



## **Introduction**

To have a better understanding of the worldview and the ideology of the Shia clergy, it would be helpful to discuss its religious principles. Islam, particularly its Shia faith, envisages a broad-based and extensive spectrum for its instructions about everyday affairs of human life. That stands exactly opposite to the viewpoint limiting religion and faith to liturgy.

In other words, the Shia faith encompasses all aspects of mundane and otherworldly life including political, social, economic and cultural affairs. Popular uprisings and attempts for the establishment of Shia governments throughout different periods of history of Shiism are a product of such a worldview.

To that effect, reviewing the views of the Imam Khomeini as the ideologue and the founder of the Islamic Revolution which he went on to lead takes up added significance. From his view, the final objective of human being is to have meaning in the life and finally to perfect its soul. To reach such a degree of perfection, humanity is facing both internal and external barriers. By internal barriers, the Imam meant carnal desires and seductions and by external barriers he meant submission to tyrannical and usurping powers and governments.

In the religious ideology, refusal to compromise with theocracy is a model manifested in the Islamic

Revolution which was one of the leading political and social events of the second half of the 20th century. This event occurred in a period of human history against the backdrop of some intellectuals' perception of religion as the opium of masses and their belief that religion had lost its efficacy for the new era. (Ref: *Bashirieh, 2021, Vol. 1*)

## **Theoretical Foundations of Research**

### **1. Human Being**

Human is a being very similar to beings in his surroundings in terms of features and particulars. To that effect, human life is divided into three layers: in the first layer human is fed and grows like plants; in the second layer, like animals

he has instincts; and in the third layer, human is eligible for perfectionism, which is reserved to humans. Due to his perfectionist nature, human is never content with any amount and level of enjoyment. Therefore, if human is abandoned to his own fate, he will not be content with any limits, as is the case with animals. Human is an insatiable animal unless his soul bows to divine law and be led by heavenly guidance. In his words on philosophy, the Imam Khomeini has an eloquent expression of human life. (Ref: *Imam Khomeini, 2002, Vol. 3: 365-366*)

### **2. Religion**

This is where divine revelations, heavenly laws and the presence of prophets and

messengers of God as well as servants of God and religious scholars in the society take up added importance. Their presence, words and deeds rush to the rescue of human beings to help them overcome ignorance. In the Imam Khomeini's thoughts, all prophets were intent on teaching humans and legalize and put constraints on their carnal desires and instincts. For him, the prophets came to perfect the existence of humanity. (*Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 11: 450; Ibid, 2002, Vol. 3: 337-338*)

### **3. Religious Society**

A society in which people have placed faith in the messengers of God and are obedient to divine orders will be governed by divine

law which would recognize and rein in human being's carnal and internal desires. In such a society, two groups of people must be distinguished: One group comprising followers the public and the other one comprising humans of higher rank including prophets, servants of God and religious scholars who are tasked with guiding the society.

### **4. Religious Government**

Another important issue that would be instrumental in understanding the model of clergy-government interaction is the Imam Khomeini's view of an Islamic government. In an interview in 1980 with Hamid Algar, he outlined the differences between an Islamic government

and other forms of government:

*There is a big difference between all regimes in the world and a divine regime which follows divine laws; the big difference is that even just and competent regimes are limited by natural boundaries. Nowhere in the world can you find a regime that seeks to purify the people's souls; they had nothing to do with that. [Other] governments have sought to prevent disorder, they take no action against anything done in private as people are free in private; but they are not allowed to come out and cause chaos. Only divine governments have pursued*

*the objective of training human beings to become what they are supposed to be. (Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 11: 449)*

### **5. Clergy**

A review of the start of the Imam Khomeini movement and its persistence until victory would give a better image of his view of the clergy. The Imam's reform movement was triggered in response to a progressive trend which was breaking the law in a frenzied manner. What infuriates him more than anything else was the regime's disregard of scholars and hostile treatment meted out to them. The Imam had said that in case the regime honored Islamic law or at least the Constitution it would have the support of

scholars. (*Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 1: 299*)

What Imam Khomeini was seeking in the struggles was to restore conditions in which Muslim scholars would be able to play their influential roles like before. His analysis of the future of planned changes was the loss of only social forces who could play the role of the prophets in expressing and applying Islamic law. (*Ibid: 160*) That is why he feels the threat (*Ibid: 419*) and warns against an unknown future.

