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Faltering Transition:
The Conflict between Tradition and Modernity in Iran

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The question of fundamentalism and modernity is still highly topical in all forms of the modern Islamic experience. This question represents the most controversial issue since the introduction of the matter of development to the Arab and Muslim mentality, which, in certain cases, such as the Iranian model, strives to adopt universal modernity and advanced sciences and technologies and to create parallel modern concepts and ideas such as citizenship, a modern form of government, the rotation of power, the separation of powers, the social and political contract, democracy, and governing sovereignty. Recently, Iran imported some Western democratic practices, such as televised debates between candidates, to the latest presidential elections.

Iran utilizes all its media and public information sources to portray itself as an anti-Western revolutionary model, an authentic Islamic awakening movement, and an alternative to the West's modernity despite the fact that the Iranian argument has depleted much of its slogans' credibility with respect to the speech of the revolution and its requirements.

Speech of the revolution and the state's constitution

The Iranian state is an important model in the history of the region. At first, the overthrow of the Shah was an inspiring model for many Muslims. People marched peacefully, asking the Shah to step down. This legitimate practice revealed an ambitious project that transcended the Iranian borders to reach all neighboring countries. The problem with this ambition was that it relied on a sectarian ideological model in terms of practicing power and exporting the model to these countries. In addition, it continued to oppress dissenters inside the country, which established a solid sectarian identity based on exclusion, hegemony, or absorption.

This model, due to its religious nature and ideological structure, cannot take any shape other than this – promoted, sometimes, by the virtual ideal model and, at other times, adapting to reality and necessity. This appears in the structure of the Shiite ideology in Iran, where the Imamate is a foundation of religion, not only of the sect. According to Shiites, the Imamate is a belief that came from a religious text but was not created by humans. They believe that no one can be an Imam – even if the nation elects him – except one mentioned by Allah through the prophet or the precedent Imam. They believe that the Caliphate of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has transferred between the infallible Imams who rule by divine right and continuity through the legitimate Islamic authority even though they (except for Imam Ali) never took over real authority usurped by unjust and undeserving rulers. As a result, Shiites prohibit the act of assisting these rulers and recognizing their legitimacy and allow dealings with them only under certain circumstances, such as the claim of "Taqiyya" in necessary cases.[1]

The problem of the Shiite doctrine started at the time of the Great Occultation of the twelfth Imam, who disappeared without recommending the Imamate for anybody. This led to the belief in the doctrine of the return of the absent Imam. According to Shiites, the absent Imam returns at the end of time to spread justice on earth after it has filled with injustice and discrimination; hence, the Imamate has been limited to infallible persons only. This position is not vacant despite the absence of the twelfth Imam, which cancels the legitimacy of the emergence of any Muslim state during the time of Occultation and withdraws religious legitimacy from whoever handles it. In light of this problem, Shiite scholars came up with a new

theory that has not been overwhelmingly supported (in the past and the present) and that relies on the so-called Wilayat e-Faqih [Supreme Leadership].[2] This theory states that the Supreme Leader who has all the required characteristics during the time of Occultation has all the proven powers of the absent Imam himself.

The qualitative addition that Khomeini introduced concerning this theory has special importance. The Supreme Leadership theory has changed from the realm of scholasticism to the science of speech and beliefs, which means turning this concept into a pillar of religion and the sect, but not a branch of them. With Khomeini's jurisprudence, the Jurist Leader receives all powers of the Infallible Imam. This leader has the administrative rights and political guardianship of the people, the same as the rights of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the prince of true believers, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib.'[3] According to Khomeini, there is only one difference between the Infallible Imam and the Supreme Leader; the first is divine, while the second is juridical.[4] Hence, the Supreme Leader has become "An alternative for the Infallible Imam during the time of Occultation and people have to listen to and obey him."[5] This is the theoretical and jurisprudent background of Khomeini's ruling doctrine concerning the form of the government and state.

The Iranian revolution prevailed in 1979 due to a large public uprising that inspired many Islamic movements. This revolution materialized out of Khomeini's leadership abroad and many his disciple scholars who followed him or accepted his leadership inside the country. Other time-honored political powers and organizations, as well as historic anti-Shah currents, also participated in the revolution and who, despite their differences in internal and external policies, were involved in the revolutionary state. Some of these currents gradually changed into unsubstantial opposition and then maintained a limited presence. Soon after the end of the Iraqi-Iranian war, which required the elimination of internal differences in Iran, some defections appeared in the ruling political class of this country, represented by the overthrow of Montazeri, Khomeini's Caliph, from his position as Supreme Leader of the Iranian republic. A few years later, these defections increased in number inside the regime in all directions.

