



The Geometry of Imam Khomeini's Political Thought in Kashf al-Asrar and its Analysis based on Skinner's Method

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Abstract: Imam Khomeini was one of the clerics who authored the book "Kashf al-Asrar" (Unveiling of Secrets) in response to Hokmizadeh's work. In the course of answering the thirteen questions raised in Hokmizadeh's book, he presented a formulation of his political thought regarding government and the role of the clergy within that political structure. The objective of this article is to provide a theoretical and coherent formulation of Imam Khomeini's political thought in Kashf al-Asrar. In this research, in addition to the documentary method for outlining the geometry of his political thought, we seek to answer, based on Skinner's intentionalist hermeneutics method, the following: What social context and background did Imam Khomeini's political thought form and cohere in, and, more importantly, with what intention was it written? The findings of this research indicate that Imam Khomeini, in this book, emphasizes the "Sovereignty of God's Law" (Hakimiyyat-e Qanun-e Khoda) as the central axis of the political structure. This is substantiated and justified from four perspectives: necessity, legitimacy, expediency, and efficacy. The outcome is the formation of a Constituent Assembly to elect the Shah (provided the Shah adheres to God's law) and a Consultative Assembly (Majlis-e Shora), centered on the clergy, to supervise the implementation of God's law. Based on Skinner's method, Imam Khomeini's discourse in this book is formulated into three types of acts: defensive, offensive, and dual-purpose (two-faceted).

Keywords: Political Thought, Pahlavi Era, Islamic Laws, Kashf al-Asrar, Asrar-e Hezar Saleh, Clergy (Ruhaniyyat).

Introduction

Following a period of pressure, antagonism, and opposition politics against religion, the Marja'iyat (religious authority), and the clergy by Reza Shah during the first two decades of the 14th century (Hijri Solar), the clergy, despite gaining an opportunity for reconstruction and revival after being freed from the severe and intense despotism of the first Pahlavi, encountered new currents that challenged and aggressively confronted religion and the clergy. At the forefront of these were three main movements: Religious Purification (Dīn Pirā'ī) led by Kasravi, Marxist currents led by Arani, and alongside these, the Baha'i current (Ja'farian, 1381/2002).

During this period, the religious community extensively confronted this collection of ideas and political forces by establishing magazines such as Ā'in-e Islām (The Law of Islam) and certain associations like the Association for the Fight Against Godlessness. This created significant opportunities for the reconstruction and intellectual development of religious thought and laid the groundwork for fateful events such as the Islamic Revolution of 1357 (1979) (Ja'farian, 1381/2002).

Alongside other forces, Imam Khomeini presented one of the most pivotal defenses of religion, the clergy, and the Hawzah 'Ilmiyyah (Seminaries) during this era, which was published in the book *Kashf al-Asrar* (Unveiling of Secrets) as the seminary's response. This book was published in rebuttal to the pamphlet and booklet *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* (The Millennial Secrets) by Hokmizadeh, which had appeared in the twelfth issue of Kasravi's *Parcham* magazine (Hokmizadeh, 1322/1943). Hokmizadeh, himself a cleric and the son of a cleric, challenged the philosophy, ideas, and function of the clerical apparatus in his book. He made great efforts to de-legitimize it and de-functionalize it in terms of responding to contemporary issues, thereby creating additional pressure on the clergy and the religious community after two decades of the first Pahlavi's harsh policies against them.

Observing the importance and necessity of the issue, and aiming to pull the clerical institution out of a state of passivity, Imam Khomeini provided a comprehensive answer to Hokmizadeh's booklet by writing *Kashf al-Asrar*. However, in the course of answering Hokmizadeh's thirteen challenging questions, he articulated a

framework for Islamic political thought in the book. Since the book was written in response to Hokmizadeh's diverse questions, and its structure is organized around these inquiries—some of which are creedal (the first and second discourses concern God and Imam), some conceptual, and others functional—it became necessary to formulate these views into a coherent structure centered on political thought.

The first section of the current research undertakes this task under the heading “The Geometry of Imam Khomeini’s Political Thought.” The formation of Imam Khomeini's political thought in this book was influenced by the social and political contexts and conditions, as well as the goals of anti-clerical movements. This is because political thought is not created and raised in a vacuum; rather, it takes shape, coheres, develops, and, if conditions are favorable, leads to political action within the context of societal events (Haqiqat, 1387: 376 (2008, 376)). In reality, political thought is enriched within the stream of time and in accordance with socio-political events. Therefore, in addition to presenting the geometry of Imam Khomeini’s political thought, the discussion also utilizes Skinner's method to analyze the illocutionary acts of Imam Khomeini’s discourse in this book, which can open up and expand other perspectives on this work for the reader.

1. Literature Review

Najaf Lakzaei, in his book titled "The Evolution of Imam Khomeini's Political Thought" (Sayr-e Tatawwur-e Tafakkur-e Siyāsi-ye Imām Khumaynī), argues that Imam Khomeini's political thought evolved from a Reformist Discourse to a Revolutionary Discourse. In one section of this book, he traces the development of Imam Khomeini's political thought from *Kashf al-Asrar* to *Wilāyat al-Faqīh* (The Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist). However, the approach and methodology of his book are not based on Skinner’s method.

Akbar Ashrafi (1402 A.H.S. / 2023) in an article titled "From *Kashf al-Asrar* to *Wilāyat al-Faqīh*, Consistency in Imam Khomeini's Political Thought", contends that the fundamental framework of Imam Khomeini's political thought remained consistent between the books

Kashf al-Asrar and Wilāyat al-Faqīh and did not undergo a transformation.

Bahrām Akhavān Kāzemī, in his book "Absolute Guardianship of the Jurist from Imam Khomeini's Viewpoint: Theoretical Consistency or Transformation" (Wilāyat-e Mutlaqah-ye Faqīh az Dīdgāh-e Imām Khumaynī, Subāt Yā Tahawwul-e Nazarī), examines Imam Khomeini's works and thoughts, explaining the consistency and continuity of the Absolute Guardianship of the Jurist in his thought and practice.

Ebrahim Kalantari and his colleagues, in an article titled "Analysis and Review of the Evolution and Development of the Theory of Wilāyat al-Faqīh in Shiite Jurisprudential Thought", emphasize Imam Khomeini's theory of Wilāyat-e Mutlaqah-ye Faqīh and review the stages of the birth, formation, and completion of this political theory. The said article dedicates one paragraph to Kashf al-Asrar while focusing on the overall periods of his political thought.

Najmeh Kikhā (1397 A.H.S. / 2018), in the article "The Philosophical-Political Basis of Imam Khomeini in Kashf al-Asrar", seeks to demonstrate that Kashf al-Asrar possesses a philosophical foundation and responded to Hokmizadeh's questions in Asrar-e Hezar Saleh based on philosophical principles. The author argues that Imam Khomeini's practical and political positions were not merely a reflection of socio-political conditions but originated from his intellectual and analytical foundations.

Amir Hossein Hatami (1399 A.H.S. / 2020), in the article "Analysis and Review of the Idea of Islamic Government in Kashf al-Asrar", investigates the assumption that Imam Khomeini's political thought in the 1940s and 1950s differed from that of the 1960s onward. However, he ultimately concludes that no fundamental transformation actually occurred in Imam Khomeini's political thought, and the idea of Islamic government, which is fully elaborated in Wilāyat al-Faqīh, can also be traced back to Kashf al-Asrar.

Firhī (1400 A.H.S. / 2021), in his book "The Modern State and the Crisis of Law" (Dawlat-e Modern wa Buhrān-e Qānūn), analyzes the challenges between Law (Qānūn) and Sharia (Sharī'at) in contemporary Iran. This research addresses issues such as

jurisprudence (fiqh) and monarchy, the clergy and politics, and fiqh and modern concepts.