The clergy is the first and foremost force whom he urges to exercise vigilance and rise up. Even after the victory of the Revolution, the clergy remained the closest and the most reliable

social force to the Imam. In a bid to encourage this potential force to exhaust its power, the Imam moved first to remove obstacles which blocked the social presence of the clergy and stood against a propaganda campaign led by opponents and critics. In his view, Islam and the clergy are intertwined to such an extent that they could not be distinguished one from another.

*Clergyman means Islam. The clergymen are intertwined with Islam. He who opposes the title of the clergy and clergyman is your enemy. (Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 7: 461)*

The Imam's descriptions of the clergy in different

stages of the Revolution are interesting:

- Agreement with the clergy means agreement with Islam. (*Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 7: 468*)
- Islam minus the clergy amounts to treason. (*Ibid: 486*)
- The clergy is an unrivalled phenomenon in safeguarding Islam. The clergy is the standard-bearer of Islam for this nation. (*Ibid, Vol. 8: 44*)
- The clergy is a national asset. (*Ibid, Vol. 11: 462*)
- Islam without the clergy is like a country without doctors. (*Ibid, Vol. 14: 190*)
- Islam, except the clergy, is like medicine,

except doctors. (*Ibid, Vol. 15: 21*)

- The clergy is the symbol of Islam and its propeller. (*Ibid, Vol. 18: 13*)

The Imam Khomeini's description of the clergy as the criterion of Islam is originally born out of his view of the nature of human being. For him, human being is unreliable per se as he lacks any intrinsic force to control his desires unless he feels constrained by Islamic instructions. The closer humans are to the focal point of sources of law, the more their knowledge of its implementation will be. Therefore, he draws a parallel between Islam-clergy and medicine-doctor relations. In Imam Khomeini's view,

religious society comprises a human hierarchy system which is linked with divinity.

The closer human beings to the source of revelation the more responsible they will be, and under the presence circumstances the clergy is the closest and hence more responsible. The clergy is the continuation of a string which is linked to the serial chain of the prophets, which ends in the invisible world. Therefore, laymen are expected to accept Islam based on clerical interpretations.

The Imam Khomeini has also warned of consequences of negligence of the clergy with regard to Islam:

*The clergy has preserved Islam. If it breaks Islam will break. If at this*

*juncture it is broken in our hands we will be betraying Islam and the Noble Quran. Watch out! Be careful! Adapt your deeds with Islam. If, God forbid, there are deviants among you drive them out. (Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 9: 539)*

While addressing people, the Imam refers to the clergy as the criterion of Islam; however, addressing the clergy, he underlines Islam as the criterion of the clergy and calls on clerics to watch out and ostracize incompetent ones in their ranks.

Since the very beginning of the Movement, the Imam did not conceal his worries:



- The clergy's thirst for power will lead to corruption. (*Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 6: 285*)
- The ruling clergy should not act like the diabolical regime. (*Ibid, Vol. 8: 1*)
- In the Islamic Republic, the clergy is more than anywhere else susceptible to deviation. (*Ibid: 2*)
- The ruling clergy's anti-Islam acts will give a wrong image of Islam. (*Ibid: 3*)
- The clergy is required to prevent anti-Islam acts by the turbaned people. (*Ibid: 5*)
- The clergy is required to prevent the corruption of the clergy. (*Ibid: 303*)
- A wrong deed is in contrast with the essence of the clergy. (*Ibid: 421*)
- Islamization of the clergy in the Islamic Republic is a must. (*Ibid: 521*)
- Denial of public freedom and mistreatment of people by the clergy will play into foreigners' hands. (*Ibid, Vol. 9: 475*)
- Like every other scientific organ, the clergy is disorganized and needs reorganization. The issues will not be resolved by playing a blame game. (*Ibid: 480*)
- In the Islamic Republic, individual and collective reforms constitute the divine and religious duty of the clergy. (*Ibid: 511*)

