

**Identity and Academic Philosophy in the Islamic  
Republic of Iran: The Case of  
Reza Davari Ardakani**

**by  
Ardalan Rezamand**

B.A., University of California—Santa Barbara, 1998

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of the Requirements for the Degree of  
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in the  
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# Approval

**Name:** Ardalan Rezamand  
**Degree:** Master of Arts (History)  
**Title of Thesis:** *Identity and Academic Philosophy in the Islamic Republic of Iran: The Case of Reza Davari Ardakani*

**Examining Committee:**

**Chair:** Emily O'Brien Chair, Department of History

---

**Derryl MacLean**  
Senior Supervisor  
Associate Professor

---

**Paul Sedra**  
Supervisor  
Associate Professor

---

**Thomas Kuehn**  
Supervisor  
Associate Professor

---

**Peyman Vahabzadeh**  
External Examiner  
Associate Professor, Sociology  
University of Victoria

**Date Defended/Approved:** 23 November 2012

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## Abstract

This thesis explores a philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih*, by Reza Davari Ardakani, a professor at the University of Tehran's Department of Philosophy since 1968, and a public intellectual of consequence. The Islamic Republic of Iran's theory of state, *velayat-e faqih*, has generally been constructed and defended using Shia jurisprudential reasoning, projecting an Irano-Islamic national identity. While this methodology has proven sufficient among traditional religious Iranians, continuing modernizing forces within and liberal Western forces outside of Iran pressure its theocratic underpinnings and hence its appeal to other Iranians. A lesser-known interpretation of *velayat-e faqih*, using both Western and Islamic philosophical methodologies, has existed within select post-revolutionary Iranian academic and intellectual circles. This thesis examines the training, philosophy and ideology of its most influential advocate, Reza Davari Ardakani, within the context of Iranian modernization, the construction of a cultural identity and the influence of modern higher education. In this thesis, I argue that Iran's state institutions, in particular the University of Tehran, serve as propagating sites of Iranian identity. More significantly, these sites and the Iranian intellectuals who create and train within them respond to the complex forces of tradition and modernity, employing Iranian, Islamic, and Western methods and practices in the creation of hybrid identities. Thus, Davari's philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih* is best understood as the latest reiteration in the conciliatory practices of hybrid identity production of a modernizing Iran.

**Keywords:** Iran; Philosophy; *velayat-e faqih*; University of Tehran; identity

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Sara and our three sons.

I dedicate this thesis to the ones whom offer an emotional response upon hearing the word *Iran*.

## **Acknowledgements**

This research project would not have been possible without the support of many people. The author wishes to express his gratitude to his senior supervisor, Prof. Dr. Derryl MacLean who was abundantly helpful and offered invaluable assistance, support and guidance with my research and writing. Deepest gratitude are also due to the members of the supervisory committee, Prof. Dr. Thomas Kuehn and Dr. Paul Sedra without whose knowledge and assistance this study would not have been successful. As well, I would like to acknowledge the help and support of the Department of History at Simon Fraser University.

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# Iranian Studies Transliteration Scheme: Consonants and Vowels

## Iranian Studies transliteration scheme

### Consonants

|    |   |    |   |
|----|---|----|---|
| z  | ض | b  | ب |
| t  | ط | p  | پ |
| z  | ظ | t  | ت |
| '  | ع | s  | ث |
| gh | غ | j  | ج |
| f  | ف | ch | چ |
| q  | ق | h  | ح |
| k  | ک | kh | خ |
| g  | گ | d  | د |
| l  | ل | z  | ذ |
| m  | م | r  | ر |
| n  | ن | z  | ز |
| h  | ه | zh | ژ |
| v  | و | s  | ص |
| y  | ی | sh | ش |
| '  | ء | s  | ص |

### Vowels

| short                  | long                                      | diphthongs                 |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| a (as in <i>ashk</i> ) | a or ā (as in <i>ensan</i> or <i>āb</i> ) | -                          |
| e (as in <i>fekr</i> ) | i (as in <i>melll</i> )                   | ey (as in <i>Teymur</i> )  |
| o (as in <i>pol</i> )  | u (as in <i>Tus</i> )                     | ow (as in <i>rowshan</i> ) |

- The *ezafeh* is written as -e after consonants, e. g. *ketab-e* and as -ye after vowels (and silent final *h*), e. g. *darya-ye* and *khaneh-ye*.
- The silent final *h* is written, e. g. *Dowlehl*.
- The tashdid is represented by a doubling of the letter, e. g. *takhassos*.
- The plural *ha* is added.
- Names are written following author's preference.

# Chapter 1.

## Introduction

In modern Iranian history (1800-present), one of the most problematic concepts is that of Iranian identity. It can be defined geographically, spanning the inhabitants of the Iranian plateau. It can include the cultural sphere of the Persianate world's linguistic and literary traditions. It can also be characterized by Twelver *Shi'ism*, Iran's most practiced religion. As well, the Euro-American "way of life," amalgamated into a package referred to as "Western modernity," has significantly influenced Iranian identity over the last century. The uncertainty surrounding identity is a key component in Iran's century and a half socio-political turmoil, as Iranians absorbed and applied Euro-American methods and practices into their existing multi-culture.

Identity is a conception of self and society.<sup>1</sup> For Iranian intellectuals, identity (*hovviyat*) has proven difficult to define, especially given Iran's rich and lengthy history. How Iranians view themselves influences many facets of their social life, from cultural etiquette to religious practices and public policy. History bears witness to notable literati Iranians who have transmitted their conceptions of Iranian identity, or *Iraniyat*, through

<sup>1</sup> By identity I'm referring to the concept of cultural identity as defined by Ernest Gellner. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), xxiv. The function of identity, as used in this thesis, refers to Charles Taylor's concept of social embeddedness, "the way we together imagine our social existence, for instance, that our most important actions are those of the whole society, which must be structured in a certain way to carry them out." Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 55.

poetry, philosophy, history, and other written works.<sup>2</sup> Any idea that supports the legitimization of a government in Iran is based on its author's conception of Iraniyat. Historical records on theory of state, including legal treatises on the conduct of the ruler and his obligations and relation to the ruled, are indicative of a commonality between a cultural identity and the nature of government in Iran.

At the start of the twentieth century, Persian, Islamic, and Western influences constrained Iranian identity leading to socio-political turmoil.<sup>3</sup> The formation of a modern and stable Iranian state required the reformulation of these cultural influences in the creation of a singular national identity.<sup>4</sup> In particular, the introduction of European concepts and practices into Iranian society, starting in the nineteenth century, disturbed the delicate balance of Iran's Perso-Islamic identity.<sup>5</sup> One way to regard Iran's twentieth century socio-political turmoil is as an attempt to account for the infusion of Western cultural identity. The historiography of twentieth century Iranian intellectuals points to a struggle with an evolving concept of Iraniyat, political instability and the development of an uneven Iranian modernity.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Colin Mitchell argues that an Iranian identity, based on "the impressive variegation of Persian culture that had developed leading up to the Safavid period," was subsequently consolidated into a "corporate identity" by "men of the pen" of the Safavid dynasty: "These individuals were beneficiaries to a corporate identity, which had been passed down for centuries since the advent of the `Abbasids. The careers of men like Nizam al-Mulk, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, and Fadl Allah Rashid al-Din loomed large in the collective memory of the Persian bureaucratic class." Collin Mitchell, *the Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran: Power, Religion and Rhetoric* (New York: I.B Tauris, 2009), 1, 88.

