

## Chapter 4: Power And Justice

### Power and Justice

In the previous chapters, we talked about two important principles of Sunni and Shi'ite political thought and the theoretical differences between the two and the way they formed in practice the history and the psychological and social structures of their followers. In this Chapter, we study the third principle and then go back to the main discussion, i.e. the political movements within the Shi'ite and Sunni territories in the contemporary history and their differences.

As we said in the previous chapter, the third basic factor in the development of Sunni political thought is that they are sensitive to power and security and the power that can provide and maintain security while Shi'ites are sensitive to justice and the strict implementation of the Prophet's (S) tradition the way it was at the time of the Prophet himself, rather than the way it was later interpreted. To them, what is important, obligatory, and sacred consists of a grand strong power in whose light security is provided either against the internal rebels or against the foreign threats and invaders.

Although this is approved by Shi'ism to a certain extent, it has not attached a full value to be absolutely true. This neither agrees with their jurisprudential or theological foundations nor is approved by the practice of the Infallible Imams. Now let's see why and how this principle appeared among Sunnis and what the factors by which it was affected are?

It shall be said in brief that three important factors were involved. The first factor is the concept of justice, which is unlike that of the concept of justice with Shi'ites, both in jurisprudential and in theological and philosophical terms. The second factor is the concept and duties of the government in old times. Finally, the third factor relates to the historical realities and necessities, each of which will be discussed.

### The Concept of Justice

The difference in the Shi'ite and Sunni perception of justice is too clear to require any explanation here.

Although the Mu'tazilite perception and interpretation of justice were close to and in some cases similar to those of Shi'ites, the Ash'arite interpretation was far different. It was this school that was later dominant and influenced the development and organization of Sunni jurisprudential and theological foundations.

The important thing in the meantime was that the Ash'arite interpretation of justice principally had a form that made it unimportant. The point was not that they considered it to be important and critical but offered another interpretation, rather, it was that they provided a meaning for it that made it lose its significance, which was perhaps desirable to them.

When they denied rational agreeableness or disagreeableness of something, in fact they reduced the concept of justice to a level that it would be compatible with any oppressive and tyrannical action. In other words, the thought and ideal of justice was reduced to reality and whatever that existed while the existing reality was made the criterion of judgment rather than a superior concept to be so. Because of this, it would not make sense anymore to evaluate and judge this reality based on its compatibility and incompatibility with that superior concept. When rational agreeableness or disagreeableness is ignored, in fact the concept and nature of justice has been ignored rather than that a new definition has been provided based on such denial.<sup>1</sup>

Such an interpretation of justice naturally provides the best ground for rejecting any ideal beyond the present reality, and it actually did so. Here, it is not a discussion of justice or whether it has been done or not. Principally, there is no situation superior to the present one, based on how to define justice and to evaluate the present situation.<sup>2</sup>

The author of the well-known book *Al-Mawaqif*, who is one of the greatest and most rationalist Ash'arite theologians, concerning agreeableness or disagreeableness says, "Disagreeableness is what is prohibited by the *shari'ah* and agreeable is contrary thereto. To the reason, nothing is judged as agreeable or disagreeable. These two do not return to another real and true matter within one's action so that the *shari'ah* would reveal it. Rather, it is the *shari'ah* that creates agreeableness or disagreeableness and defines them. If it becomes the other way round and what it considers as offensive, it considers as good and what it considers to be good, it considers as offensive, this will be possible and the result would be reversed.

However, the Mu'tazilites say, "The criterion for recognizing the agreeableness or disagreeableness of something is reason and one's action is per se either good or bad while the *shari'ah* only discovers and clarifies this reality. Then, it makes no sense to reverse the matter because goodness and badness relate to real things and are not contractual."<sup>3</sup>

As we said, such an interpretation of good and bad and its criteria will leave no room for the concept of justice and basic reason. More importantly, the rational criteria of recognizing truth or falsehood of religious texts, and especially the sayings, will be eliminated while the intellectual, doctrinal and

psychological background necessary for accepting them, with a religious and *shari'ah*-based acceptance, will provide the ground for any oppressive and corrupt action and will ultimately give a good reason to those in power and the bad clerics to document their oppressions and violations with the religion in order to achieve their goals. More importantly, the religion will also be made liable to such exploitation and misuse.<sup>4</sup>

Unlawful exploitation of the religion, especially by those in power, has generally been done by falsifying the reason in the name of the religion. When reason is put aside with all its capabilities and limitations, especially as regards to religion, the oppression and superstitions will replace it. This has always been favored by the misusers of the religion. Thus, when reason is falsified in one of the most sensitive and important religious discussions, i.e. justice, such results will inevitably follow.

## Results of the Two Different Interpretations

It should be added that the difference in the Mu'tazilite and Shi'ite perception and interpretation and those of the Ash'arites of justice did not make them create the most just sociopolitical system through their history. They were in practice more or less the same and the belief in the principle of justice did not entail sociopolitical justice. There was essentially no difference between the Mu'tazilites, who were at the service of Ma'mun, Mu'tasim and Wathiq, and the Ash'arites and Ash'arite-like thinkers after and before them although these caliphs, especially Ma'mun, were considerably different from the caliphs before and after him; but this was mainly due to his better cultured and freethinking character rather than the advice or attention of the Mu'tazilites around him.<sup>5</sup>

This applies to the Shi'ites to a large extent as well. It is difficult to accept that Shi'ite sultans throughout history were more just and democratic than their Sunni counterparts.<sup>6</sup> The desire for justice and administering justice, especially in the Islamic east, which lacked the necessary sociopolitical institutions for the administration of affairs by considering the appropriate interests and requirements rather than personal decisions, was more than anything indebted to their own internal and personal tendencies and to the general conditions of the territories they ruled.

Nevertheless, despite all this, it cannot be denied that the two, i.e. the Mu'tazilites and especially Shi'ites and Ash'arites, were and acted in two different ways in terms of guiding the ruling system to the right way, dethroning it or establishing a just system. In other words, the outcome of belief in justice and the way these two interpreted is shown when standing up against the ruler. One of the most important factors that called the Mu'tazilites and Shi'ites to stand up against the tyrants was their understanding of justice.<sup>7</sup> As such interpretation was principally not considered or believed in by the Ash'arites, it would not make sense anymore to stand up against the sultan by relying on it. They denied rational agreeableness or disagreeableness and they did not have any criterion beyond the existing factors in order to evaluate what was there.

Therefore, in history, the Mu'tazilite and especially Shi'ites have had many justice-seeking movements

while similar examples cannot be found with the Ash'arites, Salafis or Traditionists. What they actually had and have was movements that, according to them, sought to reject heresy and to defend and establish the tradition.[8](#)

Indeed, their different understanding and interpretation of justice is not the only factor for this difference. There were other factors as well. Undoubtedly, however, this different perception has had and will have the greatest share. In other words, although the belief in the principle of justice actually did not bring about sociopolitical justice, its acceptance provided the best ground for justice-seeking movements.

The story of justice-seeking and liberal movements throughout the history of Islam is itself the best confirmation of this. Such movements did not exist within the Ash'arite and Traditionist territories while they were abundant within the Shi'ite and Mu'tazilite territories. This relation was so strong and powerful that, in periods in which such tendencies appeared for any reason, the grounds were prepared for Mu'tazilite thought and especially the Shi'ite ideology. Although the Shi'ite ideology was welcomed for reasons beyond its belief in the principle of justice, the belief in this principle had yet a basic role.

It was precisely because of this that the Mu'tazilites and especially Shi'ites were attacked by those in power, the clerics and their affiliate propagandists. The ruling oppression prepared the ground for the growth of justice-seeking movements. However, as the dominant religious thought, which was promoted and probably created by the rulers, could not fulfill this need because of its lack of belief in the principle of justice, the revolutionaries had to face and encourage religions that claimed to seek justice.[9](#) As Shi'ism and Mu'tazilah were so, attempts were made to give them a bad reputation so as to divert the public opinion from them. This failed indeed. Part of the pessimism among Sunni masses about these two results from the same preventive and counter-propagandist actions.[10](#)

What has been said so far was about the theological concept of justice. Now we have to see what its jurisprudential concept was and what results it entailed. In this connection, contrary to the previous one, the Mu'tazilites are like non-Mu'tazilites and the difference is between Shi'ites and non-Shi'ites.

## [Jurisprudential Concept of Justice](#)

The fact is that the concept of justice is not jurisprudentially very much different among Shi'ites and Sunnis. The basic difference is in considering justice as a qualification, most importantly for the communal prayer leader and the Friday communal prayer leader as well as the ruler. Shi'ites deem justice as a necessary for all of these while Sunnis do not define it as a qualification for the communal prayer leader and the Friday communal prayer leader and only some Sunnis consider the communal prayer leadership of a corrupt and heretic person as religiously undesirable[11](#) as many of them do not consider justice to be a necessary qualification of the ruler either.

What is important in this discussion is the justice of the communal prayer leader and the Friday communal prayer leader because they have differing views on the ruler's justice. Now let's see what

results this difference entailed.

Prior to entering the discussion, it is necessary to note the special and sensitive position of the communal prayer leader and the Friday communal prayer leader in early Islam. In that time, prayers or Friday communal prayers were socio-politically far more important than they are today. These two, especially the Friday communal prayer, were the key to maintaining Islam, unity, integrity and, finally, stability and security of the society. It indicated the health of thought and belief in the participants and their being on the religion agreed on by the Muslims.<sup>12</sup> It showed that the society accepted the order of their emir and ruler and recognized him. It was through this prayer that the rulers, sultans and caliphs were recognized and their power and position would be stabilized and consolidated.

At that time, the cities and the other points of concentrated population were small and had small populations. All the people and especially the men considered it their duty to participate in the public and Friday communal prayers, while this participation was obligatory in many respects.<sup>13</sup> Some Sunni jurists consider communal prayers and all Sunni jurists consider Friday communal prayers to be obligatory. Shi'ite jurists consider participation in Friday communal prayers during the presence of an infallible *imam* to be obligatory as well. Many of them consider it obligatory even in the absence of an infallible *imam* if the appropriate conditions are provided. It was, therefore, natural that these two prayers would have a high political value so far so as to become the most important indicator of belief in Islam and unity in the society.<sup>14</sup>

According to the above points and its sensitivity, who other than the most prominent person, at least apparently the most prominent, could lead it? It would not make sense to give the responsibility for this most important symbol of the community of the believers and the key to the unity and stability of the society to someone other than such a person. The people also did not expect anything other than this. Apart from this, the jurisprudential fundamentals would approve of and reinforce such a current. We had better say that the people's perception of the communal prayer leader, the Friday communal prayer leader and *imamate* was in harmony with the appearances of the orders of the *shari'ah*.<sup>15</sup> The *shari'ah* legislator required the most prominent person to be the prayer leader although the meaning of prominence and the application of the most prominent person changed in the later times under the pressure of sociopolitical necessities.

During the Prophet's (S) time, he led both prayers in Medina or in any other part when he was present. Where he was absent, the prayers would be led by the representative, substitute, emir or ruler that he appointed. After the Prophet (S) passed away, the first caliph led the prayers. This specially helped him on the first days in gaining acceptance for and establishing his caliphate.<sup>16</sup> This current continued in this way until the end of the period of the Senior Caliphs and also when the Umayyad took power.<sup>17</sup>

For example, concerning the permission of the infallible *imam* or his special or general substitute for saying the Friday communal prayer and on how to appoint the Friday communal prayer, Muhaqqiq Karkhi says, "...The principle in this issue, before the consensus, is the agreement of the Muslims to the effect

that the Prophet, in his own time, appointed the Friday communal prayers and judges. After the Prophet (S), the caliphs did so. As it is not right for one to be a judge with the *imam*'s permission, it is also not right to be the Friday communal prayer leader without such permission. This is not reasoning by analogy. It is referring to the continuous practice and opposing it is violating the consensus.”<sup>18</sup>

As quoted by Pederson, “From the early days of Islam, the ruler also led the prayers. He was the commander of war, head of government and leader of communal prayers. In the same manner, province governors were both in charge of prayers and taxes. He would lead prayers, especially the Friday communal prayers, in which he would deliver sermons. In his absence, the police chief would represent him. However, this changed in the time of the ‘Abbasids and the caliph would not regularly lead the prayers.”<sup>19</sup>

What existed in the time of the Senior Caliphs was not that problematic. The first two caliphs and their governors would keep the appearances of the *shari’ah* although the conditions changed during ‘Uthman’s time, especially in the second half, and people such as Walid ibn ‘Aqabah was appointed as governor—governor of Kufah who stood to pray while drunk, saying four prayer units for the [2-unit] morning prayer, besmearing the altar with the effects of drunkenness.<sup>20</sup> However, such cases were rare and ignorable. Imam ‘Ali’s (‘a) time is well-known. Basically, there could be and was no problem in this period.

The problem shows itself seriously from the time of the Umayyad, at which time the justice of the communal and Friday communal prayer leader is overshadowed, interpreted and justified by the realities and necessities. It is gradually reduced to a level that is forgotten.

The heritage of the Prophet (S) and the Senior Caliphs required that the caliph and his representatives and governors would lead the communal and Friday communal prayers. The caliphs would not be content with less than this, not because they sought to enforce the Prophet’s (S) tradition and that of the Senior Caliphs but because failing to do so would contradict their rule, establishment and legality. They wanted to be in power and to govern and this could be achieved if the one in power would lead the communal and Friday communal prayers as well. Thus, they led both of the prayers.

It was a necessity at this time. According to the history sources relating to those days, the Umayyads were not so willing to lead prayers, especially on Fridays because the Friday communal prayer leader had to give sermons while this was difficult for them to do. In this regard, Goldziher says, “Delivering sermons was not easy for Umayyad caliphs but they consented to do it so as to remind the people that they were in charge. ‘Abdu’l-Malik was asked, “Why do you have a white beard at this early age?” “How do you expect me not to,” he replied, “While I have to deliver a sermon once a week and expose my thoughts to be judged by the others.”<sup>21</sup>

Reluctance to deliver sermons was not limited to the Umayyad caliphs only. Their province governors did not like to do it either. Even an eloquent person such as ‘Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad would consider it as

an impediment to the pleasure of governing.<sup>22</sup> Another emir told the people, “Before becoming the emir, Friday was the best of my days while nowadays it is the worst because I have to deliver sermons.”<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, the problem was that the Muslims had to take part in regular and Friday communal prayers. Both the previous customs required this and the religious texts recommended it. It was a *shar'i* obligation. Indeed, it has to be added that, from the early days and even in the Prophet's (S) time, the people were asked to take part in regular and Friday communal prayers and those who refused to do so would be severely punished.<sup>24</sup> The point was not that an individual, by refusing to take part in a communal or Friday communal prayer would be a sinner by violating an obligation, the more important thing was that he could not do so. He was forced to do so because such non-participation would be deemed as an entire or partial rejection of the accepted religion by the believers or as rejection of the present government or denying its legality or compulsory obedience of it. No ruler, especially the oppressive Umayyad rulers, would bear such a thing.<sup>25</sup>

## Denying the Justice Qualification

Considering these conditions, what way was there other than denying justice as a condition for qualification of communal and Friday communal prayer leaders. The most committed individual in the Umayyad dynasty, other than 'Umar ibn 'Abdu'l-'Aziz, who was an exceptional person, was Mu'awiyah himself. However, his behavior was different from the minimum consideration of which was necessary according to the *shari'ah* legislator and was practiced by the earlier caliphs. He went so far as to say prayers different in form from what the Prophet (S) and the Senior Caliphs read—He is the first person to deliver a Friday sermon while sitting.<sup>26</sup>

The caliphs after him and his governors were in more inappropriate conditions, so much so as if they were absolutely unfamiliar with the religion and did not think of anything other than ruling and pleasures. They had the power and would lead the regular and Friday communal prayers and the people had to say their prayers with them. Now the problem was if such prayers were separate or not. This is other than if the regular and Friday communal prayer leaders were qualified to lead prayers and principally what such qualifications were. Is justice or not committing sins or at least not persisting on committing sins one of these qualifications or not? Is it possible to take as prayer leader a corrupt tyrant who commits any crime? If yes, is the prayer of those standing behind him accepted?

The only solution was to deny the qualification of justice. Indeed, if a development had occurred at a time when the Umayyads entered the scene, no interrelation would have been established between the governance and legality of the ruler and the regular and Friday communal prayer leadership. Most probably, justice would have not been denied in this case, like in the case of the judge and witness. However, such a development did not occur and, therefore, they had to interpret and justify the issue to a certain extent as to the qualifications of regular and Friday communal prayer leaders, so as to deny the justice qualification in practice or at least reduce the issue to reluctance in saying prayers behind a

corrupt tyrant.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, Shi'ites did not face such a problem. They considered the Umayyads to be illegal usurpers and did not have to accept those conditions and obligations. Consequently, they did not have to face such interpretations and justifications. Apart from this, the texts of the divine decrees they accepted, which had been passed to them through the Infallible Imams, explicitly defined justice as one of the qualifications of the regular and Friday communal prayer leaders;<sup>28</sup> although this does not mean that the Shi'ites never took part in regular and Friday communal prayers in the past. They took part in these prayers and generally deemed their prayers as accepted. In their view, in certain cases such prayers were accepted as well as worthy of being highly rewarded. <sup>29</sup> However, such religious rewards and such pious deeds had their own special reasons. It was not, for example, because they considered the justice qualification unnecessary for a regular or Friday communal prayer leader.

The fact is that Sunnis' failure to accept the justice qualification and Shi'ites' accepting of it affected the development of the jurisprudential and theological structures of the two, their sociopsychological structure and ideological and religious sensitivities more than it seems in the beginning. Not accepting this condition meant recognizing the present condition and whatever related to it, although there were other factors involved. Yet, this was the most important, effective and finally the most critical factor.

Although the Sunni jurisprudential and theological structure is so that the ruler's obedience is compulsory,<sup>30</sup> the problem is if the Sunni masses throughout the history accepted the rulers as legal only because of these reasons. The complex theological discussions and the arguments in jurisprudence were and are far above the average level of culture of the masses. It was not through familiarity with these discussions that they accepted to obey the rulers. Principally, such discussions did not have a role in their religious perception and understanding. Their understanding and perception were too simple and limited to digest these ideas.

## **Importance of Denying the Justice Qualification**

In other words, the problem is not simply what the natural and logical requirement of the Sunni jurisprudential and theological structure is. More importantly is which part of this large collection exists in their thought, mind, faith and belief, i.e. what the perception of the mass of the people is of this collection, what its limits are and what the interrelations of the various components are. What is living and effective is this understanding and perception and it is the same that play a role in the society and on the scene of the history. Although such religious perception changes to a certain extent in any time and condition depending on the conditions, there are generally fixed elements in the changes which are affected by the fixed principles and fundamentals of the religion itself.

The most tangible, understandable and routine part of the religious faith of a Muslim was and is the prayers. Considering the fact that, in the early periods, the Muslims said their prayers always communally and took part in Friday communal prayers and that these prayers were always led by the

caliphs, their representatives or emirs, and, to the people, such leading symbolized the government, legality and religious acceptability of the caliph or ruler. Is it not that the justice qualification has the most important share in accepting the ruler and the present condition and in legalizing his position?

This is truer especially in the early centuries when the people were obliged to take part in regular and Friday communal prayers and those in power and even the regular were more sensitive to the participation of the various walks of life and to the emirs who led the prayers, at least on Fridays. However, later, when such obligation and sensitivity were attenuated, the prayers were led by people other than the emirs, who were generally and rather entirely appointed directly or indirectly by them.<sup>31</sup> However, the effects of this current, especially before such attenuation occurred, affected the jurisprudential and theological structure and the psycho religious structure of the Muslims.

It was not important here to accept the ruler's governance when accepting his prayer leadership. More important than that was the thought based on which the leadership of the corrupt tyrant was allowed. Such a thought permeated the other aspects and resulted in deeming as acceptable saying prayers behind such individuals and even paying the alms and religious tax to them and going on *hajj* pilgrimages and *jihads* with them. Even a cautious pious person like Ibn Hanbal got to a point as to say, "Jihad along with emirs is allowed until the day of resurrection whether they are just or unjust and they may distribute the spoils of war and enforce punishments.

No one may make sarcastic remarks about or fight them. It is allowed to pay alms to them and one who gives alms to them, whether they are good people or not, has done his duty. It is allowed to say prayers behind them and one who violates this is heretic and has abandoned the tradition of the Prophet (S). If one does not believe that prayers behind emirs, whether the latter are just or corrupt, are religiously allowed, he has not understood the good aspects of Friday communal prayers. The tradition is that you have to say two units of prayer behind them and believe that it is a perfect prayer without having the smallest doubt about this."<sup>32</sup>

Now we will examine what the thought was and where its root was. The main origin of this thought, which was relied on for verifying the truth of affairs, was that such things as prayer, religious tax and *jihad* are inherently good and desirable and the *shari'ah* legislator has ordered them. The important thing is to perform them rather than the way in which they are performed. The important thing is that the obligated person has to fulfill his duties according to the rules defined by the *shari'ah* legislator and it is not important with whom the act is performed.

The important thing is to say the regular and Friday communal prayers and for the Muslims to participate therein. It is not important who leads them. What is important is not to give up the duty of *jihad*, it does not matter under whose command and with what motivation it is done. What is important is to pay alms and religious tax as part of religious fees but it does not matter to whom they are given, whether the one to whom it is given is a corrupt roué or not, and for what purposes they are used.

