 07/06, *Defence Academy of the United Kingdom* (2007): 1–28.

Baha'i International Community. "The Baha'i Question; Cultural Cleansing in Iran" (September, 2008).

Bahram, Choubine. "Suppression of Baha'is of Iran in 1955." http://www.kavehroom.com/books/23years/dashti1.pdf.

Barkey, Karen. "Islam and Toleration: Studying the Ottoman Imperial Model." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 19, no. 1/2 (2005): 5–19.

Barry, Rubin. "Iran, the Ayatollah, and U.S. Options." *The Washington Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1983): 142–155.

Bayat, Assef. "Labor and Democracy in Post-Revolutionary Iran." In *Post-Revolutionary Iran*, edited by Amirahmadi Hooshang and Parvin Manoucher, 41–55. Boulder & London: Westview Press, 1988.

———. "'Workers' Control after the Revolution." *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)* (1983): 19–34.

Cameron, Geoffrey. "Baha'is in Iran, The Denial of Higher Education to the Baha'is of Iran." *Oxford Forum* (2007): http://www.theoxfordforum.com/latest_issu.html.

The Christian Science Monitor. "Iran's Persecution of Baha'is" 24 (1983).

Cole, Juan. "'Indian Money' and the Shi'i Shrine Cities of Iraq, 1786–1850." *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no. 4 (1986): 461–480.

———. "Iranian Millenarianism and Democratic Thought in the 19th Century." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 1 (1992): 1–26.

———. "Shi'i Clerics in Iraq and Iran, 1722–1780: The Akhbari-Usual Conflict Reconsider." *Iranian Studies* 18, no. 1 (1985): 3–34.

Cole, R. I., and Moojan Momen. "Mafia, Mob and Shiism in Iraq: The Rebellion of Ottoman Karbala 1824–1843." *Past & Present* no. 112 (1986): 112–143.

Enayat, Hamid. "Shi'ism and Sunnism." In *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thoughts, and Spirituality*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 65–83. New York: State University of New York Press, 1988.

Faghfoory, Mohammad H. "The Impact of Modernization on the Ulama in Iran, 1925–1941." *Iranian Studies* 26, no. 3/4 (1993): 277–312.

———. "The Ulama-State Relations in Iran: 1921–1941." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 4 (1987): 413–432.

Farivar, Masood. "Armageddon and the Mahadi." *The Wall Street Journal* (2007).

Ferdows, Amir H. "Khomaini and Fadayan's Society and Politics." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 15, no. 2 (1983): 241–257.

Fischer, Michael M. J. "Becoming Mollah: Reflections on Iranian Clerics in a Revolutionary Age." *Iranian Studies* 13, no. 1/4 (1980): 83–117.

———. "Repetitions in the Iranian Revolution." In *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, edited by Kramer Martin, 117–132. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.

Ghandchi, Sam. "Mahdaviat-IRI's Hope or Despair." http://www.ghandchi.com/458-Mahdaviat.htm (published December 11, 2007).

Godsell, Geoffrey. "Resolution of Iran's Power Struggle Hinges on Outcome of Iran-Iraq War." *The Christian Science Monitor* 7 (1982), 7–8.

Guo, Jerry. "Letter from Tehran: Iran's New Hard-Liners; Who Is in Control of the Islamic Republic." *Foreign Affairs*. www.foreignaffairs.com/print/65429.

Haeri, Safa. "Death of the Ayatollah: Army Out to Ensure Smooth Transfer." *The Independent* Section: Foreign News (1989): 13.

Hairi, Abdul-Hadi. "The Legitimacy of the Early Qajar Rule as Viewed by the Shi'i Religious Leaders." *Middle Eastern Studies* 24, no. 3 (1988): 271–286.

Halliday, Fred. "Year IV of the Islamic Republic." *Middle East research and Information Project (MERIP)* (1983): 3–8.