Kalantari and Balbasī (1397 A.H.S. / 2018), in an article titled "Governing Models Proposable Based on the Theory of Wilāyat al-Faqīh with an Emphasis on the Thought of Shiite Scholars from the Safavid Era to the Contemporary Period", seek to answer the question of what governing models can be proposed based on the theory of Wilāyat al-Faqīh. The authors demonstrate that based on the theory of Wilāyat al-Faqīh and the extent of the Faqīh's presence and prominence in government, models such as: 1. The Dominant Sultan and Jurist Model; 2. The Restricted Guardianship (or State within a State) Model; 3. The Legitimate Monarchy (or Constitutional Sharia) Model; 4. The Council of Jurists and Just Sultan Model; 5. The Islamic Republic (Religious Democracy) Model; and 6. The Islamic (Divine) Government Model can be identified.

Samī'i (1396 A.H.S. / 2017), in the book "The Power Struggle in Iran: Why and How the Clergy Won" (*Nabard-e Quadrat dar Īrān; Chirā wa Chigūneh Rūhāniyyat Barandeh Shud*), examines social classes and groups in Iran from the Safavid era to the present, focusing on the social grounds for people's inclination toward the clergy during the Islamic Revolution.

Fourian (1994), in the book "One Century of Revolution in Iran", examines various political discourses used to mobilize the Iranian people from the Qajar and Constitutional periods up to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Sections of this book analyze the Shiite political discourse and the role of Islamic movements in the Islamic Revolution.

As stated, these studies are mostly similar to the subject of the current research, but no research has yet been conducted that uses Skinner's method to examine the social roots and contexts of the change and evolution of jurisprudential political thought during the Pahlavi era.

The innovation of this research lies in two areas: first, the **structured presentation of Imam Khomeini's political thought in *Kashf al-Asrar* and the specific formulation it offers of the geometry of

his political thought; and second, the analysis of this intellectual geometry based on Skinner's method.

2. Conceptual Framework

Political thought is a vital discipline that defines the guiding principles of social organization and governance. Its importance lies in its ability to provide normative clarity, critique power, shape ideologies, and respond to emerging challenges. By engaging with questions of justice, liberty, and authority, the discipline remains essential for imagining and realizing a just and flourishing society (Wolff, 2020). Unlike political science, which focuses on the empirical analysis of political systems, political thought and philosophy are primarily normative, addressing what is just, legitimate, or desirable in the realm of government and social arrangements (Heywood, 2021).

2.1 Two Formulations of Political Thought in Structuring Government and Political Order

Methodologically, there are two ways of approaching the problem of government and governance, which are distinguished by two distinct questions. The first question is "Who should rule?" This formulation considers desirable government to revolve around the selection of qualified and legitimate rulers. The second question, however, focuses on "How should one rule?" and prioritizes determining fair, transparent, and effective methods of administering society, irrespective of the identity of the rulers.

Plato, in *The Republic*, argues that sovereignty should be entrusted to the Philosopher-Kings because, by possessing knowledge of the Form of the Good and the ability to discern truth, they are the most qualified individuals to govern society justly. He believes that philosophers rule not out of a desire for power but as a duty for the good of the community (Miller, 1399/2020: 45).

However, a number of political thinkers, especially in the modern era, have focused on how to rule, concentrating on the type and quality of governing institutions and processes. Rawls, in *A Theory of Justice*, emphasizes fair methods of governance. Rawls writes: "Justice is the first virtue of social institutions" (Rawls, 1400/2021: 34). He stresses fair and transparent processes for resource distribution

(Rawls, 1400/2021: 36). Kymlicka, a proponent of multicultural liberalism, argues that effective governance requires integrating both distributive and procedural justice. He states: "Government must be legitimized through democratic and transparent processes" (Kymlicka, 1401/2022: 160). Kymlicka emphasizes civic participation and the rule of law as pillars of governance (Kymlicka, 1401/2022: 162). Amartya Sen, in *The Idea of Justice*, emphasizes a practical approach to governance that focuses on the real improvement of people's lives. He says: "Good governance should enhance the capabilities of individuals to live better" (Sen, 1399/2020: 54). Sen stresses public participation and democratic dialogue as key methods of governance (Sen, 1399/2020: 56). Habermas, in *The Theory of Communicative Action*, argues that legitimate governance is formed through rational and democratic dialogue. He writes: "Political legitimacy stems from the rational consensus of citizens" (Habermas, 1400/2021: 89). Habermas emphasizes communicative processes and public participation as the foundations of governance (Habermas, 1400/2021: 92).

2.2 Islamic Political Thought

According to some, Islamic political thought is founded upon three main pillars: epistemological bases, methodological bases, and practical-historical developments. This framework views political thought as a practical knowledge for the administration of society, possessing the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances (Mirāhmadi, 1390/2011: 124).

2.2.1. Epistemological Foundations

The epistemological bases of Shiite political Fiqh (Jurisprudence) can be categorized into three axes: Textualism (Naṣṣ-garāyī), Traditionalism (Sunnat-garāyī), and Rationalism (ʿAql-garāyī) (Mirāhmadi, 1390/2011). Textualism emphasizes the Qur'an and Sunnah (tradition of the Prophet and Imams) as the primary sources for Istinbāṭ (deduction of legal rulings). Rationalism accepts reason (ʿAql) as a source of knowledge and is applied in Shiite political Fiqh to solve emerging issues. These foundations do not differentiate political Fiqh from general Fiqh but rather transform it into a practical

branch concerning the political actions of the legally responsible (mukallafūn) ('Amīd Zanjānī, 1367/1988: 19).

2.2.2. Methodology: Dynamic Ijtihād and Conceptual Transformation

The methodology of political Fiqh is based on Ijtihād (independent legal reasoning), which is a systematic effort to adapt religious rulings (Aḥkām-e Shar'ī) to the changing realities of life (Mudarrisī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1362/1983, pp. 30-32). Dynamic Ijtihād, by considering the requirements of time and place (maqtadiyāt-e zamān wa makān), allows for the potential evolution of political Fiqh (Firḥī, 1387/2008: 15). In recent research, this method has been applied to examine emerging issues such as international relations and citizens' rights (Sayyid Bāqirī, 1399/2020: 26). This conceptual transformation redefines the political domain across different times and places, obligating the jurist (faqīh) to engage in precise subject-recognition (mawḍū'-'shināsī) ('Emādī, 1401/2022: 137).

2.2.3. Practical and Historical Developments

Until the Constitutional Revolution period, Shiite political Fiqh was primarily individual-centric, limited to personal rulings like Jihād (holy war) and Amr bi al-Ma'rūf (enjoining good) ('Amīd Zanjānī, 1367/1988: 37). However, with contemporary developments, including the Islamic Revolution of Iran and post-2003 Iraq, it has shifted towards populism (Mardom-garāyī) and attention to political rights (Al-Awsat, 2023).

In *Kashf al-Asrar* (1323 A.H.S./1944), Imam Khomeini primarily addressed the second question ("How should one rule?") from the perspective of Fiqh and Ijtihād, relying mainly on the rational ('Aql) source of knowledge. In the course of answering Hokmizadeh's thirteen questions, he presented a specific formulation of his political structure at that juncture, which is structured in this article under the title "The Geometry of Political Thought."