This is thus explained by Hasan Basri where he intends to account for the acceptability of the prayer of one whose prayer is led by a hypocrite, “The believer’s prayer behind a hypocrite will not harm him and the hypocrite’s prayer behind a believer will not benefit him.”<sup>33</sup> He expresses, more explicitly than ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar, “Prayer is good. I do not mind who will be my partner in performing it.”<sup>34</sup>

Ibn Hazm says in this regard, “We do not know any Companion who refused to say his prayer behind Mukhtar, ‘Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, Hajjaj or any person more corrupt than them. God says, ‘Cooperate on good deeds and do not cooperate on sin and enmity.’ There is no good thing better than the prayer and saying it in mosques. Then it is forbidden for us to help it. The same is true about fasting, *hajj* and *jihad*. We will accompany the one who calls us to them and we will not accept the invitation of and will not help the one who calls us to sin. These are the views of Abu Hanifah, Shafi’i and Abu Sulayman.”<sup>35</sup>

Ibn Qudamah, who is one of the great Hanbalite jurists, says, “It is obligatory for Muslims to participate in communal prayers on Friday and the Two Feasts even if the prayer leader is corrupt, a *roué* or heretic because the duties are Islamic rites that the rulers of Muslims perform. Then, failing to perform the prayers behind them will result in the prayers being abandoned.”<sup>36</sup>

## Deeds and the Conditions of Deeds

From this point of view, what matters is the deed per se without considering its conditions while, since the conditions are part of the deed, it cannot be so. According to them, for example the regular and Friday communal prayers are only for worshipping purposes and, therefore, they recommend and emphasize them by mentioning the good aspects and their desirability—no matter who leads them—and consider them as worthy of being rewarded. Although this may be true about worships to which there is an individual aspect, this cannot be true about regular and Friday communal prayers or about *jihad*.

If we have accepted that the regular and Friday communal prayers are among the most important and sensitive Islamic rites as this can be discovered by referring to news, sayings and practices of the Prophet, “and it has been decided that the purity, monotheism, Islam and Islamic worships shall be apparent and visible, because showing them is a proof for the people of the east and the west...”<sup>37</sup>

Practically, they have been among the most important rites through history. Therefore, one cannot ignore or underestimate the issue of prayer leading only on the grounds that the prayer per se is a good and desirable thing. It is not acceptable to give the responsibility of religious rites, which indicate the social reality and presence, to someone who is not religiously or morally qualified for it. Religious rites themselves constitute part of the religion and are even among the most important parts of the religion. How can one who is the manifestation of unreligious values and ideals or is at least strange to them lead them?<sup>38</sup> This is too evident to be argued.

Apart from this, praying behind the prayer leader, at least in the first centuries, did not just mean performing a compulsory religious duty, be it daily or Friday prayers. It had further implications and it was

these implications that were subject to more attention. According to the people of that time, the problem was not that such and such a person had performed their prayers by taking part in the communal prayer. More important than this, it meant recognizing the legality and governance of the *imam* whose imamate had been approved through his taking part in the prayer.<sup>39</sup>

As we have already said, communal and Friday communal prayers symbolized the unity and consensus of the Muslims and also was the symbol of recognition of the ruler. This was the inevitable result of participating in these two prayers, which directly contributed to the approval, reinforcement and consolidation of the pillars of the ruling power. This had nothing to do with the individual's intention, whether he wanted this or not. His deed in the context of that time had such an implication. When 'Abdullah bin 'Umar said, "Friday prayers are to be led by the one who is the victor in fighting his rivals."<sup>40</sup>, he mentioned this point. This was not only his words but also was the words of the most of Muslims at that time.

There is no argument about the foundations of this way of thinking, its dimensions and results. The purpose of mentioning all this was to show how the Sunni clerics think and why they think as they do. For example, Ibn Taymiyyah says in his well-known book *As-Siyasat ash-Shar'iyah*, "There are two types of cooperation. Firstly, cooperation on goodness and piety, from *jihad* and applying the religious punishments to receiving religious dues and giving them to those who deserve it. These are the things that were ordered by God and His Prophet.

One who fails to do them fearing that he may be accomplice to tyrants has abandoned a compulsory religious duty on the illusion that he is a pious and abstinent person. There are so many occasions when fear and languor are confused with piety and abstinence because both are omission of actions. Secondly, it is cooperation between sin and enmity, like contributing in the killing of a respected person or taking away property or beating someone who does not deserve to be beaten, and the like. These are matters that have been forbidden by God and His Prophet."<sup>41</sup>

Most certainly, such a way of thinking, as we expressed in the case of the communal and Friday communal prayers, results from religious obligations on the one hand, and the undesirable and abnormal conditions in early Islamic centuries on the other hand, to which the Umayyads and the early 'Abbasid caliphs contributed greatly. The possible solution was the one they chose, i.e. removing justice as a condition in certain cases. For example, they could not ignore verses of the Qur'an that called the people to *jihad* and giving alms and religious tax. Therefore, they said that the important thing was doing these, no matter under whose leadership and with what motivation.

Nevertheless, these were subjects that received the attention of the rulers. They wanted to mobilize the people to go to wars that they called *jihad* as they wanted to get the religious dues of the people. It would not make sense to seek to stop or weaken such religious precepts. If they had, this would weaken their position or at least impede their ambitions. On the one hand, they took material benefit in implementing the precepts and, on the other hand, they took benefit of the intangible profits. Thus, they

could call themselves the warriors of God. This would further add to their popularity and contribute to the consolidation of their position.<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that not considering justice as a valid condition for communal and Friday communal prayer leading contributed extensively to creating, reinforcing and stabilizing this way of thinking in its entirety. All of the people in all places dealt with these two religious duties on a daily basis and, these would include all the people in all the five daily prayer occasions. Apart from the fact that the prayers had a special position in religious terms and in the perception of the people, when the condition of justice was reduced to such a low level, it would naturally be lowered to a similar level in other affairs as well and this would not surprise anyone or make anyone raise an objection. Basically, a new religious thought that was in harmony with some new principles and rules was founded.

When Qattadah asked Sa'īd ibn Musayyib, who was a great pious Follower and had undergone the severest forms of torture as ordered by 'Abdu'l-Malik on several occasions because of insisting on his opinion—that it is not possible to swear allegiance to two caliphs at the same time while 'Abdu'l-Malik wanted to get allegiance for his two sons Walid and Sulayman<sup>43</sup>— “Should we pray behind Hajjaj ibn Yusuf?”, he said in response, “We pray behind one who is far worse than him.”<sup>44</sup> This was also true about the Companions and the Followers in general as 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar prayed behind Hajjaj and Najdah, who were heads of the Rebels.<sup>45</sup> Indeed in those days the Shi'ites and even their seniors would participate in these prayers;<sup>46</sup> but, as it has already been mentioned, this was because of certain reasons and not because they believed that justice was not a qualification for the communal and Friday communal prayer leader.

This is one of the most important and sensitive diverging points of the Shi'ite and Sunni jurisprudential and theological systems and, subsequently, of their sociopsychological structures and political and historical developments. From the early days of its development, the Shi'ite ideology was formed and developed outside the limits of the recognized conditions of those days and the resulting necessities. Thus, justice in its jurisprudential framework played a far deeper and more extensive role than its theological concept in the way it formed the two branches of Islam differently. The historical, religious and sociopolitical developments of the two branches cannot be properly studied and analyzed without considering this point as one would not be able to recognize and evaluate their different limitations and potentials in forming the future developments.

Thus, justice maintained its position in the Shi'ite jurisprudential and theological system despite Sunnis although Shi'ites in practice rarely could realize the justice in the society the way they believed in it. Yet, they were constantly sensitive to it and at least thought of it as an ideal. The fact is that such a current cannot be seen among Sunnis. If there is such a current, it is mainly due to their Shi'ite tendencies in certain parts of the history.<sup>47</sup>

'Ali al-Wardi explains this very well, “Shi'ism is right now like a dormant volcano. Its difference with the other mountains is just in the smoke that comes out of it. However, a dormant volcano, despite its

apparent calm, is not without danger. It differs from the other mountains in that it has melting fire within it that no one knows when will explode.” Then he adds, “The Twelver Shi‘ite beliefs were so that they were not stopped from criticizing and opposing the rulers in any period of their long history. They believed that any government is tyrannical, a usurper and unacceptable, unless its power is given to a just infallible *imam* from among the children of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Accordingly, Shi‘ites were like a constant revolution that would never calm down or stop fighting. They compared any ruler with the rules of the infallible imamate the way they believed in it and, therefore, saw him as defective and a usurper. This belief from the very early periods of Islam to the present resulted in the growth and deepening of hostility between them and those in power and they were accused of being Zandaqah, apostates and heretics. They were deemed heterodox to the religion and to the government. Because of the intensive frequent pressures on them, they would rather be known as Zandiqs and unbelievers instead of Shi‘ites or heretics.

Mu‘awiyah and his Umayyad descendants as well as the ‘Abbasid caliphs tried all the different methods of force, pressure and torture to eliminate them but failed to do so. Shi‘ism resisted all this and will resist in the future all the tyrants that disrespect human rights and dignity.”<sup>48</sup> This indeed has its own consequences, the most important of which is its conflict with what one would interpret as stability, establishment and historical continuity.

The acceptance of justice as a principle with the Shi‘ites entailed its own religious psychology and religious perception. Self-motivation, irritability, tendency of devotion and idealism among the Shi‘ites are indebted to this same principle. There were other factors also that helped shape such characteristics, the most important of which is the episode of ‘Ashura. However, the problem is that, in the Shi‘ite perception, this story is itself an exalted example of liberalism, love of justice and living bravely. Therefore, it approves of and even serves explaining, reinforcing and consolidating the same idealistic concept.

These set of factors resulted in the presentation of the ideal of justice as the most superior and the most motivating ideal throughout the Shi‘ite history, and this will continue to be so. This is the natural result of believing in the ideology of Shi‘ism. As long as this school exists and inspires its followers, gives them faith and affects their psychological structure and religious perception, such a characteristic will be in place. Although it may go into a dormancy state for a short or long period due to certain reasons, it will never be put out or eliminated.

Sunnis’ failure to accept justice as a principle has shaped their religious psychology and perception differently. These two aspects, i.e. power and security and accepting the status quo, have developed with them in a way that the justice has retreated in their favor. Why was this ignored despite the explicit decrees relating to the communal and Friday communal prayer leaders in which justice, piety and religious belief were deemed necessary<sup>49</sup>—decrees that were valuable to them. This was either ignored or depicted as unimportant. Was this because of any reason other than the need to accept the status

quo and avoiding the consequences of objecting to it? Yes, their religious psychology and their religious perception were shaped on the axis of the concept of power and security, which competed with justice and made the latter retreat.

This current has special results, among which agreement of this spirit of religious perception with what we interpreted as stability, establishment and historical continuity is the most important. When the status quo had the minimum requirements for some legality that would deem disturbing it as illegal and at the same time there was not a higher legal ideal, no ideal would make the people move in order to reach it. The religious psychology and the religious perception of the people were not so as to respond to such calls. Naturally, such stability and establishment would be attained.

Indeed, this does not mean that history was necessarily so in the two realms of Shi'ism and Sunnism or it will be exactly so in the future. There were other factors, each of which played their own role in turn. The history of these two religious branches is the outcome of the interaction of these factors. What was said was and will be undoubtedly one of the most important and most critical factors. We say it will be so because these two characteristics are deeply rooted in the subconscious and psychological structure of the followers of these two sects due to the ideological structure and specific characteristics of the two ideologies. Therefore, as long as these two have followers, these two currents will continue to exist.

## **Duties of the Government**

The second factor was the concept of government in old times. Contrary to what it is today, i.e. the government provides services, in the past it firstly provided security. Presently, the government is expected to provide services while in the past it was required to provide and guarantee security, internally and externally. This expectation was exactly affected by the expectation of the ancestors from the government and arose from the conditions of those times. In their view, the government was a system to protect the people's property, lives and family and its first duty was to deal with such affairs rather than, for example, providing such services as health, treatment, education, culture and healthy recreation or similar services. The modern-day developments changed the concept of the duties of the government, to consider provision of security as one of its duties rather than the most important one.

However, in the past, especially in the Islamic east, which lacked political stability and continuity, the situation was not this way. In those days, everything and all the values ended in security. What was important was for the government to provide such security. This would be the greatest gift that a government could give to its citizens. However, if the issue is looked at not through today's view but according to the conditions in the past, the concern of the great Sunni jurists and theologians in this respect will be understood, to the effect that everything can be obtained in the light of such security, from religious rites and orders to the protection of the people's property, lives and family. In their view, the government both protected the religion and the people. Therefore, it had to provide for their good in this world and in the afterworld.

Sunni scholars in general, who have written about imamate and caliphate, or have dealt with the same, considered the first and the most important duty of the government to be providing security. Even some of them chose this duty as a definition, from a cautious Sufi-type individual like Ghazali<sup>50</sup> to a strict fanatic like Ibn Taymiyyah<sup>51</sup> and from a political scholar and politician like Mawardi<sup>52</sup> to a thoughtful intellectual like Ibn Khaldun.<sup>53</sup> All of them lived in conditions that made them sensitive to such concerns, which was natural.

You would ask why the story did not end up so with Shi'ites, i.e. why the great Shi'ite theologians and jurists were not so sensitive about security and the protection of security while they also lived in the old times and closely witnessed the events and developments. One has to say in response that their concern about security and protecting the lives and blood and reputation of the Muslims was and is not at all less than that of the Sunni clerics. However, that they did not forget about justice despite such sensitivity and this principle was not overshadowed by security and their thoughts and beliefs were due to the practice of the *imams* and the special decrees that they had accepted, i.e. there was a special reason for this and, if it had not been there, like the Sunni clerics and under the influence of the conditions in the past and the expediency for protecting security and peace, they would have thought the same way.

Finally, the third factor would arise from the historical realities and necessities. Throughout the history of Islam, other than in certain periods, it was the Sunnis who had the power and were responsible for protecting the society and its borders. Shi'ites, i.e. the Twelver Shi'ites, were a small minority community and rarely had such a responsibility. Accordingly, it was natural that the Sunni political thought would be more strongly and more deeply influenced than the Shi'ite political thought by questions concerning the administration and protection of the society and guarding its internal and external security and providing the means for it. Their jurisprudence and theology flourished and expanded at a time when they inherited centuries of experience in statesmanship and protecting the foreign borders. However, the Shi'ite jurisprudence and theology had not undergone such experiences when they were developing. The latter was based more on theoretical principles and foundations rather than on realities and practical necessities.

Islam was in constant conflict with fierce malicious domestic and foreign enemies. Such conflicts never stopped and are still going on. Basically, the geographical situation of the Muslim World from the very beginning was so that it exposed it to constant relentless attacks. The most important of these dangers came from the east, where the yellow race from Central Asia threatened the Muslim territory from the very early days. These threats continued long after the Mongol attack. The other attack was from the west, where the Christians and the Crusaders were, and continued to the early times of the present century in military form and still goes on in a different form.<sup>54</sup>

## Vastness of the Muslim World

The vastness of the Muslim World and the various groups, cultures, races, nations and religions therein were yet another problem. No religion had so much variety within its territory and no religion has been able to create so much harmony, coherence and unity. This provided an appropriate ground for understanding Islam in different ways and, as a result, for creation of an unlimited number of sects and a great deal of religious, cultural and sociopolitical tensions. Consequently, from the very beginning of its appearance, this religion was in conflict with foreign aggressors on the one hand, and with the internal insurgents on the other. Because of its vastness, anyone could convert to it and, naturally, it had a great potential for widely different interpretations and justifications. Any of these two could easily benefit from the internal groups who had different thoughts and generally fought, killed and plundered each other in order to create tension and insecurity or at least contribute thereto.

It would be appropriate here to quote part of the views of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, as quoted by Muhammad Abu Zuhrah, about the causes of sectarianism in Iraq, which is an example of Muslim sectarianism throughout history, and why it was so, "Iraq was home to all Islamic sects because it was the point where all ancient civilizations met. There, one could find the sciences of the Iranians and those of the Chaldeans and the remains of the cultures and civilizations of these nations, merged with Greek philosophy and Indian thoughts, while all of them had been mixed with Islamic thoughts.

Therefore, this land became the birthplace and growing center for various Islamic sects. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid thus explains why different sects were formed in Iraq, "Concerning the difference of this people with the Arabs of the Prophet's (S) time, I have found out that all of these are from Iraq and reside in Kufah. The Iraqi nature is so that it constantly fosters the believers of various sects and new religions. The people of this land have insight and are interested in discussions and contemplating different issues while they have views and beliefs similar to objectors to religions. People like Mani, Disan, Mazdak and the like were from among them, who appeared at the time of the Sassanid kings. The Hijazi nature and thought are not like this."<sup>55</sup>

The words of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid were true about Iraq as well as about many other places. The same causes that created various sects in Iraq or at least contributed to their growth and development existed in the other Islamic lands as well. It was the destiny that this religion extend to lands that were the cradles of ancient cultures and civilizations.

In such circumstances, one can expect that they [the Sunnis] would not think about anything other than security and power that can bring it about. The history of Islam is full of such problems. Apart from all the foreign dangers, one of which was the Mongol invasion that destroyed the Islamic east, Islam was throughout its history involved in constant malicious conflict with Christianity in the western front. If there were intervals in the meanwhile, it was for refreshing the forces rather than for stopping the conflicts permanently. Christianity and the medieval church considered Islam to be a usurping enemy, one that

had invaded part of its territory and had risen against its authenticity and truth. Although Muslims followed their teachings to consider Christians as People of the Book, the fact is that the Christians, other than in the present century when they recognized Islam as a religion, considered Muslims as unbelievers<sup>56</sup> that had to be destroyed.

## Threat of Christian Powers

An example of Ha'iri's account of the Christians' view of Muslims, quoting from Sanders, "You could hardly find a Christian with honesty in the period of belief that would consider the Prophet (S) impartially as his religion, in his view, was an infidel caricature of the Christian's own religion and its followers—from the first to the seventh century, when the Muslims took Syria from the Byzantine government—had destroyed Christianity in its birthplace where it had grown."<sup>57</sup>

Then, he adds, "Thus, the Christian World, i.e. Europe, looked at Islam and, therefore, they always considered the Prophet of Islam and his religion and followers as enemies and cursed at them, so much so that Pike, in a book that he wrote about the Prophet's life, admits that Muhammad is one of the great men that has been subject to accusations more than any other famous man."<sup>58</sup>

As we said, the Christians' hostility never stopped. They were the permanent organized ideological enemies of Muslims. Their attacks were contrary to that of the eastern invaders, who were general idolaters and whose attacks were for slaughter and plundering and for finding pastures and occupying developed and residential lands. The latter would finally merge into the Muslim society by converting to Islam while the Christians' attacks were preplanned and ideological. Not only would they not accept Islam, they were also seeking to Christianize the Muslims. The purpose of the eastern invaders was slaughter and destruction while the western invaders sought to destroy Islam and the centrality of Islam.

"To the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church and the European governments, the fall of Granada did not just mean the defeat of Abu 'Abdullah, the last Muslim ruler of the Granadan Nasiris, against the united forces of Ferdinand and Isabella. It also meant an unforgettable victory for the Christian World against Islam and, as Sanders puts it, the Granada event was 'an uncompleted partial avenge by Christianity' against Islam. Europe, which was constantly worried about and feared the unity of the Muslims and the material and spiritual progresses of the Muslim World—which had extended after the Muslims took control of Constantinople—celebrated the fall of Granada and expressed much happiness for the defeat of the Muslims while, as Bartold writes, the fall of Granada was 'like a bomb exploding in the Muslim World', making all the Muslims mourn on it. The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church arranged feasts, dances and celebrations in Rome and the Vatican for the event.

In his book *Jam-Sultan*, a French writer writes that, after the news of the Granada fall spread, the Vatican and the other places in Rome were lit for celebrations, there were plays and horseracing and bullfighting competitions for consecutive days. In one of the plays, two people dressed as Ferdinand and Isabella, while another man playing the role of Abu 'Abdullah, the defeated Muslim ruler, was chained

and fell to their feet. The people were joyous for the king and queen of Spain, who had finally been united to defeat the Islamic rulers of Granada after years of being defeated by them.

Among the first-hand spectators or audience, there was the same Jam, the brother of Bayazid II, the Ottoman Sultan, who was held by the Pope's government in order to make the Ottoman sultan behave himself. According to the French writer, more than anything else the prince disliked the chaining play of Abu 'Abdullah and throwing him at the feet of Ferdinand and Isabella. It seems that the Vatican Catholic leaders held such plays, feasts and celebrations to show that the Muslims were in bad conditions and were disunited, especially in the presence and with the awareness of Jam Sultan, who contemplated having the crown of the greatest Islamic government of that time. They thus sought to quench their sense of avenge and:

- 1) Say to the Christian World that, despite the past, Islam was now powerless against the West and Christianity had overcome Islam.
- 2) Severely break the spirit of the Muslims and Muslim rulers, especially the Ottoman kings who claimed to conquer the world."[59](#)

## **Power and Security**

In such conditions, it was natural that the thoughts and sensitivity to security and power be directed towards the creator and protector of security rather than to justice or the practice of justice. What mattered here was merely having power and splendor because these would frighten the enemies and protect the centrality and borders of Islam. Therefore, everything would have to be put at the service of making the ruler as powerful and splendid as possible. This is the duty of all and it is a religious and Islamic duty because, in their view, defending Islam was so intermingled with defending the ruler that it was not possible to defend the religion without defending the ruler. To them, it was not important who he was and what he did and how far he was committed to the religious precepts and Islamic justice. What was important was that he symbolized Islam and everybody had to be at his service and obey him in order to consolidate his position as much as possible because it is the power and splendor of this symbol that silences the enemies, frightens the aliens and establishes security.[60](#)

This is well explained by Ibn Hanbal where he is accounting for the religious necessity of obeying the rulers, "It is obligatory to obey the rulers and commander of the faithful, be he a good or bad person. It is necessary to obey the one who has become the caliph and the people gather to express their allegiance and also the one who has gained domination over the people with the power of the sword and by force and is known as caliph and commander of the faithful. *Jihad* by the side of the emirs, whether they are good or bad, is acceptable until the Day of Resurrection.