- Un-Islamic deeds by the clergy will break the clergy and Islam. (*Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 6: 539*)
- Wrong deeds by teachers in the society will push the clergy to failure. (*Ibid, Vol. 10: 24*)
- The clerics outside power must help the government instead of sitting down and complaining. (*Ibid, Vol. 15: 336*)
- A wise scholar reforms the environment he lives in and a corrupt scholar will corrupt his surroundings. (*Ibid: 484*)
- Undermining the clergy and division in the clerical rank risk distancing people away from the clergy. (*Ibid, Vol. 18: 18*)

- Instead of quantitative expansion, the clergy must put efforts in scientific and moral boost. (*Ibid, Vol. 19: 2*)

- The more the clergy braces for material benefits, the more its spirituality will be weakened. (*Ibid: 25*)

- The loss of quality of life of scholars will result in the elimination of Islam and the Islamic Republic. (*Ibid: 137*)

As described above, the Imam Khomeini maintains that the main mission assigned to an Islamic government is to make endeavors for training humans. Governments cannot remain indifferent vis-à-vis people's beliefs and morality. Therefore, by envisaging such a large-scale and long-term

objective, the presence of the clergy to liaise people and government would be inevitable. By coming closer to people and benefiting from their heartfelt trust, the clergy can convince them to align themselves with the government's human development policies and plans.

Another role for the clergy with regard to interaction with the government is to keep an eye on the performance of different branches of government and help it implement Islamic law more effectively. Although it seems that the Imam Khomeini's interpretation of clergy-government relationship has been subject to significant modifications nearly four decades after the

victory of the Islamic Revolution, he had separated the clergy from the government in clear terms:

*The clergy's role is to lead the government and steer the people. The clergy does not seek governance; but has a role in the government. The clergy is responsible for looking after the government; however, it does not want to become president. The clergy exercises a controlling role. The clergy is expert in law and regulates implementation of Islamic law. The clergy is neither the government nor stranger to the government. The role of the clergy is to control the power and prevent injustice, dictatorship*

*and dependence. (Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 11: 462-466)*

Also, to see excerpts of Imam Khomeini's views about the clergy-government relationship, refer to these sources: (*Ibid, Vol. 1: 417-418; Ibid, Vol. 9: 225; Ibid, Vol. 13: 11-12&433-434; Ibid, Vol. 21: 288&292; Ibid, 2010: 138*)

#### **6. Clergy-People Interaction**

The Imam Khomeini tasks the clergy with safeguarding the people's hearts and under different circumstances urges them to accompany people, reach understanding with them, and win their trust in the government. He also calls upon the clergy to invite people to regularly be present in social affairs and practice perseverance.

(*Ref: Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 1: 274-275; Ibid, Vol. 9: 475; Ibid, Vol. 14: 274-275; Ibid, Vol. 15: 327; Ibid, Vol. 16: 97; Ibid, Vol. 18: 37; Ibid, Vol. 19: 3&305*)

#### **7. Clergy-Government Interaction**

Interaction between the clergy and the Islamic government is an outcome of the social and religious standing of the clergy. On one hand, the clergy is well aware of Islamic law and is tasked with elucidating the law and supervising its correct implementation by different sectors of government, and on the other, it enjoys the empathy and solidarity of Muslims and believers who support the Islamic government. Therefore, the

clergy is tasked with protecting this asset. The clergy is obligated to win people's trust in the clergy and the Islamic government.