It is a big mistake to think that the current political division between Conservatives and Reformers has only recently emerged or is new to Iranian politics. Observers of Iranian politics know that this division has been present in different contexts and forms since the victory of the revolution and an attempt on the part of its leader to establish the 'Islamic' State.

The state's constitution was formed by the first models that considered Islam a religion, state, doctrine, and platform. The goal was to introduce this constitution in a way that, on the one hand, reflected modern times and the world's constitutions

and, on the other hand, meshed with the state's existing reality, which was not an easy step. Indeed, the Iranian constitution was written in 1979, then amended in 1989.

Following the general referendum on the form of government to be adopted in Iran, Iranians started writing an 'Islamic' constitution for the country in 1979. At that time, Khomeini and Shariatmadari differed. The first wanted a public referendum on an 'Islamic' constitution, then wrote a draft constitution based on his book *The Islamic Government*. The other, supported by some political currents, wanted to introduce the constitution to a constituent assembly elected from among all categories of Iranian people; then, upon its approval, it would be subject to public referendum. After that, public elections could be conducted to build all the new state's organizations.[6] As a middle ground, it was decided to elect an assembly of experts comprising 75 members to handle the draft constitution that Khomeini and his team prepared and to approve it with the amendments before putting it to a public referendum. Some conditions related to those who wanted to nominate for the Assembly of Experts were established and some seats were set aside for minorities. Nevertheless, these procedures, in addition to the organization of the electoral process, were met with an objection from Shariatmadari and supporters of the National Frontier, who canceled the nomination of their candidates. As a result, supporters of Khomeini achieved an overwhelming victory, while the opposition won only 13 seats in the council. At that time, concerns were raised about electoral fraud, pressures, and the rigging of the results.[7] This motivated Shariatmadari to insist on returning to the 1906 constitution after implementing some amendments that corresponded to the "Islamic Republic;" however, this requirement was rejected.

The elected assembly started work and changed its name to the Council of Experts to write the final copy of the constitution after preparing the first draft in January 1979. Ten years after the Constitution's ratification, some shortcomings appeared in the application of the constitution; these obliged Iran's new leaders to create some amendments related to the president of the republic's limited powers in this constitution. The amendments also created a means for settling disputes between all branches of power, especially the parliament and the Guardian Council. In addition, some amendments concerned the characteristics of the Supreme Leader and his powers as a means of preparing for the Post-Khomeini era. The amendments were created under the direct supervision of Khomeini, who instructed Khamenei (the current Supreme Leader) to create constitutional amendments that improved upon the positive points that had emerged throughout the practical experience of the "Islamic Republic" and to fix all negatives.[8] This assignment coincided with a letter signed by 170 MPs in the parliament and sent to Khomeini, asking him

to make immediate constitutional amendments.[9] As a result, a committee was formed to study the amendments. This committee finished its work in July 1989, when Khomeini died. The referendum on the amendments won 97.3 percent of the votes, leading to a division between the Iranian political elite (Conservatives) and their absolute loyalty to the Supreme Leader and Reformers, with their modernist reforming trend in its size and ratio. What Khomeini did with respect to containing contradictions and currents, in addition to some controversial issues related to the Supreme Leadership [Wilayat e-Faqih,] considered to be one of the constitutional bases on which the regime's entire philosophy relies, could not have been done by his successor.

Opposition to the Supreme Leadership took two forms: conservative and liberal. Some religious conservatives said that there had been no Supreme Leadership during the Occultation of Imam Mahdi and that legitimate Islamic rule could not have been established unless he reappeared, saying that giving the Republic an 'Islamic' legitimacy detracted from the religion itself. On the other hand, the Liberal Reform opposition said that the draft constitution Khomeini signed did not include any terms related to the Supreme Leadership and that this term had been added as a result of pressure from the influential 'Beheshti group' in the Council elected to write the republic's constitution. Reformers sought to eliminate Iran's Supreme Leadership and establish a democratic system that respected Islam and scholars – a view closer to the constitutionalism movement that emerged in Iran at the beginning of the 20th century. However, the controversy was not confined to the Supreme Leadership; it extended to public and personal freedom, press and political freedom, and the state's powers and role in the economy, development, education, arts, media, politics, and relations with the West, in addition to 'Islamic' and national priorities in Iranian foreign and regional relations.