The decisions they make like the distribution of spoils and tributes and on punishments is acceptable. No one should be sarcastic towards them or stand up against them. It is allowed and rewarded if you pay

them alms, whether they are good or bad. Standing behind them for prayer and behind any other person who is qualified is acceptable and one who refuses to do this is a heretic and a violator of the tradition of the ancestors. One who does not believe that standing behind good or bad emirs to say the Friday communal prayer is accepted, has not understood the true virtues of the Friday communal prayer.

The tradition is that two units of prayer have to be said with them and you have to believe that this prayer is complete and should not doubt it. One who disobeys an *imam* of the Muslims whom the people have accepted and whose caliphate the people have accepted, whether with satisfaction or with force or reluctance, has broken the customs of the Muslims and opposed the Prophet's tradition and, if he dies, it is as if he has died in the pre-Islamic ignorance period."<sup>61</sup>

The Muslims in the past centuries lived under such conditions and this was true especially in the first centuries of Islam when the seed of Sunni jurisprudential and theological structure and thoughts was planted. These foundations developed in the light of such conditions and necessities. Indeed, this was approved by the experiences of the subsequent centuries. Hajjaj ibn Yusuf says, "The sultan's weakness is more damaging than his oppression because his weakness affects everybody whereas his oppression affects a certain group."<sup>62</sup> This indicates the true spirit of that time and the mentality and sensitivity of the people of that time. It was an example for later times and the emirs advised their children about them.

In those times, it was possible to make one of the two choices, either accepting anarchy, insecurity and foreign threats or submitting to the oppression of the ruler and his deviation from the right path of Islam and Islamic justice. In such conditions, naturally all the people would choose the latter.

## Ghazali's Theory

As Ghazali sought to prove the religious rather than the rational necessity of imamate, he says things that are a clear expression of the problems that were mentioned and of the necessities arising therefrom, "...And as to the second introduction: It is that the world affairs and the security of the souls and of property is not provided, unless under a powerful obeyed sultan. The best reason for this is when a sultan or caliph dies, that if he is not immediately substituted by another obeyed king, there will be anarchy, murder, plunder and drought everywhere. The beasts will die and the industries will be stopped. The powerful will steal and plunder and no one will have rest so as to worship or seek knowledge, if he survives the situation, and most people will be killed.

Therefore, it has been said that the religion and the sultan are together. The religion is the foundation and the sultan is its guard. What has no foundation will be destroyed and what had no guard will be ruined. In brief, any reasonable person will notice that the people will be destroyed if they are left to themselves, because of their class difference and conflicting views, and there being no powerful obeyed person to gather them together.

This disease has no cure other than a powerful sultan to maintain the worldly system, and the maintenance of the worldly system is necessary for establishing a religious system, and the religious system is necessary for the otherworldly salvation, which is what the prophets meant. Therefore, the necessity of having an *imam* is an inevitable religious necessity. Understand this very well.”[63](#)

It is interesting that the well-known theologian, Qadi ‘Abdu’r-Rahman bin Ahmad Ayji mentions the same point. As the second reason for the necessity of appointing an *imam*, he mentions preventing probable damage. Explaining this, he says, “With a relative certainty, we know that the *shari’ah* legislator, while legislating the religious rites on the days of feast and Fridays, meant to provide for benefits for the people in this world or in the afterworld. These benefits will not be attained other than by having an *imam* appointed according to the *shari’ah* so as to be referred to in what relates to him because the people, with their differing views and their conflicts, rarely submit to each other.

This would result in fights and perhaps the death of all. This has been shown by experience and also by disturbances that happen in the interval between the death of a sultan and the appointment of another individual because, if this appointment is delayed, the daily life will be stopped and everyone will take a sword to protect his life and property. This will result in the destruction of the religion and of all the Muslims.”[64](#)

We quoted the above in full because of its importance in the entire discussion. However, despite all this, the big problem was that the second choice, i.e. submitting to an oppressor despite his deviation from the right path of Islam and from the Islamic justice, which was due to necessity, resulted in the establishment of a tyrannical sociopsychological structure among them and formed the foundations of their thoughts accordingly in all respects. This temporary necessity had a lasting effect, which continued to the present day and aroused a great deal of protests by the youth and the intellectuals of the new generation.”[65](#)

## Preserving the System

All of these factors finally constituted the thought of preserving the system and the need to do so. The question was to preserve the system. This had the first priority. The other factors were either in its employment or had a peripheral or secondary importance. Such a way of thinking would certainly nip any objection in the bud on grounds of justice, either by claiming to return to the Prophet’s (S) tradition or by claiming to confront heresy. From this point of view, the question is not what the truth is and what the falsehood is. The principle is that all people have to serve to protect and preserve it and to consolidate and reinforce it as much as possible. Anything other than this would be violating the customs of the Muslims and prohibited, and persistence on that would be deemed as rejection of the religion. Accordingly, the greatest protest that one could have would be an objection in one’s heart and a personal one, i.e. one must not accept a ruler’s heresy by heart, yet objecting to it would be violating the customs of the Muslims and one has to avoid doing so. One’s duty is, at the ultimate point, a denial by

heart not in action or practice. The following story explains this very well.

One day, the jurists of Baghdad went to Ibn Hanbal and said to him, “This person—they meant Wathiq, the ‘Abbasid caliphate, who, like Ma’mun and Mu’tasim, promoted the issue of the creation of the Qur’an—has corrupted the people’s beliefs and does not stop on this. It is necessary to do something.” They meant to get a *fatwa* for rising against the caliph. However, he said in response, “Your duty is to deny in your hearts. You have to deny him in your heart but are not allowed to rise against him or oppose him.”[66](#)

Ibn Hanbal did not say this because he sought comfort or he was conservative. He champions the period of hardship, to be later known as the Days of Hardship. He is one of the most prominent opponents of the thought of the creation of the Qur’an and insisted so much on this that he was defamed and beaten for it. In Mu’tasim’s period, he was lashed nearly to death. He was not afraid or did not seek personal comfort. He really thought so and recommended that too.[67](#)

However, the question why he thinks so returns to his jurisprudential and theological foundations, as were mentioned. He believed that even if the imamate and caliphate is attained by force and sword, one is not allowed to oppose it thereafter. When the ruling system and the protection of the ruling system are made a principle, the person who takes it and the qualifications he has to have are overshadowed thereby. The principle is solidity and power rather than conforming the religious precepts or justice. It is this principle that makes it legal and necessary to be obeyed rather than its characteristics. Because of this, even a caliph that believes in the creation of the Qur’an and promotes this has to be obeyed because they believed that the negative results and consequences of opposing the ruling system are far more than the positive results that may result in ‘calling to goodness’ or ‘prohibiting the evil’ in words and in practice. Therefore, one must not do it. Although this is a true saying, if its limits are not defined and it is considered to be true in any circumstances, it would provide the best ground for the rule of oppression and deviation from the religion and justice, as this happened.[68](#)

It was exactly on this basis that he said they should not make any objection to Wathiq or take any action against him. It was again based on this he did not call Mu’tasim, the powerful and strict and at the same time uninformed and unlearned ‘Abbasid caliph, by any title other than caliph and the Commander of the Faithful, even when he underwent the severest forms of torture.[69](#)

These were the most important factors that formed the mentality of the senior Sunni clerics regarding security and protecting the ruling system, from among of which the third factor was the most effective and critical. This was one of the major differences between Shi’ites and Sunnis. One of the most important reasons why Shi’ah has been criticized and even blamed throughout history has been this last factor. They constantly said and say that Shi’ah, with what they did, has broken the Muslim unity and created differences and disputes. Some even criticize Imam Husayn with this same reason and explicitly ask why he stood against the consensus of the Muslims.[70](#)

Here the problem is not whether this criticism of theirs is right or not, i.e. whether Imam broke the Muslim unity or whether there was another issue. What is important is that this criticism is the product of their intellectual and doctrinal system. Commitment to such a system will necessarily take one to such views as they have adopted. The critics of the Imam thought so and those that did not say anything, were under the influence of the special sayings regarding the Imam, which were also cited by great Sunni sayings scholars. That is to say, from among the prohibition of breaking the Muslim unity, which was a natural and logical result of their intellectual, ideological and jurisprudential system, and the sayings that were cited as to the high position of the Imam, they resorted to the sayings. Their silence and probably admiration was due to this rather than due to the agreement of the ‘Ashura uprising with their jurisprudential and theological foundations—here we are talking about the true independent Sunni scholars rather than the ones who were affiliates of tyrants and would give up their religion in order to justify the purposes and actions of those in power. These would say anything even at the price of insulting a person like Imam Husayn.

## Ibn Qayyim’s Theory

It would be better here to cite the theory of one of the greatest Sunni scholars, Ibn Qayyim. In his most important and serious book *A‘lam al-Muwaqqi‘in*, he has a full chapter on “Change and difference of *fatwa* depending on change of time, place, conditions, intentions and results”, in which he provides a detailed account on that “The *shari‘ah* has been constructed for the people’s benefits in the worldly and the otherworldly affairs.”

Then, he provides the degrees of prohibiting the evil and its conditions, saying on the latter, “The Prophet necessitated prohibiting the evil so that what God and his Prophet like will prevail. Then, if prohibition of the evil involves another evil which is disliked by God and his Prophet, it will not be allowed, although that evil is not liked by God and He will punish those who commit it. It is like prohibiting the sultan or the governor from evil by rising up against him, as this will be the basis for any disturbance and evil to the end of time. The Prophet’s Companions asked him about fighting emirs who delay saying prayers on time, and if they should fight them. He said, ‘No, not as long as they say it.’

‘One who sees something from his emir that he dislikes, he has to be patient regarding it and must not refuse to obey him.’ One who contemplates small and big damages that occurred to Islam will see that it has been due to non-commitment to this principle and impatience on the evil. They sought to eliminate an evil but were entangled in a bigger evil, which was the result of their action. The Prophet saw the greatest of evils in Mecca but he could not change them. When God opened Mecca to him and made it the home of Islam, he began changing the Ka‘bah and made it the way Abraham had built as the Qurayshis could not bear it since they had just converted to Islam and left paganism. Therefore, the Prophet did not let the Muslims stand up against the emirs and prohibit the evil in practice as a great disturbance would arise out of it.”<sup>71</sup>

## Seeking Justice and Ambition of Power

The important thing here is that these two different types of attitudes and interpretations will entail absolutely different consequences. The historical experiences of Shi'ites and Sunnis and their present conditions are mainly affected by these two types of consequences rather than by the two types of attitudes and interpretations.

One of the most important differences of these types is that the Sunni revolutionary potential in the contemporary time had an 'ambition for power' rather than 'seeking justice' the way it is within the Shi'ite world.<sup>72</sup> The biggest motivation and rather sensitivity and worry of revolutionary Shi'ites at present are their seeking justice. The important characteristic of their Islamic political ideology, which is the source of their inspiration and mobility, is their seeking justice.

They have risen to establish justice, i.e. they have risen to establish an Islam whose main message is justice and the establishment of justice while the goal of the Sunni Islamic movements in general is mainly creating a powerful grand centrality. They are looking for the power and splendor of Islam like the early periods and want the Muslims to have a power like in the past. Their ideal is powerful caliphs of the early period. To them, Islam is the religion of power in the first place and its history is one of power and majesty. Shi'ites, at least contemporary Shi'ites, see Islam as the religion of justice in the first place and deem its true history to be one of justice and administration of justice.

For example, in the Shi'ite view, the most important distinguishing feature of 'Ali's character is his appreciation of equality, justice and justice administration. The former see bright grand faces among the powerful Islamic caliphs, who ruled over the greatest empire of that time while the later find manifestations of justice and equality in the true caliphs, who lived like the most ordinary people and did not bow other than to the religion and justice.<sup>73</sup>

It is exactly because of this that the internal developments after the Islamic Revolution of Iran, especially after the committed revolutionaries took control of the power, have to be studied based on their concerns about enforcement of justice and social justice. The most important factor that formed the ups and downs in Iran in the meanwhile was exactly this. The other factors were secondary. However, if such a revolution had occurred in a Sunni country, the critical sensitivities and factors would certainly not have been so and, most probably, they would have thought of making the revolution as powerful as possible. The natural result of it would have been its further ability in achieving social integrity and absorbing those that had different thoughts in order to create a powerful centrality.<sup>74</sup>

## Channels for the Manifestation of the Revolutionary Potential

From among the other important consequences of this different attitude towards security and justice is that, throughout the history, Sunni Islamic movements were generally religious or cultural and one hardly sees any political movement while in the Shi'ite world, political movements even during the rule of Shi'ite

sultans are abundant as there were the necessary theoretical foundations for rising up against the ruler. Therefore, they were more likely to occur than where there were no such principles and such actions would be deemed illegal as causes of the order established by the ruling system.

The fact that Sunni Islamic movements in general have been religious and cultural is not because of their lack of theoretical sociopolitical foundations. In the absence of a sociopolitical channel which is both religiously acceptable and can contain and guide the revolutionary potential of the people, a tendency towards change, development and reform shall be naturally contained within the religious and cultural channel while the Shi'ites did not have such a problem. It was likely for this potential to be put through its religiously acceptable channel, be it social or political or any other military or armed form. There was no problem in this regard. Therefore, a revolutionary potential could easily be led through its natural channel. However, this was not the case with Sunnis.

The outlets of public anger had been blocked and one could not rise up against the ruler, its oppressions and heresies. Consequently, all of these were manifested in the form of fighting heresy, religious deviation and intellectual problems so far as it does not relate to the ruler. One day in the form of fighting the Mu'tazilites, while the other day in the form of fighting Shi'ism, Sufism, the philosophy and the next day in the form of fighting any of the four religious branches and the jurisprudential and theologian schools and sometimes in the form of confronting the people and their beliefs claiming that they do things that are not acceptable to a certain religiously dogmatic and backward group, whereas they have adopted polytheistic tendencies and shedding their blood is allowed.[75](#)

From this historical point of view, this has been one of the important causes of the endless internal conflicts of the Muslims throughout history. Despite the many common points among the various sects of Islam, which is due to the firm, clear and explicit principles and the infinite capacity of Islam itself, the history of Islam is still full of bloody confrontations between the sects. A great part of this indeed is due to the social, political, tribal and racial factors. However, it should not be ignored that lack of an appropriate and religiously acceptable channel through which one can benefit from the revolutionary potential of the people for sociopolitical reforms was itself a factor for the deviation of this accumulated and at the same time natural force. When this force was deprived of an appropriate and religiously acceptable means to achieve its goals, it will naturally use channels and means that are acceptable to it and, instead of dedicating its force directly towards the ruling system, it will confront its brothers with various excuses.[76](#)

This is especially more important in a religion such as Islam. Islam, more than any other religion, is capable of mobilizing its hidden forces for promoting its objectives. The other religions more or less dedicate their manpower to individual salvation. It is not so in Islam. Yet, its difference with the other religions is that this individual salvation will be attained in the light of social action, any action that is dedicated to the promotion of the objectives of this religion.

The final purpose is for this religion to achieve its social objectives. Man will be happy if he puts himself

at the service of realizing such a goal and ideal. It is because of this that this religion has been and is better able than the other religions to realize hidden individual talents and benefit from them for its sociopolitical progress. Therefore, a Muslim wishes to make maximum use of his power in order to promote his religion and to devote himself to this cause as much as possible, as this would finally result in his salvation. In other religions, this salvation is attained with a sort of practice on one's soul or by individual or probably collective actions. However, in this religion, this salvation is attained mainly through individual or collective actions that somehow contribute to the promotion of the objectives. In the meanwhile, the important thing is that Islam has the ability and power to improve the internal forces of a Muslim, develop his sense of devotion and apply all of these forces.<sup>77</sup> Further discussion is needed to better clarify this issue.

## Seeking Devotion

It is principally an important human feature to be affected and attracted by something. This is one of his constant unchangeable needs. If this need is not equally found with all people, it is not because it does not exist. Rather, the reason is the scattering of their internal forces. They are attracted by numerous factors and their forces are scattered without being sufficiently concentrated for the appearance and emergence of this intrinsic aptitude.

However, from among the many elements that can attract one, religion is undoubtedly one of the most important and powerful. This returns on the one hand to one's intrinsic aptitude to seek the religion and God and, on the other hand, to the deep nature of the religion itself. It is because of this that it can permeate the depths of one's subconscious and employ all his visible and invisible forces. From this point of view, there is not much difference between Islam and the other religions, such as Christianity, for example. Medieval Christianity employed its followers the same way. A Christian missionary or warrior would work and devote himself with the same passion as a Muslim missionary or *jihad* warrior. However, in the modern era, when Christianity, and not just Christianity but all the other religions other than Islam, made extensive reforms and put aside many of their authentic elements and primary claims, the difference in Islam and Christianity emerged. Present-day Christianity, contrary to medieval Christianity, is a set of rites with a limited capacity, incapable of mobilizing and employing all the capabilities of its followers, as in the past.

The fact that one does not see Christians nowadays who are as firm as in the past is not due to the intrinsic weakness of today's Christianity. Rather, it is mainly due to the weakness of the version of Christianity which is now believed in because Christianity today is not as firm, determined and direct as it was in the past and is actually required of a divine religion. When a religion is set back by the modern civilization by its necessities and pressures and it retreats step by step and gives up its original values in order to adapt to the present conditions at any price, it cannot have the minimum attraction with the help of which to create love and devotion in its followers. The inattention and non-devotion of Christians nowadays is more due to the internal weakness of Christianity promoted by the modern church than to

their weak faith.[78](#)

This is the difference of Islam and the other religions, on top of Christianity today. For various reasons, which related entirely to its essence and nature, Islam went, and could only go, on a path different from the one that the other religions went or had to go on in the modern centuries. Although modern Muslim thinkers wanted it and still want it to be like the other ones. It is precisely because of this that the Islamic beliefs among the masses of the people are not less original than those of their fathers in the past centuries. This means that this religion has retained its originality, purity, entirety, certainty and explicitness and has been able to preserve the same influence, attraction and potential that it had in the past centuries. It can quench the thirst of the new generation and employ them in the same way as it did their ancestors.[79](#)

Nevertheless, the discussion was that Islam can develop the internal capabilities of its followers and make them fond of it and employ their mobilized force for promoting its objectives. Now, the point is, when these forces and capabilities flourish but do not have a chance in the sociopolitical scene, it will be deviated and misled, and will turn into a force to encounter all that is deemed as heresy. When the emotions are excited, they will not submit to reason. Then the individual will seek to make his religion the most devoted by encountering whatever that is heresy. It will not matter to him if the one whom he attacks is his brother or fellow believer. He sees confronting him one whom will mean his religious purity and the victory of the religion, the truth, the Qur'an and the Prophet (S). This is not because the one he encounters is really on the wrong path. It is he who needs cases to deem as misled although this might be a mental process and an illusion, so as to apply the fire within him for devotion.[80](#)

Scenes of bloody sectarian clashes throughout the history of Islam did not just involve Shi'ites versus Sunnis. It is surprising that sectarian violence between Hanafites and Shafi'ites[81](#) or the Traditionists and the non-Traditionists were far more extensive and bloodier.[82](#) The problem was not a Shi'ite-Sunni one—indeed, according to what was said, there was in practice a much greater number of moves by Sunnis against Shi'ites rather than the other way round as Shi'ites, apart from the fact that they were generally in a minority, they were not like the Sunnis in terms of facing jurisprudential and theological limitations for making and taking sociopolitical moves and actions and for having a revolutionary potential for reform. Apart from this, their jurisprudential and theological foundations, religious thought and historical experiences were not so as to consider Sunnis to be outside the religion.[83](#) The problem was that there was no means for expressing religious purity other than by fighting heresy in the sense, as we said, of relating to the ruling system. It was as if the heresy of the other sects had attracted the entire sap of the tree of religious self-sacrifice and devotion and the other branches had been cut away. In other words, 'sacrifice oneself for the high objectives and ideals of the religion' was put at the service of rejecting heresy, the way they called it, a current that is still going on.[84](#)

## Ideology of the Ruling System

What has so far been said was related to the development of Shi'ite and Sunni political thought in the first one or two centuries, to the background in which the Sunni jurisprudence and theology developed and what effects this background had on its realization. However, how these foundations were understood in the following centuries and how they developed are independent subjects without considering which one cannot understand the present situation, especially because their social, religious and psychological structures and institutions are formed in this same period. In the meanwhile, the religious and political method of the 'Abbasid caliphs was more effective and critical. Although the foundations of Sunni political thought were laid at the time of the Senior Caliphs and the Umayyad, especially Mu'awiyah, it was in fact the 'Abbasids who developed it into a final system. They needed the religion and pretended so and made use of it as much as possible in order to preserve and continue their rule.[85](#)

The flourishing, extension and development of Islamic sciences from jurisprudence, sayings and analysis to theology, statesmanship and history, go back to the same period. Because of their general politics, it was natural that this current be strongly influenced by their interests. It practically became so influential that the Sunni jurisprudential and theological system was involved in the ruling system of the society and, finally, turned into the ruling system's ideology and justified and legalized it.[86](#) Later, after the fall of the 'Abbasid caliphate, the bond was still in place and was put at the service of local rulers.