<sup>3</sup> By "turmoil" I'm referring to socio-political events that have impacted the structure of Iranian society and government in the modern period. Events such as the Tobacco Protests, Constitutional Revolution, Qajar to Pahlavi transition, Allied interference in Iran during both World Wars, the Mosaddeq Coup, etc.

<sup>4</sup> "Nationalism has been defined, in effect as the striving to make culture and polity congruent, to endow a culture with its own political roof, and not more than one roof at that." Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 42.

<sup>5</sup> The use of the term Perso-Islamic identity entails the presence of both Persian and Islamic traits; whereas, the use of the term Irano-Islamic identity entails the presence of Persian, Islamic, and Western traits.

<sup>6</sup> These intellectuals, such as Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Taleqani are discussed in Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), And Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

There is no consensus on the definition of Western modernity. In this thesis, it refers to a particular way of life that includes the amenities of twentieth century urban development, an industrial or post-industrial economy and a political system with clear limitations for both the state and the citizen.<sup>7</sup> In the past century and a half, changes based on the aforementioned components of Western modernity were introduced at different times and to different sectors of Iranian society, complicating the makeup of their cultural identity. These changes - commonly referred to as reforms - affected Iranians' conceptions of Iraniyat as witnessed through the writings of early twentieth century Iranian intellectuals.<sup>8</sup>

Reza Davari Ardakani is a lesser-known twentieth century Iranian intellectual who has produced a hybrid philosophical theory supporting Iran's current theory of state. This thesis examines the creation and propagation of Davari's theory as part of writings that support a modern Irano-Islamic identity. The creation of a modern education system, and in particular, the University of Tehran, where Davari trained and remained as lecturer, is the primary contextual focus as a site for this activity. In particular, I examine Davari's interpretation of *velayat-e faqih* using philosophical methodologies.<sup>9</sup> Davari's Iraniyat has Islam as its core identity but also incorporates Western and Persian traits. However, it is more specific in congruency to the projected Irano-Islamic identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, than the hybrid Islamic theories proposed by Shariati, Taleqani, and other Iranian intellectuals of the twentieth century.

Davari's theory is significant in two particular ways. First, it uses philosophy to support an interpretation of Shi'ite jurisprudential political ethics. He applies Western and

<sup>7</sup> This definition of modernity is supported by Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> According to Mostafa Vaziri, "At the turn of the century, men of letters such as Mirza Malkam Khan, Ali Akbar Dehkoda, Zaka al-Mulk (known as Foroughi), and Hasan Priniya introduced and used Western methodology and models to approach history and historiography." Mostafa Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation: The Construction of National Identity* (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 155. Vaziri argues that the published works of these individuals exhibited an affinity to the Pahlavi's preferred model of Iranian national identity, see 154-164.

<sup>9</sup> *Velayat-e faqih* is the theological basis for Iran's theory of state and is grounded in Shi'a jurisprudential reasoning (*feqh*). It was popularized and implemented by the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini. It states that the primary purpose of government is to move the public towards Islamic moral perfection, which can only be achieved through a government headed by a Shi'ite supreme juristconsult (*vali-ye faqih*). See Imam Khomeini, *Islamic Government (Velayat-e Faqeeh)* (Tehran: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Work, 1991).

Islamic philosophy to a particular juristic interpretation of Islamic governance, namely, *velayat-e faqih*. Moreover, he uses a minority view in professional Western philosophical methodologies, anti-Enlightenment philosophy, to support a minority view of Shi'a political ethics, *velayat-e faqih*. Second, his theory's influence is not confined to academics and projects a real political corollary. Davari's theory, through its association with an affirmation of the Islamic Republic of Iran's projected Irano-Islamic identity, has influenced Iranian post-revolutionary public policy.

Reza Davari Ardakani was born in 1933 in the city of Ardakan. He attended Ferdosi Primary School and subsequently enrolled in Isfahan Preparatory Academy.<sup>10</sup> In 1951, Davari received his diploma from the academy and was consequently employed by the Ministry of Culture (renamed Ministry of Education) as a local teacher in the province. He spent the next three years teaching in provincial cities and the capital. In 1953, he enrolled in Sadr Seminary Institute and studied preparatory courses in Islamic jurisprudence, procedure, and methods.<sup>11</sup> In 1954, he entered the University of Tehran, earning a Bachelor of Arts and a Doctorate in Philosophy (1967), and remaining as a professor of philosophy. Davari's training and exposure to the philosophical thoughts of some senior faculty at the Department of Philosophy, such as Ahmad Fardid and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, greatly influenced his intellectual development before the Islamic Revolution.

In the ideologically charged atmosphere of the 1980s, Davari gained fame as an Iranian intellectual by debating other emerging post-revolutionary Iranian intellectuals. In 1982, Davari published a book titled *Islamic Revolution and the World's Current Situation*. In this book, Davari presents his argument in support of *velayat-e faqih*, and views the Islamic Revolution as the dawn of a new age that will help cure "Iran's ill-encounter with modernity."<sup>12</sup> In the mid 1980s, Davari defended this view against the

<sup>10</sup> Reza Davari, *Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha* (Tehran: Sokhan, 2008), 46.

<sup>11</sup> Ali Paya and Mohammad Amin Ghaneirad, "The Philosopher and the Revolutionary State: How Karl Popper's Ideas Shaped the Views of Iranian Intellectuals," *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 20, no. 2 (2006): 195. Reza Davari, *Aql va Zamaneh*, 46.

<sup>12</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh Chist* (Tehran: Anjoman-e Hekmat va Falsafeh-ye Iran, 1989), 71. Please note, this book was written in the late 1970s and published in several editions in the 1980s; the version used in this thesis is from 1989.

views of Akbar Ganji, Abdolkarim Soroush and Ali Paya - in a series of ideological debates published in *Keyhan-e Farhangi*.

In addition to participation in public discourse, Davari holds several key positions within Iran's state-funded civic institutions that influence Iran's cultural directive. Davari became the director of the Academy of Sciences of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1998, an institution created by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution back in 1987.<sup>13</sup> The Academy is an institution with the dual purpose of cultivating scientific development within the country as well as promoting Irano-Islamic views on scientific technology and research abroad. In helping promote this strategy, Davari has been a participant in international conferences on philosophy and phenomenology. At these conferences, Davari has presented on topics such as "Religion and Liberty," "Is Philosophy Global or Regional," "History of Politics in the World of Islam," and "The Possibility of Dialogue between Islamic Philosophy and Western Phenomenology."<sup>14</sup>

More importantly, Davari is a member of the High Council of the Cultural Revolution (HCCR) and sits on the board of several affiliated organizations which effectively direct cultural and educational planning in Iran. These organizations include the Institute for Public Education, the Institute for Scientific Study of Islamic Philosophy, the Supreme Council for Curriculum Planning, and the Foundation for Iranian Studies.<sup>15</sup> In addition to these appointments, Davari promotes the ideals of the Islamic Republic continues through his publications, lectures, and speeches.