2.2.4. Research Methodology

Various methods exist for understanding political thought, and different Western thinkers have established distinct schools: text-centered schools, context-centered schools, and combined schools,

each focusing on the question of how to understand political texts. Among these, the methodology of Strauss (from the text-centered school) and Skinner (from the Cambridge School) have received considerable attention (Mirāhmadi, 1396/2017: 180). Generally, two broad approaches can be cited for examining thought and political thought within hermeneutical frameworks: contextualism and textualism. The contextualist approach holds that every text derives its meaning from its original context or background; therefore, to uncover the meaning of a text, it must be placed within its social and historical setting. In contrast, the textualist approach examines the text independently of the contexts and structures that influenced its production. Leo Strauss believes that classical texts are formed based on eternal questions; hence, regardless of the period to which they belong, their original meaning can be grasped simply by reading the text in light of those eternal questions, anytime and anywhere (Ibid: 181). However, Skinner, in his famous article, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," provided a new approach to understanding the history of ideas, criticizing previous text- and context-centered approaches and calling for a novel comprehension of the history of beliefs (Ibid: 189).

By directing fundamental criticisms at textualist approaches, Skinner sets forth his own distinct method for reading a text, which is, in many respects, a context-sensitive approach. This is because it attends to both the linguistic context and the social and historical background, though it differs from the classical meaning of contextual reading. In his view, understanding a text is contingent upon examining the intellectual context, the discursive framework, the illocutionary aspect, and intertextuality (Skinner, 1393/2014: 11). Skinner enters his interpretive world by assuming three types of meaning. The first meaning is equivalent to asking: What do the words mean in a given text, or what do certain words or specific sentences convey? Against meaning number one, the potential meaning arises: What does this text mean to me? And finally, a third meaning is proposed, stemming from the question: What did the author intend by saying what he said? (Skinner, 1393/2014: 165). The

premise of these three distinct meanings serves as a suitable entry point into the realm of Skinnerian hermeneutics.

In Skinner's methodology, attention to the historical context is a necessary condition, but not sufficient, because one must also consider the linguistic context and the author's intention – that is, what the author intended to achieve by saying or writing it; what the authors are doing with their writings (Skinner, 1393/2014: 155).

Skinner derives this methodological aspect from the speech act theory of J. L. Austin (1911-1960). According to Austin, three types of acts are performed in every speech act (Malakiyān, 1381/2002: 149): First: the locutionary act, or the utterance of meaningful sentences; Second: the illocutionary act, the act performed in uttering, such as ordering, questioning, or the like; and Third: the perlocutionary act, the act performed by the utterance or, in other words, the effect the speaker exerts on the listener by means of their speech, such as teaching, offending, and so forth.

Skinner, following Austin, seeks the illocutionary force within the text (Skinner, 1393/2014: 176), the force that connects the utterance to the action. Therefore, Skinner's hermeneutics can, in some respects, be seen as being in pursuit of discovering the author's intention – the intention of an author who sought to achieve an action through writing the text. Thus, the act of writing was directed toward the accomplishment of an act intended by the author and their purpose (Mīrahmadi: 195).

In the introduction to his book on Machiavelli, Skinner summarizes his methodological approach, mentioning the ideological debates and issues governing text production concerning political context and structure: "My argument will be that in order to understand Machiavelli's theories and teachings, we must uncover and illuminate the problems he clearly saw himself confronting in his works. However, to arrive at such a view, it is necessary to reconstruct the environment in which these works were composed: namely... Renaissance philosophy and... the political environment of life in the Italian city-states in the early sixteenth century" (Skinner, 1378/1999: 17). Therefore, based on Skinner's method, attention to and reference to the social context and background are necessary for understanding the meaning of texts and behaviors (Skinner, 1393/2014: 13). By

context, Skinner means practical contexts and linguistic or ideological contexts. Practical contexts are essentially the political action and behavior with the characteristics of the society the author addresses, and to which the text is a response. In other words, the political theorist reacts to the political issues of society. Hence, political theory is part of politics, and the issues discussed in theory are the product of political action. The linguistic or ideological context is the set of existing or prevalent texts at that time, concerning the same topics and issues or similar and common instances of a number of norms. That is, to understand the author's intent in writing the text, we must be familiar with the intellectual and ideological atmosphere prevailing at that time. Since language is intertwined with norms, familiarity with the prevailing norms during the author's time is also mandatory for understanding the author's purpose. Therefore, the ideological context refers to attention to the prevalent language of politics as defined by the common norms. By considering these contexts, he uncovers meaning and derives the process of meaning production by referring to these dual contexts. According to Skinner, to understand an intended speech act embodied in the text, one must know the questions, responses, the social atmosphere of the time, and the set of concepts, words, and specific meanings available to the author. Furthermore, the specific verbal act or action must be understood and interpreted within the framework of the linguistic and social conventions of that particular society. Therefore, by being aware of the author's intentions and placing the author within their social and linguistic context, one can determine whether the author's intent in uttering the speech or writing the text was to propose an idea or thought or to criticize and object to it (Skinner, 1988: 26).

James Tully, in an article, summarized the different stages of interpretation in Skinnerian hermeneutics, which can be considered a general summary of Skinner's methodological discussions and included at the end of this section. It serves as both a suitable summary of the text and a step-by-step guide for applying this method. According to Tully, Skinner generally organized his work into five stages (Tully, 1383/2004: 44):

a) What action does the author perform or has performed in writing the text regarding other existing texts that form the ideological context?

b) What action does the author perform or has performed in writing a text regarding the existing and debated political action that forms the practical context?

c) How should ideologies be identified, and how should their formation, critique, and transformation be examined and explained?

d) What is the relationship between political ideology and political action that best explains the dissemination of specific ideologies, and what impact does this have on political behavior?

e) Which political thoughts and actions play a role in promoting and conventionalizing ideological transformation?

Accordingly, and in this research, to use Skinner's terminology, we first seek to discover the issue of what Imam Khomeini, as the author of *Kashf al-Asrar*, intended to say? To this end, we attempt to place his language and vocabulary within a broader linguistic context and specify the intellectual, political, and social context in which he operated. Therefore, to use Skinner's term, we will traverse the temporal distance between ourselves and the text in the era under investigation, returning ourselves to his intellectual world. We strive to reconstruct his worldview and place his text within a set of texts written or prevalent on the same topics or similar and common instances in a number of conventions or prevailing norms and existing intellectual traditions of that era.

As Skinner stated, the reason for this is that the intent and purpose of the authors of this period are hidden behind their texts, and thus are only understandable when we consider the questions of the time and its cultural contexts and intellectual traditions. In other words, analyzing his texts is not possible without considering their meaningful social implications and the broad linguistic structure. Therefore, it seems that by recreating the intellectual and cultural contexts and conditions prevailing during this period, we will be able to recognize the norms and conventions ruling the society of that day and grasp the place of Shiite thought as their intended illocutionary act and purposive communicative action among these prevailing norms and conventions.

Consequently, to understand the intended communicative and illocutionary act of Shiite political thought embodied in their texts, the questions and responses, the intellectual atmosphere of the time, the set of concepts and meanings available to them, and the intellectual and cultural context – such as the Constitutional Revolution, the fall of the Qajar government, the formation of the Pahlavi government, the policies of Reza Shah, the country's conditions after his removal, and the activities of political parties – must be examined.