This requires further explanation. The fact is that the 'Abbasids, in order to consolidate their power and position, needed the religion more than their predecessors. The Islamic society was more integrated and harmonious in the Umayyad period than in the 'Abbasid period. The newly converted Muslims of the newly conquered lands in the Umayyad period were frightened of the new situation and power that had dethroned their kings. They either witnessed the events that went on or were finally in the employment of Arab or ethnic Arab rivals who had risen to fight for power. Years had to pass before they could discover that they could effectively and actively participate in the formation of the sociopolitical and even religious and cultural currents.

In the late Umayyad period, the days of seclusion and watching had passed. That is to say, the non-Arab Muslims entered onto the scene, providing for the fall of the Umayyad. Their fall intensified their entering on the scene in all its aspects. The other problem was the presence of new forces that not only had political claims, but had religious and cultural aspects that aggravated the sociopolitical differences despite all its positive results.[87](#)

The set of these conditions weakened the power of the 'Abbasids compared to the Umayyads.[88](#) This was not because, for example, the 'Abbasid caliphs were less capable or probably less strict or tyrannical; rather, it was mainly due to the change in the conditions. The conditions in the 'Abbasid period did not allow the pursuit of the Umayyad policies. If the Umayyads had taken power in the

'Abbasid time, they would have followed more or less similar policies and would have a similar degree of power.

What matters here is the effect of these conditions on the Sunni jurisprudential and theological structure, which was founded and flourished mainly in this period. That is to say that the caliph's weak military power made it necessary to use the religion as a means to consolidate his position. In fact, the religion made up for the power that could no longer be obtained by sword.

This does not mean that all the clerics who followed a similar path followed the caliph or pursued certain interests that could be gained by doing so. Doubtless, there were people among them that arrived at such conclusions only for the protection of the religion and for the security of the people. In their opinion, what mattered in those hard days of tension was a powerful centrality that could protect the religion and the people's property and lives, while the ruler alone could not create such centrality. Therefore, the religion had to help create such centrality.

Thus, the religion was adopted as the ruler's ideology. This did not mean that the religion responded to the ideological needs of the ruling system concerning how to run a society and how to govern. Rather, it was like a support to make up for his weaknesses and shortages. This indeed required a minimum of the religious appearances to be considered by the ruling system. It was not possible to ask the people to bow to and defend the ruling system while the system was entirely inattentive to religious appearances.[89](#)

## New Objections

According to this, one has to say that, if the 'Abbasid caliphs after Harun were not militarily weak, the Sunni jurisprudential and theological structure, at least where it concerns the political and governmental issues, would be shaped otherwise. This did not arouse any objection by Sunnis themselves until the contemporary era. In the latter period, and especially in the last two decades, numerous objections were made, some indications of which can be traced in the writings of revolutionary and even reformist Islamic or non-Islamic political groups in Egypt, northern Africa and some Arab countries.[90](#)

However, Shi'ite ideology did not go on this route from the very beginning. Its principles were not so as to be able to turn into the ideology of the ruling system, even where the sultan was a Shi'ite. When the religious acceptability of the ruling system is defined in connection with its conformity to the principles and conditions that the ruler of the ruling system should have, such an ideology cannot be adopted by the ruling system and cannot serve its justification.

The theoretical foundations of Sunni ideology were so that, in practice, it had no claim other than legalizing and justifying the present conditions. This was, firstly, because its theoretical and doctrinal foundations had been formed and had grown under the influence of political and historical realities, especially where it related to the early period of Islam. In other words, here the ideology was peripheral

to and derived from the reality—we have already said that, in the issue of imamate and leadership, despite Shi'ites, who first defined the position, Sunnis defined and interpreted the position in the light of the one who was in the position. To them, what had happened in the early period was true and religiously acceptable.

Naturally, they would derive the definitions and concepts from the officially accepted cases. Secondly, the reason for this was that they deemed the preservation and protection of the religion possible only in the light of the existence of the government and the governing system.<sup>91</sup> Since this had been accepted as a principle, it would serve to justify and legalize the present situation. Their thoughts and minds were shaped like this from the very beginning, especially because, in their view, the consensus of the Companions, the Followers and the clerics of the later periods as well as the Qur'anic texts and the Prophet's tradition approved it as well.<sup>92</sup>

The problem was not just that they had accepted such a principle. They thought this way. More importantly, they understood the religion like this and would interpret it like this. Doubtless, there were many among them who accepted and promoted this method because of bad intentions or for gaining material profit or approaching the sultan. Yet, it cannot be denied that there were also others who had accepted it for reasons that were mentioned.<sup>93</sup>

Nevertheless, these foundations were otherwise with Shi'ites, who did not think or bow other than to their own rules, criteria and values. That is to say, they did not consider the justification of the present situation and avoiding weakening the ruler's power and probably trying to strengthen it, as some Sunnis claimed so, to be the only way to preserve and protect the religion. At least in certain parts of history they believed the contrary. Therefore, in their opinion, the present situation has to be accepted so long as it conforms to these rules or if the conditions are so that the preservation and protection of the religion require non-opposition to the ruling system, in which case they would neither recognize it nor oppose it.<sup>94</sup>

Although this difference may not seem very important and critical at first glance, it has shown its importance in the course of the developments of the new period. The theoretical problems of contemporary Islamic movement in the Sunni world and lack of such problems among Shi'ites are initially due to this difference as the meaningful silence of Sunni religious circles against the criticism of the new generation about their support of Islam offered and interpreted by the corrupt tyrants, whether in the past or in the present, is because of the same reason.<sup>95</sup>

Although some Shi'ite intellectuals in Iran and in other countries have made similar criticisms against the Shi'ite clergy, the problem here had other causes and could, therefore, be solved. Although there were some Shi'ite clerics by the side of Shi'ite rulers in the past, this had secondary causes and was not because they considered the ruling system as religiously acceptable or their obligation to be religiously required. The necessity of defending the true religion and a more important expediency led them to adopt such a position temporarily. Apart from this, as there was not such a necessity in the

contemporary times and they had to stand up against the ruling power in order to defend and support the religion, even if the power was a Shi'ite one, they did so.

## The Shi'ite Stance

The important thing, nevertheless, is that, for certain reasons, the way the clerics stood by the side of the sultan was different in the Shi'ite and Sunni history. A Shi'ite cleric could never accept the legality of the power attained by religiously unacceptable means and which acts with a method contrary to the religious rules. Because of this, he could not approve it in this respect. If he had to approve and support him, it was for peripheral and secondary reasons.<sup>96</sup> However, a Sunni cleric did not face such a limitation. To him, the ruler simply because he was the ruler and had the power was religiously acceptable and had to be obeyed. At least, he would deem any opposition to him as religiously prohibited. If some of the early jurists expressed doubts as to the necessity of obeying a ruler only because he was a ruler, they did not yet unanimously agree on the acceptability of opposition.<sup>97</sup>

Indeed, a moral and pious factor prevented the pious Sunni clerics and jurists from getting close to the sultan. They would stay away from the sultanate as it often involved material pleasures, tyranny, violation of others' rights, lavish drinking and forgetting about the afterworld and the Resurrection. They would similarly avoid the company of the others who lived a similar life. As we said, this mainly had moral rather than doctrinal reasons. According to pious Sunni clerics, the sultan himself was one who had to be avoided in order to avoid the world and the pursuit of worldly pleasures. They followed sayings in this regard that advised avoiding the sultan.<sup>98</sup>

Considering the above points, one has to see now why some Shi'ite clerics, some of whom were among the best-known of their time and even the following times, stood by the sultan's side. In fact, most clerics in the Safavid time were so.

The basic reason for this was the political conditions of those times and the constant tensions between the Safavids and the Ottomans. The rivals of the Ottomans, i.e. the Safavids, were Shi'ites. Therefore, it would be in the Ottomans' interest to introduce the Shi'ites as people away from or even outside of and opposing Islam. By doing this, they could arouse the support and courage of their people and persuade them, under the claim of defending the religion and gaining rewards in the afterworld, to do things that they liked and they managed in so doing.<sup>99</sup> However, the important point is that these actions and arousals were and could not merely be against the Safavids and would naturally include the Shi'ites that lived within the Ottoman territory. It was exactly because of this reason that they were under constant pressure, harassment, murder and pillage. Some of the slaughters were so extensive that the Shi'ites in some parts were eliminated forever. As an example, Sultan Salim I, after he dethroned his father Sultan Yazid II and killed his brother and took the throne, in the very beginning ordered the beheading of 40,000 Shi'ites.<sup>100</sup>

In fact, the political rivalry between the two had resulted in religious rivalry or rather hostility. The fact is

that, if it is assumed that the two had a similar role in arousing political rivalry, the Ottomans doubtless had a greater share in arousing religious hostility because the Safavids were Shi'ites and the Shi'ites had never throughout the history considered the Sunnis to be outside of Islam so as to fight them on such grounds. [101](#) However, the contrary is true. For reasons that are beyond the present discussion, there were numerous occasions when the Sunni mobs, provoked by a worldly cleric or a bloodthirsty emir, attacked Shi'ites. The same was true in this case, i.e. the Ottoman sultans could easily employ such a mentality in order to provoke the people to fight against Iran or the Shi'ites within their territory. Indeed the undesirable consequences of such provocations were far deeper and longer lasting than was expected by the sultan or the other provokers. [102](#)

## The Safavids and the Shi'ite Clergy

Under such circumstances, the clergy naturally stood by the sultan's side in order to defend the status and the only powerful Shi'ite centrality [103](#) so as to protect the power that was constantly under different pressures by the rival, as a result of which they would prevent ruthless slaughters of their fellow Shi'ites in the Ottoman territory, as this was a deterrent against the disrespect shown against the Ottoman Shi'ites and their slaughter and pillage. In those critical days, the destiny of Shi'ites whether inside or outside Iran was interdependent with the strength and power of the Safavids and they had no way other than to protect the latter. We finish this section by mentioning a historical example that shows the conditions and situation of those days.

“Sultan Murad IV (1032–1049 A.H.) took interest in taking Iraq, which was controlled by the Safavids at that time. He prepared to enter into war with Iran but, as he knew he could not defeat the Safavids, he decided to arouse a tribal and religious disturbance. Therefore, he asked the court clergy to issue a *fatwa* for the war against the Shi'ites. No one accepted his request other than a young man by the name of Nuh Afandi. He issued the *fatwa* that the Sultan desired. The title of his *fatwa* was, “One who kills a Shi'ite will go to paradise.” In some parts of his elaborate *fatwa*, he said, “Know that God will make you happy as this infidel rebellious group of roués have all the types of infidelity, rebelliousness, hostility, corruption, heresy and apostasy in them and one who hesitates on the order to kill them is an infidel like them.”

He also says, “The reason for fighting and the permission for killing them are their rebelliousness and infidelity. They are rebellious because have refused to obey the caliph while God says, ‘*Fight the rebels so that they will obey God's orders.*’ This is a must ordered in the Qur'an. Therefore, the Muslims have to respond to the call by their caliph for fighting this rebellious group who were cursed by the Prophet. The Muslims have to help him fight them.” Finally, he adds, “After killing these infidels, whether they repent or not... it is not allowed to get tribute from them or give them temporary or permanent refuge... Enslaving wives is permitted as it is allowed to enslave apostate women when they enter into war or go to a place that is not controlled by *imam* or caliph and this place is a war zone. Their children can also be enslaved following the enslavement of their mothers.” [104](#)

This *fatwa* resulted in a war that lasted for seven months, in which thousands of people from both sides were killed until a peace treaty was concluded between Iran and the Ottoman Empire in the city of Qasr-e Shirin and the war ended.

After the war, another war began in the Ottoman territory against Shi'ites based on the same *fatwa*. They killed as many of them as they could. The most terrible of all was the slaughter of the people of Aleppo as it was a Shi'ite-settled city since the time of the Hamdanites. The slaughter and pillage was so extensive and terrible that, except a few people who fled to the neighboring villages, no one survived. In this event, 40,000 Shi'ites were killed only in Aleppo, thousands of whom were the Prophet's (S) descendants. Sayyid Sharafuddin Ali ibn Hujjatullah Shulestani, who was a cleric from Najaf, sent the *fatwa* to Iran so that the terrible slaughters might be stopped.”[105](#)

## Shi'ite Isolation and Its Consequences

It is necessary to mention another point here. It is the fact that Shi'ites, unlike Sunnis, were always a minority in isolation. Shi'ites lived as scattered minorities within the greater Sunni society. Even where they formed a majority and had the power, they were like an island surrounded by their neighbors. As a result of this isolation, especially after the Shi'ite sultans took power in Iran, the active connection of the Iranian religious society with the outside world and the Muslim World was cut off. When the modern history began in Muslim countries, including Iran and the other Shi'ite territories, the negative resistance of the religious society to guard its original values further isolated this society. [106](#)

Although this phenomenon can be seen in Sunni communities as well, their isolation has never been so severe and as deep as that of Shi'ites. The result of this difference can now be seen in the Islamic thought and the sociocultural movements of the two, especially on a spectrum of religious scholars and thinkers who have been carrying out the mission of defending Islam in the two territories.

Although, for numerous reasons, Shi'ite Islamic thought is more genuine and firmer than the Sunni one, because of the more direct and more extensive contact of Sunni thinkers with the modern civilization, apart from the fact that their thoughts are better updated than those of Shi'ites, their way of thinking is more objective and less subjective than that of Shi'ites. The long history of reformist and modernist thought among Sunnis is probably affected by this.

When the preservation of the original values is to mean merely a nostalgia about the past and entirely rejecting everything that is new or strange, there would be no room for reform, development and modernism. Such thought, more than originating from the religion and the religious foundations, is due to the secluded historical experience of Shi'ites and the Shi'ite religious society.

Indeed, Shi'ite seclusion, at least in Iran, has other reasons as well. Lack of communication between the religious institutions and establishments and the ruling political power has intensified the seclusion. Lack of relations between the two in modern history and while foreign influence and that of the modern culture

was expanding, resulted in a clash between them. As Iran was never a colony and modern thought and culture were not directly but practically imported into the society through the ruling power and its dependents and advocates, the clash between the two finally resulted in the clash between the religious society and modern culture.

As this culture did not show itself to the religious people in any form other than colonialism, exploitation by foreign powers, corruption and irreligiousness, they thought it proper to avoid it entirely. They withdrew themselves from the surroundings and closed their society as much as possible so as to protect themselves and their children. Most probably, nothing could be done in such conditions and situation other than this that could be possible and useful. [107](#)

However, the story of the clash of the religious society with the modern culture was not like this. First of all, the strong relation of their society with the ruling political power exposed them to almost the same thoughts and developments that the ruling system was exposed to. Secondly, their clash with the modern culture was a direct one. Sunni settlements in general, from India to the Middle East and Northern Africa were subject to colonialism for a while.

They saw the features of the modern civilization in all its aspects in the faces of their children. However, this civilization was symbolized in Iran in general by people who were frail-minded, and, alienated from themselves, who neither knew this civilization nor thought of achieving such knowledge. Their resorting to that civilization was mainly for avoiding their moral, social and religious obligations. Finally, they were so in order to distinguish themselves from the masses of the people. [108](#)

In brief, the Shi'ite and Sunni societies entered the contemporary history in two completely different ways. They experienced the modern civilization, culture and thought in two different ways and this culture influenced them in two different ways. They have inherited two different experiences and are children of two different developments. The study of the religious situations of these two, especially their Islamic movement, is impossible without bearing this in mind.

Now let's see, according to what has so far been said on the foundations of Shi'ite and Sunni political thoughts, how the Islamic movements are within these two realms, what differences they have and where the differences originated from.

## **New Pressures and Necessities**

The fact is that the Shi'ite Islamic movement did not have any significant ideological problem. The doctrinal principles, jurisprudential foundations, historical experience and sociopsychological structure arising from these principles, foundations and experience were not so as to be in conflict with the necessities and pressures of modern history in order to find an Islamic answer for political and revolutionary actions. Shi'ites, led by their clergy, could rely on their ideological foundations to stand up against the tyrannical ruling system and to resist it as long as to overthrow it.

This current was in agreement with the psychological, cultural and moral consequences of the massive socioeconomic and political developments of the recent decades in Islamic countries that produced oil or somehow benefited from it. The problem was not just that, in order to protect the religion and guard its values, it was necessary to rise up against the dominant power that was inattentive or even opposed to it—for example, the way we have been witnessing in the last fifty or one hundred years.

Religious movements in the recent century, other than in the last two or three decades, were for stopping the unbridled actions of the ruling system against the religious and national interests—more important than this was that such a struggle had significant objectives without considering its ultimate goal. It did not matter that one had to stand up against and lead to the right path the corrupt ruling system in order to defend the religion.

What mattered was that the various developments, the presence of active leftist and rightist groups that carried out political and revolutionary actions provided such an intellectual and psychological background for the Muslim youth and students that the very presentation of a way based on the principles of Islam which were at the same time revolutionary and challenging was itself a necessity. Other than through this way, it was not possible to quench the religious and justice-seeking souls of the youth who felt an ideological gap for justice and struggled for it. They were so thirsty and passionate that, if they could not find an answer in Islam, they would have certainly gone to other schools of thought. In order to protect its children, the religion had to offer its revolutionary ideology. [109](#)

As we said, Shi'ite ideology and historical experience could well respond to this without making any change or reform in its foundations or without providing interpretations or justifications beyond its actual capacity, especially as the 'Ashura of Imam Husayn had a place in the minds and feelings of the people, a story every moment of which contained a message and the revival of whose memory was actually the revival of the principle that one has to oppose the corrupt tyrannical system no matter how powerful it is, and that one had to resist even by devoting one's blood. This was the most important source of inspiration for finding appropriate solutions to problems that the new Shi'ite generation faced. [110](#)

However, the problem was not like this with Sunnis. On the one hand, there was the pressure of the new generation and the thirsty loving souls of the youth, which required a religious, political and revolutionary answer, and, on the other hand, there was their historical jurisprudence, theology and historical experience that were contrary to such needs and expectations. The problem was both a theoretical and ideological one and a practical, historical and social one. Sunni ideology, even in its most committed, revolutionary form, never went beyond verbal advices when the sultan was a Muslim. Brave Sunni liberals throughout history were those that did not bow to the sultan and did not give up God's content for that of God's creation. They did not sell their faith to the world and were not overwhelmed by the splendor or threats or offers of the ruler. They stood against him, his wishes and expectations and told the truth despite the sultan desire and accepted the outcome of living this way. [111](#)

These are the great Sunni revolutionary heroes. They had the moral and spiritual power to stand firm

against the world and the seekers of worldly advantages while their resistance was different from what was needed for the modern period. The new generation needed figures who would stand up against the ruling system with religious motivations and who would call the people to their way and goals. Figures like Imam Husayn, Zayd ibn 'Ali and other great Shi'ite advisors to the truth not people like Ibn Hanbal or Sa'id ibn Musayyib or other Traditionists who were beaten in the Days of Hardship but still stood firm on their beliefs. [112](#)

Their denial of the ruler was in their heart or, ultimately, verbal rather than in practice—indeed, verbal denial rarely occurred where it means criticizing the ruler—because denial in practice was not deemed proper by anyone. We have already said that their avoiding advising the truth was because of their beliefs rather than conservatism. Therefore, the changes of the time did not and could not affect it. The Sunni political thought had accepted it as a principle that one cannot and should not rise up or draw one's sword against the Muslim ruler even if he is a corrupt tyrant, [113](#) while this was exactly what the modern era needed.