The Iranian constitution represents Khomeini's approach in relation to the state, the regime, the nation, citizenship, and the "Other"; practically, it is the direct outcome of the theocratic state in compliance with the Supreme Leadership that achieves a close correlation between the religion and its institutions and scholars, and the state and its organizations and tasks. This form of government puts an end to any opportunity for the smooth or democratic transition of power between the traditional fundamentalist current on the one hand and the liberal reform current on the other.

The Iranian constitution relied on a major idea, which is, "For sure, "Imam Mahdi" is coming from Aal Al Bait (the close family of the prophet) to spread justice on earth after it has been ruined by injustice and discrimination." Based on this doctrine, Iran's constitution paved the way for the return of the "Absent Imam," who has the

greatest and final legitimacy in relation to issues of life and religion, and that all laws, constitutions, and customs before him are subject to change and amendment upon his return, which is undetermined in terms of time. During the time of Occultation, which extended for more than 1000 years, the Iranian constitution states in its fifth article, "The Jurist [Faqih] is the guardian and leader of the nation. He is aware of all his time's circumstances, courageous, brilliant, has great administrative capability, and [is] responsible for his position."

Based on that assumption, the absence of the Guardian of Age "Absent Imam" was no longer an obstacle in the face of the clergy in Iran because the right to lead the country is limited to the Jurist with some flexible characteristics like "The Jurist is courageous, brilliant, and is aware of his time's circumstances." Remarkably, the introduction of the constitution talks about its objectives clearly; they are: "Prepare for [the] continuity of this revolution inside and outside the country … it seeks building the one nation of the world: (This nation of yours is one nation, and I am your Lord, so worship me and no other) – a verse from the Holy Quran." The constitution also promotes the continuation of Jihad [Holy War] to save oppressed peoples all over the world and opens the door to exporting the revolution and interfering in the affairs of other countries, which requires building an ideological revolutionary army (the army and IRGC). The constitution also presents additional detail, such as, "The armed forces' responsibilities are not limited to protection and guarding borders only, they bear [the] responsibility of their divine message, which is Jihad for the sake of Allah to spread the divine rule in the world…"[10]

A further analysis of the Iranian constitution reveals an attempt to integrate modern concepts and elements. The Constitution's first article states that the Iranian form of government is "Islamic Republican", which means the revolution adopted a modern context: the introduction of Iran as a "republic". This means Iran is committed to the international values of modern republics, such as sovereignty, citizenship, and rotation of power, which helps Iran and other Muslims avoid embarrassment over their relations with this country. The term "the Islamic Republic" differs from the theory of the Caliphate or Imamate in that it does not require migration or political affiliation from the Muslim world. However, practical application of the idea of exporting the revolution and IRGC missions outside Iranian borders has diverted this claim from its central objectives.

The Iranian constitution does not mention the term "democracy" but it has approved two elements of democracy and separated them from their main objectives. It approved elections (though has set certain conditions for candidates) and approved the concept of separation of powers by establishing a legislative authority that is independent of other authorities while remaining under the supervision of "The Supreme Leader and Imam of the nation" as stated in article (57).

In fact, many of the constitutional texts reflect modern ideas in terms of form, though, essentially, they contain room to limit the freedom that the constitution itself approves. For example, article 24 states that the press and publications are free to address topics that "do not violate the Islamic rules and public rights." Article (26) also allows for the establishment of parties, assemblies, and political institutes, and states that these entities are free, including the rights of religious minorities, though are under the condition of "not violating the national unity, basics of the Islamic republic, and Islamic values." In addition, article 27 allows for the holding of public meetings and for the organizing of demonstrations under the condition of not violating the "foundations of Islam". All these rights remained theoretical and were emptied of their objectives by the rules that were approved later, while minorities' rights, full citizenship, and women's participation were all mentioned as vague concepts. Later, Iranian laws limited the participation of non-Muslim minorities in the country, diminished women's political participation, and decreased the participation and rights of Muslim sects other than 'Jafariah' in the government and politics.

All attempts failed to limit the Supreme Leader's powers in Iran. Practically, he oversees the three branches of government, appoints the chief of the Judiciary, approves the inauguration and dismissal of the president of the republic, and appoints jurists in the Guardian Council and members of the Expediency Council.