Given the Imam Khomeini's guidelines, the following basic points may be highlighted:

- Necessity of the presence of the clergy in social and political affairs in the Islamic Republic. (Ref: *Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 9: 179; Ibid, Vol. 14: 184-185; Ibid, Vol. 15: 486; Ibid, Vol. 19: 185-186,248&305*)
- The clergy's administration of judicial affairs within the government. (Ref: *Ibid, Vol. 16: 423; Ibid, Vol. 17: 236*)
- The clergy's reasonable expectations from the government. (Ref: *Ibid,*

*Vol. 15: 336; Ibid, Vol. 16: 416; Ibid, Vol. 19: 303-304*)

- The clergy's refrainment from undermining the government. (Ref: *Ibid, Vol. 19: 303; Ibid, Vol. 20: 57*)

- The clergy's refrainment from causing division. (Ref: *Ibid, Vol. 19: 250&304; Ibid, Vol. 21: 282*)

- The clergy's refrainment from unnecessary interference with government affairs. (Ref: *Ibid, Vol. 16: 348-349*)

### **Religion-Politics Relationship**

The relationship between religion and politics remains a highly challenging issue in a religious government. Contrary to the Western-style political science which is largely distant from religion, Islam incorporates political views; the history of Islam and establishment of religious

governments in different eras bear proof to this fact. The Holy Quran and traditions have given rise to Islamic culture and civilization and prepared ground for their growth and development throughout different periods by developing concepts, reforms and political thoughts.

For example, in the Quranic verse “*There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern...*”, (*Quran, 33: 21*) the Prophet Muhammad is described as the pattern of excellence whose words, deeds and thoughts will serve as an example for a religious society to follow. One of these patterns which materialized by the Prophet Muhammad was the establishment of government

based on Islamic teachings. (*Enayat, 2010: 18*)

The Imam Khomeini has a clear stance with regard to the relationship between politics and religion:

*The extent of what have the clerics to do with politics? Campaign was spread to the point that many scholars had been convinced and every time one word was said [on politics] they responded downright: That's politics and does not concern us. (Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 15: 209)*

The Imam Khomeini goes on to highlight the negative impacts of this propaganda campaign, saying:

*Once, the clergy would be respected when it was deep in idiocy; otherwise,*

*a political-minded scholar and a smart and knowledgeable cleric was always viewed negatively. That was common in seminaries. The deviants were more faithful. (Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 21: 278-279)*

This modus vivendi of some clerics was criticized by other figures like Ayatollah Taleqani, Shahid Beheshti and Hashemi Rafsanjani. (Ref: *Hosseini Beheshti, 1988; Hashemi Rafsanjani, 1982: 18-19*)

In the preface of a book, Ayatollah Taleqani fires a broadside at those who are indulged merely in invocations: How can one shirk social obligations for good under the pretext of non-interference

with politics? (Ref: *Naeini, 1995: 6-15*)

The Imam Khomeini has express remarks:

*Islam is the religion of combatants who seek right and justice; the religion of those who want freedom and independence; the school of anti-colonialism combatants and people. (Imam Khomeini, 2010: 10)*

Furthermore, the publication of the "Shia School" magazine in 1959, with contributors like Allameh Tabatabaei, Hossein-Ali Rashed, Mohammad-Taqi Falsafi, Abolfazl Mousavi Zanjani and Imam Musa Sadr, was instrumental in the promotion of the Shia ideology and discourse. The magazine was banned

by the Shah regime's intelligence service "SAVAK" in 1964 after the arrest of Hashemi Rafsanjani and some of the magazine's columnists. (Ref: *Jafarian, 2011: 426-428*)

In the wake of the propaganda campaign against the clergy over its alleged relationship with the Second Pahlavi dictatorship, the clergy opted for concealing its true beliefs. The Imam Khomeini was aware of this challenge and he issued a fatwa on taqiyah; It means to precautionary concealment of one's faith or opinion about something when its disclosure is feared to jeopardize one's life or threaten any harm or loss:

*- The principles of Islam are in jeopardy. The Quran and religion are in jeopardy. Hence, taqiyah is haram (religiously forbidden) and expression of truth an obligation. No more silence to injustice. (Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 1: 178)*

*- Taqiyah concerns secondary issues. When the principles of Islam, the dignity of Islam are in jeopardy there is no room for taqiyah and silence. (Ibid, 2010: 135)*

These historic fatwas by the Imam effectively encouraged the Shia cleric out of isolation.