Thus, post-revolutionary Iran has been a period of growth and influence for Davari. Other Iranian intellectuals such as Mehran Kamrava and Ramin Jahanbegloo call Davari the secular vanguard of the regime because of his views and influence.<sup>16</sup> Given the unique approach of this theory and its influence on several sectors of Iranian society including post-revolutionary political ethics, education, cultural identity, censorship, and the affirmation of a state-sponsored Iraniyat, it is surprising to find

<sup>13</sup> Reza Davari's official Website, <http://Davari.com/biography.htm> (accessed 20 July 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Danny Postel, "Ideas Whose Time has Come: A Conversation with Iranian Philosopher Ramin Jahanbegloo," *Logos Online 2006*, [http://logosjournal.com/issue\\_5.2/jahanbegloo\\_interview.htm](http://logosjournal.com/issue_5.2/jahanbegloo_interview.htm) (accessed 20 July, 2012).

limited Western scholarly works on Davari. Indeed, compared with many other twentieth century Iranian intellectuals, the historiography on Davari is limited and contains disjointed accounts of the philosophers' thoughts and influence. The lapses in information, for the most part, can be attributed to the peripheral attention he has received in the works of Western scholars. Thus, the historiography on Davari is divided into several and often overlapping categories: Iranian intellectuals, philosophy, modernity, and identity.

Western modernity as the adaptation of European socio-political concepts and practices contains the largest historiography on Davari by scholars outside of Iran. Often, scholars intertwine their primary discussion on Iranian modernity with ideas proposed by Iranian intellectuals, some stemming from philosophical inquiry. Farzin Vahdat's book, *God and Juggernaut: Iran's Intellectual Encounter with Modernity*, clearly demonstrates this approach.<sup>17</sup> Vahdat's work is overwhelmingly concerned with the unfolding of Iranian modernity against Iran's traditional Irano-Islamic culture. Vahdat discusses the growing Islamization of Iranian intellectuals' thoughts in the second half of the twentieth century. This approach includes an analysis of Davari's political ethics.

Vahdat postulates the concept of "mediated subjectivity"<sup>18</sup> and applies it to the religious philosophies of Khomeini, Shariati, and Motahheri.<sup>19</sup> He uses the concept of mediated subjectivity to link the views of the three aforementioned Iranian religious intellectuals with that of Ahmad Fardid, Davari's teacher and mentor at the University of Tehran. Vahdat builds on Fardid's ideas by incorporating them into the philosophical structure of Davari's philosophy. Still, Vahdat's focus on Davari is limited, since Davari's

<sup>17</sup> Farzin Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut: Iran's Intellectual Encounter with Modernity* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 134, 156. According to Vahdat, mediated subjectivity is human subjectivity projected onto the attributes of monotheistic deity. Since humans possess incomplete individual subjectivity their welfare is contingent on the perfection and unlimited nature of God's subjectivity. It then follows that it is the duty of the Islamic jurists, acting as guardians of humanity, to guide individuals towards moral perfection. Thus, the public mediates their subjectivity to the jurists. Mediated subjectivity is a core tenet in the political legitimacy of *velayat-e faqih* according to Vahdat.

<sup>19</sup> The thoughts and influences of these three intellectuals can be directly attributed to the Islamic ideology manifested in the political authority of the Islamic Republic of Iran, albeit, in theory and certainly not in practice.

philosophy is mainly used by Vahdat to serve as a comparative point for the political ethics of Abdolkarim Soroush in the 1980s.

Another Iranian scholar with a focus on Iranian intellectuals as agents of an Iranian modernity is Ali Mirsepassi. His book, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran*, provides the link between Davari and Heidegger by examining the relation between Iranian intellectuals and German, anti-modern philosophers.<sup>20</sup> Mirsepassi identifies Fardid's, and by extension Davari's, work as having affinity with the German, anti-Enlightenment philosophical tradition that reached its height during the 1930s. Mirsepassi draws similarities between Iran in the 1960 to 1980 period with Germany during the interwar years in that both states displayed resentment toward being drawn into the liberal-socialist political bipolarization. While Mirsepassi does establish a historical justification for the link between Davari and Heidegger's philosophy, on the premise that discourses of authenticity are integral to modernity, Mirsepassi does not get into the details of their philosophical congruency nor the linkage between Davari's thoughts and the ideologies of the Islamic Republic. The focus of Mirsepassi's work is on forms of Iranian modernity, divided into three ideological phases.<sup>21</sup> This book is significant in that it categorizes Iranian modernity within evolving intellectual currents, some concerning the development of a national identity. In so doing, Mirsepassi's work helps define the role of Iranian intellectuals at the time of Davari's training at the University of Tehran.

A more recent work by Ali Mirsepassi, *Political Islam, Iran and the Enlightenment: Philosophies of Hope and Despair*, focuses on the third phase of Iranian modernity with a particular view grounded in the philosophical understanding of Western modernity in

<sup>20</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Please note that the linking of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Inter-war Germany in terms of their respective propagation of "anti-modern" philosophies is Mirsepassi's position and argument. In particular, linking the "neither West nor East," slogan of the Islamic Republic with, mainly, Heidegger's essentialisation of "Mittleuropa" is used by Mirsepassi in constructing his argument, and is not necessarily true or valid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 13. This stage of Iranian modernization correlates to Ali Mirsepassi's first phase in the categorization of Iranian modernity: "(1) an uncritical embrace of modernity as a Western model designed to totally replace Iranian culture; (2) a shift to a leftist paradigm of modernity critiquing imperialism and capitalism; and (3) the turn towards Islamist discourses of authenticity."

relation to the reactionary, anti-Enlightenment views of twentieth century Iranian intellectuals, including Davari. The most relevant part of the book to my thesis is Mirsepassi's chapter on Heidegger. Mirsepassi's discussion is an extremely important one for the understanding of Heidegger's impact on the Iranian intellectual tradition, in particular, his detailed discussion of Heidegger's *Being and Time* as a historical document. At the same time, the bulk of Mirsepassi's analysis of Iranian intellectuals is concerned with Ahmad Fardid, Jalal Al-Ahmad, and Daryush Shayegan. Mirsepassi identifies Fardid as "the thinker whose work contributed most to setting the ground for a Heideggerian political discourse in the Iranian context."<sup>22</sup> The analysis naturally extends to a study of Al-Ahmad and Shayegan's philosophy, who took part in Fardid's philosophical circle. Davari, the intellectual heir of Fardidism in Iran's intellectual tradition, is almost absent from discussion and makes sporadic appearances in conjunction with his famous debates with Abdolkarim Soroush in the 1980s.<sup>23</sup> In this thesis, I examine Davari's published responses regarding his association with Fardid and "Muslim Heideggerians".