In the Iranian constitution, the Supreme Leader's rights include almost everything and extend over many pages, divided into 11 points in article 110. The Supreme Leader remains in his position for life until he becomes unable to carry out his responsibilities, at which point the Assembly of Experts elects a replacement.[11] Remarkably, the Supreme Leader has the right to form the Expediency Council, which does not have specific constitutional articles but is mentioned in separate articles as an advisory institute for the Supreme Leader that interferes, as mandated by the Supreme Leader, when Shura Council resolutions violate Sharia [Islamic laws] or the constitution. In addition, the Supreme Leader tasks this council with checking presidential candidates' applications to approve the suitable ones. In fact, observers of the Iranian constitution find themselves in front of a religious and ideological republic led by the Supreme Leader and Mullahs, while all other authorities are locked into their orbits.

The failure of reform and the stalemate of modernization

After the absence of key personalities like Muraza Motaheri (1920-1979) and the dismissal of the expected successor of Khomeini, Hussein Montazeri (who died in 2009 and who was one of the most prominent Shiite scholars, having established the

theory of the Supreme Leadership and spent quite some time teaching this theory, but who was excluded from practicing politics), a very serious political division occurred among the new leaders of Iran. Montazeri was one of the engineers of the Iranian revolution, if not its true leader. He was the actual leader inside Iran, while Khomeini was the leader abroad. After the victory of the revolution in 1979 and the return of Khomeini, Montazeri was appointed chief of the Revolution Command Council and then deputy of the Supreme Leader, to whom he was the expected successor. After 10 years of serving the revolution, Montazeri clashed with the desire to turn the Imam and Guardian into a Supreme Leader and a shadow of Allah on earth. Montazeri entered an open conflict with the Iranian leadership with respect to freedoms and the way to treat prisoners and political opponents. As a result, a few months before Khomeini's death, Khomeini dismissed him and ordered him to stick to teaching under tight control in the scientific Hawza in the city of Qum. The selection of Ali Khamenei as the successor of Khomeini and leader of the revolution was declined by Montazeri, who attacked Khamenei for many years and questioned his scientific and political competence. This time, Montazeri was subjected to severe punishment and placed under house arrest for five years, without contact with the outside world. However, all the years he spent under house arrest did not inhibit his courage and determination. On the contrary, he became stronger and more resentful of the regime, criticizing its oppressive practices against people, freedom, and the press. In 2009, when public demonstrations protested the electoral fraud that favored Ahmadinejad, who won a second term to the presidency, Montazeri supported these protests, encouraged their leaders, launched a campaign against the Iranian authorities, cast wild accusations against these authorities in dealing with the angry youth, and asked the Iranian leaders to resign and leave their positions, saying they were not fit to rule.[12]

The most significant consequences of this division appeared during Mohammed Khatami's electoral campaign in May 1997, when a number of powers gathered in what was known as the camp of Reformers, comprising several personalities inside the regime, such as Mohammed Mahdi Karroubi, former Speaker of the Parliament Mir Hussein Mousavi, Mohsen Kadivar, Mujtahid Spashtari, Izatollah Sahabi, Hashemi Rafsinjani, and others. To confront this grand Reform coalition, the conservative powers rallied around Nateq Nouri and included a wide range of personalities, currents, and former high-ranking officers who held responsibility for a wide range of public organizations and municipalities in important provinces. These differences between the two camps led to considerable confusion in the performance of Khatami's government, which achieved a great and significant victory, leading to a state of frustration in Iran. Later, in the 2002 domestic elections,

Conservatives succeeded in reorganizing and achieving a return to power. A year later, they won the majority in the parliamentary elections, leading to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's winning of the presidential election of 2005.