Embracing martyrdom in addition to faith in the second coming of the Imam Mahdi to usher in justice are key elements of the



Shia ideology. In the Shia school of thought, embracing martyrdom is intertwined with its evidence, i.e. the Karbala Battle in 680 AD. Fighting injustice and struggling for promoting justice and righteousness are key concepts enshrined in the Shia-prescribed martyrdom. Belief in the reappearance of Mahdi will be the realization of divine promise and fulfilment of obligations of all prophets, servants and combatants for the sake of justice.

Both of the aforesaid concepts define the political life of Shiism. The Imam Khomeini has described the uprising of the Imam Hussein, the third Shia imam and grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, as follows:

*Monarchy and [hereditary] succession constitute an ominous and invalid system of government, against which Hadhrat Seyed ash-Shohada (master of martyrs; an allusion to the Imam Hussein) rose up and was martyred. (Imam Khomeini, 2010: 8)*

### **Shia Political Discourse**

The history of formation of religious *marja'* in the Shia faith dates back to when the Imam Mahdi went into occultation. As long as the Imam Mahdi remains occult, steering and leading the Islamic society will fall upon competent religious scholars.

According to official data, during the ten centuries leading to the death of Ayatollah Boroujerdi (1961),

58 theologians had been recognized as marja', 34 of whom were Iranian and the rest were Arab. In terms of place of education, 40 of them had studied in Iraq and 14 in Iran. No information is available about the education of remaining four. A total of 18 of them had settled in Iran. (*Haeri, 2013: 82*)

Alongside the foremost mission of Islamic canonists, which was to answer to modern issues by referring to religious tradition, (*Garmroudi, 2006: 142-169*) some historical events occurred and a generation of scholars emerged who upgraded the concept of the marja' and developed the notion of supreme marja' in the 16th

and 17th centuries. (*Foran, 1992: 83*)

Beyond these changes and religious developments in the concept of marja' and following changes which transpired Iran in this sector, we may evoke the Shia political discourse. Shia political discourse means a collection of perceptions and responses presented by Shia canonists and scholars about political issues during different periods and they mainly include political theories.

A sign of Shia political discourse are the developments of the three decades leading to the Islamic Revolution. They happened against the background of emergence of knowledge about the standing of the marja' and the clergy and were followed

by the emergence of new religious concepts like Taqiyah, Shahadat or embracing martyrdom, Velayat or guardianship and Intizar-e Faraj or waiting for second coming of the Imam Mahdi. (Ref: *Derakhsheh*, 2005: 197-253)

That was when for the first time the Shia political views found a place within the government. This discourse development culminated in the Islamic Revolution in the first step, and redefined itself in the following stages in light of post-revolutionary events.

Some pundits believe that the Shia marja' has so far developed seven discourses:

1. Unjust Sultan vs. Just Sultan: From the start of period of occultation up

to the start of the Safavid dynasty

2. Government of Shia Shah vs. Guardianship of Just Canonist: During the Safavid dynasty

3. Silence: From the end of the Safavid dynasty until start of the Qajar

4. Public Guardianship vs. Legal Monarchy: From the start of the Qajar era to Constitutionalism

5. Constitutional Monarchy vs. Legitimate Monarchy: During Constitutionalism period

6. A politicism: During the Pahlavi era up to arrangements for the Islamic Revolution

7. Practical Struggle for Materialization of Islamic Government: During arrangements for the Islamic Revolution until victory of the Islamic Revolution. (Ref: *Kadivar, 2009*)

This transformation of the Shia discourse would be understood more accurately when its background is analyzed. The gradual emergence of such concepts as freedom, equality, parliament, separation of powers and law, which were unknown under former governments like the Safavid and Qajar dynasties, prompted the Shia clergy to elucidate the Shia view of these new notions. The Shia clergy expressed its views in two forms: Discourse of constitutionalist scholars and discourse of legitimate

constitutional scholars. (*Jamalzadeh, 1999: 7*)

The Constitutionalist movement failed and the Pahlavi dynasty came to power. The implementation of modernist policies in the 1940s and their contrast with the clerical opinions set the stage for the development of a new Shia discourse. In this context, the Imam Khomeini's role in the development of this discourse by underscoring the necessity of establishment of an Islamic government and the ensuing formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran bears special significance. (*Kadivar, 2008: 24*)

Two more discourses were born out of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution; Velayat-e Faqih and religious

democracy. The notion of Velayat-e Faqih relies on the establishment of Islamic government. This idea was first raised by the Prophet Muhammad upon the revelation of Islam and continued afterwards by the Shia scholars after the start of the Imam Mahdi's occultation as to who would be responsible for people's religion and lifestyle. The discussions about imamate and justice helped complete the debate on Velayat-e Faqih.