Similar to Mirsepassi, Mehrzad Boroujerdi's book, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism*, focuses on the themes of Iranian intellectuals, modernity, and *Iraniyat* presented with a concern for the agency of nativist ideas.<sup>24</sup> Boroujerdi has little to say about Davari, since his book argues for the development of an authentic Iranian modernity with the help of Iranian intellectuals. In particular, Boroujerdi is concerned with the formation of an Islamic political subculture in Iran after 1963, echoing Mirsepassi's findings in the third phase of his theoretical approach to Iranian modernity. Boroujerdi also provides a detailed discussion of *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication), a critical theory on Iranian modernity that is seen in the works of many twentieth century Iranian intellectuals, including Davari.

Boroujerdi's article, "*Gharbzadegi: The Dominant Intellectual Discourse of Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Iran*," directly engages Davari's incorporation of *Gharbzadegi* into his political ethics. He introduces Davari as an Iranian intellectual in search of an

<sup>22</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Political Islam, Iran, and the Enlightenment*, 30.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 70, 72.

<sup>24</sup> Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996).

Iranian identity for what Boroujerdi calls, “homo islamicus.” Interestingly, Boroujerdi argues that Davari’s philosophy concerning *Gharbzadegi* goes beyond the works of Shayegan and Al-Ahmad. Davari, according to Boroujerdi, holds the designation of intellectuals to be an, “offspring of modern Western history,” that begins “with the principle separation of politics and religion.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, this work is significant in several ways. First, it argues for the Islamic-centric identity in Davari’s Iraniyat that greatly affects his theory. Second, it highlights Davari’s criticism that the intellectual is a product of the secularizing effects of Western modernity. This criticism indirectly relates to the creation of a modern Iranian educational system as problematic, although Boroujerdi’s article never touches on this topic.

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 drastically changed Iran’s socio-political environment, providing Davari with the opportunity to move his theory from the realm of academics to public policy. Unfortunately, the historiography on Davari’s post-revolutionary activity, including the propagation of his philosophical views, is once again presented in a fragmented manner. Several Iranian scholars living outside of Iran have written about Davari in this regard. In particular, Farhad Khosrokhavar’s “The New Intellectuals in Iran,” traces the development and thoughts of Iran’s “third generation” Islamic intellectuals; figures who contributed to the theoretical construction of the reform movement in the 1990s.<sup>26</sup> Khosrokhavar’s article examines Davari as an ideological opponent of the Reform movement. In addition, the article elaborates on the existence of a pluralistic interpretation of *velayat-e faqih* with Davari’s neo-conservative position being labelled a minority view in *Shia* thought. Although devoting little space to Davari, this article is significant in that it places Davari’s thought in a particular ideological niche within post-revolutionary Iranian political ethics.

Khosrokhavar’s other work, “Neo-Conservative Intellectuals in Iran,” is perhaps the best available Western source on Davari’s political ethics with an elaborate discussion of the ideologies of Iran’s neo-conservatives. It outlines Davari’s efforts to synthesize Heidegger’s anti-Western views within an “Islamic Idiom.” Khosrokhavar

<sup>25</sup> Mehrzad Boroujerdi, “Gharbzadegi: The Dominant Intellectual Discourse of Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Iran,” in *Political Culture in the Islamic Republic*, eds. Samih K. Farsoun and Mehrdad Mashayekhi (New York: Routledge, 1992), 49.

<sup>26</sup> Farhad Khosrokhavar, “Neo-Conservative Intellectuals in Iran,” *Middle East Critique* 10 (2001): 5-30.

brings to light Davari's antidemocratic philosophy while advocating a "return to Islamic values" through "the authentic politics... [of] *velayat-e faqih*."<sup>27</sup> Khosrokhavar illustrates how Davari's Iraniyat projects into Iranian politics by linking Davari's hybrid theory to Iran's current ruling ideology, *velayat-e faqih*. At the same time, the focus of the article is Khosrokhavar's discussion of the fourth generation of Iran's Islamic intellectuals, whom he labels as neo-conservatives.

Khosrokhavar's findings about Davari's ideological influence on Iran's neo-conservatives are present in Danny Postal's interview with Ramin Jahanbegloo. In the interview, Jahanbegloo outlines the reformist movement and its religious champions such as Mohsen Kadivar and Mojtaba Shabestari. Jahanbegloo also speaks about the neo-conservative ideologues in Iran naming Reza Davari Ardakani as its prominent figure. Jahanbegloo refers to Davari as the, "philosophical spokesman of the regime." This article establishes the prominence of Davari as a political philosopher of the Islamic Republic and designates him as a neo-conservative ideologue in the reformist-conservative discourse on Iranian political ethics, yet does not get into the specific aspects of Davari's philosophy that contribute to this view of him.

Mehran Kamrava's book entitled *Iran's Intellectual Revolution* also deals with post-revolutionary Iranian intellectuals and their contributions to political ethics.<sup>28</sup> This book provides a historical account of Iran's post-revolutionary reformers, as well as an assessment of what Kamrava calls, the current (2008) intellectual revolution in Iran. The impetus for this intellectual revolution is a popular desire to modify Iran's current constitutional structure, in particular the concept of the absolute rulership of the jurist or *velayat-e faqih*. While tracing the ideological history of Iran's post-revolutionary political debate from the reformers' point of view, Kamrava points to a rising intellectual tension that could lead to a reformulation of Iran's theory of state. His approach situates Davari as a viable counterweight to the intellectual challenge on *velayat-e faqih*. However, Kamrava devotes less than ten pages of his two hundred and forty page book to discussing Davari, providing peripheral insight into Davari's thoughts and position as an Iranian intellectual. Still, Kamrava's recognition of a process in modern Iranian history

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>28</sup> Mehran Kamrava, *Iran's Intellectual Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

that begins with an ideological shift in *Iraniyat* and leads to possible socio-political reformulation is important. Davari's role in this process is that of a conservative given the historical period being studied by Kamrava. However, the same process can be seen unfolding in pre-revolutionary Pahlavi Iran in which Davari was the progressive, promoting a hybrid theory that helped in the ideological shift of *Iraniyat* in the 1980s.

Finally, Ali Paya and Mohammad Amin Ghaneirad's, "Karl Popper and the Iranian Intellectuals," rounds off the historiographical analysis of Western scholars on Davari with an overview of the neo-conservative opposition to the reform movement, in particular, the reform movement's support of Popperian philosophy as a secular challenge to *velayat-e faqih*. The authors discuss the opposition of Heideggerians to Popperians in Iran's ethics. It names Reza Davari as critical opponent of Popper and analyzes Davari's thoughts and publications about the subject. In addition, this article provides a small insight into the personal life and career of Davari, offering details lacking from most other works on the philosopher. Paya's work is significant in that it places Davari within a philosophical polemic in post-revolutionary political ethics. This classification, I argue, will lead Davari to respond in clarifying his position. In a way, Paya's work brings us back to Farzin Vahdat and his inquiry into the Soroush-Davari debates that dichotomized the discussion on *Iraniyat* in the 1980s that lead to the Reform movement in the 1990s.