Hanley, Charles J. "Militant Iranians Prosecute Baha'is." *Los Angeles Times* (1980): 4.

Heyking, John von. "Iran's President and the Politics of the Twelfth Imam." *Ashbrook Center*. http://www.ashbrook.org, Oct /publicat/guest/05/vonheyking/twelfthimam.html (accessed October 24, 2010).

Al-Hilli, Allamah. "Shi'i Theology." In *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thoughts, and Spirituality*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 91–99. New York: State University of New York Press, 1988.

Hooglund, Eric. "The Gulf War and the Islamic Republic." *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)* 125/126 (1984): 31–37.

Hunter, Shireen T. "Iran's New Power Struggle." *The Christian Science Monitor* (1983): 22.

el-Husseini, Rola. "Resistance, Jihad, and Martyrdom in Contemporary Lebanese Shi'a Discourse." *Middle East Journal* 62, no. 3 (2008): 399–414.

Ibrahim, Youssef M. "Piety and Power; Iran's Clerics Tighten Grip by Instilling Islam In Every Detail of Life." *The Wall Street Journal* (1982): 1.

The Iran Brief. "Messianic Group Said to Be Behind Assassination" (1999).

The Iran Brief. "Rafsanjani to Succeed Khamene'i?" (October 4, 1999).

Jansen, G. H. "Iran's Divided Mullahs Pursue a Zigzag Path on Internal Reform." *Los Angeles Times* (1984): E2.

Kazemi, Farhad. "The *Fada'iyan-e Islam*: Fanaticism, Politics and Terror." In *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, edited by Amir Arjomand, 158–176. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984.

Keddie, Nikki R. "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4, no. 3 (1962): 265–295.

Kedourie, Elie. "The Iraqi Shi'is and Their Fate." In *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, edited by Martin Kramer, 135–157. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.

Kifner, John. "Khomeini Faction Challenged by More Conservative Group." *The New York Times* (1982): A1.

Lewis, Bernard. "The Shi'a in Islamic History." In *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, edited by Martin Kramer, 21–30. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.

Los Angeles Times. "Iran Says It Thwarted Plot To Kill Khatami" (November 26, 1999): 36.

MacEoin, Denis. "Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy in Nineteenth-Century Shi'ism: The Cases of Shaykhism and Babism." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110, no. 2 (1990): 323–329.

Maghen, Ze'ev. "Occultation in Prepetuum: Shi'ite Eschatology and the Iranian Nuclear Crisis." *Institute for Policy and Strategy* (2007): 1–30.

Masters, Bruce. "The Treaties of Erzurum (1823 and 1848) and the Changing Status of Iranians in the Ottoman." *Iranian Studies* 24, no. 1/4 (1991): 3–15.

Mayer, Ann Elizabeth. "The Universality of Human Rights: Lessons from the Islamic Republic; Iran." *Social Research*, 67, no. 2 (June 22, 2000): 519.

Maziar, Behrooz. "Factionalism in Iran under Khomeini." *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 4 (1991): 597–614.

Mazyar, Mokfi, and Charles Recknagel. "Could Ahmadinejad's Mix of Mysticism and Politics Lead to a Power Grab?" *Radio Free Europe, Radio Library* (2009).

Mcallester, Metthew. "Cartoonist Draws Political Heat Jailed, Banned for Being Critical of Iranian Cleric," *Newsday* (February 17, 2000), A22.

Meed Quarterly Report—Iran. "Iran: Political Outlook" (October 26, 1999).

Meed Quarterly Report—Iran. "Iran: Political Outlook" (November 5, 1999), 5.

Menashri, David. "Iran (Jumhuriyye Islamiyye Iran)." In *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, vol. VI, edited by Lugum Colin, 532–549. Tel Aviv: The Shiloah Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1981–2.

———. "Iran (Jumhuriyye Islamiyye Iran)." In *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, vol. VII, edited by Lugum Colin, 512–523. Tel- Aviv: The Shiloh Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1982–3.