To that effect, the Imam Khomeini says:

*Today and forever, the existence of a supreme authority, i.e. a custodian ruler who will look after Islamic order and law is a must. (Imam Khomeini, 2010: 40)*

Furthermore, the Velayat-e Faqih notion is based on the three hypotheses of God's sovereignty on existence, implementation of Islamic decrees and people's allegiance to the establishment. In order to make these hypotheses come true, the leader of the society is required to meet three conditions; namely, expertise in Islamic law, justice and competence. (Ref: Shakerin, 2013: 68-222)

This theory requires people to meet the three conditions of obedience, supervision and allegiance. Obedience means people are not authorized to make legislation, (Ref: Imam Khomeini, 2010: 44) supervision means Vali-e Faqih or ruling supreme cleric is legitimate as long as he is just (Ref:

*Imam Khomeini, 2010: 73)* and allegiance means people's acceptance of the Vali-e Faqih. (*Amid Zanjani, 1999, Vol. 2: 208*)

The notion of Velayat-e Faqih, which was mainly a redefinition of religious topics, was faced with new issues after the Islamic Revolution and it prompted the clergy to have a reasonable view of religion. The product of these efforts was the development of a new political theory which combined the divine and people rules. For this reason, Article 56 of the *Constitution of the Islamic Republic (1989)* underscores on one side the divine sovereignty and protection of traditional and religious values and on the other side it

stresses people's sovereignty while calling for an elected establishment, civil and political freedoms.

### **Sociological Study of Pahlavi Collapse**

Neopatrimonialism, which is derived from Max Weber's patrimonialism, is one of famous sociological views about ruling establishments. This theory is largely adaptable to the Pahlavi regime, particularly the tenure of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi; the period when the method of governance prompted the clergy to rise up against the ruling regime.

Neopatrimonialism is seen mainly in the Middle East regimes. Autocracy, strictly centralized power, and neglect of traditional constraints

constitute the main features of such systems. (*Weber, 1978: 230*)

Now, we review some neopatrimonialist features of the Pahlavi regime:

Neopatrimonialist regimes are generally brought to power by special groups. That indicates the limited social base of such governing establishments. Enjoying the support of a group of political pundits, Reza Shah came to power in such a manner. The weakness of private ownership and absence of independent social classes, which occurred in the aftermath of Shah Mohammad Reza's agrarian reforms, set the stage for the independence of social. Furthermore, oil revenues made the regime independent from

the people and consequently the dictatorial Pahlavi regime in the proper sense of the word took shape. (*Ref: Chehabi and Linz, 1998: 17-77; Eivazi, 2004*)

Such ruling regimes refuse to honor modern legal systems and laws. Symbols of democratic systems like parliament, general elections and parties are seen; however, these organs are directly or indirectly elected under the eye of an autocracy and are tolerated as long as they do not impose any restrictions upon the establishment. This issue is in maximum compliance with the aftermath of the February 21, 1921 coup d'état; on one side, we see new models of governance are devised for legitimization,

and on the other side, they become invalid as soon as they pose restrictions to the Shah. (*Ref: Manouchehri, 1998: 13*)

As it was mentioned earlier, neopatrimonialist regimes lack a social basis and therefore in a bid to justify their legitimacy they depend on foreign powers' support in addition to resorting to a new method of governance. That is why such regimes will make every effort to benefit from the presence of foreign governments by luring them into Iran through economic projects. Examples could be seen in the presence of Russian, English, European and American officials and companies in Iran. (*Ref: Katouzian, 2000: 18*)