3. Contextual Factors in the Formation of Imam Khomeini's Political Thought and the Compilation of *Kashf al-Asrar*

To understand the contexts underlying the formation of political thought, it is fundamental to address the prevailing political and socio-political conditions. In this regard, we must turn to the highly influential period in Iranian history that profoundly affected political thought: the First Pahlavi regime. This was an era in which the process of state modernization led to a reduction in the social power of the clergy (Bashirieh, 1387/2008: 68). During the Pahlavi era, especially under Reza Shah, significant efforts were made to create a secular government and state, and severe measures were implemented against religious forces (Mehrzaad Boroujerdi, 1389/2010: 131). It is important to note that before ascending to the throne, Reza Khan refrained from overtly supporting anti-religious measures. Throughout his tenure as Minister of War and Prime Minister, he presented himself as a supporter of the people and religion. However, after becoming Shah, the secularization of society began on several fronts (Abrahamian, 1395/2016: 174). Following the commencement of Reza Shah's reign, the Pahlavism discourse became dominant in Iran. In his modernization process, Reza Khan sought to sever the influence of the clergy over society and the pillars of government. In this pursuit, he stripped the clergy of many customary traditions, duties, and defined functions, including the post of judiciary (Qazā) and Sharia courts, religious endowments (awqāf), and even the teaching of religious subjects, placing them within the scope of state affairs and duties. Naturally, the Pahlavi attempt to universalize the theory of separation of the clergy from politics was alarming to the clerics. In better terms,

the clergy were the most ostracized group during the Reza Shah period, and the government's policies were directed toward the destruction and elimination of the clerical institution. Despite this, no organized effort was undertaken by the clergy against the state during that time, and the government's non-religious policies were even tolerated to some extent (Hosseinizadeh: 121). However, with the fall and removal of Reza Shah from power, a new atmosphere and conditions emerged in Iran. The consequence of this was relative political freedoms in society and the rise and activity of various schools of thought and political parties. One of the most prominent of these was the increasing growth of left-leaning ideologies. Furthermore, intellectuals and writers, in the guise of defending the Constitution and the changes established during the First Pahlavi era, began to oppose the religious traditions that were gradually beginning to reconstruct themselves. The gradual formation of Islamic Associations in the 1940s, the establishment of the Kānūn-e Islām (Islamic Center), the publication of the magazine *Ā'in-e Islām* (The Law of Islam), and the writing of books and articles in defense of religious thought and in response to figures like Ahmad Kasravi and Hokmizadeh were the products of that new atmosphere. This period saw the clergy and seminaries emerge from the defensive and forced isolation of the First Pahlavi era and adopt a strategy of reconstruction and offense. In such circumstances, Kasravi reacted to the changing public perception of Reza Shah by defending his actions, particularly the centralization of the state, the restriction of clerics, the unveiling (*Kashf-e Hijāb*), the implementation of conscription, and the establishment of schools, among others (Abrahamian: 191). Similarly, Hokmizadeh, in *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh*, attacked the clergy and asked them whether Iranians were more secure during Reza Shah's time or before him (Hokmizadeh: 6).

3.1. Asrar-e Hezar Saleh (Secrets of a Thousand Years)

One of the most crucial and influential periods for jurisprudential political thought in the contemporary era was the time immediately following Reza Shah's deposition. Imam Khomeini's book, *Kashf al-Asrar*, was written during this period, and its content was a detailed response to Hokmizadeh's *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh*. Indeed, had

Hokmizadeh not written *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh*, Imam Khomeini's *Kashf al-Asrar* would not have been authored. Therefore, before delving into the content of *Kashf al-Asrar* and analyzing Imam Khomeini's political thought during this era, we must review the content of *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* and examine the author's intent and purpose.

Ali Akbar Hokmizadeh, born in 1276 A.H.S. (1897 C.E.), was a turbaned theological student in Qom and the son of the famous cleric Sheikh Mehdi Hokmi. He was among those who held religious reformist tendencies and was influenced by Kasravi (Ja'farian, 1398/2019: 82). Before *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh*, Hokmizadeh had written another article titled "My Purpose" (*Maqṣūd-e Man*), which has been considered a form of intellectual Egyptian Salafist viewpoint (Ibid: 82). Hokmizadeh also wrote an article on the pulpit (*minbar*) and mourning rituals (*rawḍa-khwānī*) that adopted a critical view of the clergy (Ibid: 84). However, his most important work is *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh*, which was written in the post-Shahriyar 1320 (August 1941) period (in 1322 A.H.S./1943), when Reza Shah, the symbol of modernism, had left the country and Iran was entering a new atmosphere where religion was being reinforced (Ibid: 107). To understand the reasons for the strengthening and reconstruction of religion after Reza Shah's fall, one must review the status and conditions of religion and the clergy during his reign. According to Ja'farian, the clerics had several major problems and objections concerning Reza Shah's government and regime. First was Modernism and Westernization, which the majority of clerics opposed. Second was corruption, especially moral corruption, which the clerics regarded Reza Shah as promoting. Third was Reza Shah's confrontation with the clergy, including the change of clerical attire and the removal of occupations that had previously been monopolized by the clergy (such as the judiciary). Ja'farian also points to another concern of the clerics: they attributed the presence of figures like Kasravi, Hokmizadeh, and Shariat Sangelaji to the Reza Shah government (Ibid: 98). Based on this, it was natural that immediately after Reza Shah's fall, the clerics would direct their attacks toward the Kasravi and Hokmizadeh currents.

Asrar-e Hezar Saleh and Shi'a-garī (Shiism) were written during a period when, with the fall of Reza Shah, Iran witnessed the revival of the seminaries and the efforts of the clerics to return to their former position of authority. The rhetoric of both books suggests that statements were being made during that period regarding the right of the jurists to rule, or at least to supervise, which was met with reactions from some intellectuals and even some clerics. These discussions recalled old disagreements between intellectuals and a section of the anti-Constitutional Revolution clergy. These efforts were met with a negative reaction from figures including Kasravi and Hokmizadeh, resulting in the publication of books like Asrar-e Hezar Saleh and Shi'a-garī.

Thus, the content of Asrar-e Hezar Saleh was rooted in the religious intellectual currents of the first twenty years of the Pahlavi regime and operated within the discursive framework initiated by Ahmad Kasravi (Ibid: 111). In Asrar-e Hezar Saleh, Hokmizadeh criticized the Shiite heritage and the behaviors of the clergy, targeting both aspects of clerical behavior and some of their beliefs. He also addressed and criticized the historical role of the clergy in Iran (Ibid: 111).

3.2. The Thirteen Critical Questions in Kashf al-Asrar

The book Asrar-e Hezar Saleh and the questions raised within it provoked various reactions from the clergy and the seminaries, especially given that Asrar-e Hezar Saleh was written by an individual known to be associated with the clergy. Opponents perceived Hokmizadeh's ideas as being influenced by the spread of Wahhabism (Ibid: 112). Furthermore, Asrar-e Hezar Saleh was published precisely at a time when the clergy were attempting to revive, reconstruct, and restore their former status, making it a highly sensitive action (Ibid: 114). Consequently, numerous responses were written to the publication of Asrar-e Hezar Saleh, one of the most important of which was published by Imam Khomeini in the form of Kashf al-Asrar. However, among the seminary students, various individuals tried to respond to Hokmizadeh by publishing books and pamphlets, some of which were weak and lacked the necessary rigor (Ibid: 114). Apparently, for this reason, some individuals, such as Sheikh Mehdi

Ha'eri, the son of Ayatollah Ha'eri (founder of the Qom Seminary), insisted that Imam Khomeini write an appropriate response to *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* (Ibid: 115). Ja'farian, while referencing the preliminaries to Imam Khomeini's writing of the response, as well as surviving memoirs and the Imam's writings from that era, concludes that the Imam was anti-modernist at the time, and his stance on *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* was not merely a defense of official Shiism but also a critique of modernism (Ibid: 118).

Ali Akbar Hokmizadeh posed thirteen questions in *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh*. Some of these questions concern issues such as pilgrimage to tombs, mourning rituals ('azādārī), Istikhāra (seeking guidance through the Qur'an), Hadith, the life and budget of the clergy, etc. Others refer to the propositions and claims of the jurists and clerics regarding government and the succession of the Infallible (Ma'ṣūm). Hokmizadeh's first question concerned creedal examples attributed to the Shiite community, including seeking needs from the Prophet and Imams, seeking healing from the earth (turbat), prostrating upon it, and building domes and shrines for the Imams. Hokmizadeh's second question concerned Istikhāra, and the third concerned mourning rituals. However, the fifth question was one of the most important issues related to political thought, concerning the power of the Mujtahids (jurists) and their right to rule during the Occultation (Ghaybah). In fact, a crucial and common question posed by Kasravi and Hokmizadeh to the clerics was: Where did the Fuqahā' (jurists) derive the right to rule?