The problem was and is not that the present rulers, whom the Sunni youth oppose, are more tyrannical or corrupt than their previous counterparts. The problem is that today's conditions are entirely different from those in the past. In the past, people would stand against the corrupt tyrant ruler in order to administer justice and spread religion throughout the society. The justice and the religion required this and this required standing up against the deviating ruler. There was no obligation other than this because, firstly, the deviation of the society originated from the ruler's deviation, and that of the latter originated in him. Secondly, there was no sociopolitical, intellectual or cultural need to provide a revolutionary ideology or an ideology for armed struggle so as to, for example, prevent the increasing distance between the youth and the religion. [114](#)

In our era, however, the problem had another face. The ruler was the puppet or follower or at least an ally of great world powers. It was not he who had control of the affairs. He carried out the plans that were prepared by others and given to him to be implemented. In the past, it was the ruler who had the power or ruled as he wished while now the real power lied somewhere else and he was more like a performer than a decision-maker. [115](#)

Apart from this, the sociopolitical, cultural and psychological conditions had changed entirely. In the disorderly severe conditions that existed, every school provided its own solution and claimed to be solving the problem while Islam could not do so. This solution naturally had to be proportionate to the existing characteristics, some most important ones of which were aggression, challenge and reformism of the youth, which could be created only in the big urban, industrial and conflicting communities of today that were full of tension and turned into a real need. [116](#)

If Islam had not provided an acceptable competitive solution in such conditions, it would certainly have lost its influence. Any religion can maintain its active effective presence, if it is not indifferent to the realities and needs of the surrounding environment. It can even be said that preserving a situation

worthy of the religion is indebted to its active creative exchange with all that is going on around it. In conditions in which any school, rightfully or wrongly, claims to reform the present situation, or seeks to disrupt it in favor of a more desirable situation, and such claims were accepted by a large number of young people only because there was a proper background for them, Islam could not remain silent and just watch. This was neither possible nor would the religious commitment and zeal of religious believers, the clerics, the educated people and the intellectuals allowed this. [117](#)

Other than these two factors, there was another obligatory factor which was neither internal nor external. In the recent decades, all the manifestations of the collective and individual lives had changed. Naturally such conditions would develop a psychology, thought, personality and ideal in harmony with it. The contemporary young Muslim grew up in an environment absolutely different from that of his fathers and ancestors. His psychology and personality, mind and thoughts, sensitivities and needs, wishes and ideals and, finally, understanding and perception were under the effect of the new rapid accelerating socioeconomic, intellectual and political developments. His religious understanding, even in its most committing type possible, was different from the religious understanding of his ancestors. He was the child of another era, another experience, another necessity and another need. [118](#)

For certain historical and sociopolitical reasons, this personality, psychological and ideal difference was manifested in socio-religious discussions. The major difference in the religious perception of the new generation and that of his previous generation is in their understanding of politico-religious discussions. Therefore, the classical Sunni thought, even in its most progressive and modernized form could not provide an appropriate response in this regard. The classical thought was appropriate for conditions that no longer existed and it was no longer effective, especially as this had its own vulnerabilities. The Sunni political thought is mainly based on consensus while this basis could not bear and survive the doubts and criticisms of the new generation, as it did not, and many of its assumed principles and theorems collapsed in practice. [119](#)

Nevertheless, these factors altogether entailed new needs and obligations. The basic problem was that the needs and obligations were in conflict with the past thought and heritage. They sought to find, from an extensive jurisprudential and theological or even historical and traditional collection, which at least considered weakening the ruler as religiously unacceptable if not entirely approving the ruler and the ruling system, a response for fighting the ruler. For the first time in their history, they wanted to stand against their ruler based on religious grounds and to find examples in the past history and *fatwas* with whose help to justify their actions and legalize it while this was impossible to do.

This was a serious real need while their doctrinal foundations and historical experiences were in conflict therewith. Such a dead end led them towards unprecedented theories and solutions that were far from the general beliefs and consensus of Sunnis, from the theories set forth in Sayyid Qutb's *Ma'alim fi't-Tariq* to the extremist thoughts of Mustafa Shukri's "*At-Takfir wa'l-Hijrah*" group, and from 'Abdu's-Salam Faraj's *Al-Faridah al-Gha'ibah* to 'Utaybi's *Al-Imarah wa't-Ta'ah wa'l-Biy'ah*.

It is not clear yet which of these theories will prevail in the future because these theories are not based on specific principles so as to be used for predicting the future. What is critical and forms it is the present conditions and the pressure to find a challenging solution and the mentality of those who think of their own problems, one day by saying the society is a pre-Islamic Ignorant one, so as to obligate fighting it, and the other day by resorting to certain parts of the Prophet's (S) and the early Islamic history in an attempt to choose an isolated minority who has left its society and immigrated, with the help of which they intend to Islamicize the society, which at another time they resort to a *fatwa* by Ibn Taymiyyah and prove the need of fighting the present society, which includes Muslims, who, although they are Muslims and cannot be deemed as infidels, yet they are ruled by non-Islamic rulers and by non-Islamic law and order, and, sometimes, they question his religious legality and prove the need to fight him because of violating the allegiance conditions. [120](#)

We see that, although all seek the same goal, each have gone a different way without the slightest agreement or similarity between their ways. This is itself the best reason for what was said. On the one hand, there is increasing pressure that cannot be moderated or deviated and requires an explicit definite response. On the other hand, there is no ground for a response and, because of this, anyone seeks a way out without seeking the problem in its entirety. If anyone can invoke one or more verses of the Qur'an, sayings or historical examples to suggest a theory, one can invoke other examples from the Qur'an, the tradition and the history to provide their opposing theories. Any study of Islam in which its principles, foundations, spirit and generality are ignored and are not in harmony with its foundations is wrong, unreliable and cannot be continued. The big problem of the theoreticians and their theories returns to the same thing. [121](#) Therefore, these theories attract young people for a while and are then forgotten. To clarify the issue, it would be better to mention the thoughts and tendencies in modern history.

## Thought of an Islamic Government

The history of the thought of an Islamic government and the attempts to establish it within the Sunni territory goes back to the fall of the Ottoman caliphate. From the early days of the expansion of Islam to the fall of the Ottomans, the Islamic laws ruled the Muslim territories in practice. More importantly, the existence of a caliph in the following periods of the history of Islam was a great religious and spiritual support that calmed the Muslims and reminded to them that the Islamic rules and standards flow in all the aspects of their lives and that they have practiced their duties.

According to Suyuti, throughout the history of Islam before the fall of the Ottomans, Muslims lacked a caliph only for a period of three years. [122](#) Other than this brief period, there was always a caliph in some part of the Muslim World. This in itself rejected the thought of lack of an Islamic government and no one, therefore, thought of establishing one. Apart from this, the existence of the caliph responded to the religious obligation of having a caliph, following his orders and swearing allegiance to him because, according to them, any Muslim had to be under an oath of allegiance to a caliph and *imam*. Otherwise,

they would die as if before Islam. [123](#)

Here the problem was not political dependence. It was a form of religious obedience and allegiance. Otherwise, they had to live under the political control and influence of a caliph. Since the late 18th century, when the Ottoman caliphate descended to a weak position, Muslims in general did not have a caliph based in Istanbul. More importantly, he was not anymore considered the most powerful Islamic power to be proud of. However, despite lack of political hegemony, his religious position was recognized and the people had performed a great duty by paying or swearing allegiance to him. [124](#)

## Fall of the Caliphate

The Ottoman caliphate was overthrown in 1924 by the Young Turks. This was an unexpected dizzy blow. The Muslims everywhere felt that they lost their support and one of the most important divine duties had no longer been done. They could not imagine living without a caliph and at the same time being a true Muslim. To evaluate the excitement and emotion that the fall of the Ottomans entails, for example, see the poems of Shawqi, the prominent Egyptian poet of that time. [125](#)

It would be appropriate here to mention some of the developments following the termination of the caliphate in the Muslim World and especially in Egypt.

“One of the well-known events of Egypt at that time was the formation of a permanent assembly as ‘the General Islamic Assembly for Formation of Caliphate’, which published a magazine known as *As-Khilafat al-Islamiyyah*. The goal of the conference was to appoint one of the kings in the Islamic countries as the caliph.” [126](#)

Other than the activities of this assembly and its magazine, many scientific circles and newspapers contained the religious discussions relating to the imamate and the caliphate. As a result of these attempts, they mentioned or rather definitely said that, with the termination of the Ottoman caliphate by Ata Turk, Islam had been eliminated in Islamic countries and all Muslims are sinners until they pledge allegiance to another caliph. This sin would have worldly as well as otherworldly punishments which would soon occur... They also mentioned that, because of removal of the caliphate, they had returned to the Ignorance Period and those who die in such a state would die as if they had died in the pre-Islamic Ignorance Period.

Many magazines published numerous articles and *fatwas* in this respect, saying, “It is necessary for all to appoint an *imam* at this time as in the other times. All Muslims are sinners so long as they have not appointed an *imam* who can unify them and they will be punished in the world with what the people of insight know and, in the afterworld, they will be punished with what God knows... Those whom we have to follow are not Muslims, unless they have an *imam* whom has pledged allegiance been to voluntarily... The *imam* of Muslims heads their government and the Muslims have to serve his glory, power and splendor.” [127](#)

After the caliphate, some Muslim thinkers and clerics considered for a while to revive it, as Rashid Rida theorized, “As much as the Islamic forces of this time can”.<sup>128</sup> However, they did not manage to do this for numerous reasons. Revival of caliphate at that time, despite in other times, that if the caliphate had been removed, it would have been restarted somewhere else, was not subject only to the decision of the Muslims. At that time, the foreigners had a critical and effective influence and would not remain indifferent to such a current.

Apart from this, a generation of new educated people had risen who were in sensitive sociopolitical positions. They thought similarly to the Young Turks in this regard and, not only did they not intend to return to the caliphate, but they would also oppose it as much as possible. For example, Muhammad Hasanayn Hiykal, the well-known Egyptian politician writer was among them. At that time, he defended the thoughts of ‘Abdu’r-Razzaq, whose book was published immediately after fall of the caliphate, and attacked his critics and harshly criticized those who worked to revive the caliphate. He wrote in this regard, “What could one say about an Islamic cleric who seeks a caliphate for the Muslims at a time when any Muslim king wishes to be the caliph.”<sup>129</sup>

Smith, who studies the mutual relations of Islam and the contemporary developments in Egypt in the light of Muhammad Hasanayn Hiykal’s biography, says, “Everybody was under the influence of the political events and socioeconomic developments of Egypt of that time. Everybody was to a certain degree under the influence of the modernists of the 1920’s and wanted to limit Islam and the power of Muslim authorities. Such actions were reflected in ‘Abdu’r-Razzaq’s book, *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm*, and in Taha Husayn’s *Ash-Shu‘ara’ li-Jahili*.”<sup>130</sup>

Nevertheless, many, occasionally honest, attempts of many of the believers in the religious necessity of the caliphate failed. The caliphate was terminated and attempts to revive it were futile. The Muslims, despite their tendencies and beliefs, accepted that it was not possible to revive it although some of those in power at that time in Islamic countries were tempted to nominate themselves for the position, yet such temptations did not last long and were replaced by realism, and the thought was entirely forgotten.<sup>131</sup>

With the weakening of this trend, another trend appeared and grew, which was the thought of an Islamic government, which, to many clerics and religious intellectuals, meant nothing but the same Islamic caliphate and its continuation.<sup>132</sup> Before the fall of the caliphate, this thought was not that comprehensible. The previous caliphs and sultans, although corrupt, were not against the religion as it existed among the people. Their interests on many occasions even required them to promote the religion. So long as there was no significant foreign or domestic factor against the religious reality of the society, everything was in a form of harmony with and in compatibility to the religion and the religious heritage.

However, in the modern history, everything had evolved. The scientific, intellectual and industrial developments, the opening of the closed religious society, the backward society, foreign hegemony, direct or indirect dependence of those in power and influential people on the colonialists created new

conditions, as if the religion was under pressure and attack from all directions. The problem was not just that the Ottoman caliphate, as the last sociopolitical and military symbol of the Islamic society had collapsed. More importantly, the situation had entirely changed and the Muslims truly believed that all that they had was threatened by these events. [133](#)

In such conditions, eyes were directed towards a new concept, which was the Islamic government. Indeed, it was not a new concept but its realization, as it occurred in middle of the present century and its manifestation as a politico–religious ideal was a new issue. It soon had numerous supporters in different classes and, in the absence of an acceptable, deeply rooted and unanimously agreed on political ideal, it became the most important ideal of the Islamic societies. In the meanwhile, numerous other developments and events occurred, all of which contributed to the acceptability and expansion of this trend. [134](#)

## **Influence of Western Laws**

Along with this trend, the western laws rapidly extended in Islamic countries. This had indeed nothing to do with the termination of the caliphate. Even if the Ottoman caliphate continued, the western laws would have entered Islamic countries and even to Turkey itself, as it had already done. This resulted from the entire conditions of those days not from the fall of the Ottoman caliphate, although some thought of these two as relevant. [135](#)

At this time, Muslims in all Islamic societies had crept into their closed society. The rapid pace of the developments and pressure of the time along with backwardness and desperation had put them in a passive position and pushed them towards passive resistance. Those who denied or opposed the religion or had claims for the western culture, laws and value system were, in practice, the only ones who ran the society without facing any opponent or opposition. No one could help resist the new trend and its advocates. [136](#)

In such conditions, it was natural that the legal system and even the constitution in Islamic countries would be formed and reconstructed in the light of western laws. As the entry of Islamic countries in general into modern history coincided with the expansion of liberal thoughts and tendencies, the first thing that attracted attention was to develop laws and a constitution. Where could the laws be adopted from other than western sources? [137](#)

This requires further explanation. Throughout their history, Muslims, like many other Third–Worlders, constantly suffered from the tyranny of their rulers. The most important aspect of tyrants is breaking laws and not bowing to or recognizing any rule or law. In such conditions, the new developments began and eyes and ears were opened. All of a sudden, they found out that they lived in the worst sociopolitical conditions and in the utmost decadent backward conditions.

Indeed the top intellectuals had an undeniable role in arousing this feeling and reinforcing it.

By formally comparing their society to the developed societies of that time, they had reached the conclusion that their backwardness was rooted in political tyranny and that it occurred in the lack of a legal system. Therefore, they promoted liberalism as much as they could and they considered the developing of a constitution and the other laws as the only way to achieve it. The problem, in their opinion, was entirely due to the rule of tyranny and lack of freedom, and the cure was naturally the western laws. [138](#)

This was perhaps one of the most inappropriate choices that the Islamic societies could make, which would entail various complications. Right now, we do not intend to say why it was inappropriate. What matters is that a flood of new laws began to flow without there being proper grounds for them, while the Muslims, at least in this respect did not face any shortage. Although there were no well-compiled laws at that time, at least the sources were there, which are the same Islamic jurisprudence and laws, and they could easily get help from and be inspired by them for their various needs, as this happened in some Islamic countries. [139](#)

The first serious experience in modern history in Islamic countries, however, began through the modernization of the legal and legislative system. As we have already pointed out, this happened in the absence of committed Muslims. In those days, they were in a state of numbness and fear, had left the scene and, when they regained balance, they found out that they had to bow to new laws that were in many cases against their religious principles and fundamentals.

It would be appropriate here to quote part of the views of William Shepherd on how the Muslims entered the contemporary history, “It was through military events that for the first time the leaders of Muslim societies faced changes, such as the British conquests in the 18th and early 19th centuries in India and the defeats of the Ottomans by the Russians in the 1768–74 wars, although the Ottomans’ awareness of the westerners’ military superiority had made them take limited actions in order to westernize their society in the early periods of the same century. In a place such as the Ottoman Empire, it was the military issues that entailed reformist attempts. However, when these reforms began, they could not be limited to what the leaders had chosen them to be.” [140](#)

He goes on to say, “If Christian theology sought to understand God’s nature and actions in this world, the Muslim jurists sought to understand God’s will and the divine laws and *shari‘ah*, which would define the behavioral duties of all people. It was because of this that modernization attempts are mainly in legal fields and for sociopolitical institutions rather than on issues concerning theology. In the Muslim world, one cannot see anything similar to the great doubts that Darwinism aroused in the Western World although the picture of the creation as provided by the Qur’an is similar to that provided by the Holy Book. [141](#)”

It is exactly from this point that the seed of the ideology of Islamic movements in the Sunni World was planted. As we have already said, Sunni jurisprudential and theological structure and historical experiences were not as if to allow opposing a Muslim ruler that pretended to believe in Islam. The

ultimate apposition was not to bow to him in one's heart, distance oneself from him and not to serve him. The most extreme form was to object in words about his vices and note his deviations, heresy or tyranny.

However, for various reasons, it was not allowed to stand up against the ruler and the ruling system and to take political or military action. From this point of view, the problem of objecting to the ruling system was not solvable. The new period, by offering laws other than those of Islam and by making them rule, opened a new door for objecting to the ruler and all the contemporary Sunni religious movements benefited from it. This was a way out and would allow them to live and go on with their activities. [142](#)

## Conformity to the Shari'ah

In their view, there was no place in an Islamic country for non-Islamic laws. Everyone had to accept Islamic laws and it was merely these laws that had to rule. Working for the promotion of this cause was a great undisputable and unchangeable duty. This is the concept that was later suggested as 'the conformity to the *shari'ah*', which attracted the thoughts and minds of committed Sunni revolutionaries and justified the moves that had begun with this motivation. [143](#)

Genuine Sunni Islamic movements in the second half of the recent century in the Sunni World have all been formed with the same motive and goal. According to them, the Islamic government, i.e. a government in which Islamic laws rule, means Islamicizing, i.e. applying the Islamic laws in all aspects of individual and collective lives and making them rule in the society. This is a thought that is in itself a reform but not a revolution against the ruling system. It is one against the present laws. Its goal is to change laws not the ruler, and if the ruler does not accept this, he has to be obeyed. If he stands beside these laws and wants to defend them against the people, then a *fatwa* may be issued for countering such a person. [144](#)

The principle is to Islamicize the society by Islamicizing its legal system rather than by Islamicizing it by changing its political rule. The problem is that the ruler should accept such a change and, preferably, take such an action on his own. From this point of view, regimes such as the Sau'dis or the other regimes in the 80's, when the Islamic movements were at their peaks in the contemporary era, began to conform to the *shari'ah*, as in Pakistan under Diya' al-Haqq, Sudan under Numayri, Egypt under Sadat, and in many sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf. [145](#)

Such a way of thinking in the past four or five decades, when non-Islamic laws ruled absolutely, although a reformist thought was considered to be a revolutionary thought at that time. Now that the conditions have changed entirely and the psychology, wishes and religious ideals of the young people have changed, this thought cannot respond to their passion for change and struggle. They need something far beyond this limited and somehow conservative capacity. They require the rule of Islamic values in all aspects not the rule of Islamic laws in the appearances of the social life, which the *shari'ah* deals with. The utter dead end of the present Islamic movement in the Sunni World is in this same point.

The only door that was opened to them in their jurisprudential and theological thought is too limited to respond to the serious needs of the present generation. [146](#)

It is because of this limitation that thinkers of the new Islamic movements in general, from Sayyid Qutb to ‘Utaybi and ‘Abdu’s–Salam Faraj, have provided interpretations and justifications that are entirely strange to Sunni principles, beliefs and consensus. They have tried to resort to witnesses in the Qur’an, the tradition and *fatwas* of some clerics of the past, on the top of whom are Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim, to provide an ideology that can religiously legalize and even necessitate fighting the ruling system and even establishing a new system. If great Sunni scholars consider these thoughts and theories with doubt, so much so that they liken their founders, claimers and supporters to the Rebels, it is not because of conservatism or seeking a comfortable life. It is because of believing in the principles and foundations of Sunni jurisprudence and theology, unanimously agreed on. [147](#)

They truly say that, by considering the Qur’an, the tradition and the practice of the Companions and the good people of the past, which the Sunnis have understood and practiced in the past, one cannot accept such theories. These theories are far beyond the most extremist true interpretations of the Qur’an, the tradition and the practice of the Companions. Although there may be others in the meanwhile that say such a thing because of bad intentions and having certain dependences and may even promote that it is practically so—in which respect the Sau’dis and the clerics supporting them are the great claimers of this thought at present—this is true without regard to who has said it and with what intentions. [148](#)

Apart from these issues, which are theoretical anyway, there are other issues as well. We have already said that the differences of Shi’ite and Sunni movements, especially in contemporary history, are not ideological differences. There is also a difference in their sociopsychological structure, with each of them having created theoretical specifications of their own in a different sociopsychological structure. This difference is the product of centuries of differently experiencing two different ideologies. Any great extensive movement in any of the two would naturally be strongly influenced by these different structures. Because of this, one should not expect the manifestations and emergence of the two movements to be the same merely on the grounds that they are both Islamic. It is true that both are Islamic movements and seek to establish the rule of Islam, yet the problem is that two different interpretations of Islam have influenced their past and is still influencing them today. [149](#)

Sunni Islamic and revolutionary problems and dead ends are, on the one hand, rooted in the jurisprudential and theological limitations of this religious branch for fighting the ruling power and, on the other hand, in the rapid developments that have led the new Islamist generation in some Islamic countries to embrace challenging thoughts and methods. These limitations and this rapid pace made it impossible for Sunni religious clerics and intellectuals to move side by side with them. [150](#)

Indeed, a great part of this was due to the pressures of the ruling governments on scientific and religious centers, eliminating their dependence and employing them forcefully. Those in power in Sunni countries in general, especially in Arab countries which are the base for extensive self-motivated religious

movements, from Tunisia and Morocco to Egypt, Syria, Arabia and Yemen, have constantly attempted in recent decades to take control of scientific and religious centers with such claims as modernizing the educational system. However, the result of these developments was not just their being put at their service. More important than that was that they gave up their scientific depth and comprehensiveness and religious authenticity while this was something contrary to the needs of the time. Responding to religious, scientific and moral needs requires living in the time and comprehending the time while also requiring depth and genuineness. Those who are strange to the great Islamic heritage in various grounds will certainly not be able to provide an appropriate response to the needs of the time. [151](#)

These problems showed themselves from the mid-60's and were intensified by the proper conditions in the 70's, while culminating after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The main problem was arriving in a new interpretation of Islam that would guide them in their struggle and tell them what to do in order to make an Islamic society and how to fight. They rose to action in the absence of a well-informed scientific and religious authority that they could trust. However, the problem was that, firstly, they knew little, and, secondly, they had already made their decision as to what they wanted and what they had to do. Their little knowledge served to respond to a question that had already been answered. The purpose was to get confirmation for the response. [152](#)

In such conditions, naturally the answer could not be completely Islamic. It was more Islamic-based than of an Islamic nature. However, as the responses were in general harmony to the psychological, intellectual and doctrinal needs of the young people and the students, they were rapidly and intensively absorbed and deemed as strictly Islamic solutions. This, however, had two basic problems and could not resist the ups and downs to survive. The resistance of an ideology, especially revolutionary and military ideologies, against the current of events depends on their commitment to the adopted principles, on their internal coherence and harmony and their ability in solving the new problems and dead ends, while the latter is indebted to the first two former characteristics. These newly-founded ideologies lacked such characteristics.