Since the aforementioned issues, i.e. lack of minimal social basis and dependence on foreign powers, do not complete the puzzle of the Pahlavi legitimacy, the rulers capitalize on nationalism in the society in a bid to stabilize and legitimize their standing. The Pahlavi regime was no exception to this rule and since 1933 it pursued such policies as return to ancient Persia, changing the country's official calendar from solar hijri to imperial calendar, staging 2,500-year-old fetes, countering the Arabic language, and promoting Pan-Iranism whose remnants are still visible in the Iranian society. (*Ref: Eivazi, 2004: 74-75*)



Another feature of neopatrimonialism, which is clearly observed in the Pahlavi establishment, is concentration on nepotism and cronyism in economic affairs. The Pahlavi regime relied only on its own affiliates; Of course, these economic activities were often tainted with corruption and illegality.

The abundant petrodollars in the 1970s worsened the situation and stoked economic corruption. Short-term economic growth and boom could be seen in such regimes due to access to new financial sources; however, corruption in the political system, individualism and limited distribution of wealth due to exclusive trust in the royal families would trigger

economic crash in the long-term. (*Ref: Alamdari, 1998: 12; Huntington, 2006*)

Apart from the sociological debates about the Pahlavi governance, the phenomenon that transpired the society was the isolation of religion and promotion of secularism in the society. Traditions which constituted a key element of social culture were an opportunity missed by the regime. On the contrary, the regime developed new cultures which did not match the beliefs of a traditional society, thereby widening the gap between the people and the regime in power.

### **Shia Clergy Stance against Pahlavi Secularism**

A main feature of the Shia clergy is their belief in the

divine nature of governance and supervision on all mundane affairs of the people. This issue is a major concept in cognitive fundamentals of Islamic governance from the Imam Khomeini's view.

In the political society leading to the Islamic Revolution, masses were seriously involved. Intellectuals represented an influential player. Ali Shariati may be referred to as the representative of this group. Expressing opposition to the development plans envisaged by the Shah, Shariati managed to push the clergy to close ranks with students and intellectuals. That helped link different social strata like laborers and the poor.

What prepared the ground for the victory of the Islamic Revolution was the coherence of the alliance of people, which was born out of communications between different strata on one hand and the leadership of the Islamic Revolution on the other. Amid the unbridled wave of carnage, like the September 8, 1978 Black Friday, the leadership of the Revolution braced for new methods like calling general strikes and mass protests to shake the foundations of the Pahlavi regime, and after all, the Imam's steadfastness in changing the government and unseating the ruling monarchy to install an Islamic Republic led to the victory of the Islamic

Revolution. (*Foran, 1992: 545-546 & 584-585*)

In his attempt for the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Imam Khomeini urged the Iranians to continue their strikes before issuing messages to the military and the Army to join the revolutionary movement. The Imam also highlighted the common objectives of opponents, like national independence, freedom and democracy, in order to win a maximum social base, which was the most valuable asset of the Revolution. (*Milani, 2007: 224*)

The sociological and phenomenological approach presented here was painting a historical image of the events leading to the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

It seems that despite all the social and historical events of those years, what led to the Revolution were the ideological principles of the leader and the founder of the Islamic Revolution.

### **Causes of Pahlavi Collapse in Imam Khomeini's View**

Imam Khomeini says about this:

- Let me say that neither political factions nor the clergy can claim that they caused revolt across Iran and did this (Islamic Revolution). They were God's combatants who did it. It was a divine order and we pin hope on Him. It was not a human issue to be unsupported. That was an act of God.