Hokmizadeh's sixth question concerned the living expenses of the clergy, and he raised sharp criticisms regarding their conduct. However, the seventh question (which was again a common question of Kasravi and Hokmizadeh) once again related to the subject of political thought: What is the reason for their opposition to the government and the contemporary state? Some individuals, including Rasul Ja'farian, believe that the purpose of Kasravi and Hokmizadeh in raising these questions was to instill the notion of clerical opposition to the government. Indeed, Imam Khomeini and Seyyed Nour al-Din Hosseini Shirazi, in their responses to Kasravi and Hokmizadeh, pointed to this issue and rejected any confrontation with the state.

However, the truth is that these questions were posed to point to one of the obstacles to the stabilization and strengthening of the government and state by the clergy. This question must be correctly understood, and the reason for its proposal must also be considered. Intellectuals and critics of the clergy, who supported a central state, saw one of the obstacles to that state's success as the separation between customary law ('urfi) and religious law (shar'i), and wrote about this in their books (for example, regarding clerical opposition to paying taxes to the government or opposition to compulsory military service, and conversely, the clergy's collection of Khums and Zakāt). In the view of pro-government intellectuals, these issues signified the weakening of the state and government, and the responsibility for this lay with the clergy. Based on this, Hokmizadeh asked the clerics why they considered the state and government to be oppressive (ẓalima). Imam Khomeini responded by writing: "Because the government does not fulfill its duty, it is oppressive, and if it fulfills its duty, it is not oppressive" (Ja'farian, 1398/2019, Political-Religious Texts: 275). It is clear that the Imam's definition of "duty" refers to acting according to divine and Islamic obligations, and "law" (at least in *Kashf al-Asrar*) refers to religious and divine laws, not ratified laws, which he explicitly calls anti-Islamic and Western laws. Immediately following this section, the Imam writes: "We do not say the government must be run by the Faqīh [Jurist], but we say the government must be administered by God's Law... and this cannot take place without the supervision of the Faqīh." (Ibid: 276). And he further writes: "When they say the government must be in the hands of the Faqīh, it does not mean that the Faqīh must be the king, minister, general, soldier, or sweep-cleaner, but rather the Faqīh must supervise the legislative and executive branches of the Islamic country" (Ibid: 282).

Hokmizadeh's eighth question in *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* concerned taxation, Zakāt, and Khums, and the ninth question concerned legislation and the opinion of the Fuqahā' and clerics regarding it. In the tenth question, by referring to the existence of abrogating and abrogated verses (nāsikh wa mansūkh) in the Qur'an, he asked the clerics for what reason all religious laws must remain fixed forever. Hokmizadeh's eleventh question concerned the existence and validity of Hadiths which he claimed were unscientific,

and the fact that some validate these Hadiths by considering conjecture (ẓann) as authoritative in religion. The twelfth question again referred to Hadiths that are incompatible with science. Finally, the thirteenth question asked the reason for people's alienation from religion and their lack of interest in it.

3.3. The Book *Kashf al-Asrar*

The central point of Imam Khomeini's critique of *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* was the analysis of the author's ideas within the framework of Wahhabi influence. In the very opening pages of *Kashf al-Asrar*, by posing the question "Where are the roots of these discourses?" the Imam refers to the appearance of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab and some events of that time, as well as the stance of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar regarding it. He attributes the transmission of those ideas and their effects to Iran as the cause for the emergence of writings like *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* (Imam Khomeini: *Kashf al-Asrar*: 5). In his view, individuals like the author of *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* possess a feeling of backwardness compared to civilized Europe, and they identify religion as the cause of that backwardness. Consequently, they see unrestraint and the abandonment of religious ceremonies as the means to sublimity and civilization (Imam Khomeini: 6). Calling the author of *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* a "babbler," the Imam responds to Hokmizadeh's assertion that true religion is what reason dictates, by writing: "If whatever your reason and ours comprehends is the religion, then why do you mention the name of the religion of Islam, the Qur'an of God, and the Prophet of Islam?" (Imam Khomeini: 7). The Imam considered Hokmizadeh's position a continuation of the same stance held by Reza Khan during his twenty-year rule in confronting the religious scholars, using every means and method to sideline them (Imam Khomeini: 9). After these preliminaries, the Imam entered the main discussions criticizing *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh*. The First Discourse concerns Divine Unity (Tawhīd) and related topics. This section is essentially a response to Hokmizadeh's accusations regarding Intercession (Shafā'at), Istikhāra, seeking blessings (Tabarruk), prostrating on the earth of the sacred tombs (Turbat), and the construction of shrines and domes over the tombs of the Imams, etc. In this section, the Imam

stated that many of the criticized behaviors in the religious community were irrelevant to the clergy (103 and 104).

The Second Discourse is about proving the theory of Imamāt, which, according to Ja'farian, was the reason the book was not reprinted after the Revolution, due to the discussion of certain issues regarding the Caliphs (Ja'farian: 121). The Third Discourse relates to the Cleric and the Clergy (Rūḥānī wa Rūḥāniyyat). This section was a response to Hokmizadeh's fifth question about the power of the Fuqahā' during the Occultation. As mentioned previously, Hokmizadeh raised objections regarding the power and authority of the Faqīh during the Occultation, to which Imam Khomeini responded (Imam Khomeini: 186). Another part of this discourse presented explanations regarding the professional aspects of the clergy, their expenditures, and issues such as the clergy as an occupation. These explanations were also responses to Hokmizadeh's objections, who believed that since the cleric takes his expenses from the masses, he is consequently forced to always speak according to the masses' wishes (Asrar-e Hezar Saleh).

The Fourth Discourse of *Kashf al-Asrar* is about Government (Ḥukūmat), and it examines topics related to government, the clergy, and the nature of the clergy's relationship and confrontation with governmental issues. The Imam addresses the subject of Jurist's Governance (Ḥukūmat-e Faqīh) and rejects any intent or purpose for the Faqīh to seize control of the government, but he emphasizes that the government must be administered by God's Law (Imam Khomeini: 222). The Imam repeatedly rejects the subject of the Faqīh ruling and explicitly writes that the Faqīh is not intended to be the king, minister, general, soldier, or sweep-cleaner, but rather the Faqīh must supervise the legislative and executive branches (232). In this section, he launches sharp attacks against the twenty-year period of Reza Shah and, in response to Hokmizadeh's objections that accused the clerics of being negative and opposing the state, defended the correctness of the clergy's behavior against the dictatorship of Reza Shah. Hokmizadeh accused the clergy of hindering the unity of the state and the nation by calling the government "oppressive" and causing the bazaaris to refuse to pay taxes under the pretext of its illegitimacy according to Sharia. While discussing the nature of the state and its oppressiveness, the

Imam responded that if the government fulfills its duty, the clergy would not consider it oppressive (239). Another instance that Hokmizadeh used to highlight the clergy's opposition to the state and government was the issue of opposition to compulsory conscription, which the Imam sought to answer by using the example of England (243). The discussion on comparing Islamic civilization and European civilization is another topic referred to in this section. Hokmizadeh wrote in *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh*: "It is laughable that some people sit by themselves or with people like themselves and say that the Europeans adopted our laws and implemented them to reach where they are now, or they say that if the world had implemented these commands, such-and-such would have happened" (Hokmizadeh). The Imam responds by writing: "I also say, not only laughable, but it is a disgrace if someone says that the Europeans implemented the laws of Islam and reached where they are now! Where have the Europeans reached? Should today's Europe, which a handful of witless people yearn for, be counted among the civilized nations?" (272). Ja'farian assesses the Imam's response as an indication of his disbelief in European civilization (Ja'farian, 1398/2019, Hokmizadeh: 125). The Fifth Discourse of the Imam in *Kashf al-Asrar* is about the subject of Law (Qānūn). Hokmizadeh asked in *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* whether humans have the right to legislate for themselves. In response, the Imam criticized the country's current laws, such as civil and registration laws, and in this section, he also directs an attack toward Kasravi (303). Finally, The Sixth Discourse of *Kashf al-Asrar* is dedicated to the subject of Hadith and responds to Hokmizadeh's criticisms concerning the Hadiths discussed.