The above sources represent the most current Western scholarly references to Davari, thus highlighting my position about the fragmented underrepresentation of Davari in Western academic works. As mentioned, most of these sources focus on overlapping themes such as Iranian intellectuals, philosophy, modernity, and identity, with a fragmentary treatment of Davari's thoughts and contributions as an Iranian intellectual.

Several gaps in the historiography are addressed in my thesis. In particular, I examine the impact of modern education on Davari's training, including the University of Tehran as a site for the development of ideas supporting the state's vision of an Iranian cultural identity. I provide an overview of Davari's philosophy leading to his support of *velayat-e faqih*. I analyze the growth of and slight shift in Davari's influence in Iran's post-revolutionary political ethics. Also, I examine Davari's direct influence on Iranian

cultural reforms through his appointments in several state institutions, including the powerful High Council of the Cultural Revolution.

Furthermore, the existing historiography on Davari is, for the most part, based on his earlier publications in the 1980s and early 1990s. This approach does not account for Davari's own intellectual development as witnessed by his many publications in the 2000s. In other words, Davari's philosophical position including his concept of Iraniyat has evolved from the pre-revolutionary era, to the ideologically charged decade in Iranian history following the Iranian Revolution, and finally to his rise as the "ideologue of the Islamic Republic." My thesis seeks to fill these historiographical voids on Davari. At the same time, I argue that Davari's philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih* is best understood as part of a historical process of identity construction by Iranian intellectuals, intertwined with the emergence of a modern state. This encounter is examined in the context of state-sponsored identity construction mainly by, but not limited to, Iran's modern higher education system.

In the second chapter of my thesis, I examine the site of Davari's training, the University of Tehran. This chapter surveys the historical relationship between Western style education and the state, in the context of Iranian modernization, modernity, and the impact on Iranian identity in the twentieth century. In short, this chapter provides the context in which Davari was trained as an intellectual. I use Davari's own publications as primary sources to examine his relation with Iran's education system both as student and faculty. I argue that the formation of higher education in Iran was a state-initiated project intertwined with the process of modernization. It served as a site for the production of philosophies that supported the regime's preferred cultural identity. Davari was trained, in the 1950s and 1960s, at a time where several theories on Iraniyat existed in Iranian society and coincided with the rise of political Islam in Iran as cited in Iranian historiography. Thus, his philosophy is directly influenced by the competing Iraniyats that existed during his training, as well as the preferential model being offered by his mentors at the University, such as Ahmad Fardid and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. This chapter is supplemented by a discussion on other Iranian intellectuals of the time, such as Ali Shariati and Al-Ahmad, in order to contextualize the political environment of the 1960s and 1970s and identify Davari's theory within a generational trend among Iranian intellectuals who were creating socio-political theories with greater emphasis on an Islamic identity.

Chapter three traces the philosophical development of Davari's interpretation of *velayat-e faqih* by examining his publications as lecturer in the Faculty of Philosophy at Tehran University. In this chapter, Davari's own writings, as well as the works of others, are used in a discussion of Davari's philosophy and its reflection on Iranicity. I argue that Davari's philosophy, while exhibiting both Western and Islamic philosophical traditions, is structured on Islamic philosophy, with a shallow understanding of Heideggerian ontology used mainly in affirming Davari's anti-Enlightenment stance. The chapter is supplemented with a discussion of Davari's explanation for Iran's uneasy relationship with modernity by highlighting Davari's philosophical reasoning for his critique of Western modernity, i.e. *Gharbzadegi*.

The fourth chapter examines Davari's influence on political ethics. It entails an examination of Davari's publications, public discourse, and affiliation with state institutions. As well, I draw a link between the University and the new Islamic state in the implementation of Iran's Cultural Revolution, paying particular attention to Davari's role as a member of its high council. In this chapter, I argue that the Irano-Islamic national-identity desired by the Islamic Republic of Iran provided a niche for the projection of Davari's philosophy in support of *velayat-e faqih* into Iranian society.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Davari the Student: Modernity, Modernization and Higher Education**

Davari's education and training, as well as the rapidly modernizing Iranian society in which he grew up, shaped his conception of Iranian identity, contributing to his philosophical and ideological positions. In this chapter, I argue that the Irano-Islamic tradition Davari acquired, before arriving in Tehran, coalesced with the modern training he received in both Islamic and Western philosophy at the University of Tehran, leading to his philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih*. At the same time, ideological changes in the form of a move towards political Islam starting in the latter half of the 1950s impacted his views on Iranian identity. Therefore, in understanding his use of philosophy to promote a theory of state rooted in Shia' jurisprudence, it is important to examine his intellectual training in the context of Iranian modernity, modernization and higher education.

#### **Introduction of Modern Education to Iran**

Although Iran's first modern university was created in 1934, the roots of its formation can be traced to mid-nineteenth century Iran, an era of European imperial encroachment. As Qajar Iran awoke from its political malaise, Iranian intellectuals and bureaucrats attempted to remedy Iran's weakness vis-à-vis the great European powers. The initial solution came at the request of government officials who saw the benefits of applying modern Western science on European military and government and wished to replicate these methods and concepts in Iran. Thus, a program of modernization through imitation was initiated. More specifically, early reforms implemented by various Qajar ministers centered on the creation of European style colleges to serve the government's

new, “military, technical and administrative needs.”<sup>1</sup> These Western centers of higher education employed European faculty along with a few European educated Iranians. Among the first institutions created was the Dar al-Funun Polytechnic School, established in 1851.<sup>2</sup> Other colleges were added over the years, all closely linked with the needs of governmental departments, such as the creation of the School of Political Science by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1901, the College of Agriculture at the request of the Ministry of National Economy in 1902, a training college for elementary and secondary teachers called the Normal School for Boys at the request of the Ministry of Education in 1918, and a School of Law established at the request of the Ministry of Justice in 1921.<sup>3</sup>

Because these institutions were modeled after and conceived by European faculty and created for the specific needs of a reforming government, they lacked the capacity to act as a site for the independent development of Iranian public intellectuals. These schools acted predominately as technical centers and did not include a mandate for social sciences. At this time, the *madreseh* system and seminary colleges (*howzeh*) remained as the primary centers of higher learning in Iran rooted in the native Irano-Islamic tradition. This approach created a dual education system in Iran that still exists.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, at this stage of Iranian modernization, the impetus for change came from the state with the aid of foreign-educated intellectuals.<sup>5</sup>

These initial reforms produced unexpected social consequences. Since this top down modernization process had no real ties to local culture and could not act as a local site for indigenous intellectual growth, it remained foreign and operated through the

<sup>1</sup> Reza Arasteh, “The Growth of Higher Institutions in Iran,” *International Review of Education* 7, no. 3 (1961): 329.

<sup>2</sup> Dar al-Funun literally means “The House of Sciences.”