Middle East News Items. "Mahdaviyat Group another Scapegoat" (November 29, 1999).

Mideast Mirror. "Iran Reformists Shoot for 'Another Second of Khordad,'" 14, no. 29 (February 11, 2000).

Moaddel, Mansoor. "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran." *Theory and Society* 15, no. 4 (1986): 519–556.

Moezzi, Mohammad Ali Amir. "Une absence remplie de présences. Herméneutiques de l'occultation chez les Shaykhiyya" (Aspects de l'imamologie duodécimaine VII). *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 64, no. 1 (2001): 1–18.

Mokfi, Mazyar, and Charles Recknagel. "Could Ahmadinejad's Mix Of Mysticism And Politics Lead To A Power Grab?" http://www.rferl.org/content/Could_Ahmadinejads_Mix_Of_Mysticism_And_Politics_Lead_To_A_Power_Grab/1793312.html. (August 5, 2009).

Momen, Moojan. "Usuli, Akhbari, Shaykhi, Babi: The Tribulations of Qazvin Family." *Iranian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2003): 317–337.

Moussavi, Ahmad Kazemi. "The Establishment of the Position of Marja'iyyt-i Taqlid in the Twelver-Shi'i Community." *Iranian Studies* 18, no. 1 (1985): 35–51.

Moussavi, Seyed Reza. "La religion et le système politique en Iran: étude comparative des révolutions de 1906 et 1979." *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* 32, no. 2 (1999): 347–366.

Murphy, Caryle. "U.S. Baha'is Denounce Abuses." *The Washington Post* (1983): A1.

Newman, Andrew J. "The Nature of the Akhbari/Usuli Dispute in Late Safawid Iran," Part 2: The Conflict Reassessed. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 55, no. 2 (1992): 250–261.

Nouraie, Fereshte M. "The Constitutional Ideas of a Shi'ite Mujtahid: Muhammad Husayn Na'ini." *Iranian Studies* 8, no. 4 (1975): 234–247.

Olson, William J. "The Succession Crisis in Iran." *The Washington Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1983): 156–[?].

The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam. "The Doctrine of the Imamate." http://www.karbala-najaf.org/shiaism/289–316.htm.

Political Parties and Groups. "From 15th Khordad Uprising to the Victory of the Islamic Revolution." http://www2.irib.ir/worldservice/imam/hadith%20bidari/2.htm (accessed November 9, 2008).

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Middle East News Items, "Mahdaviyat Group Another Scapegoat" (November 29, 1999).

Randal, Jonathan C. "Iran's Clergy Divided By Succession Battle." *The Washington Post* (1982): A20.

The Record (Bergen County, NJ). "Messianic Group Blamed for Attack On Judge in Iran" (April 24, 1999): A17.

"The Return of the Hojatieh": http://bahairants.com/the-return-of-the-hojatieh-81.html (December 14, 2005).

Reuters. "Iranians Dissolve Communist Party." *The New York Times* (1983): A1.

Richard, Yann. "Ayatollah Kashani: Precursor of the Islamic Republic." In *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, edited by Martin Kramer, 101–124. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.

———. "Le Rôle du clergé: tendances contradictoires du chi'isme iranien contemporain." *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 28e Année 1, no. 55 (1983): 5–27.

Rudi, Matthee. "The Egyptian Opposition to the Iranian Revolution." In *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, edited by Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, 248.

Ruehsen, Moyara de Moraes. "Operation 'Ajax' Revisited: Iran, 1953." *Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no. 3 (1993): 467–486.

Sachedina, Abdulaziz Abdulhussein, "The Just Ruler" (al-sultan al-adil), *Shi´ite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence* (1988): 105.

Sachs, Susan. "Runoff Voting in Iran Tests Majority Hope of Reformers," *The New York Times* (May 6, 2000), 6.