4. The Geometry of Imam Khomeini's Political Thought

Generally, Imam Khomeini's response to Hokmizadeh can be divided into two main categories: First: creedal discussions related to Divine Unity (Tawḥīd), Imamate, Intercession (Shafā'at), Pilgrimage (Ziyārat), and other theological topics; and Second: discussions related to issues of governance during the Occultation and the view of the Fuqahā' (jurists) and the clergy regarding it. By reviewing the Imam's views in *Kashf al-Asrar* concerning politics, government, and the clergy, the

structure and geometry of his political thought in that book can be specified. The axis and center of this thought is the Sovereignty of Islamic Law (God's Law), which is discussed below.

4.1. The Sovereignty of God's Law (Islam)

In *Kashf al-Asrar*, while responding to the questions and issues raised by Hokmizadeh, Imam Khomeini put forth criticisms of Reza Shah's state and government, while simultaneously defending his desired political system. The core of the Imam's political thought in *Kashf al-Asrar* is the Sovereignty of God's Law (Islam). "As we said earlier, we do not say that the government must be run by the Faqih [Jurist], but we say that the government must be administered by God's Law, which is the best interest (ṣalāḥ) of the country and the people" (Imam Khomeini, 1323/1944: 223). This statement by the Imam possesses a methodological point in the articulation of political thought. In this proposition, Imam Khomeini places his emphasis on the question "How should one rule?" rather than the question "Who should rule?" Focusing on either of these two questions can generate a specific system of inquiries and organize a different formulation of political thought. Alongside this methodological point, a substantive axis in this proposition is the harmony between God's Law and the best interests (maṣāliḥ) of the people and the country, which suggests a certain potential in the Imam's thought for a Religious Democracy (Mardom-sālāri-ye Dīnī) theory. He presents his justificatory arguments in a coherent structure for the defense of the Sovereignty of God's Law (Islam).

4.1.1. Necessity

Imam Khomeini begins by establishing the necessity of the existence of government from a general standpoint. "We mentioned that no Faqih has ever said or written in a book that 'we are the king' or that 'sovereignty is our right.' Yes, as we explained, if a monarchy or government is established, every sensible person will confirm that it is good and conforms to the best interests of the country and the people. Naturally, an organization founded upon the decrees of God and Divine Justice is the best organization. But now that [the current establishment] does not accept this from them [the clergy], they [the

clergy] have never opposed this half-formed organization and have never wished to overturn the fundamental basis of the government. And if they have occasionally opposed a certain Sultan, the opposition was against that person, because they determined his presence was against the welfare of the country. Otherwise, no opposition has been expressed by this class [the clergy] to the fundamental basis of monarchy so far; rather, many great, high-ranking scholars have collaborated with the Sultans in state organizations" (Khomeini, n.d.: 186-187).

In another part of *Kashf al-Asrar*, rebutting the claims of the author of *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* who stated that scholars consider governments before the rise of the Qā'im (A.J.) to be the "Government of Oppression" (*Ḥukūmat-e Jawr*) and thus consider collaboration with them forbidden, the Imam stated: "Now, if someone denies the legitimacy of a government, considering these governments to be tyrannical (*jā'irāneh*) and that no one can reform them until the time of the righteous government, what relevance does this have to the idea that a just government should not be formed? Rather, anyone with even partial knowledge of our narrations will see that the Shiite Imams, despite considering the governments of their time to be the rule of oppressors and treating them as you know, never failed to offer guidance for the preservation of Islamic countries and practical and intellectual assistance. And in Islamic wars during the time of the oppressive Caliphs, the Shiites of Ali (A.S.) were still at the forefront..." (Khomeini, n.d.: 225-226).

4.1.2. Legitimacy

Imam Khomeini considers the legitimizing aspect of the rule of God's Law (Islam) to be one of his justificatory reasons in *Kashf al-Asrar*. "The only government that reason recognizes as right and accepts with open arms and a welcoming face is the Government of God" (Imam Khomeini, n.d.: 222). In justifying the legitimacy of this government, the Imam emphasizes the proposition that governments must be legitimate to intervene in affairs, and this legitimacy is only possible in matters that they own and have not acquired through usurpation (*ghaṣb*). Therefore, only God is the Owner and Possessor of the entire

universe and its beings, and only He has the right to intervene. Hence, only a government based on God's Law is legitimate. "It is God's Government where all its actions are right, and the entire universe and every atom of existence belong to Him by right. Whatever He intervenes in, He has intervened in His own property, and whatever He takes from anyone, He has taken His own property... It is here that the situation of [human] governments becomes clear, and the officiality of the Islamic government is declared" (Imam Khomeini: 222).

Therefore, the only legitimate government is the Government of God's Law, and the function of an institution like the parliament (Majlis) is the elaboration of this Divine Law. "Our government... its duty is to pursue this official government, and the parliament's law must be the elaboration of this Divine Law" (Imam Khomeini: 222). In the Law of Islam and the government dependent on Islam, legitimacy is also dependent on God. Imam Khomeini believes that except for the Divine Monarchy, all other monarchies are tyrannical and against the interests of the people, and except for God's Law, all other laws are futile and baseless. He maintains that the Prophet, the Imam, and the Mujtahid (Jurist) can only authorize governance to someone who does not violate God's Laws – which are founded upon reason and justice – and whose official law of the country is the Divine Celestial Law, not the laws of Europe or worse than Europe. By the decree of reason and the Constitution, any law contrary to Islam has no legal validity in this country. Therefore, in Imam Khomeini's view, the organization established based on the decrees of God and Divine Justice is the best organization.

In Imam Khomeini's belief, humanity needs the rule of law, and only God possesses such a government, for everyone else is subject to their own selfish desires (*hawā-ye nafs*). The Imam specifies that Islam has a program for all details – from the fetal stage to death, and covering individual, family, social, and governmental aspects – and has neglected nothing in the manner of forming a government. Therefore, by the decree of reason, no one except God and the successors of the Divine Government (i.e., the Prophets and Imams) has the right to govern or legislate (Imam Khomeini, n.d.). In this book, while stating the need of human societies for government, the Imam

considered the absolute right to rule to belong to God Almighty and permitted obedience only to those appointed by God. "It is one of the clear decrees of reason that no one can deny that law and government are necessary among humans, as the human family requires fundamental organizations, regulations, guardianship (*Wilāyat*), and governments. And what God-given reason dictates is that establishing a government, which is rationally necessary for people to follow and obey, is only proper and right for the one who owns everything, and whose every intervention is an intervention in His own property. And such a person, whose intervention and guardianship over all humanity is valid and correct by the decree of reason, is the Lord of the Universe, the Owner of all beings, and the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Therefore, every decree He issues is issued in His own domain, and every intervention He makes is an intervention in His own gift. And if He grants authority to someone and deems their decree obligatory to obey through the words of the Prophets, it is mandatory for humanity to obey them. No human should accept any ruling other than the ruling of God or the one God has designated..." (Khomeini, n.d.: 181-182).