[1.](#) A practical example of this way of thinking can be seen in Ibn 'Arabi, *Al-'Awasim min al-Qawasim*, and especially the footnotes of Muhibb ad-Din Khatib. These two provide a justification for and interpret the wrong actions of those whom they intend to defend. Actually, they consider only the reality and not anything beyond it as the criterion. According to them, justice is what existed rather than a superior concept according to which the existing situation has to be evaluated.

Compare with the way Mu'awiyah is introduced by Ziyad and that his actions were political and for the maintenance of power; *Al-Jawhar an-Nafis fi Siyasah ar-Ra'is*, p. 73.

For example, while defending Mu'awiyah on his ordering the killing of Hajar ibn 'Uday—which aroused the objection of all even that of 'A'ishah (*'Ali wa Banuh*, p. 219)—Ibn 'Arabi says, “If you say that his killing is injustice, unless it is proved to be right for a reason, we will say, ‘The principle is that the killing is right and the one who claims that it was wrong has to prove his claim. If it was wrong then all the people have to curse Mu'awiyah while in Baghdad, which is the center of the 'Abbasid caliphate, whose rivalry with the Umayyad is known to all, it is written on mosque doors, ‘The best of the people after the Prophet (S) is Abu Bakr and then 'Umar and then 'Uthman and then 'Ali and then Mu'awiyah.’” p. 213.

[2.](#) The theoretical example of this perception can be found in the works and views of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim and Ibn

Hanbal. *As-Siyasah ash-Shar'iyah*, pp. 10, 21; *A'lam al-Mawqi'in*, vol. 3, pp. 3–6; *Al-Ahkam as-Sultaniyyah*. Also see endnote 54 to the previous chapter.

[3.](#) *Al-Mawaqif fi 'Ilm al-Kalam*, p. 323.

[4.](#) For further explanations, see the introduction to *Min al-'Aqidah ila'th-Thawrah*, vol. 1, pp. 3, 41.

[5.](#) See Amir H. Saddiqi, *Caliphate and Kingship*, pp. 2–5.

[6.](#) This is approved by Shi'ites as well. See *Ash-Shi'ah wa'l-Hakimun*, pp. 7–8, and also *Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi'i*, pp. 268–71.

[7.](#) For example, see the actions of Ghaylan Damashqi, who, based on a concept different from the Umayyad interpretation, called the people of Armenia to rise up. *Dhikr Bab al-Mu'tazilah*, pp. 16–17, and also the justice-seeking risings of Shi'ites and the Mu'tayelites.; *Al-Intifadat ash-Shi'ah*, pp. 97–110.

[8.](#) To find out about the sensitivities of dogmatic Sunnis concerning the ideal ruler and ruling system and that there was no place therein for justice, see *Manaqib al-Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, p. 438, and also *Tabaqat al-Hanabilah*, vol. 2, p. 31, and concerning how a hard-hearted tyrannical ruler such as Mutawakkil is praised simply on the ground that, in their view, he resisted heresy. The praise is one like that given to the first caliph and 'Umar ibn 'Abdu'l-'Aziz.

[9.](#) The fact is that the influence of Shi'ite views on a pressurized and suffocated society like ours is more than the influence of Sunni views as the latter does not benefit anyone other than the existing ruling system. *Min al-'Aqidah ila'th-Thawrah*, vol. 1, p. 26.

[10.](#) Concerning the blaming of the Mu'tazilites and how the founders of Sunni belief view them, see *Tabaqat al-Hanabilah*, vol. 2, pp. 30–1, and also *Al-Ibanah 'an Usul ad-Diyanah*, pp. 13–16.

[11.](#) *Fiqh as-Sunnah*, vol. 1, pp. 209–10, *Al-Mahalli*, vol. 4, pp. 213–4. You can find the elaborate account in *Bidayah al-Mujtahid wa Nihayah al-Muqtasid*, vol. 1, pp. 147–8.

[12.](#) For example, see how he sets forth and asks the questions from Imam Baqir concerning attending the communal prayers. *Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah*, vol. 5, p. 381, saying no. 5 and also saying no. 8, p. 377; *Ibid.*, and also *Mustadrak Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah*, vol. 6, p. 457.

[13.](#) The Hanbalites consider it obligatory to take part in communal prayers. See *Al-Fiqh 'ala'l-Madhahib al-Arba'ah*, vol. 1, p. 375. The Formists consider communal prayer participation obligatory for those who have the relevant conditions. *Bidayah al-Mujtahid*, vol. 1, p. 143.

[14.](#) You can find the rejection of the arguments of opponents of permission of Friday communal prayers in the time of Occultation in *Jami' al-Maqasid*, vol. 2, pp. 74–380. Also see *Salat al-Jumu'ah* by Haydar ibn al-Mawla Muhammad al-Dizfali, as commented on by Shaykh Ansari, and *Risalah Salat al-Jumu'ah* by Muhaqqiq Karki in *Rasa'il Muhaqqiq Karki*, vol. 1, pp. 117–40.

[15.](#) *Kanz al-'Ummal*, vol. 7, pp. 581–2.

[16.](#) It was because of Abu Bakr's leading the prayers that people like Hasan Basri, Ibn Hazm and a group of the Traditionists said that his caliphate had been explicitly advised by the Prophet (S). *Ma'alim al-Khilafah fi'l-Fikr as-Siyasi al-Islami*, p. 133.

[17.](#) For further explanation, see *Al-Badr az-Zahir fi Salat al-Jumu'ah wa'l-Musafir*, pp. 6–8.

[18.](#) *Al-Muhaqqiq al-Karki, Rasail*, vol. 1, p. 144.

[19.](#) *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 350.

[20.](#) *Al-Imamah wa's-Siyasah*, vol. 1, p. 34; *Fiqh as-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 209.

[21.](#) Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. 2, p. 50.

[22.](#) *'Uyun al-Akhbar*, vol. 2, p. 282.

[23.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 281.

[24.](#) That the Prophet (S) blamed and even threatened those who refused to attend regular and Friday communal prayers has been cited by Shi'ites as well as Sunnis. See *Kanz al-'Ummal*, vol. 7. For the necessity of attending the communal prayers, see pp. 581–2, for attending Friday communal prayers, see pp. 728–33. Similar to the contents of these sayings are sayings 6, 9, 10 in *Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah*, vol. 5, pp. 376–7, and can also be found in *Jami' al-Madarik*, vol. 1, p. 489 cite from *Ash-Shahadat* in *Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah*.

[25.](#) In this respect, the 'Abbasids were like the Umayyads. They had allocated exclusively to themselves all that concerned

regular and Friday communal prayers. “One of the most important symbols of religious mastery of the ‘Abbasid caliph was that a drum was played in front of his house at the times of the five prayers so as to announce the time while no one else, even the crown princes, were allowed to have a drum beaten in front of their house, so that no body could share this symbol of mastery with the caliph.” Muhammad Safar az-Zahrani, *Nizam al-Wizarah fi’d-Dawlah al-‘Abbasiyyah*, p. 26, cited by Ibn al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam*, vol. 7, p. 92.

[26.](#) *Fiqh as-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 272. The author thus quotes Sha’bi as saying, “At a time, Mu’awiyah grew fat and had a protuberant belly, then he delivered the sermon while sitting.” Cf. *Wasa’il ash-Shi’ah*, vol. 5, p. 31, saying 1.

[27.](#) Concerning the corrupt heretic imamate and the view of each of the four branches of the religion, see *Al-Fiqh ‘ala’l-Madhahib al-Arba’ah*, vol. 1, p. 429.

[28.](#) See *Wasa’il ash-Shi’ah*, vol. 5, chapter on non-permission of praying behind a corrupt person, pp. 392–5.

[29.](#) *Wasa’il ash-Shi’ah*, vol. 5, pp. 381–2.

[30.](#) For example, see *Al-Fasl fi’l-Milal wa’l-Hawa wa’l-Nihal*, vol. 4, p. 87, and also *A’lam al-Mawqi’in*, vol. 1, p. 48.

[31.](#) *Al-Badr az-Zahir*, pp. 7–8, and also *Min al-‘Aqidah ila’th-Thawrah*, vol. 1, pp. 22–3, which critically studies how a regular or Friday communal prayer leader is appointed by the sultan and the mutual relations of the two.

[32.](#) *Al-A’immah al-Arba’ah*, vol. 4, pp. 119–20.

[33.](#) *Al-Mahalli*, vol. 4, p. 214.

[34.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 213.

[35.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 214.

[36.](#) *Mu’jam al-Fiqh al-Hanbali*, Part II, p. 575, and also *Al-Ibanah ‘an Usul ad-Diyanah*, p. 23.

[37.](#) *Wasa’il ash-Shi’ah*, vol. 5, p. 372, saying 9.

[38.](#) This is an example of the religious alienation of the Umayyad caliphs and agents, “Tariq was a governor for some Umayyad caliphs. I saw him ask for food, which he ate on the Prophet’s (S) rostrum. There was a bone in his food that contained marrow. He hit it on the wood around the rostrum to take out the marrow.” *‘Uyun al-Akhbar*, vol. 2, p. 46. When the governor of Medina behaves like this, what can one expect from the governors of the other regions?

[39.](#) This participation not only meant recognizing the caliph or the ruler, it also means recognizing all that related to him. For example, see the suggestion of the governor of Medina to Sa’id ibn Musayyib in *Waffiyat al-A’yan*, vol. 2, p. 117.

[40.](#) *Al-Musannif*, vol. 2, no. 148.

[41.](#) *As-Siyasah ash-Shar’iyyah*, p. 42.

[42.](#) An example of this materialistic and profit-seeking attempt in the name of the religion can be found in the actions of the chancellor of the Sultan Sulayman Qanuni, Lutfi Pasha, who tried to promote the former’s position to imamte or caliphate. In his book, *Khulas al-Ummah fi Ma’rifah al-A’immah*, he names Sulayman with such titles as ‘imam of the time’, ‘God’s Prophet’s substitute’, ‘defender of Islam’, ‘powerful supporter of God’s religion’, ‘sultan of Muslims’, ‘bridler of the infidels’, ‘just prayer leader’, ‘establisher of the shari’ah laws’, ‘one with a characteristic of divine blessing and happiness and whom God accompanies with His infinite attention’.

All of this indicates how the religion could be used for strengthening a worldly position. *Majalleh-ye Daneshkadeh-ye Adabiyat wa ‘Ulum-e Insani* (Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities), Mashhad University, serial no. 257–8, pp. 7–8.

[43.](#) *Al-Islam bayn al-‘Ulama’ wa’l-Hakimun*, pp. 133–8.

[44.](#) *Al-Mahalli*, vol. 4, p. 214.

[45.](#) *Fiqh as-Sunnah*, vol. 1, pp. 209–10.

[46.](#) *Al-Mahalli*, vol. 4, p. 214.

[47.](#) *Wasa’il ash-Shi’ah*, vol. 5, p. 383, saying 9.

This point is emphasized in *Mustadrak Wasa’il ash-Shi’ah*, vol. 6, p. 456, and *Al-‘Awasim min al-Qawasim*, vol. 3, pp. 242–4, which elaborately cite Sunni documents.

[48.](#) *Min al-‘Aqidah ila’th-Thawrah*, vol. 1, p. 26.

[49.](#) Hashim Ma’ruf al-Husayni; *Intifadat ash-Shi’ah ‘ibar at-Tarikh*, pp. 108–9, cited from ‘Ali al-Wardi, *Wu’az as-Salatin*, well explains the reasons for the stability and survival of Shi’ism despite many other religions; see 109–10.

[50.](#) For example, see *Kanz al-‘Ummal*, vol. 7, pp. 591–7.

[51.](#) *Al-Iqtisad fi’l-I’tiqad*, pp. 197–206; *ibid.*, *Fatihah al-‘Ulum*, p. 11.

[52.](#) *As-Siyasah ash-Shar‘iyyah*, p. 23.

[53.](#) Mawardi, *Adab ad-Dunya’ wa’d-Din*, p. 115.

[54.](#) Ibn Khaldun, *Introduction*, p. 180.

[55.](#) Concerning the historical rivalry of Muslims and Christians and its reflections in their religious understanding of each other and its continuation to the present, see the critique of *The Satanic Verses* and especially *The Legacy of Islam*, pp. 9–62. To find out about the perception of the Christians about continuation of this historical tension and their critical attitude towards the Muslim perception in this regard, see *Yayambar wa Fer’un* (the Prophet and Pharaoh), pp. 185–202, *Islam dar Jahan-e Mu’asir* (Islam in the Contemporary World), pp. 106–20.

[56.](#) Muhammad Abu Zuhrah, *Al-Imam Zayd*, pp. 108–9.

[57.](#) As Christians, at least in the past, did not recognize Islam, they considered Muslims as infidels and, naturally, the latter lacked any right, religious or nonreligious, in their territory. A Christian turned Muslim from Andalusia, thus writes in his books, “One of the Muslims of the city of Nabunia had to hide his Muslim beliefs in order to protect his life and to be able to continue his life in his homeland. He became a pastor and called himself Nicola Martil.” *Majalleh-ye Daneshkadeh-ye Adabiyat wa ‘Ulum-e Insani* (Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Mashhad University), serial no. 57–8, p. 9.

Although Christianity did not recognize Islam as a religion at least until after the 2nd Christian Assembly in mid-60’s of the present century, it still has some very hostile criticisms. For example, see Joseph Craft’s articles in *Washington Post*, 19 May 1981, entitled, “Who Wanted to Assassinate the Pope?”, and also *The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, pp. 738–42, Diya’uddin Sardar, *Islamic Futures*, John Loffin, *The Dagger of Islam*. To find out about the causes of this hostility, see Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*, pp. 1–14.

[58.](#) The same journal, no. 56, p. 753.

[59.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 753.

[60.](#) The same journal, nos. 57–8, pp. 10–11.

[61.](#) The fact is that the caliph’s or sultan’s ability to create domestic security and especially to protect the borders was so important in the past that many Sunni clerics were made to support him as a religious duty because, to them, this ability and splendor means the strength and splendor of Islam and of Muslims and the best deterrent against the foreigners and infidels against the Muslim territory.

The individual position of Harun ar-Rashid, both in his time and in the following periods, despite all his oppressiveness and corruption, some of which is reflected in the *One Thousand and One Nights* stories, was mainly for the same reason. To many Sunni clerics, he symbolized power, grandeur and splendor of Muslims, and was therefore respected and popular. He was one who could stand powerfully against the Roman Emperor and make the latter obey him. The following is an example.

In 187 A.H., the Roman Empire wrote him a letter and canceled the peace treaty between them. This treaty had been made by the previous emperor, who was actually a woman. The Roman Emperor wrote, “In the previous treaty, which was due to weakness and stupidity of my predecessor, you were given properties which you have to return upon receiving the letter or have to prepare yourself for war. When Harun read the letter, he got so angry that no one dared to look at his face let alone talk to him.

He asked for a scribe to write overleaf the letter, “In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Harun ar-Rashid to Nacnur, the Roman Dog! O’ you the son of an infidel woman, I read your letter. The response to that is what you will see not what you will hear.” The same day, he rushed towards Rome, defeated the Emperor in a fierce battle and specified a tribute for him to pay. *Tarikh al-Khulafa’*, p. 288. Concerning his good characteristics and even virtues, which indicate an example of the great clerics’ perception of him, see *ibid.*, pp. 283–97.

It has also been cited that, “One day, he was reading the Qur’an. He got to the verse, ‘Is the Egyptian land not mine? Are

these streams not flowing under my feet? Do you not see?’ He said, ‘Curse on this mean person who claims to be a god because of having Egypt’s kingdom. I give the Egyptian kingdom to the one who is the most inferior of my servants.’ He then asked for Khasib, who was his bathman and appointed him as the governor of Egypt. He ordered a charter to be written for that and dispatched him to Egypt. Khasib ran that state and was proud of it...” Ighrad aa–Siyasah fi l’rad ar–Riyasah, p. 320. Interestingly, the author of this book considers this as Harun’s magnanimity. This way of thinking has a long history and was deeply influential.

[62.](#) Al–A’immah al–Arba’ah, vol. 4, p. 119.

[63.](#) Ighrad as–Siyasah fi l’rad ar–Riyasah, p. 285.

[64.](#) Al–Iqtisad fi l’–I’tiqad, pp. 198–9.

[65.](#) Al–Mawaqif fi ‘Ilm al–Kalam, pp. 396–7.

[66.](#) For example, see the explicit critiques of Mustafa Shukri in Payambar wa Fir’un (The Prophet and the Pharaoh), pp. 87–90 and, still better, see the more scholarly and principal critiques of Hasan Hanafi in the introduction to Min al–‘Aqidah ila’th–Thawrah, vol. 1, especially pp. 20–32.

[67.](#) Abu Ya’la, Al–Ahkam as–Sultaniyyah, p. 21; Al–Khilafah wa’l–Imamah, p. 300.

[68.](#) Concerning the Days of Hardship [Ayyam al–Mihnah] and the hard conditions that Ibn Hanbal and his fellow–theologians underwent, see Al–A’immah al–Arba’ah, 4, pp. 140–80, Al–Khilafah wa’l–Imamah, pp. 300–9, and still better, the readable chapter ‘Clerics and the Pains they Suffered from the Rulers’ in Al–Islam bayn al–‘Ulama’ wa’l–Hakimun, pp. 129–214, and Manaqib al–Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal by Ibn al–Jawzi, pp. 397–420.

[69.](#) If the preservation of the system, in fact the ruling system, is the only criteria for judging the good and corrupt things, deviation from the religion and justice with that excuse may go so far as to result in disrespecting the Prophet’s daughter, “Fatimah’s house was violated. She was disrespected in order for the ruling Islamic system to be preserved, for the caliphate not to be dispersed, to prevent some Muslims from disobeying the caliph and to disrupt the Muslims’ unity.” Ibn Abi’l–Hadid, The Description, 20, p. 16... Other examples can be found in the following pages of this book. Concerning the criticism of the caliphs who believed in creating the Qur’an, see Al–‘Awasim min al–Qawasim, pp. 249–51.

[70.](#) Al–Khilafah wa’l–Imamah, p. 301.

[71.](#) Yazid and the corrupt clerics of his court and the descendants of the two in later periods accused Imam Husayn and his companions of having ‘dersted the religion and risen up to oppose the imam and caliph. Therefore, they had to be fought against and eliminated.’ See Tarikh Tabari (Tabari’s History), p. 342.

[72.](#) A’lam al–Mawqi’in, vol. 3, pp. 3–4.

[73.](#) For example, see India and Pakistan, pp. 37 and 38.

[74.](#) For example, see the well–known magniloquent speech of Rashid Rida in approving the caliphate of Sharif Husayn in Menna in Thawrah al–‘Arab didd al–Atrak, pp. 320–6, and words of Sharid Husayn at the end of Rashid Rida’s speech, *ibid.*, p. 342, and also the introduction by Muhibb ad–Din Khatib to Al–‘Awasim min al–Qawasim, where he praises even the Umayyad caliphs because they expanded the territory of Islam with their power (p. 3). Also see Khasar al–‘Alam bi Inhitat al–Muslimin, pp. 299–319.

[75.](#) One of the best examples is the letter of Zaynab al–Ghazali, the well–known Egyptian writer to Yasir ‘Arafat when the centers of the Palestinian Liberation Organization in Tunisia were bombarded by Israeli airplanes.

[76.](#) There is a long bloody history for religious dreams in Islam, in which the Hanbalits had the greatest share—exactly because of their fanatic populist beliefs and the strict and repellant psychology that is the outcome of such beliefs—so far that even the Ash’arites, who are well–known for fanaticism and strict attitude, have complained of their fanaticism, dogmatism, atrocity and mischief.

For example, a group of Ash’arite clerics in the time of Khwajah Nizamu’l–Mulk wrote him a letter in support of the head of the Ash’arites of their time, ‘Abu’l–Qasim Qushayri, in which they complained of what the Hanbalits did and asked for his effective support. It is interesting to know that they wrote the letter at a time when the Ash’arites and the Shafi’ites were in the peak of their power. This shows the amount of pressure that the Hanbalites exerted on non– Hanbalites and one can imagine how hard they pressured the other sects, “...A group of rabbles who call themselves Hanbalites committed disgusting heresies in Baghdad which no apostate, let alone monotheist, would let himself do.

They disrespected the imams of the past and abused the followers of truth and the religious people in mosques, circles and bazaars..." Al-Milal wa'n-Nihal, Subhani, pp. 279-82.

One can find numerous stories in *Tabaqat al-Hanabilah*, which the Hanbalites themselves wrote as biographies of their great clerics. The following story is an example of the disturbances they made, "In the second trip of Tabari from Tabaristan to Baghdad, one Friday, in the congregation mosque, the Hanbalites asked his view about Ahmad Hanbal and the story of God sitting in heaven. He responded that Ahmad Hanbal's opposition did not count. They said that the clerics consider him in the disputes. Tabari said, 'I neither saw him or any story about him nor any of his trustable companions. The story of God's sitting in the heaven is an impossible thing.'"