Samii, A. W. "Falsafi, Kashani and the Baha'is." *Shaykhi, Babi and Bahaa'i Studies* 2, no. 5 (1998). http://www. h-net.org /~bahai/notes/vol2/falsafi.htm (accessed November 13, 2008.).

Samii, Bill. "Iran: Resurgence of Religio-Political Society Raises Concerns." *Radio Free Europe, Radio Library* (2006).

———. "Iran va Jahan. Is the Hojjatieh Society Making a Comeback?" *Radio Free Europe* (2004).

Sadri, Mahmoud. "Hojjatiya." *Encyclopaedia Iranica* XII Fascicle 4, edited by Yarshater Ehsan (2006): 427–428.

———. "Shaikh Mahmud Halabi." *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (2006). http://www.iranica.com/newsite/.

Shapira, Shimon and Dan Diker. "Iran's Second Islamic Revolution." In *Iran, Hizbullah, Hamas, and the Global Jihad: A New Conflict Paradigm for the West*. Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2007. http://jcpa.org/text/iran_page_44–61.pdf.

Tabataba'i, A'llamah. "The Shi'i Interpretation of Hadith Literature." In *Shi'ism, Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, 35–36.

Taghavi, Sayed Mohammad Ali. "'Fadaeeyan-I Islam': The Prototype of Islamic Hard-liners in Iran." *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 1 (2004): 151–165.

Valinejad, Afshin. "Iran's Leading Journalist Says Former Intelligence Minister Ordered Murder of Dissidents," *Associated Press Worldstream* (November 30, 2000).

Van England, Claude. "Factions in Iran Ready for Power Struggle after Khomeini." *The Christian Science Monitor* 3 (1982).

———. "Iran Finds Its Self-Isolation Gets a Cool Reception Abroad." *The Christian Science Monitor* 5 (1982).

———. "Khomeini Shifts to Political Sidelines." *The Christian Science Monitor* 13 (1984).

Vaziri, Sharough. "Les Groupes Dominants et le Jeu Politique Islamique en Iran." Centre D'etudeE et de Documentation Iraniennes, Lausanne, Switzerland (2000): 1–22. http://www.shahrokhvaziri.org/pdf/groupes_dominants.pdf.

Walbridge, John. "The Babi Uprising in Zanjan: Causes and Issues." *Iranian Studies* 29, no. 3/4 (1996): 339–362.

The Washington Post. "Iran's Khatemi Asks for Tolerance of Free Expression" (November 26, 1998): A51.

Xinhua general News Service. "Iranian Leader Worried about Disunity among Ruling Clergy." Item No: 072029 (1983).

Zabihi-Moghaddam, Siyamak. "The Babi-State Conflict at Shaykh Tabarsi." *Iranian Studies* 35, no. 1/3 (2002): 87–112.

Zonis, Marvin, and Daniel Brumberg. "Shi'ism as Interpreted by Khomeini: An Ideology of Revolutionary Violence." In *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, editor by Martin Kramer, 47–66. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.

Zubaida, Sami. "An Islamic State? The Case of Iran." *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)* no. 153 (1988): 3–7.