4.1.3. Public Interest

After discussing the necessity of establishing Islamic rule and its divine legitimacy, Imam Khomeini views this state and government as serving the welfare, righteousness, and public interest of the people, society, and country. Indeed, Imam Khomeini first tries to portray the Pahlavi political system (with direct reference to the Reza Shah era) as inefficient and corrupt, and in contrast, to present the Islamic political system as efficient, whose benefits will reach the general populace.

Imam Khomeini considers the rule of God's Law to secure the public interest from two aspects. One is that in the absence of the Sovereignty of God's Law, collective life must be organized by human judgment, and since humans are filled with desires and selfishness, they cannot safeguard the public interest.

"No human should accept any ruling other than the ruling of God or the one God has designated. [Because] the lawmakers are also humans, just like them; they have lust and anger. They have cunning

and deceit. They seek their personal interests. They sacrifice the interests of others for their own. In conclusion... no one expects that the decrees of such a human will be in the public interest and that he will not prefer himself over others and will not violate the interests of others" (Imam Khomeini, n.d.: 182).

The other aspect is that human (non-Divine) law cannot secure the public interest due to the lack of comprehensive knowledge and mastery of humans over the entire universe, such as that which God possesses.

"Since those who legislate also lack comprehensive knowledge of all aspects and particulars and are not immune from error, fault, and mistake, it often happens that they issue a decree that turns out to be detrimental to the people and contrary to the interests of the country" (Imam Khomeini, n.d.: 182).

He introduces the Islamic economic system as being in line with the public interests of society and emphasizes that taxes should be spent on the country's welfare: "It is good that the merchant gives it [tax] with an open countenance, and if the nation also recognizes this, what better thing can they know than to give a certain amount annually for the preservation of their wealth, lives, and country? But the discussion is whether, with these absurdities and the betrayals of the government officials, people are still responsible if they do not pay taxes. Yes, they are responsible before those who want to suck the blood of merchants and fill the banks of America and Europe, and then retire to them. Government employees must also certainly not commit treason." In addition to economic matters, the Imam, while referring to social and cultural issues such as publications, government departments, military conscription, etc., emphasizes that the conditions, requirements, and structure must first be changed for the problems and difficulties to be rectified.

The observance and consideration of the public interest are mentioned repeatedly in *Kashf al-Asrar*:

"One of the general laws established in Islam is a kind of supervisory law over other laws of God for the sake of observing the masses, such as the law of hardship (*ḥaraj*), the law of harm (*ḍarar*), necessity (*iḍṭirār*), coercion (*ikrāh*), and their likes. These laws supervise other laws for the sake of observing the condition of the

people. Islam, by passing such laws, has sufficiently observed the requirements of times, countries, and individuals" (315).

4.1.4. Efficacy

Imam Khomeini presents the desirable Islamic political system as an efficient system that not only manages the country and the material and objective affairs of society and the people better but also attends to the spiritual issues of people's lives:

"God has reminded [humanity] of this meaning and has invited those killed in His path to eternal life and comfort and bounty in His presence. In Islam, material and spiritual life are intertwined, and each is made to assist the other, as those who know the law understand this well. This is one of the greatest masterpieces that is characteristic of this law, and it has necessarily existed to a greater or lesser extent in other celestial laws. From this brief comparison between the laws of the world and the Law of God, one can well understand how fragile and baseless these futile laws are, and such laws have no right to stand against the Law of God and display themselves before it."

By comparing some existing laws in world governments with Islamic laws, he seeks to prove the efficacy of Islamic laws. Based on this, he writes:

"Here we compare the civil and military laws of Islam with other laws to show that this law, besides being sufficient for administering the country and advancing as the country progresses, is also superior to all other laws."

To demonstrate that the proposal for an Islamic government is not a vague, unplanned generality, he presents evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah for the organization of mobilization, the army, the judiciary, and even document registration. Regarding the state budget, he elaborates on the Islamic government's taxation system:

"One is the annual and perpetual tax, which is when the country is at peace... The second is the extraordinary tax, which is at the time of foreign or domestic revolution. The amount of tax collected at this time has no definite limit and should be called an unlimited tax, as it depends on the discretion of the Islamic government..." (Khomeini, n.d.: 255).

5. Structure of Government

In addition to the fourfold justification for the Sovereignty of God's Law as the desirable political order, the Imam also outlines its concrete structure. Throughout this book, he proves that Islam possesses an independent political system, and in response to the claim that Islam lacks a theory of government, he states: "Where do you say that religion has not determined the mandate of government? If it had not determined it, how did the Prophet of Islam form a government and..." (Khomeini, n.d.: 237). The Imam even enumerates the fundamental foundations of the Islamic government in this book: "The foundation of Islamic government rests upon the legislative power (Qūwah-ye Taqniyyah), the judicial power (Qūwah-ye Qaḍā'iyyah), the executive power (Qūwah-ye Mujriyyah), and the budget of the public treasury (Bayt al-Māl)..." (Khomeini, n.d.: 237). Imam Khomeini, relying on the central approach of *Kashf al-Asrar* – the Sovereignty of God's Law – sketches the structure of his desired government. This structure is still defined within the constitutionalist (*mashrūṭah-khwāhī*) atmosphere and discourse, as it relies on a Parliament (*Majlis*) on the one hand, and the delimitation of the power of the King or Sultan on the other.

5.1. Constituent Assembly

In the governmental structure presented in *Kashf al-Asrar*, there are two councils, the Constituent Assembly and the Consultative Council (*Majlis-e Shūrā*), each with a specific responsibility and function. The members of the Constituent Assembly are just jurists and Mujtahids who are familiar with the laws of Islam. According to the Imam, one of their duties is the selection of the Shah (King) or Sultan of the society: "If such an assembly is formed from pious Mujtahids who both know the decrees of God and are just, are free from carnal desires, and have no purpose other than the benefit of the people and the implementation of God's command, and they select a just Sultan who does not violate the Divine Laws, abstains from oppression and tyranny, and does not encroach upon the wealth, lives, and honor of the people, where would this clash with the order of the country?" (Imam Khomeini, n.d.: 185).

5.2. Consultative Council (Majlis-e Shūrā)

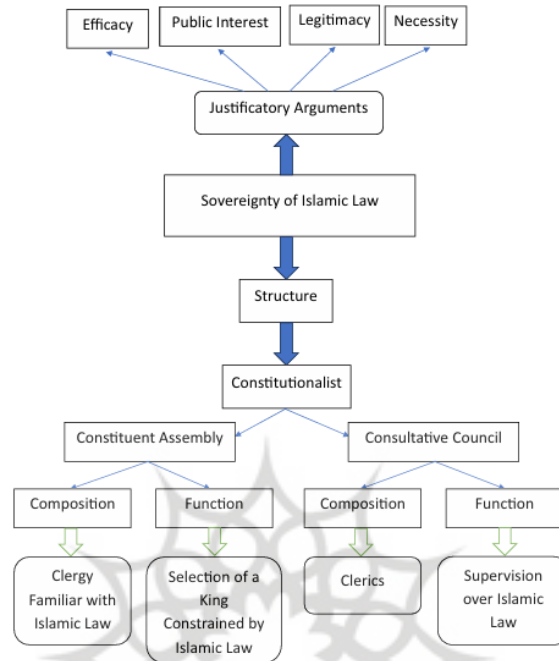
The Consultative Council, like the Constituent Assembly, is part of the Imam's desired government structure. The members of the Consultative Council are also pious clerics and jurists familiar with Divine Laws, and the duty of this council is the supervision of Islamic Law and its implementation in the country:

"If the Consultative Council of this country is composed of pious Fuqahā' or is under their supervision, as the law itself mandates, where would this clash with the world order?" and, "We say that if that righteous, just Divine Government is to be established, the Council must be composed of Fuqahā' or be under the supervision of the Fuqahā'."