*(Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 3: 39)*

- That was an invisible hand which was extended to awaken this country. *(Ibid, Vol. 16: 181)*

For the Imam Khomeini, divine will was the first and foremost factor in the victory of the Islamic Revolution; this factor is incomparable with other instrumental factors in terms of value and credit:

*We are obligated to remove ambiguities that have been fabricated against Islam. As long as we did not erase these ambiguities off minds we could not do anything. We have to remove these ambiguities which have been developed in the minds of even many of our educated*

*people under the influence of negative propaganda against Islam over centuries. I assure you that if you introduce this school of thought and introduce the Islamic government as it is to universities students will accept it. The students are opposed to dictatorship, they are opposed to puppet colonized regimes, they are opposed to bullying and plundering of public assets, they are opposed to consuming ill-gotten wealth and spreading lies; but no university and student opposes an Islam with such social system of governance and teachings. (Imam Khomeini, 2010: 77)*

People constitute a major asset for the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic establishment. These people will not become assets before they have not found a correct understanding of their surroundings. The Imam Khomeini believed that universities were seeking facts and that they would not hesitate to join Islam and the Islamic establishment if their questions were answered correctly:

This idea of the Imam Khomeini is supported by the divinity of human nature; a nature which needs to be awakened. That is why the Imam Khomeini refers to "Internal Revolution" as key to objective and external revolution: (*Ref: Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 19: 478-487*)

*The most we can do is to awaken the people. (Ibid, 1984, Vol. 10: 46)*

Based on this, the Imam Khomeini expected the clergy and religious marja' to awaken the dormant human nature in order to lead it onto the path traced by God for human beings.

As mentioned earlier, the Imam Khomeini believed that humanity was destined to drive its soul to perfection which itself requires self-awareness as the key for going through internal and external barriers.

Another factor largely highlighted by the Imam Khomeini as the cause of the downfall of the imperial regime was the absence of a social base:

*Imperial regimes and particularly in this recent regime, this meaning was totally inverted. I mean the ruling regime was treating the nation with allegations, pressure, annoyance, torture, imprisonment and similar conducts and the defenseless nation tried to evade taxes, shirk every responsibility and obstruct state affairs as much as it could. That created a gap between the people and the government which had no popular support. The ruling regime wrongly imagined to be independent and it had broken away from the nation. For its part, the nation did by no means trust the regime and considered it as its enemy. Due to the lack of*

*a base in the nation, it had no option but to go and it finally did go. That must serve as a lesson for all governments. (Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 8: 230)*

The Imam Khomeini also refers to widespread injustice done to the people by the Pahlavi regime as another cause of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, saying:

*One thing that brought you this victory was the increased injustice and crackdown. In response to suppression, pent-up demands are accumulated and they wait for a voice. Therefore what brought you to victory and defeated them was that they were the oppressor and you were the oppressed.*

*That caused discontent and then you turned to Islam more and more and you went ahead. (Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 8: 443-444)*

### **Conclusion**

The fundamental standing which the Imam Khomeini envisaged for the clergy in the Islamic establishment is a special one rooted in the social background of clerics. Religious scholars enjoy a special standing in the idealistic model of religious society.

The clergy has been assigned two important obligations which it must fulfill simultaneously. On one hand, the clergy is tasked with guidance and monitoring and it should not change the parameters preached by

the Imam Khomeini to take power independently and deprive the people of this political chance and marginalize them. On the other hand, if the clergy plans to bring people and government closer together and convince the people to show empathy for and solidarity with the Islamic government it would have to give political room to the people and let them compete among themselves.

Such a trend must be reinforced based on religious democracy from day to day. In return, the clergy would find its genuine standing in the society, as envisaged by the Imam Khomeini, and enjoy opportunities presented by the people's confidence in clergymen and

finally would lead them to better understanding of human life.

Over the past half a century, the Shia clergy has progressed significantly in the world in the face of influential discourses in light of the potentialities of the Shia political discourse. The theory of Islamic government and Velayat-e Faqih is one of these new capacities of the Shia political discourse. On this front, the Imam Khomeini's view mainly promotes the implementation of divine law rather than a religious government. This political discourse, which was raised during the Imam Khomeini's lifetime almost five decades ago, has redefined political concepts in a bid to develop

political canon law for the purpose of social democratization and better understanding of human life.

It is also important to note that full knowledge of the Imam's thoughts on the clergy would not be possible only through his speeches and works; hence, we have to discuss other aspects of the issue. But meantime, this study is not expected to outline all aspects of the Imam's thoughts, part of which remains hidden behind his lifestyle. A separate forum would be needed to extract such details.



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