In his first electoral campaign, Nejad overthrew the old ruling class when he tackled the corruption that prevailed among members of this class. It can be said that the presidency of Nejad, who swore allegiance to the Supreme Leader, cemented Khamenei's leadership. His first eight years of leadership were characterized by agreement and partnership with President Rafsanjani, while the second eight years were characterized by varying tension between him and President Khatami. Indeed, the apparent internal and external understandings between the Supreme Leader and the president of the republic excluded the old guard, especially Rafsanjani. In addition, it prompted a number of conservative personalities like Tehran's former Mayor Qalibaf, former Speaker of the parliament Nateq Nouri, and the current Speaker Larijani to oppose Nejad. As a result, the Reformer candidacy of Mir Hussein Mousavi, who ran in the 2009 presidential election against Nejad, was a smart and measured move. Mousavi was known for his moderate tendency, falling between Reformers and Conservatives. By taking this step and nominating Mousavi, they anticipated receiving the votes of a wide range of people in the conservative electoral districts. In fact, there were signs of electoral fraud in some electoral districts, which raised a few questions. How did fraud influence the electoral process in general? Moreover, was Ahmadinejad in need of these votes? However, the indisputable issue was that the eruption of protests and clashes in Tehran at that time did not come about as a response to election's result so much as the roots of the previous divisions among the ruling elite. The new factor was the partiality of Rafsanjani and the coalition that had been excluded during Nejad's era, which manifested as a battle with the Supreme Leader Khamenei, who sided with Nejad at that time. It can be said that the conflict in Iran was not a conflict of coalitions inside the Iranian regime but, rather, a conflict of directions between two streams. The first was a Reform current led by moderates inside the regime and considerable segments of the Conservative current. This coalition believed in the need to reform the regime and enable it to keep up with developments in Iran both internally and externally. It also believed that national interest should prevail over ideology and that the Supreme Leader is not the Caliph of Allah on earth, nor infallible; on the contrary, he can be monitored and held accountable for his actions before the constitution. The other current, led by fundamentalists under the leadership of the Supreme Leader, the IRGC, and the real ruling institute of Iran, strictly abided by the foundations of the Iranian Republic and rejected any change.

The crisis of the 2009 presidential elections in Iran brought about a significant challenge with respect to the Supreme Leader's position when some scholars in Qum Hawza stated, "Any person [who] stands against the will of people loses his position as a Supreme Leader." This meant the credibility of the Supreme Leader had become suspect and that the position had lost the recognition it had once enjoyed. The crisis also effectuated the growing role of military organizations – especially the IRGC – in protecting the regime and the political power of Conservatives. Since then, a coalition has been established between Conservatives and the military, which became key partners for this current and promoted the belief that handing power over to civilians was no longer possible under those circumstances. This view was supported by the fact that all state organizations were no longer exempt from militarization due to the fact that a significant number of ex-military personnel – especially from the IRGC – had taken over these organizations. For example, 60 percent of the current MPs have a military background. The 2013 and 2017 presidential elections resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Reform current (represented by the Moderate Hassan Rouhani), which reflects the state of friction in Iran due to the extreme Conservative policies that plunged the country into a series of crises. This victory came under the umbrella of the constitution, though Khatami's experience is still borne in mind as a result of the capability of the religious institution – The Deep State – to curb Reform momentum in the country. In his programs, the president of the Republic – especially if he is a Reformer – clashes with the great influence of the IRGC, which impedes the president and his government in their efforts to make economic and political decisions. Indeed, the IRGC (the shadow government) controls the country and its resources and is free of monitoring by the government or any other regime organization except the Supreme Leader's.

The IRGC's role seems to be supported by the country's Supreme Institution, which no longer hides its fears and reservations with respect to the Reformers' political, economic, and cultural tendencies. This institution believes that the IRGC's influence – especially after the expansion of its role and interference in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen – is a safety valve and a revival and expansion of its traditional role during the 1979 revolution.

These events reflect a structural contradiction in the Iranian model that cannot take its full shape as a revolution under the Supreme Leadership theory, nor be a normal state that develops its activities and institutions to include all currents in the country. Before, Iran excluded all powers and currents opposed to the regime. The differences inside the regime powers have not been settled since the eruption of the revolution that has eliminated its children, one after another. These differences will

most likely continue and explode, aligning with the model of the 2009 events, unless the Iranian people come up with an inclusive form of government for all – one that believes in the true rotation of power and good neighborly relations in the regional and Islamic environment.

The Iranian researcher Asghar Shirazi summarized the regime's crisis, saying that the most prominent contradictions impacting the development of the state since the revolution – contradictions which are expected to worsen in all cases – are represented by the inconsistency between the regime's nondemocratic and democratic arguments and those that emerged from the conflict between the two ideas of dual sovereignty introduced by the constitution – the sovereignty of people and the sovereignty of scholars who have this right as representatives of Allah.[13]

This leads to clashes between the ideological speech (Dogmatique) and the pragmatic current (Pragmatique) and prevents it from reviewing its ideas and experience. This important experience is necessary to reform the political movement in Iran, the regime, and the conservative powers, but cannot happen without a multilateral system capable of changing the ideology from the language of absolutes to a system of values, ideas, programs, mechanisms of accountability, and freedoms that do not oppress people, but, rather, that help them rule themselves, develop their reality, create their programs, and continuously review them.