<sup>3</sup> Reza Arasteh, “Growth of Higher Institutions in Iran,” 329-332. According to Arasteh: “New administrative, technical and military needs brought about the establishment of Dar al-Funun and absorbed the graduates as they emerged from their training.”

<sup>4</sup> Saeed Peyvandi, “Vaq’iyat hay-e Nezam-e Amuzeshi Emruz-e Iran,” *Irannameh* 7, no. 68 (2000): 731.

<sup>5</sup> This stage of Iranian modernization correlates to Ali Mirsepassi’s first phase in the categorization of Iranian modernity: “(1) an uncritical embrace of modernity as a Western model designed to totally replace Iranian culture; (2) a shift to a leftist paradigm of modernity critiquing imperialism and capitalism; and (3) the turn towards Islamist discourses of authenticity.” See Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse*, 13.

suppression of Iran's traditional culture. Mirsepassi notes that this phase of Iranian modernity centered on the complete loss of native culture: "the incorporation of European modernity through the denial of the local native identity."<sup>6</sup> Understandably, these military, administrative and technical reforms intruded into the traditional lives of Iranians, creating negative sentiments towards the government and European modernity.

European methods and practices were also introduced to Iranians through direct acts of foreign powers, adding to the existing friction between government policy and social practice. Concessions, in particular, played an active role in this process. Western reforms, often introduced through foreign concessions, served as the primary point of contact between traditional Iranian and European methods and practices when it came to trade and services. European-style reforms in the collection of taxes and duties, a central banking system, post and telegraph services, hospitals, and higher education centers all impacted Iranian's traditional way of life.

For example, the establishment of the Bank of Persia in 1889 created a new system of credit in Iran, rivalling the bazari money lenders and adding to the pressure the bazari felt through changes to taxes and duties, registrations of the guilds, and rival European imports. In short, the bazari's traditional methods and practices were directly affected by the introduction of these European style reforms. The duality in Iran's education system created by the introduction of European style education was replicated, unevenly, across Iranian society in the latter half of the nineteenth century as European style bureaucratic and economic practices were introduced. The difference between modern European and traditional Irano-Islamic socio-economic systems was that while the bazari could point to a local source of knowledge that supported their methods and practices, European trained Iranian reformers and practitioners, government or private, could not.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, a rival source of knowledge to the local religious ideologies that helped define social, economic, and political identities in Iran was introduced and

<sup>6</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 12.

<sup>7</sup> The bazaari alliance with the Ulema can be viewed in this light. See Nikkie Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4, no. 3 (1962): 265-295.

enforced without local intellectual support.<sup>8</sup> The primary point of contention, as mentioned, was the source of knowledge, in particular the knowledge of new sciences versus the *Ulema's* claim of the totality of religious sciences.<sup>9</sup> The impact was real, as demonstrated through the bazari example. Islam's influence on Iran's socio-political culture meant that the denial of religious science (knowledge) would not only undermine the cleric's position of power, it would deny their projected Iranian identity. Resistance to change based on Islamic ideology was demonstrated through the cancellation of the Reuters' Concession and the Tobacco Concession, as well as the tension between *Mashruteh* and *Mashru'eh* during the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911).<sup>10</sup>

Mirsepasi argues that the clash of the permeating effects of European modernity with the all-encompassing nature of Islam produced an uneven modernity.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the lack of an institutionalized site for the production of modern state ideology clearly contributed to the unevenness of this type of modernity. If modernization was projected by the state, from above, then it needed a local site for the production and growth of its legitimizing discourse with the local. This site became a reality in the 1930s with the creation of the University of Tehran during Reza Pahlavi's modernization program.

At this time, Reza Shah implemented many reform programs aimed at strengthening Iran's government, military, and economy. Developments included improved infrastructure including seventeen thousand kilometres of roads, a trans-Iran railway, building of modern city centres, government buildings and some modern industry, imposition of Western dress code, and the outlawing of *hejab* in favour of

<sup>8</sup> The dependence of colleges on various government ministries ensured a lack of independent intellectual development. Also, the small number of western educated Iranians wielding so much political power was disproportionate to the masses of Iranian trained in traditional Iranian madreseh' whose practices were imbedded in Iranian culture.

<sup>9</sup> Ali Mirsepasi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 62.

<sup>10</sup> See Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Origins of Feminism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), Chapter 4. This "tension" is explained on page 61.

<sup>11</sup> Mirsepasi states that the existence of modernity depends on having an 'other,' and in this case the other was Islam. Ali Mirsepasi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 12.

Western attire.<sup>12</sup> More importantly, Reza Shah created a modern military and bureaucracy employing hundreds of thousands of Iranians. This modern military and bureaucracy needed an education system to supply it with skilled labour. As a result, during Reza Shah's reign, there was an explosion in the number of modern schools and educators.<sup>13</sup> Davari concurs with this view and states that, "in the creation of modern schools [in Iran] the goal was the training of new workers [for the new bureaucracy] and after the creation of the center for higher learning and the University of Tehran, the education of those needed to teach at the high school level was also considered."<sup>14</sup> More important to this study, schools were built in small towns and villages including the city of Ardakan where Davari attended primary school.

Reza Shah implemented many of the core reforms originally proposed during the time of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, reforms that had fallen through due to the political chaos that ensued in Iran in the 1910s. Perhaps Iran was not ready for pluralistic politics while undergoing state-projected reforms. The authoritarian Pahlavi regime provided the order and means needed to implement a state-led, nationwide modernization program. Without popular support through a democratic government, Reza Shah needed a cultural legitimizer for his regime and policies, and envisioned an Iranian identity based on pre-Islamic Persian symbolism connected to the twentieth century in the promise of glory. In other words, Iran could regain its prominent historic status by embracing Western modernity led by an Enlightened monarch. Davari comments on these efforts, "during this time two thoughts were central in Iran, one was the issue of identity (*Hovviyat*) and how could we remain Iranian and the other was the

<sup>12</sup> M. Reza Ghods, "Government and Society in Iran, 1926-34," *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, No. 2 (1991), 222.

<sup>13</sup> According to Faghfoory, "By 1936, the total number of schools rose to 4,505 with an enrolment of 300,513 students, including 6,495 girls. Educational expenses increased from RIs. 100,000 in 1925 to some three million by 1940. The government also sent students to Europe, and their total number exceeded 1,651 by 1936. Meanwhile, many *maktabs* and *madreseh* were transformed into modern secular schools and some *vaqf* income was allocated to the establishment of modern educational centers." Mohammad Daryush Faghfoory, "The Impact of Modernization on the Ulema in Iran, 1925-1941," *Iranian Studies* 26, No. 3-4 (1993): 286. Also see Reza Arasteh, "The Growth of Modern Institutions in Iran," 37-38.

<sup>14</sup> Reza Davari, "Enqelab dar Amuzesh: Molahezati dar Bab-e Barnameh-ye Amuzesh Doreha-ye Rahnamai va Dabirestan," *Nameh-ye Farhang*, no. 16 (1993): 118.

method for reaching the West and becoming Western.”<sup>15</sup> The propagation of an Iranian identity based on these premises was made possible, and more successful, through the creation of thousands of modern schools across Iran during this period.