BBC Correspondence

"Resalat" (Tehran, in Persian). "Iran: Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi Vows to Continue Fight against USA" (October 18, 2000).
"Iran Majlis Ratifies Draft Bill on Non-Profit-Making Schools," Tehran Home Service, The Middle East, ME/0084/A/1, February 25, 1988.
Iran News Agency. "Information Ministry Says it has Crushed Extremist Group Plotting to Kill President" (November 27, 1999), ME/D3703/MED.
Iranian Newspaper Hamshari (Teheran, in Persian). "Iran: Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi Says Islamic Ruler 'Appoints' the President" (December 7, 1998).
Islamic Republic News Agency. "Judiciary Chief Comments on Source of Emulation, Prisons and the Pope's Remarks" (December 8, 1994), ME/2173/MED.
Jomhuri-ya Eslami' website (Tehran, in Persian). "Iran: Paper Links CIA Director's Comments to 'attacks' against Mesbah-Yazdi" (February 5, 2000).
Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran. "Iran: Yazdi Urges Judiciary To 'Take Action' against 'Mercenary Writers'" (September 18, 1999).
Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Network (in Persian). "Pilgrims Perform Ceremonies in Mina despite Saudi Obstruction" (May 26, 1994), ME/2006/MED.
"Comparison of Persecution Under the Shah and Khomeyni." *National Voice of Iran* (in Persian) (March 29, 1983), ME/7297/A/9.
"The 'So-Called Islamic Association." *National Voice of Iran* (in Persian) (June 25, 1982), ME/7061/A/8.
"Denunciation of Bazargan's Freedom Movement." *Iran* (October 12, 1982), ME/7154/A/1.
Free Voice of Iran (June 28, 1983), ME/7371/A/1.
"Islamic 'Despotism' in Iran." *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (June 29, 1983), SU/7372/A4/1.
"Iranian Prime Minister on the Economy: 'Dark Gangs' in the Bazaar." *Radio Iran* (July 12, 1983), ME/7383/A/1.
"Interior Minister's Speech Disrupted." *Radio Iran* (July 15, 1983), ME/7386/A/1.
"Advice to Iranian Revolution Guards." *National Voice of Iran* (in Persian) (July 20, 1983), ME/7390/A/7.
"American-Style Islam the Greatest 'Enemy' of Iranian Revolution." *Tehran Home Service* (July 21, 1983), ME/7391/A/1.
"US Links with Iran." *Soviet Television* (August 11, 1983), Su/7409/A4/3.
"Hojjatiyeh Members 'CIA Fifth Column." *Moscow in Persian* (October 5, 1983), SU/7456/A4/1.
"Pro-Western Faction Reported within Iranian Leadership." *National Voice of Iran* (In Persian) (September 24, 1984), ME/7756/A/1.
"Iran Majlis Ratifies Draft Bill on Non-Profit Making Schools." *Tehran Home Service* (February 25, 1988), ME/0084/A/1.
Voice of the Kaviyani Banner of Iran (April 28, 1989), ME/0445/A/1.
Voice of the Kaviyani Banner of Iran (April 1989), ME/0443/A/1.

"Guards Commander Blames Extremist Shi'I Group For bid to Kill Judicial Official." *Iran News Agency* (April 24, 1999, ME/D3518/MED.
"MKO Group Reportedly Claims Responsibility for Assassination Attempt." *Iran News Agency* (January 7, 1999), ME/D3426/MED.
"Iranian Papet Says Razini's Assailant Extradited from UAE." *Tehran Times* (August 20, 1999), ME/D3618/MED.
"Information Ministry Says it has Crushed Extremist Group Plotting to Kill President." *Iran News Agency* (November 27, 1999), ME/D3703/MED.
"Iran: Cleric Warns against Dangers of Reactionary Religion." *"Aftad-e Yazd"* website (Tehran, in Persian) (February 16, 2004).
"Iran Press: Senior Cleric Comments on 'American Islam.'" *"E'temad"* website (Tehran, in Persian) (September 18, 2005).
"Iran Press: Senior Politician Criticizes Some Reformists." *"Aftab-e Yazd"* website (Tehran, in Persian) (August 26, 2006).
"Iran Press: Commentary Defends Mesbah against Claim of Being "Sect" Leader." *"Resalat"* (Tehran, in Persian) (August 29, 2006).
"Iran Press: Letter Defends Reformist Cleric Who Attacked Hardline Ayatollah." *"Kayhan"* website (Tehran, in Persian) (September 4, 2006).
"Iran Press: Leading Clerics Denounce MisuseCof concept of Mahdi." *"E'temad"* website (Tehran, in Persian) (September 10, 2006).
"Germany: Munich Meeting of Christian, Islamic Theologians Criticized." *"ddp" news agency* (Berlin, in German) (December 5, 2008).