The difference between the two speeches deepened to such an extent that all attempts at gathering and reconciliation failed. The first speech was locked inside itself, while the other was based on openness to others and the world. In fact, the difference between both currents is increasing day by day.

The resumption of the dream of exporting the revolution and the new scope of identity

When Khomeini was obliged to stop the war with Iraq in 1988, the strategy of exporting the revolution was dealt a severe blow and ceased. However, some regional and international changes have revived this dream.

The idea of exporting the revolution is not an illusion. It is true that the revolutionary ideas can be transferred and adopted by people, but when they are adopted by regimes that establish organizations for the theory, it becomes disastrous, especially when, on the one hand, it is adopted as an identity and an ideological and sectarian model and, on the other hand, it is integrated into exporting operations that are promoted by political and sectarian organizations and countries in similar environments. This theory will not find an incubator except in similar Iranian environments where Iranian interference operations are concentrated among the Twelver Shiites that spread all over the world, especially in the neighboring Arab

countries. Practically, this triggers sectarian conflicts that break down all common social grounds. The comprehensive bond of national identity is fragile as compared to the bonds of ethnicities and sectarian ideological minorities that result in sectarian conflicts and wars.

All in all, the project of exporting the revolution in line with the Iranian model has become an ambition to build a cross-border "identity sphere" above the national sovereignty of the emerging countries in the region after dividing the region and drawing the boundaries of interests in line with the balance of power after World War I. Since this project has an ideological sectarian nature, it presents itself in the face of "the end of ideologies" in line with the "clashes of civilizations" approach. It has a great generating capacity and feeds off the argument of unification and division – unification with those who have the same ideology and differentiation from others, which is one of the "identity strategies" that lives on challenges, conflicts, diversity, and differences.

The sectarian ideological "identity sphere" differs from the "vital sphere" that was presented at the end of the 19th century. It is noted that expansionist colonial ambitions led to two world wars and a new world order based on vital universal spheres and geo-economic issues. Based on the geopolitics and the international balance of power at that time, spheres of influence were divided among the great powers, leading to the emergence of new countries under the control of these powers. In light of today's global developments, these areas seem more fragile than before.

Similarly, the Iranian model adopted ideological sectarian identity speech. Tehran has played a significant role in fomenting the bloodshed in Iraq, Yemen, and Syria. It formed a sectarian ideological identity with proxy militias that swear allegiance to and fight on behalf of Iran, crossing the national interests of their home countries on the one hand, and forming proxy forces in these countries (integrated either within or parallel to these countries' armies) on the other. These militias established slogans and calls that attracted militants from several countries and nationalities, with names that reflect their ethnic and sectarian identity. Some of these militias have the features of Karbala and hide their sectarian bond despite the fact that they bear the name "Public Mobilization Forces" or "reluctance and resistance" forces. What brings militants from Iran under the IRGC umbrella or "Hazarah Shia" from Afghanistan is something far from resistance and the goal of defending Jerusalem or holy shrines. Slogans like "in order not to let Zainab be imprisoned a second time," "death is to America and Israel," or "Labaika ya (we are coming) Hussein" are simply covers for the real conflict that reflects the difficulty involved in a smooth and peaceful transition toward reform and development of the theological state protected by divine infallibility.

What is left of Khomeiniah (Khomeini Teachings)

No doubt, revolutions begin strong but soon the struggle for power starts. The first stage of any revolution is full of expectations and ideals, while the second is characterized by envy, suspicion, and self-interest. This took place in Iran, similar to other revolutions in which politics prevailed over ideologies and reality destroyed the dreams of ideals and principles. After the revolution and emergence of globalization, everything changed in Iran. Modernity created an obsession with technology. Constraints on the internet could not have stopped this technology because most internet users have decoding programs. More than half of Iranians are on social media. The "Telegram" application has become the most popular of all social media applications, with 20 million users. Iranians are ranked 12th among the world's Instagram users, while eight million Iranians have Facebook accounts. As a result, the current generations, which did not witness the 1979 revolution or the Iraqi-Iranian war of 1980-1988, are not attracted by calls to export the revolution and care only about their own future and needs. In fact, the Iranian leadership is aware of the dangers of these changes, as expressed by the chief of the Iranian Youth National Organization, Hajj Ali Akbari, and reported by the Iranian press.[14]

Iranian leaders have always warned about the influence of the Western world; nevertheless, Iranian markets are now full of Western goods, computer games, Western aesthetic values, and the division of roles based on the Western model. No doubt, the Iranian culture is solid, but the dream avowed by the fathers of the revolution is receding. Some reports showed that 64 percent of Iranian students are willing to migrate, especially in light of the increase in the unemployment rate, up to 13.5 percent over the past 10 years. The number of unemployed university graduates (most of whom are highly qualified) jumped to 2.2 million in 2015.