Modernization was accelerated under Reza Shah with the aid of social engineering.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, newly built modern schools and higher learning institutions were inextricably linked to the Pahlavi regime. According to Said Peyvandi, modern European-style schools in Iran were a place for political orientation in the direction of national unity based on a defined national identity.<sup>17</sup> Since the Constitutional Revolution, successive Iranian governments have been vocal in creating a role for themselves in the implementation of education programs at modern schools and universities.<sup>18</sup> These governments often worked with public and even some private institutions and societies in introducing Western European reforms to Iranian society.

Under Reza Shah, many intellectuals were allowed to launch their social engineering programs.<sup>19</sup> Davari has criticized the work and approach of these reformers,

The politicians and intellectuals of the time not only considered Westernization, acceptance of European culture and in particular turning to knowledge and technology to be incompatible with protecting our identity, they saw it as a way to advance a natural progression in [Iranian] history and did not think that being Iranian and Muslim is somewhat contradictory with being Western.<sup>20</sup>

These reformers were all highly educated in the Western tradition and separated by a generational distinction. The first group were Iranian intellectuals of the Constitutional era, some belonging to the Social Democratic Party, whose reform ideas were never realized. Mohammad Mosaddeq and Mohammad Ali Foroughi were members of this

<sup>15</sup> Reza Davari, “Molahezati darbareh-ye Masa’el-e Keshvar,” *Farhang Nameh* 49 (2003): 147.

<sup>16</sup> The concept of “engineering,” stemming from an étatist ideology, is demonstrative of Reza Shah’s reliance on Western knowledge in the planning, including the education of the workforce needed to carry out the civil, military and infrastructural changes, of his modernization program.

<sup>17</sup> Saeed Peyvandi, “Vaq’iyat hay-e Nezam-e Amuzeshi Emruz-e Iran,” 732.

<sup>18</sup> Saeed Peyvandi, “Vaq’iyat hay-e Nezam-e Amuzeshi Emruz-e Iran,” 732.

<sup>19</sup> Talinn Grigor, “Recultivating ‘Good Taste’: The Early Pahlavi Modernists and Their Society for National Heritage,” *Iranian Studies* 37, no. 1 (2004): 19.

<sup>20</sup> Reza Davari, “Molahezati darbareh-ye Masa’el-e Keshvar,” 147.

group. The second group were the new generation of Iranian intellectuals who had lived and studied in Europe between 1910 and 1925.<sup>21</sup> While abroad, these Iranian intellectuals published periodicals on reform and modernity in Iran. They were mainly based in Berlin and had a sympathetic understanding of German philosophy including ideas on nationalism and national identity. This group, who included Ali Akbar Siyasi and Ali Akbar Davar, followed Herder's philosophy with national identity being derived from land and blood mixed with a theoretical understanding of a national spirit; in short, favouring a modern monarchy in the form of a despotisme éclairé over a republic and the social contract of the French model.<sup>22</sup>

During the formative years of Reza Shah's regime, these intellectuals coalesced into societies and organizations that helped direct the first Pahlavi's modernization program. One group, composed mainly of returning Iranian intellectuals, including Ali Akbar Siyasi, established the *Anjoman-e Iran-e Javan* (The Society of Young Iran). This group is notable for its insistence for an educational revolution in Iran in which European style education was speedily and forcefully implemented. This education system included acculturation in which the body, mind, and spirit were transformed, ready to lead a modern life in a modern society.<sup>23</sup>

Another autonomous organization that aided Reza Shah in his modernization program consisted of an influential group of Iranian intellectuals who originally belonged to a Constitutional Revolution political party known as *Tajaddod* (Modernity) and became known as *Anjoman-e Asar-e Melli* (The Society for National Heritage, 1921-1979) during the Pahlavi era.<sup>24</sup> The goal of this society was the use of spatial imagery to enforce a new national identity that supported Reza Shah's modernization plan. This society was responsible for creating modern institutions housed in complexes with pre-Islamic prototypes and icons during the Pahlavi dynastic reign.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Jamshid Behnam, "Dowlat, Melat, Hovviyat-e Fardi va Tajaddod," *Iran Nameh*, No. 72, (2001): 377-378.

<sup>22</sup> Behnam, 378.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.

<sup>24</sup> Talinn Grigor, 20-22.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

The Society for National Heritage (SNH) is significant for two reasons. First, it demonstrates a legacy of cooperation between intellectuals and the government in various Iranian modernization programs initiated in the twentieth century. Second, many of the SNH's members were also responsible for the founding of the University of Tehran. According to Talinn Grigor, the Society's senior members were also part of Reza Shah's cabinet but maintained independence of action in their activities within the Society. These members included the Court Minister Abdol-Hossein Teymurtash, the historian Hasan Pirnia, the Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Foroughi, the Justice and Finance Minister Ali Akbar Davar, as well as Isa Sadiq, and Ali Asghar Hekmat.<sup>26</sup> In the 1930s, several members of this society approached Reza Shah with plans to create a modern university in the capital.

## The University of Tehran

The University of Tehran was created in 1934, with the approval of Reza Shah and at the recommendation of Ali Asghar Hekmat.<sup>27</sup> Hekmat was assigned with the task of creating the University with the aid of a committee consisting of Mohammad Ali Foroughi, Gholam-Hossein Rahnamah, Isa Sadiq and Ali Akbar Siyasi.<sup>28</sup> Siyasi became the first elected president of the university and remained in that position for twelve years. Siyasi was a first generation, post-Constitutional Revolution intellectual whose goal was state reform and modernization.<sup>29</sup> Davari mentions him among his undergraduate faculty at the University of Tehran. He had studied abroad and had strong beliefs about the implementation of reforms in Iran. He argued, the need for modernity was popular among Iranians and modernization required scientific solutions. Sharing the ideological perspectives of other members of SNH who founded the University, Siyasi felt that it was

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>27</sup> Many of the aforementioned independent Colleges (Law, Political Science, and Agriculture) were incorporated into faculties in The University of Tehran.

<sup>28</sup> Faruq Amir Faryar, "Sharh-e Esteqlal-e Daneshgah Tehran va Gushehayi az Tarikh-e amuzesh-e Novin dar Iran," *Jahan ketab* 13, no. 1&2 (2007): 30.

<sup>29</sup> By intellectual, I am referring to the Farsi term *roshan fekran* that literally means "enlightened thinker," and includes mainly western-style educated and some seminary educated Iranian scholars of the twentieth century.

his responsibility to help implement educational reforms.<sup>30</sup> Thus, SNH played a role in the initial linking of the University to the state through the common goal of modernizing reforms.