"When the Hanbalites and Traditionists heard this, they attacked him and threw their inkwells at him. Tabari took refuge in his house. The Hanbalites, of whom there were thousands, stoned his house so that a great pile of stone was made in front of his house. Nazuk, the police chief of Baghdad with thousands of police arrived and rescued Tabari from the mob, while staying there for one day and ordered for the stones to be taken away." *The Wahhabis*, p. 27. Also see the pain that 'Izz ibn 'Abdu's-Salam, one of the greatest 7th-century clerics suffered from the Hanbalites. *Al-Islam bayn al-'Ulama' wa'l-Hakimun*, p. 192.

[77](#). This is exactly opposite to the stances of the Shi'ite Imams. They never ignored the basic role of the ruling system in corrupting the people. Therefore, they paid attention to individual upbringing as they did to social reform and especially reforming the ruling system.

Even where deviation from the right path was for reasons other than inherent mischief and the power was in the hands of an individual or system with such characteristics, they did not show much willingness to confront such individuals. For example, Imam 'Ali thus ('a) wrote in his will about the Rebels, "After me, do not fight with the Rebels because one who seeks the truth but goes on the wrong path is not like the one who seeks falsehood and achieves it." Sermon 61, *Nahj al-Balaghah*, edited by Subhi Salih.

From the very early days of the appearance of Islam, this religion could employ its followers and especially the youth successfully. Such a mechanism was in the first place due to the characteristics of this religion and its coordination with the human nature. This continues to date and will continue in the future.

In this regard, one can reflect on the speech of Abu Hamzah Khariji when he addressed to the people of Hijaz, who criticized his supporters for his young age, "O' the people of Hijaz! Do you blame the young age of my companions? Is it not true that the Prophet's Companions were young too? Young people who lived in their youth [as piously] as old people. They take their eyes away from evil and their feet are hard to move on the wrong path. They are thin and weak because of staying awake at night to worship. God looks at them in the dark of the night while their backs bend on the Qur'an because they see a verse that tells of the paradise and cry happily about that. And when they read a verse concerning hell, they yell as if they hear sounds come from the hell... In the most frightful moments of the battlefield when the pioneers of the army tremble with the fear of death and from the dazzle of the swords and spears, they see the fear of enemy minute compared to their fear of God and step forward. The wild animals go to their dead bodies and the birds fly to them. So many eyes that cried with the fear of God through the night are taken in beaks of the birds and so many hands that prostrated through the night for long periods of time are cut from the wrist..." *Al-Bayan wa't-Tabyin*, vol. 2, pp. 102-3.

His description of the religious piety of his young followers and that they think but to the promotion of the religion while devoting themselves for this cause is one that is more or less true about all times. For example, see the various issues of the magazine *An-Nadhir*, the organ of Syrian Ikhwan al-Muslimin and books that study the actions and spirits of the devotees of Islam. Also, see *Payambar wa Fir'un* (The Prophet and the Pharaoh).

[78](#). For further explanation, see *On Being a Christian*, especially pp.31-4.

[79](#). Gibb truly attributes this to the nature of Islam, "The belief system of Islam is a consolidated, positive and emphatic collection. These characteristics are due to the Qur'an, the sayings, the tradition and the shari'ah."

[80.](#) The study of the psychological, religious and morals of the Sa'udi Ikhwanites and their actions well reveals this. See *The Wahhabis*, pp. 446–59. For example, Hafiz Wahabah, who was closely familiar with them and witnessed their wars, says in this regard, “The Ikhwanites are not afraid of death. They embrace death in order to return to God. When a mother says goodbye to her child, she says, ‘God will bring us and you together in heaven.’ Upon attacking, their slogan is, ‘O’ God we only worship You and get help only from You.’ I witnessed some of their wars and saw how they embrace death and go to the enemy group by group while thinking only about breaking and killing the enemy’s army. The Ikhwanites in general have no mercy. They release no one and, wherever they go, they are the messengers of death.”

*The Wahhabis*, p. 452, quoted from *Jazirat al-‘Arab fi’l-Qarn al-‘Ishrin*, p. 314. Wajjan Filbi says about them, “The Ikhwanites have prohibited murders, pillage, banditry, smoking and living a good comfortable life. Their attempts were mainly focused on saving for the other world. Other than themselves, they called all the other Islamic sects polytheists and idolaters.” *The Wahhabis*, p. 449, quoted from the *Tarikh-e Najd*, pp. 305–8.

[81.](#) For finding out about the competition between the Hanafites and Shafi’ites, which prepared the ground for many conflicts, the following story, which is quoted from Hindu Shah, is worth reflecting upon, “Khawajah was the follower of the Supreme Imam Shafi’i. Sultan Malik Shah built a school. When they wanted to write which group attended the school, they asked the Sultan.

He said, ‘Although I am a Hanafite, I have constructed this for God Almighty. It is not good to protect and let a group attend and prohibit another.’ He said that the followers of both Imams had to attend the school equally and cooperatively. As the Sultan was a Hanafite, they wanted to write the name of Imam Hanafiyah before the name of Imam Shafi’i. Khawajah did not allow this. The book had to wait for a while... Finally, it was decided that it should be written, “Endowed to the followers of the two Imams from the early imams of Islam.” *Majalleh-ye Daneshkadeh-ye Adabiyat wa ‘Ulum-e Insani* (Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities), serial no. 56, p. 742, quoted from *Tajarub as-Salaf*, pp. 277–8.

[82.](#) “The strong fanaticism between Shafi’ites and Hanafites, between maturidiyun (‘those who follow their wishes’) and Ash’arites, between Sunnis, Mu’tazilites and Shi’ites was one of the most important factors to weaken the Muslims. One who reads Muqaddasi’s *Safarnameh* and Yaqut’s *Mu’jam al-Buldan*, will find out to what extent such fanaticism resulted in destruction of lands, killing of people and creating disturbances...” *Zuhr al-Islam*, 4, p. 102.

“In 350 AH, there was a great dispute between Sunnis and Sudanese soldiers on one hand and Shi’ites on the other hand. The soldiers would ask anyone that they saw on the street, “Who is your uncle?” If he failed to say Mu’awiyah, they would beat him severely or even kill him. In the years, 408, 444, 445 and 449 AH, there were terrible conflicts and many from both sides were killed...” *Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi’i*, pp. 285–8.

[83.](#) “Among the Islamic sects, Shi’ites were subject to killing and violation more than the others. There were many reasons for this; most importantly because the people inclined towards them since they [their leaders] were as the Prophet’s Family. The tendency grew so strong that it very worried and terrified the Umayyad and the ‘Abbasid and they became strict on them, prosecuted and tortured them.” *Islam bila Madhahib*, p. 285.

[84.](#) Many of those who now, especially in black Africa, the Indian Subcontinent and the Far East, spend their energy to fight Shi’ism have the same motivation. They seek a means to do their duty in the religion and are ready to give their life in order to promote their religion and its purification. However, since they do not have the means to this goal and, at the same time because of their unawareness and naïveté, are under the influence of the hostile propaganda of Wahhabis against Shi’ites, which is full of lies and slanders, are ready to do all they can for this cause in order to do their duty properly. These have to be considered separately from spiteful Wahhabis who are aware of what they are doing for their own interests. See *Afriqa: Mirath-e Gozashteh wa Mawqifiyyat-e Ayandeh* (Africa, the Past Heritage and the Future Situation), pp. 112–4.

[85.](#) “In 143 A.H., Muslim clerics began to put in writing the sayings, jurisprudence and analyses. Ibn Jarir did this in Mecca, Malik wrote the book *Mu’atta* in Medina, *Owza’i* in Syria, Ibn Abi ‘Urubah and Himmad ibn Salmah and others in Basrah, Mu’ammam in Yemen, Sufyan Thawri in Kufah, Ibn Ishaq wrote *Maghazi* and Abu Hanifah wrote on jurisprudence and collected opinions. Much was done on the compilation and classification of the sciences and various books were written on Arabism, language, history and the stories of the past. Prior to this, the clergy talked of memorizing and would narrate science from reliable books that had not been compiled.” *Tarikh al-Khulafa’*, p. 261.

In order to study what factors and reasons prevented the writing of the Prophetic sayings in the early period, see *Al-Milal wa'n-Nihal*, pp. 51–71, and also see the discussion in the book *Adwa' 'ala'-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah* in this respect on page 261 and thereafter. In the beginning, the clerics, following the tradition of the past, were not willing to write books and, when Hisham forced Zahri to do so, the others followed suit. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

[86.](#) See the introduction to *Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah*, vol. 1, pp. 35–49, printed by Al al-Bayt Institute. Concerning the 'Abbasid policies, see Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, pp. 75–7.

[87.](#) An example of non-Arab and especially Iranian influence in the early 'Abbasid society can be noticed in this story. Mansur asked Imam Musa ibn Ja'far to attend the Nowruz feast to visit the presents. The Imam refused. Mansur said in response, "This ceremony is held for political reasons and for pleasing the army." *Jawahir al-Kalam*, vol. 5, p. 42.

[88.](#) In the last century, classical Sunni thought, especially where it concerned the relations of the clergy and the sultans' and caliphs' courts has been sharply criticized. The critics are from various groups and do so with different motivations. Some are clergy, like Shaykh Kushak, Khalid Muhammad Khalid and the Ikhwan al-Muslimin-dependent clergy in general, above them Sayyid Qutb. Other than these, they are leftists and progressivists, liberal or freethinkers.

Criticism of some of them, who are generally from the first group, is reformist, constructive and sympathetic while that of the others is bitter, disturbant and, probably, despicable and destructive. Concerning the views of Shaykh Kushak, see *Payambar wa Fir'un* (The Prophet and the Pharaoh), pp. 219–20. For views of Khalid Muhammad Khalid, see *Ash-Shi'ah fi'l-Mizan*, pp. 375–8. For views of clergy supporting al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, see *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun wa'l-Jama'at al-Islamiyyah*, pp. 262–70. For criticisms of the second group, see *Al-Islam wa'l-Khilafah fi'l-'Asr al-Hadith*, pp. 9–34, especially 18–23, and introduction by Muhammad 'Amarah to *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm*.

[89.](#) "In the early 4th century A.H., most 'Abbasid lands were governed by local governments without any or with little connection to the 'Abbasids and only symbolized by mentioning the caliph's names in sermons. As a result, their territory was in practice limited to Baghdad and a small part of Iraq." *Nizam al-Wizarah fi'd-Dawlah al-'Abbasiyyah*, p. 19.

[90.](#) As an example, concerning the religious policy adopted by the Seljuks and their employing the policy for consolidating their political position, see *Nizam al-Wizarah fi'd-Dawlah al-'Abbasiyyah*, pp. 47–50. Regarding their religious policies, Ibn Athir says, "When the Seljuks took power, they revived the grandeur of caliphate, which had been weakened, especially during the vizierate of Nizamul-Mulk. He carried this out in the best way possible." See *ibid.* when quoting from *At-Tarikh al-Bahir fi'd-Dawlah al-Atabakiyyah*, p. 51, and also *An-Naqd*, pp. 47–8, which provides a positive account of their religious actions.

This policy was followed by the 'Abbasid themselves. Al-Bandari says that the 'Abbasids—he means in 6th century A.H., improved the caliphate's image so that "Baghdad was so grand to its enemies that taking it would be impossible. Therefore, no king made any attempt to conquer it." *Nizam al-Wizarah fi'd-Dawlah al-'Abbasiyyah*, p. 64 quoting Al Saljuq, p. 268. For further explanation, see *ibid.*, pp. 62–7.

[91.](#) *A'lam al-Mawqi'in*, vol. 1, pp. 47–8. Grunebaum thus explains the major characteristics of the Muslim government and its role in preserving the religious and moral authenticities: 1. The purpose of the creation of man is worship. 2. Perfect worshipping requires a group of believers. 3. To have such an ummah, a government is needed. 4. The first duty of the government is to provide the grounds for worshipping." G.E. Grunebaum, *Islam*, 1969, p. 127.

[92.](#) Concerning the value and importance of consensus, especially the consensus of the Companions and the Senior Caliphs, which, in Subhi Salih's words, is the third source of Islamic shariah legislation, and how it has been the source of many governmental and caliphate affairs, see *An-Nazm al-Islamiyyah*, p. 281. The author believes that the most important aspect for caliphate itself is consensus and the sayings that have been provided in this respect have been aimed at further consolidating and approving something whose source was proved with consensus.

[93.](#) Read these words of Ibn Taymiyyah, "Ahmad ibn Hanbal writes an account of 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, who in turn quotes the Prophet (S) as saying, 'Any person in any part of the earth shall appoint one as leader.' The Prophet (S) necessitated having a leader even in a small community so it may be a lesson for other communities. God necessitated recommending the good and prohibiting the evil. This can be carried out only with power and leadership. In addition, the other necessary obligations such as jihad, administration of justice, hajj, the Friday, the feasts, victory of the oppressed and enforcing the

other orders can be carried out only with power and leadership.

Therefore, it has been quoted that, “The king is God’s shadow on the earth.”, “Sixty years living under a tyrant leader is better than one night without a sultan.” These are proved by experience.” Then he adds, “It is because of this that the good people of the past such as Fudayl ibn ‘Ayyad, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and the others said, ‘If there is one prayer that we can do and will be fulfilled, it will be a prayer for the sultan.’” *As-Siyasah ash-Shar‘iyah*, pp. 138–9. Also see *Tabaqat al-Hanabilah*, 2, p. 36.

[94.](#) “The truth is that Fatimite policies and those of Al Buyeh do not express Shi‘ite beliefs. They were governments in their own time.” *Ash-Shi‘ah wa’l-Hakimun*, p. 7.

“...Therefore, actions of kings who called themselves Shi‘ites have nothing to do with Shi‘ite beliefs and Shi‘ites do not see any relation between themselves and these rulers and think that any seizure by them is a personal one. If it is according to the Qur’an and the Tradition, it is right. Otherwise, they are sinners.

Therefore, the Shi‘ites divest themselves of any responsibility in the rulers’ seizures. As politics is mixed with religion and, at the same time, politics has not been manifested other than in the practice of the Infallible Imams, Shi‘ite political thought cannot go beyond the opinions and practice of the Imams. Principally, Shi‘ite political thought can be clarified according to Shi‘ite views and actions regarding political issues. Any action or seizure from a Shi‘ite and any view that he expresses, if being according to the orders of the Infallible Imams, is part of Shi‘ite political thought. Otherwise, it is separate therefrom.” *Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi‘i*, p. 280. For further explanation, see *ibid.*, pp. 268–71.

[95.](#) For example, see this bitter and destructive criticism by Mustafa Shukri, who founded an armed Islamic movement in Egypt and was executed after being arrested and tried, which is about the Four Leaders of Sunni jurisprudence. In fact, he tries not only them, but also mainly the jurists of the later periods and those of his time and accuses them of being accomplices of the sultans. In response to the question why the Four Leaders claimed they took religious expertise to its ultimate limit, he says, “So that they and their writings would be admired and they would be idols to worship like gods in temples. Therefore, they put themselves between God and the believers and took themselves outside Islam. They belong to the Ignorance and savagery.”

Then he adds, “Did those who claimed that jurisprudence was completed really do so? No, they did so for the public and the remainder of the Muslims but left it open to interpretation through generations of court clergy so that the latter may issue fatwas proportionate to the ruling opinions, no matter who and what opinion rule, and so that, in the name of Islam, they can propagate sins and legalize the illegal. If we were to provide examples of the present and of the past, no one could deny... because there are cases of prescribing adultery, usury and legalizing the government on principles other than divine principles and even cases of approving prostitution and drinking alcohol in the name of Islam.”

Then, he gives examples of fatwas issued in his time. *Payambar wa Fir‘un* (The Prophet and the Pharaoh), pp. 88–9.

[96.](#) For example, see *Nokhostin Ruyaruyiha-ye Andisheh-garan-e Iran* (The First Encounters of Iranian Thinkers), pp. 323–66.

[97.](#) A small group of Sunni jurists have allowed opposing the corrupt ruler if there is no way to make him go on the right path other than by the force of the sword. See the considerable views of Imam al-Haramayn Juwayni in *Sharh al-Maqasid*, pp. 271–5. Indeed, as it has already been said, these have always been and remained in a minority.

[98.](#) In his readable book *Talbis Iblis*, Ibn al-Jawzi mentions the various traps that the Satan may set for jurists, including their approaching the sultans. He talks on this elaborately, “... In addition, entering a sultan’s court is a dangerous thing to do because, although one may have good intentions in the beginning, one will gradually change as a result of being respected and tipped or by having greed and avoiding advising the good and prohibiting the bad. Sufyan Thawri used to say, ‘I fear a sultan’s respect rather than insult because then my heart will incline towards them. The clergy of the past avoided the sultans because of their oppression while the latter asked them for fatwas and judgments. Consequently, a group was formed that were fond of the world, would learn sciences that would be useful to emirs and would run to them with these sciences in order to have worldly fortunes...’” *Talbis Iblis*, pp. 118–9. Such criticisms can be found in abundance

in books of the sayings, ethics and history.

For example, Ghazali elaborates on the position that the cleric scholars have to adopt towards sultans, "...And this was the practice and habit of the scholars in advising the good and prohibiting the bad. They were saved by not fearing the sultans and relying on God. They were satisfied with God's orders and willing, if God wanted to make them martyrs. As they had pure intentions, their words were very effective on hearts and would soften them. However, greed has now closed the mouths of the clerics and silenced them. If they say something, their words do not suit their actions and, therefore, they will not succeed. If they are honest in what they say and have good intentions, they will succeed. The corruption of the people is because of the corruption of the sultan and that of sultan is because of the corruption of the clergy. The corruption of the latter is for love of wealth and positions. One who is filled with the love of the world cannot lead the rabble to the right path let alone the kings and great people." Ihya' 'Ulum ad-Din, vol. 7, p. 92.

Interestingly, Ghazali allows entering a sultan's court only in two cases, which indicates his politico-religious perception as, "Entering a sultan's court is acceptable only on two grounds. First, if the king calls the cleric scholar by force rather than with respect, while the cleric knows that, if he refuses to accept the call, he will be persecuted and, if he avoids to enter the sultan's court, this will result in the people's uprising and in political disputes, in which case it is necessary to go to the court, not for obeying the king but for the people's expedience so that the government will not be disturbed. The second is for removing an oppression on a Muslim or on himself..." Ihya' 'Ulum ad-Din, Ch. 6, as quoted in Al-Islam bayn al-'Ulama' wa'l-Hakimun, p. 112. Also see, Al-Fawa'id, Ibn Qayyim, pp. 149-53. Also see Goldziher, The Zahiris, p. 165, and Gibb, Studies on the Civilization of Islam, p. 145.

[99](#). An example of this policy can be found in a sermon by a Friday communal prayer leader of Aba Sufiyah Mosque, Shaykh Ubaydullah, early in the month of Ramadan of the later years of the Ottoman caliphate, "... Here I repeated what I said before, that all the people, other than the poor, the handicapped and the blind, who are among them, the sheikhs who claim that they are inheritors of the Prophet (S), the teachers, muftis, judges, heads of Sufi sects, dervishes, merchants, craftsmen and all the people, have become apostates according to the Qur'an, are among the hypocrites and it is necessary to kill them because they have intentionally abandoned jihad with wealth and body, for whose proof there are thousands of Qur'anic verses. It is necessary to make them faithful again by: First, making them personally appear in battlefields. Secondly, they shall give half of their wealth to the seat of the Turkish caliphate so that the Turks can take revenge on their domestic and foreign enemies... If they fail to do so, i.e. to give half of their wealth to the government, their reconversion to the faith is not accepted and, on the Day of Resurrection, they will be resurrected with apostates and infidels and will go to hell..." Thawrah al-'Arab didd al-Atrak, p. 224, from p. 25, Qawm Jadid (The New People).

[100](#). Ma'alim al-Khilafah fi'l-Fikr as-Siyasi al-Islami, p. 11. The elaborate account of the story can be found in the book Al-Bilad al-'Arabiyyah wa'd-Dawlah al-'Uthmaniyyah by Sati' al-Husari, the famous Arab nationalist theoretician. Pages 300-1 of Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi'i thus quote part of the story, "Sultan Salim became the leader of the Sunnis and took a fatwa from the evil scholars to the effect that Shi'ites are not Muslims and it is necessary to kill them. He, therefore, ordered the beheading of any person within his territory who was known to be a Shi'ite." p. 38. Ha'iri quotes Sanders on Sultan Salim and his actions as saying, "During the 8 years of his reign—918-927 A.H—the Sultan attacked Iran and, from 920 A.H. onwards, he conquered Kurdistan and Azerbaijan, killing or jailing anyone within his territory who was known to be a Shi'ite. Sunni clerics had said that killing a Shi'ite is more appropriate than killing 70 Christians. According to an account, 40,000 Shi'ites were killed in those events." Journal of the Faculty of Literature & Humanities, Mashhad University, serial nos. 57-58, pp. 5, 6.

[101](#). For example, although the Seljuks for various reasons had an extensive anti-Shi'ite policy (Nizam al-Wizarah fi'l-Dawlah al-'Abbasiyyah, p. 47), and Khajé Nezamolmolk considered them to be infidels, saying, "Kill them whenever you see them.", or "He ordered that the heretics be taken to the rostrums, their heads be uncovered...and it be said to them, 'You are the enemies of the religion.'" At the same time, however, one of the great Shi'ite theologians of that time, Abdoljalil Qazvini, says in appreciation of the religious deeds of the Seljuks, "The truth is that, throughout the world, whatever of Islam that appears in schools, mosques, Sufi monasteries, rostrums, good traditions and rejection of heresies, is indebted to the power of Seljuk sword." Majalleh-ye Daneshkadeh-ye Adabiyat wa 'Ulum-e Insani (Journal of the

Faculty of Literature and Humanities), serial no. 56, pp. 744–5, quoting *An-Naqz wa Siyasatnameh*. There are many such examples in Shi'ite history although contrary examples are rare.