UN Files

Nazila, Ghanea-Hercock. "Ethnic and Religious Groups in the Islamic Republic Of Iran." The UN Refugee Agency, *University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies* (2004). http://www.un.org (accessed October, 2004).
The UN Refugee Agency. "Iran: Information on the Hojjatiya Society." *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* (2003), IRN41774.E. http://www.un.org (accessed September 11, 2003).

Persian Literature

Akhgari, Mohammad Reza. *Velayati-haye bi Velayat (Anjoman Hojjatiyeh)*(?) Jalad Aval. (1367/1988).
Anjoaman-e Hojjatiyyeh (Hojatieh Society). http://www.bashgah.net/topics-1024.html (accessed June 21, 2010).
Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh Va Anharafat An (Hojatieh Society and its deviation). http://www.bashgah.net/pages-17611.html (accessed June 21, 2010).
Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh va Savak (Hojatieh Society and the SAVAK [shah's intelligent service]). http://www.askquran.ir/showthread.php?t=4615.

Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh; Hakayat Moqades Nemayan (Hojatieh Society, narrative of sanctimonious). http://www.rajanews.com/printfriendly.asp? id =36396.

Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh; Tashkilaty-e Sad Chehreh (Hojatieh Society, a Hypocritical organization). http://mehrabeandishe.blogfa.com/post-42.aspx.

Baqi, I'mad al-Din. *Dar Shenokht hezb Qa'idin-e Zaman (Mowsum Be Anjoman-e Hojjatiyeh)* (In recognition of Qaedin Party [to be known as Hojatieh Society]). Tehran: Neshar Danesh Eslami, 1362/1984.

Dindary-e Dar Chanbareh-ye Jamud (Religiosity, in circle of inanition). http://www.bashgah.net/pages-13375.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

Ershadi-niya, Mohammad Reza. *Az Madreseh-ye Ma'aref ta Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh va Maktab-e Tafkik* (From the School of Ma'aref to the Hojjatiyeh Society and Its Separation Ideology). Qom: Muwsasa Bustan-e Ketab, 2005.

Gholamy, Fatah. *60 Sal Faraz va Neshib, Ravayaty- Taze Az Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* (60 years ups and downs, the new story of Hojatieh Society). http://www.bashgah.net/pages-520.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

———. *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh va Savak* (Hojatieh Society and the SAVAK [shah's intelligent service]). http://www.bashgah.net/pages-550.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

———. *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh, Ruyaruy Ya Hemayat Az Velayat-e Faqih* (Hojatieh Society, encounter [confrontation] or patronage of Velayate Faghih [Velayate Faghih=Supreme leader]). http://www.bashgah.net/ pages-617.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

———. *Layeh ha-ye Panhan-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* (The hidden layers of Hojatieh Society). http://www.bashgah.net/ pages-1169. Html (accessed June 21, 2010).

———. *Mudafai'n-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* (Hojatieh Society, encounter [confrontation] or patronage of Velayate Faghih [Velayate Faghih=Supreme leader]). http://www.bashgah.net/ pages-788.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

Hayati, Mahmoud. *Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* (The history of foundation of Hojatieh Society). http://www.nasirboushehr.com/01/journal481.html.

Imam Khomeini (rs). Bidarkar Jama'a Eslami (Imam Khomeini; Hojatieh Society, The raiser of Islamic society). http://www.bfnews.ir/prtc14q1.2bqs481aa2/html.