5.3. Constitutional Monarch

In accordance with the centrality of the proposition "Sovereignty of God's Law" in the political thought of *Kashf al-Asrar*, not just any king or sultan can assume the leadership of the government. The person worthy of being chosen as king is one who is limited and conditioned by Divine Law and does not transgress it (Imam Khomeini, n.d.: 185). This setting of boundaries for the king based on non-transgression and non-violation of God's Law leads to the regularization and standardization of the political order, thus fulfilling the general expectation of the rule of law—which is the de-personalization of power. In other words, it rejects the exercise of authority based on self-will. This regularization and de-personalization of power prevent oppression, tyranny, and encroachment upon the lives, property, and honor of the people (Imam Khomeini, n.d.: 185).

Ultimately, the issue of the Sovereignty of Law in the geometry of Imam Khomeini's political thought, based on the book *Kashf al-Asrar*, can be illustrated in the following schema.



6. Analysis of Speech Acts in Kashf al-Asrar

In applying Skinner's method, the time has come to focus on the question from speech act theory: What did the author intend by saying what he said? Hokmizadeh's *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh*, in its super-text, is an intellectually and politically active text, and the author pursues specific goals through its writing. Some of these goals include relative defense of Reza Shah's monarchy or considering Shiite beliefs promoted by the clerical establishment as superstitious and irrational. However, the main thrust of *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh* centers on opposition to the clergy, emphasizing their alleged power-seeking, and the marginalization and abandonment of Islamic thought—of which the clergy is the symbol and representative—in regulating the political order.

Therefore, Imam Khomeini's speech acts in *Kashf al-Asrar* can be analyzed on three levels:

6.1. Defensive Speech Act: Rejecting the Fuqahā's Power-Seeking

In response to Hokmizadeh's accusation of the Fuqahā's power-seeking, Imam Khomeini explicitly states: "We do not say that the sovereignty must be run by the Faqīh [Jurist]" (*Kashf al-Asrar*: 232). This defensive speech act has two objectives:

1. Neutralizing the Intellectuals' Accusations: Hokmizadeh and Kasravi sought to portray the clergy as a power-seeking group in confrontation with the modern state. By rejecting this accusation, the Imam removed the clergy from a position of confrontation and assured the government that the clergy was not seeking to overthrow the regime.

2. Establishing Moral Legitimacy: By emphasizing that the Fuqahā' are not seeking worldly power, the Imam imparted a spiritual and non-material image to the clergy, creating a superior moral standing against Reza Shah's secular discourse.

Linguistic Context: This action is rooted in the discourse of Constitutionalism (*Mashrūṭah*), which represents the spirit of the time that was damaged by Reza Shah's monarchy. The Imam's emphasis on law and the centrality of the concept of law is compatible with the spirit of the Constitutionalism of the era and is comprehensible and legitimizing within that atmosphere. However, by emphasizing that the content of this law must be God's Law (Islam), he draws a line distinguishing his type of constitutionalism from non-Islamic versions. He rationalizes and substantiates this Sovereignty of God's Law with multiple public reasons, including its ability to respond to the public interest and its efficacy, thereby providing it with a general legitimacy. This is similar to where scholars like Nā'īnī, by emphasizing the moral legitimacy of the clergy, avoided direct confrontation with the state.

6.2. Offensive Speech Act: The Fuqahā's Supervision and Divine Law

Immediately after rejecting power-seeking, the Imam states: "The government must be administered by God's Law, and the Fuqahā' must supervise it" (*Kashf al-Asrar*: 222). This speech act is offensive and legitimacy-conferring, and it pursues two goals:

1. Establishing Practical Power: By proposing the necessity of the Fuqahā's supervision over the legislative and executive branches, the Imam practically defined a religious veto power for the clergy. This supervision, without accepting direct governmental responsibility, placed the main arteries of power (legislation and execution) under clerical control.

2. Redefining Political Legitimacy: By emphasizing "God's Law," the Imam transferred political legitimacy from the modern state (based on Pahlavi nationalism) to Divine Law, establishing the clergy as the guarantor of this legitimacy.

Linguistic Context: The phrase "supervision of the Fuqahā" directly references Article Two of the Supplementary Constitutional Law, which mandated the supervision of five Fuqahā' over parliamentary legislation. By reconstructing this discourse, the Imam established the clergy's position within a framework familiar to the audience of the 1940s.

6.3. Dual Strategy: Moral Legitimacy and Practical Power

There appears to be a contradiction between rejecting the Fuqahā's power-seeking and emphasizing their supervision, but this is not dissimulation (Taqīyyah) but a dual strategy:

Moral Legitimacy: Rejecting power-seeking absolved the clergy of the accusation of ambition and bestowed a spiritual image upon them.

Practical Power: The Fuqahā's supervision, without accepting governmental responsibility, granted the clergy control over the arteries of power.

This strategy allowed the clergy to establish its supervisory position without direct confrontation with the state. In the context of the 1940s, when the clergy was in the process of reviving its status, this strategy was a political maneuver to avoid the costs of confrontation while simultaneously ensuring authority.

Intertextual Context: This strategy is similar to the responses of other scholars (such as Hosseini Shirazi to Kasravi) who attempted to place the clergy in a balanced yet powerful position against secular intellectuals.

Conclusion

Shiite jurisprudential political thought in the contemporary era, since the founding of the Qajar dynasty, has undergone transformation and evolution within the context of political and social developments. In other words, jurisprudential political thought faced challenges amid transformations such as the shift from absolute monarchy to constitutionalism, the change of government from Qajar to Pahlavi and subsequently to the Islamic Republic, and in response to various crises, it subsequently sought to reconstruct itself in answer to those crises. In transitioning through these historical changes, Iranian society went through numerous and diverse issues and topics, as a result of which the political thought of the Shiite clergy and Fuqahā' also, voluntarily or involuntarily, became involved in change and evolution. These changes were sometimes for the sake of revival and reconstruction of religious thought and regaining lost status, and sometimes for the purpose of responding to new needs, expectations, and questions. During the Pahlavi regime, the implementation of modernization programs and the establishment of a government based on secularism and nationalism gradually prompted an offensive reaction in Shiite political thought. This ultimately led to the presentation of the theory of Shiite government in the framework of the Islamic Republic model and a new understanding of the limits of the Fuqahā's authority and guardianship (Wilāyah) that emphasizes the executive function (amr-e ijrā') beyond the domains of Iftā' (issuing fatwas) and Qaḍā' (judiciary). A part of the evolution and conception of Shiite jurisprudential political thought occurred concurrently with Reza Shah's removal from power and the post-Reza Shah era. In the relatively free atmosphere after his departure, the clergy sought to revive its lost status. In reaction to this, a section of intellectuals, writers, and socio-political activists, such as Kasravi and Hokmizadeh, opposed the clergy and leveled accusations against them by writing books like *Asrar-e Hezar Saleh*. In such an atmosphere and context, the clergy was forced to respond and defend itself, and Imam Khomeini's book, *Kashf al-Asrar*, is the product of those circumstances. In fact, a part of Imam Khomeini's political thought was crafted, processed, and shaped based on the political, social, and religious conditions and

contexts of an era in which intellectuals were accusing the clergy of attempting to seize control of the government. However, the clergy, including Imam Khomeini, rejected this accusation, stating that the clergy had no intention of ruling and only wished to supervise it. Subsequently, with changes in the times and context, we witnessed a shift and evolution in this thought, such that Imam Khomeini departed from the discourse of monarchy, deemed it illegitimate, and gradually introduced the concept of the governance and guardianship of the Jurist (Wilāyat-e Faqīh).



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