For example, "When Nader Shah attempted in 1741 to convince the Ottoman Sultan to accept Shi'ism as the fifth branch of the religion, he went so far as to accept to call him 'the caliph of Islam', but the Sultan did not accept this.

[102.](#) In many cases, Shi'ites were under pressure, were beaten and killed by people other than the sultans. The evil clergy had a great role in this. They deceived the public and provoked them in the name of defending the religion against Shi'ites and, principally, against those who did not have beliefs similar to theirs, "Abu Muhammad Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Khalaf Barbahari, the chief of the Baghdad Hanbalites, has special views and would treat harshly anyone that opposed his views and opinions, having his companions treat the people violently, even plundering their houses and bothering them in their trades and terrorizing whomever that would not accept what he said.

"One of the things Barbahari did was prohibiting mourning and dirge singing about Imam Husayn and the pilgrimages to his shrine in Karbala. He would order the killing of the dirge singers. Once there was a dirge singer known as Khilb, who was a master in his job and had a good voice. I [Tanukhi] heard him in the house of one of the chiefs. At that time, no body would dare mourning on Imam Husayn in public. Dirges were also rimited on mourning on Imam Husayn and the Prophet's Family. However, when Barbahari found out about this, he ordered searching for and killing of the dirge singer." The Wahhabis, p. 26. To find more examples on what Barbahari and his advocates did, see *ibid.*, pp. 26–33 on the dispute with Abu'l-Hasan Ash'ari and his views, beliefs, actions and the end of his stories. See *Tabaqat al-Hanabilah*, vol. 2, pp. 18–45.

[103.](#) The fact is that, other than the mentioned factors, there was another religious factor that would bring the clergy closer to the Safavid. The Safavid themselves were Sufis and had Sufi attitudes. It was with their help and devotion that they took the power and, therefore, they appreciated the Prophet (S) and his family. Many Shi'ite clerics in that time used this interest to convert them to Shi'ism. Their approach was for carrying out this task. It appears that Shaykh Baha'i and his father were among these clerics.

[104.](#) The story of the persistence of this fatwa and its consequences can be found in the magazine *Turathuna*, no. 6, pp. 38–41, and in *Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah fi Ta'lif al-Ummah*, pp. 143–7. To find other examples, see the same magazine, pp. 32–61.

[105.](#) *Turathuna*, no. 6, p. 40.

[106.](#) *Tahawwul wa Thubat (Development and Stability)*, pp. 161–5.

[107.](#) An example of the perception of the clerics about the intellectuals of those days, which indicates their reality as well, can be found in these words of Sayyid Jamaluddin, "These atheists are not like the atheists of Europe because one who abandons the religion in western countries will still remain a patriot and his zeal to defend his country against foreigners will not be affected and he will be ready to give his life for the interests of his country but Ahmad Khan and his advocates, along with their propaganda for the people to abandon their religion, have made the people indifferent to their country and prepare them to accept foreign domination and try to wipe off any religious or national determination... not for being highly rewarded but for having a mean life and mean benefits. This is how an eastern atheist can be identified from a western atheist, i.e. meanness and humiliation after heresy and infidelity." *Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa*, pp. 572–5, quoted from *Al-Fikr al-Islami al-Hadith Waslatuh bi'l-Isti'mar al-Gharbi*, p. 43. *Al-Minar*, issue of 13 April 1925, p. 31, quoting from Muhammad 'Amarah's introduction to *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm*, pp. 8–9. Concerning the excitement after the fall of caliphate and the supports for the assembly, see *ibid.*, pp. 7–14.

[108.](#) *Idi'uluzhi wa Inqilab (Ideology and Revolution)*, pp. 15–164.

[109.](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 169–184.

[110.](#) In the sociopolitical developments of the Shi'ite history, the epic of Ashura has been of the utmost importance. This is truer about our time. In the Shi'ite World, at least in Iran, in the contemporary history there has always been a need for revolutionary thoughts and solutions for changing the political destiny.

For example, the unclear stance of Malik ibn Anas towards Muhammad Nafs Zakiyyah is very likely due to this same point. The people of Medina wanted to support Muhammad, but they had already sworn allegiance to Mansur. Malik said that an allegiance could not be achieved with reservations. Therefore, the Medina people surrounded Muhammad, as a result of which Malik was beaten on the orders of the emir of Medina, so badly that his shoulder blade was broken.

However, despite all these, when he was asked about the permission of rising up against the ruler, he said, "If it is an uprising against 'Umar ibn 'Abdu'l-'Aziz, it is not allowed." In another citation, 'it is not allowed' has been replaced by 'God kill them, and if it is not an uprising against a person like him, let God take revenge on him through another tyrant, and then both will be taken revenge on.' Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi'i, p. 321. To find other examples of the resistance of the cleric scholars against the wishes of the rulers, see Al-Islam bayn al-'Ulama' wa'l-Hakimun, pp. 104-222.

One of the people introduced by the author is Sa'id ibn Musayyib. He resisted 'Abdu'l-Malik, who wanted to take allegiance for both his children, Walid and Sulayman at the same time, saying, "The Prophet (S) had prohibited double allegiance." He suffered much torture for this but did not submit. Adopting such positions against the sultan is essentially different from the position that, for example, Imam Husayn adopted against Yazid or Zayd ibn 'Ali against Hisham. Almost none of the Sunni scholars have admitted unacceptability of rulers whose wishes they resisted. At the most, they would refuse to accept his demand.

[111.](#) For example, Al-Islam bayn al-'Ulama' wa'l-Hakimun, pp. 115-32. However, what mattered was that Shi'ites and Sunnis have more or less different interpretations of the duty of a religious scholar. This difference is mainly or rather entirely due to their position against the ruler and that they should not remain silent against his tyranny and corruption. For example, compare the duties and responsibilities of a religious scholar the way they have been provided in the words of Imam Husayn. Tuhaf al-'Uqul, pp. 171-2, and the way they have been defined by Ibn Hanbal. A'lam al-Mawqi'in, 1, p. 9, citing Ar-Radd 'ala'z-Zanadiqah wa'l-Jahmiyyah by Ibn Hanbal.

[112.](#) Al-A'immah al-Arba'ah, pp. 140-80, and Manaqib al-Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, pp. 397-437.

[113.](#) The fact that one should not rise up against the sultan and has to be patient on his oppression is unanimously agreed on by Sunni jurists. Shafi'i, Malik and Ibn Hanbal have confirmed this. Intifadat ash-Shi'ah 'Ibar at-Tarikh, p. 98. In his Sharh al-'Aqa'id, he cites this opinion from Abu Hanifah and then says, "After the Senior Caliphs, corruption and tyranny emerged from caliphs and rulers while [our] righteous ancestors followed them, standing behind them to say their regular and Friday communal prayers and did not rise up against them." Ibid., p. 99. Those who in general do not allow such opposition have resorted to this argument. For further explanation, see ibid., pp. 97-107, and also Tabaqat al-Hanabilah, vol. 2, p. 22.

[114.](#) To find out about the urgent need of Muslim youth to a revolutionary Islamic ideology, for example see the various issues of magazines An-Nadhir, Ath-Thawrah al-Islamiyyah, Al-Muntaliq, Ad-Da'wah and the other magazines and publications of Muslim armed groups.

[115.](#) Concerning the perception of Sunni revolutionary youth about the ruling regimes, see the criticisms of 'Utaybi, who, on the 1st of Muharram 1400 A.H, seized the Ka'bah house, about the Sa'udi rulers and even the person of 'Abdu'l-'Aziz Baz, who interceded to free him from jail in 1978 in Faith and Power, pp. 180-5.

[116.](#) Concerning the effects of modernization on Islamic societies, especially in big cities, and in general the thoughts and ideals of young people, see Payambar wa Fir'un (The Prophet and the Pharaoh), pp. 273-95, and also the researches of Sa'd ad-Din Ibrahim in this regard, and Idi'uluzhi wa Inqilab (Ideology and Revolution), pp. 169-178.

[117.](#) As to the quality and amount of pressure that Islam has borne in the 50's and 60's, especially in the Arab World and Egypt, see Al-Fikr al-Islami al-Hadith wa Silatih bi'l-Afkar al-Gharbi.

[118.](#) Concerning the differences of these two periods and these two experiences, for example see the story of the intellectual and doctrinal developments of one of the contemporary Muslim intellectuals, which he recounts honestly and frankly. Min al-'Aqidah ila'th-Thawrah, pp. 46-8.

[119.](#) See the discussions and arguments of 'Abdu'r-Razzaq in Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm, where he seeks to remove caliphate as a religious principle or even a religious affair. He denies the consensus of scholars in this respect, and indirectly the partisans of consensus. His critics in general have relied on this and have rejected his opinions from this point of view. For example, see the seven criticisms that the al-Azhar Faculty made of him, based on them he was tried and then expelled from al-Azhar. Introduction by Muhammad 'Amarah to Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm, p. 21.

Also see the book Sadd Bab al-Ijtihad wa ma Tarattab 'alayh by 'Abdu'l-Karim al-Khatib, which makes similar criticisms of 'Abdu'r-Razzaq from a different position. His main goal is defending the opening of the way for new interpretations, thereby

overcoming the religious crisis, contributing to religious awareness of Muslims and helping further Islamicize the society. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[120.](#) Concerning the views of ‘Utaybi, see *Al-Harikah al-Islamiyyah fi’l-Jazirah al-‘Arabiyyah*, pp. 119–30.

[121.](#) For example, see the fatherly sympathetic advices of Yusuf al-Qardawi in his book *As-Sahawah al-Islamiyyah bayn al-Jumud wa’t-Tatarruf*, in which he asks the youth to put aside extremist methods and interpretations in the religion and not to go beyond the principles and rules of the religion.

[122.](#) *Tarikh al-Khulafa’*, p. 77.

[123.](#) *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm* with an introduction by Muhammad ‘Amarah, p. 9, citing *Al-Minar*, issue of 23 April 1925/29 Ramadan 1343 A.H., p. 31.

[124.](#) *Majalleh-ye Daneshkadeh-ye Adabiyyat wa ‘Ulum-e Insani* (Journal of Faculty of Literature and Humanities), Mashhad University, serial no. 57–8, pp. 4–8.

[125.](#) Ahmad Shawqi, the ‘King of Egypt’s Poets’, was especially fond of the Ottomans and even Turks as the supporters of Islam and Islamism. In his *divan, Ash-Shawqiyyat*, one can find numerous poems full of epics and feelings that were said on different occasions in praise of the Ottomans and Turks.

For example, somewhere he praises Turks and calls them the ‘noblemen of all nations’, asking them not to follow the thoughts of the Young Turks and not remain backward and tired and rather be dynamic, active and determined people (pp. 206–7) while some other place in his poems he rejoices at the sight of their navy with the flag of Islam waving (pp. 208–11). He greatly admires the war of Turks against the Greeks and calls their commander, Mustafa Kamal, ‘the Turkish Khalid’ (pp. 44, 258).

Even where Sharif Husayn claims to be the caliph, he sends a long poem to Sultan ‘Abdu’l-Majid (1194) and asks him as the main master of Mecca and Medina to eliminate Sharif (p. 194). One of his most attractive and emotional poems was said when caliphate was terminated by Ata Turk, which begins like this, “The wedding songs have turned into dirges and the message of death was brought in the cheers of happiness.” In this poem, he asks the Muslims to remind Ata Turk to stop what he is doing (pp. 90–93). Compare these poems with those in praise of Sharif Husayn, the Arab Empire, and in criticism of the Ottomans and Turks. *Thawrah al-‘Arab didd al-Atrak*, p. 354 and onwards.

[126.](#) *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm* with an introduction by Muhammad ‘Amarah, p. 8.

[127.](#) *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm*, p. 9, citing the newspaper *Al-Ahram* of 12 May 1925, the magazine *Al-Minar* of 23 April 1925, p. 31. Concerning the excitement following the fall of caliphate, and the supports that were given to the Assembly, see *ibid.*, pp. 7–14.

[128.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 17, citing *Al-Minar*, vol. 2, issue of 21 July 1925, p. 100.

[129.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 13, citing the newspaper *As-Siyasah*, issue of 22 July 1925.

[130.](#) See Charles D. Smiths, *Islam and the Search of Social Order in Modern Egypt*, p. 1.

[131.](#) In those days, some were tempted to take the position of the caliph, including the king of Egypt, Malik Fu’ad. Introduction to *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm*, pp. 35–145. Another of them was Sharif Husayn in Mecca. *Thawrah al-‘Arab didd al-Atrak*, pp. 312–53. The interesting thing is that Rashid Rida and his fellow thinkers nominated the Imam of Yemen for caliph as they saw that he had the entire politico-religious conditions necessary. *Andisheh-ha-ye Siyasi dar Islam-e Mu’asir* (Political Thoughts in Contemporary Islam), p. 137.

[132.](#) “Caliphate is usually understood as meaning ruling over an Islamic government. It must even be said that ‘caliphate’ means an Islamic government. The consensus is that the head of the government can be called a caliph”. *Ma’alim al-Khilafah fi’l-Fikr as-Siyasi al-Islami*, p. 30.

[133.](#) For example, see *Al-Fikr al-Islami al-Hadith fi Muwajjah al-Afkar al-Gharbiyyah*, pp. 7–42.

[134.](#) See the response of Hasan al-Banna when he was asked what he wanted. *Min Usul al-Fikr as-Siyasi al-Islami*, p. 11. His response provides the primary signs of the realization of the concept of Islamic government and its idealization.

[135.](#) Concerning the nature and history of western influence and laws in Islamic countries, especially within the Ottoman and Indian territories, see *Islamic Surveys, A History of Islamic Law*, pp. 149–62.

[136.](#) *Al-Islam bayn al-‘Ulama’ wa’l-Hakimun*, pp. 15–25.

[137.](#) H. A. Gibband Harebd Brown, *Islamic Society and the West*, vol. 1.

[138.](#) For example, see the various issues of the newspaper *Qanun* (Law) published by Mirza Malkam Khan.

[139.](#) ‘Abdu’l-‘Aziz al-Badri thus explains the story of the influence of the new laws in the Ottoman territory, “... In 1957, new laws including criminal and civil laws began to influence. However, these laws were not practiced before the Shaykh al-Islam agreed to them, who issued a fatwa that they did not contradict the shari’ah. The cleric scholars did not deem the entrance of the new civil laws into Islamic countries as religiously acceptable. Therefore, they compiled the book *Al-Majallah*, which was a collection of laws relating to transactions, which the authors considered to be documenting the shari’ah. *Al-Islam bayn al-‘Ulama’ wa’l-Hakimun*, p. 17, and also *Tahrir al-Majallah*, vol. 1.

[140.](#) William Shepard, *The Faith of a Modern Intellectual*.

[141.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[142.](#) One of the first people who began political and somehow revolutionary activities in the Sunni world was Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* movement. He taught his followers, “If you are asked, ‘What do you call the people to?’, tell them, ‘To the Islam that was revealed to the Prophet (S), part of which is the government, and freedom is a duty of its duties. If they say, ‘This is politics.’, say, ‘This is Islam and we do not make such divisions.’ If they say, ‘You are calling to a revolution.’, say, ‘We claim the truth and peace, which we believe in and are proud of. Then, if you stand against us and want to stop us from fulfil our calling our call, know that God has allowed us to defend ourselves and you will be oppressors.’” *Min Usul al-Fikr as-Siyasi al-Islami*, p. 11, citing Hasan al-Banna’s book, *Bayn al-Ams wa’l-Yawm*.

[143.](#) *Ma’alim fi’t-Tariq*, 8–11.

[144.](#) Even a committed independent sholar like the author of the book *Ma’alim al-Khilafah al-Islamiyyah*, who in his book criticizes the views of many before him concerning caliphate, its qualifications, how it can be established and the necessity or non-necessity of opposing it, is not willing to oppose the ruling system although his definition of caliphate is more logical and progressive than those of many of his predecessors and even contemporaries, “Ruling over all the Muslims in the world in order to administer the shari’ah and carry out the call of Islam to the world”, *ibid.*, p. 30.

He also says, “The ummah has power and, when it pledges allegiance to a caliph for the latter’s ruling over the government and to match Islam to the everyday life scientifically, the caliph will represent the ummah in its power because the ummah wishes to enforce the laws of Islam and the caliph represents the ummah in doing so. Therefore, one is appointed caliph only if the ummah pledges allegiance to him willingly and voluntarily, which constitutes a reason for the caliph’s representing the ummah.” *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Regarding rising up against the ruler, he says, “If the uprising results in bloodshed between Muslims, it is not allowed as disturbing the country is religiously forbidden and an action that results in a forbidden thing is forbidden based on the rule ‘The means of the forbidden is forbidden.’ Therefore, it is necessary to obey him [the ruler] and to take part in a jihad by his side in order to put down any disturbance. He will be the emir but not the caliph, unless he has taken allegiance from Muslims with their satisfaction and without their reservations.” *Ibid.*, p. 126.

[145.](#) One of the outstanding committed Sunni cleric scholars in our time, Shaykh As’ad Bayyud at-Tamimi, says, “The purpose of the Islamic government is to enforce the shari’ah.” This has been often quoted from him. Also see *Tahawwul wa Thubat* (Development and Stability), pp. 120–1.

[146.](#) For further explanation, see *Payambar wa Fir’un* (The Prophet and the Pharaoh), pp. 75–192.

[147.](#) The implicit response by many to such criticisms, which are in turn the result of new expectations brought about by the newly created socio-economic developments and politico-intellectual necessities, has been provided humbly by a virtuous Sunni cleric scholar, Muhammad Diya’ ad-Din ar-Rays, many years before the criticisms were so severe. Indeed, he is addressing non-Muslim critics or non-believer Muslims.

However, it is an answer to all those who have criticized Sunni clergy for their political position throughout the history, whether they are committed Muslims or uncommitted non-Muslims. “Some writers, and especially orientalist, accuse Sunnis and provide a picture of them that neither conforms to the reality and nor favors them. They say, ‘They were inclined towards the rulers and were in agreement with their practice and cooperated with them in what they did. People like Hasan Basri, Sha’bi, Sa’id ibn Jubayr and Sa’id ibn al-Musayyib during the Umayyad and Abu Hanifah, Malik and Ahmad during

the 'Abbasid periods were in conflict with the policy of the rulers and emirs of their time and even refused to accept the governmental order with which they had reached power." An-Nazariyyat as-Siyasiyyah al-Islamiyyah, p. 71.

Somewhere else, he explains the reasons why they were indifferent to political issues, "Sunnis and the people believed that an uprising and a revolution that is not expected to succeed will create disturbance, anarchy, bloodshed, dispersion and crimes. Therefore, they preferred to stay out of politics and, instead, have scientific activities that were more useful and stable." Ibid., p. 71.

Providing further explanation, he says, Sunnis left it to the Rebels, Shi'ites, Mu'tazilites and suspensionists to discuss and contemplate imamate and the relevant issues. They did not develop, define and limit their views in this regard until later when the former gave them up. However, this does not mean that they lacked political opinions or were content with the ruling politics, whether the Umayyad or the 'Abbasid ones." Ibid., p. 70. For further explanation, see *ibid.*, pp. 69–75.

[148.](#) This point and even deadlock is well explained by Gibb, "Thus, it emerges that, while one can legally depose the caliph, there is no legal means to do it. This is not only Mawardi's problem, but a problem in Sunni political thought up to his time. This confirms that the Sunni political theory is in fact the rationalization of the history of the Islamic ummah while there is no theory without it." For further explanation, see *Nazariyyat al-Imamat 'inda ash-Shi'ah al-Imamiyyah*, pp. 149–63.

[149.](#) *Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi'i*, pp. 116–266

[150.](#) See the book *Sadd Bab al-Ijtihad wa ma Tarattab 'alayh*, pp. 5–8. The author himself is one of the religious scholars who approaches the intellectual and religious stagnation of the religious scholars and the resulting problems more honestly and sympathetically.

Also see the views of Amin concerning the need to open the doors to religious interpretation in William Shepard, *The Faith of a Modern Muslim Intellectual*.

[151.](#) Concerning the modernization of the religious educational system and its consequences, see the views of 'Abduh in *Al-Fikr al-Islami al-Hadith wasailathu bi'l-Isti'mar al-Gharbi*, pp. 176–81, in which he provides an interesting description of the mentality of the cleric scholars in al-Azhar, "If a book reaches the hands of these scholars in which something is written that they do not know, or if they do not find out about the intentions of the writer, or if they find little about it, they will reject it and will refuse to accept it. If they accept it, they will interpret it with their own knowledge, which is in fact distorting it." Also, see the views of Khalid Muhammad Khalid in *Ash-Shi'ah fi'l-Mizan*, pp. 375–8, and also *Wu'az as-Salatin*, 291–302 concerning its consequences, especially see *Payambar wa Fir'un (The Prophet and the Pharaoh)*, pp. 102–15; also, Charles D. Smith, *Islam and the Search of Social Order in Modern Egypt*, pp. 109–13; and also Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, pp. 63–70.

[152.](#) *Payambar wa Fir'un (The Prophet and the Pharaoh)*, pp. 273–95. Better examples can be found in the various issues of the magazine *An-Nadhir*, especially in years 1981–1985.

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