Mani, Hassan. *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh Chunan Yek Farqah Genosi* (Hojatieh Society, as a gnosis sect [gnosis is a Hellenic word with meaning of enemy]). http://www.bashgah.net/ pages-17112.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

Mehraby, Taj Aladin. *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* va *Velayat-e Faqih* (Hojatieh Society and Velayat-e-faghih [supreme leader]). http://www.bashgah.net/ pages-7482.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

Mehergan, Keyvan. *Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh*: *Hezb Marmuz* (Hojatieh Society, mysterious party). http://www.bashgah.net/ pages-16459.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

Motaheri, Murteza. *Qayam va Enqelab-e mahdi—Shahid* (Resurrection and revolution of Mahdi [Motahari Martyred]). Qom: Chap-e Amir, 1398 Hijri/1978.

Muhtashemy Pur: Pusht Sar Tamam Fateneh-hay-e Ke Rakh Dadeh, Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh Ra my-binam (Hojatieh Society is behind of [cause of] all intrigues). http://www.parlemannews.ir/?n=8522.

Nabuy, Said Abbas. *Kash "Hojjatiyyeh" Yek Jariyan Fekry Bud* (I wish Hojatieh was a flow of thought). http://www.bashgah.net/ pages-17213.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

Nemin, Salimy, and Abbas Slimy. *Gozashteh va Hal Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh* (The past and present of Hojatieh). http://www.bashgah.net/ pages-359 (accessed June 21, 2010).

Nury-Zadeh, Alireza. (2007). *Az Hojjatiyyeh Ta Hezbullh* (From Hojatieh to Hezbollah). http://www.mamnoe.tk

Owliya Nasab, Din Zia'ul, and Salman Alavi-Nik. *Jaryan shena'si-ye anjoman-e hojjatiyye* (Methodology of Hojjatiyeh Society). Qom: Zalal Kowsar, 1375/2006.

Razvy, Hussein. *Tanzah Talab Az Siyasiyat* (?). http://www.bashgah.net/pages-17141.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

Sarabandi, Mohammad Reza. *Khatarat-e Sarhang-e Mohammad Mahadi-ye Katibeh* (memoirs of Colonel Mohammad Mehdi Katibeh). Tehran: Markaz-e Osnad Enqelab-e Eslami, 1382/2003 (Tehran: center of Islamic revolutionary documents).

Stodeh, Masoud. *Enqelab Va Guru Hojjatiyyeh* (Revolution and Hojatieh Group). http://www.bashgah.net/pages-29728.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

Tajari, Hossein. *Entezar, bedhar-e Enqelab; Yadi az Qayam Jahani Mahdi* (Expectation, origin of revolution; remembrance of world's resurrection of Mahdi. (Neshar Kukab [Kukab publisher] [1358/1979]).

Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh (The history of foundation of Hojatieh Society). http://www.nasirboushehr.com/journal-01-issue33–398.html.

Tarikhcheh-ye Shekalgiry-e Anjoman-e Hojjatiyyeh; *Qesmat Davam* (The history of foundation of Hojatieh Society). http://nasirboushehr.com/01/journal456.html.

Tavakoli, Bina. *Abulfazal, Madhhab A'liye Madhhab* (Religion against religion). http://www.bashgah.net/ pages-17213.html (accessed June 21, 2010).

Tavalay, Abdulhossein. (2010). *Hojjatiyyeh binash ya tashakel* (Hojatieh, insight or organization.) http://www.boshgoh.net/pages-17231.html.

Books in Arabic

A'waid Al-iyam Lilfaghal Al-mahqaqa Al-mauly Ahmed Al-naraqi (1245–1185). Markaz Al-abhat wa Al-darasat Al-eslamia, 2010. http://www.naraqi.com/arg/g/g03/000.htm.

Abdul Rahim, Mohammad. *Aqa'id Ash-Shi'a; Dur Abdullah Bin Siba Alyahudi fi Sana'a Al-A'qai'd Ash-Shia Al-fasida*. [?]: Alneshar Rawaq, 2008.

Al-halifa, Majeed. *Gharaib Fukahiya A'end Al-shea'a Al-imamiya*. http://www.dr-majeed.net.