The Iranian regime has shown an interest in education – especially higher education and institutes that require great effort to reach poor classes and far-away villages. However, Iranian youth have become more independent in their thinking, and religious topics are no longer the only ones taught in Iran. Most importantly, culture is not as strong a means of promotion and mobilization as it was before.

Conclusion

Two views exist in Iran. The first is from the academic Ali Riza Shuja'i Zand, who expressed his views in his important book *Religion and the Modern Cultural Varieties*.[15] Zand believes that real modernity lives side by side with religion and flows in the lives of religious people. Despite its rudimentary nature, it seeks to present itself as a different experience and a leading model for other societies. It relies on the theoretical framework of Max Weber, who illustrated a form of harmony between

Protestant Christianity and the essence of capitalism to develop evidence for the possibility of combining religion and modernity. However, Zand is aware of the differences in Protestant Christianity, which is a piecemeal religion that led those societies to harmonize with a factor of modernity. On the other hand, the Iranian state faces a totalitarian and conscious sect in which all efforts are dedicated to the complete application of religion, ideology with individual and group extensions, and a race to improve living conditions, which makes it cautious in its judgment, especially with respect to the current form of modernization

The Iranian thinker Dariush Shaigan in his book "Alnafs Almabtourah" expressed the second view. Shaigan believed the only option was a division between two major dimensions: the need-and-desires dimension and the ideals dimension. He called this view the mutilated self—[*Alnafs Almabtourah*], which experiences a crisis and does not have the assurance of continuity because it lacks the presence of integration. As a result, it resorts to so-called "Lamination," which is most likely an unconscious process that links two separate worlds to integrate them in terms of harmonious, comprehensive knowledge. Lamination takes place in two contradictory ways, but its consequences seem to be almost the same. Here, a new speech above the old traditional context, or the opposite, an old (traditional) speech above a new context, can be laminated. In the first case, we get Westernization, while in the second we get Islamization.[16] The two processes seem contradictory, but according to Shaigan's view, they are related. Indeed, they do not result in the same phenomenon: division and instability. Why? Because the content to which the new speech will be added will not remain old or become new. It is a combination of both that will become a field of confusion. In both cases, we have an incomplete view of reality and a vague and changing vision, as if reflected in a distorted mirror. In all cases, it will be non-conforming with reality.

The two views belong to two Iranian thinkers who live in the West. The first is more optimistic despite being cautious, while the other is less optimistic about the possibility of cohabitation between the theocratic state and modernity. What combines the two views is the fact that pursuit and intermingling will take place, though the results are unknown and the consequences are still points of dispute. Still, the reality and its requirements are stronger than all expectations.

Endnotes

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(2) The first step started during the Safavid era (1501) with Sheikh Ali Bin Abdulal Alkaraki, who played a major role in strengthening politics and the monarchy during the era of Shah Ishmael Alsafavi. For more information on this topic, see our book: Hakimiatollah wa sultan alfaqih. Lebanon: Attaki'ah Publishers, 2005: 118-125.

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(10) Iran. Introduction of the Iranian Constitution: 4, 6.

(11) The Assembly of Experts is supposed to be elected, but the constitution does not clarify how or when, nor does it clarify the governing mechanics of its workings.

(12) "Ayatollah Montazeri … The Supreme Leader." France 24. December 21, 2009. http://cutt.us/gkl1A

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(14) Hadr Annizam Alirani Liwasa'il Attawasul Alijtima'i Fi Iran. Almizmah Center for Researches and Studies. February 8, 2017. http://cutt.us/kjQq See also: Fo'ad, Isra' Ahmed. "Iran Tafriz Ala Muatinihah Istikhraj Tasrih Listikhdam Facebook." The Seventh Day, June 28, 2016. http://cutt.us/tFYHX

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