Al-Idres al-Sayed, Hamed. *Al-fadheh li-Madhhab Al-shia'a Al-imameya* [?].
Al-Juajiry, A'del. *Ahmadinejad; Rajel fi Qalb Al-Asifa*. Dimashq: Maktaba Riadh Al-A'lbi, 2006.
Al-shashary, A'bed Al-rahman ben said. *A'qaid al-shia'a Al-ithny A'shariya 133 Suuala wa juuaba*. http://www.saaid.net.
Al-zahrany, Haled Bin Ahmed. *Maoqefal Al-shia'a Al-ithny A'shariya min Alaima Al-arabia*. http://www.alburhan.com.
Katazuman, Kinish. *Al-hars Al-taury Al-irany… nashataha wa takuinaha wa durha*. Markaz Alimarat lildarasat wa albahut. http://www.albainah.net.
Qasir, Abdulla Ahmad. *Qaraa fi al-faker al-Siasiya lilImam al-Khumeini*. Najaf: Harakat al-Tajdid wa ul-Istanahadh, 1987.

Public Record Office (PRO-U.K)

Cabinet—Conclusions of a Meeting of the cabinet. CAB/128/25.
Persia—Internal Political Situation. CAB/129/55.

Central Intelligence Agency Records

Central intelligence Agency. "Analysis of Iranian Political Situation, Topics Include: Popular Support of Mossadeq's Government; Collapse of British Position in Iran; Soviet Position in Iran" (October 12, 1951).
———. Secret. "Prospects for Survival of Mossadeq Government," report (October 14, 1952).
Department of State. Confidential. Office of Intelligence Research, Report No. 4849 (January 28, 1949).
———. Secret. "Fedayan Islam." Am Emb Tehran, Despatch No. 20. July 7, 1951.
———. Secret. "Luncheon Meeting with Prime Minister Mosadeq." Transmittal Memorandum, Dean Acheson, Secretary of State to the President (October 22, 1951).
———. Secret. "Increasing Communist Threat in Iran." Office of Intelligence Research, Report No. 5716 (November 23, 1951). 8 p.
———. "Further Activities of Fedayan Islam." Am Emb Tehran, Despatch No. 845 (January 25, 1952).
———. Secret. "Increasing Communist Threat in Iran." Office of Intelligence Research, Division of Research for Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Report No. 5735 (January 10, 1952).
Division of Research for Near East, South Asia, and Africa. Office of Intelligence Research, Report No. 6126 (January 9, 1953).
Further Activities of Fedayan Islam. Am Emb Tehran, Despatch No. 969. February 29, 1952.

"Iran, Basic Factors Leading to the Nationalization of the Oil Industry in Iran." Office of Intelligence Research, Division of Research for Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Report No. 5683 (March 6, 1952).

National Security Council. Top Secret. "Current Policies of the Government of the United States of America Relating to the National Security": Volume I, Geographical Area Policies: Part V, Middle East—Iran (November 1, 1952).

Secret, National Intelligence Estimate. "Probable Developments in Iran in 1952 in the Absence of an Oil Settlement." NIE-46 (February 4, 1952). Item Number: IROO274.

Secret, National Intelligence Estimate. "Probable Developments in Iran through 1953" (January 9, 1953), NIE-75/1, Item Number: IROO303.

———. Probable Developments in Iran through 1955. Secret, National Intelligence Estimate, NIE 34–35 (December 7, 1954). Item Number: IROO325.

Books in Hebrew

Menashri, David. *Iran: Between Islam and the West* (in Hebrew). Kiryat Ono: The Ministry of Defense Publishing, 1996.

Shahvar, Soli. "Iran, 1925–1946." In *The Middle East between World Wars*, edited by Hagai Erlich, 255–259. Book E, Part Two. Tel Aviv: The Open University, 2003.

Sharon, Moshe. *The Baha'i Faith and its Holy Writ; The Most Holy Book (al-Kitab al-Aqdas)* (in Hebrew Translation) (Jerusalem, 2005).

Index