The creation of the University of Tehran, I argue, in particular the addition and expansion of dedicated departments modeled after Euro-American social sciences, provided Iran's first site of consequence for the instruction, discussion, and promotion of a national Iranian identity. In addition, the relation between the founding members of the University, SNH, and the government, helped enhance its role as a site for the production of state ideology supporting a Perso-Western identity with the suppression of the Islamic identity as promoted by Iran's clergy.<sup>31</sup> Reza Shah's domestic politics aimed to weaken the power of the clergy in Iran with and promote an ideology that favoured freemasonry, radical nationalism, and mysticism.<sup>32</sup>

A project for this purpose was implemented with the aid of two of the founding members (and lecturers) of the University of Tehran: Mohammad Ali Foroughi and Ali Asghar Hekmat. Fashahi contends that Foroughi's ultimate plan was to replace Iran's official Shia religion with a form of Sufism called *Erfan-e monfa'el*. This is a mixture of Islamic and Iranian Sufism and the teachings of masonry lodges. This form of Sufism even made its way into school and university texts and was promoted in other manners.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Faruq Amir Faryar, 30.

<sup>31</sup> On particular, the suppression of religious traits as an independent source of identity, as well as, the suppression of religious traits found in Iran's cultural identity. It must be noted that there is variance in the specifics of the Islamic cultural identity being thought by the clergy, differing in quality based on the audience of the mosque, *howzeh*, or *resaleh*; not to mention the rank and influence variance among the ranks of clergy in Iran – from *Marja`* to *Molla*. At the same time, the general tenets of the *Usuli* school of *Itna Ashari* Shi`ism set the social boundaries of this Islamic cultural identity.

<sup>32</sup> Mohammad-Reza Fashahi, *Az Shahryari Arya-i be Hokumat-e Ellahi Sami 1800-2000* (Spanga: Baran, 2000), 167. According to Fashahi, Reza Shah intended to undermine the religious authority of the *Ulema*, replacing their projected Irano-Islamic identity with a new form of national mysticism. Doing so would create a national religion that was more conforming to modernizing reforms and undermined the ability of the *Ulema* to project an independent form of national identity.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 168-169.

In addition to weakening the role of the Ulema through the theoretical creation of a new state religion, Reza Shah used the University of Tehran, particularly its Department of Philosophy, in order to establish theoretical links between his mode of monarchy and the historic Prussian model. For example, Hegel's popularized phrase, "whatever is possible, is and whatever is, is possible" that became the legitimizing philosophy of Prussia's monarchy, was transplanted to Iran and became one of the legitimizing factors of the Pahlavi Dynasty.<sup>34</sup> In fact, this Hegelian philosophy and approach found its way into institutional education including the university system in Iran.<sup>35</sup>

In short, the expansion of modern education in Iran including the creation of the University of Tehran, was the direct result of Reza Shah's modernization program and founded by Iranians with ideological gravitations that supported a Perso-Western approach to a modern Iranian identity. It was during this stage of twentieth century Iranian modernity that Davari began his education and training on his way to becoming lecturer at University of Tehran.

## **Davari's Education and Iran's Education System, 1940s-1950s**

Ardakan, where Reza Davari Ardakani was born in 1933, is the second largest city in the Iranian province of Yazd with an area of 24,000 square kilometers. It is located on the main road between Tehran and Bandar Abbas, Iran's main international port, and has dry, desert like weather.<sup>36</sup> In the early part of the 1930s, Ardakan was a little more than a village as described by Davari.<sup>37</sup> Literacy and Islamic studies were taught at the local mosques following Iran's traditional education system and there was limited access to modern schools of the type Siyasi and Foroughi were building across Iran. Davari

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 170

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>36</sup> Statistical and historic information on Ardakan is available from <http://www.irantour.org/Iran/city/Ardakan.html>

<sup>37</sup> Iran's Reformist president Mohammad Khatami and his entire family are also natives of Ardakan, and Davari has even written about his relation with Khatami's father, a cleric who ran the most famous mosque in Ardakan.

attended Ferdosi Primary School and writes that, “there was only one [modern] school in Ardakan called Ferdosi Primary and Middle School with courses offered from grades one through nine.”<sup>38</sup> Davari also complains about living in a small Iranian town with no bookstore or library, making access to books difficult. The picture that Davari draws of Ardakan and his early education is both traditional and modest. Reza Shah’s modernization program followed by the Allied occupation of Iran during World War Two would challenge this picture.

Being located on an economically and militarily important route, Ardakan was subjected to Reza Shah’s infrastructural developments, improving roads, sanitation and electricity in the city by 1939. New city centers, part of Reza Shah’s urban renewal program, were erected accompanied by civic institutions.<sup>39</sup> The combination of changes to the roads, buildings, and civic institutions brought a modest, yet visible form of urban modernity to the city of Ardakan. The culture of the city, however, remained traditionally Islamic as seen through recurring social tension rising out of religious factionalism in the city.<sup>40</sup>

Reza Shah Pahlavi’s modernization program came to an abrupt halt with the Allied invasion of August 1941. The abdication of Reza Shah and wartime occupation of Iran by the Allies led to an era of unprecedented political and intellectual freedom. Davari writes that this event politicized the nation’s atmosphere with bi-annual parliamentary elections and the proliferation of print media.<sup>41</sup> Access to books and by extension worldviews and ideologies was now available to Davari, even in Ardakan. At the same

<sup>38</sup> Reza Davari, *‘Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 8.

<sup>39</sup> Eckart Ehlers and Willem Floor, “Urban Change in Iran, 1921-1940,” *Iranian Studies* 26, no. 3.4 (1993): 253-254, 260.

<sup>40</sup> “The Ne’matis (variously Ne’matullahis, Ne’matieyeh) and the Heydaris (Heydariyyeh) were rival groups that engaged in constant and violent conflict in most cities of Iran from the Safavid to the Qajar period. Their violent street fights sometimes paralyzed whole cities, especially during the mourning month of Muharram and on the the tenth day of the month when their rivalry reached a climax.” “In the rural community of Ardakan near Yazd, the people are still partitioned between Heydaris and Ne’matis. Informants among the present population affirm that the two factions were formerly located in two districts, the Ne’matis in one called Zardak and the Heydaris in a district three kilometers south of there called Kachib, where the ruins of a mosque are still visible. After a qanat of sweet water was opened to the present location,” From Hossein Mirjafari and J. R. Perry, “The Haydari-Ni’mati Conflicts in Iran,” *Iranian Studies* 12, no. 3.4 (1979): 137,153.

<sup>41</sup> Reza Davari, *‘Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 8.

time, Ardakan had no secondary school and Davari did not have the economic means to continue his education at a private institution. He enrolled in Isfahan Preparatory Academy, a public institution for the training of rural teachers, after placing first in the regional preparatory exam earning a bursary to continue his education.<sup>42</sup> In 1951, Davari received his diploma from Isfahan Preparatory School and was subsequently employed by the Ministry of Culture (renamed Ministry of Education) as a local teacher in the province; he was eighteen. Davari was now trained and employed under the Pahlavi vision for modern education.

Davari spent the next three years teaching in Ardakan, Arak, Qom, and Tehran. He also took an interest in Western critical theory, this time in the form of Marxism. According to Ali Paya, Davari had a favourable view of Marxist ideology at this time, which is reflective of Mirsepassi's identification and general observation of this stage of Iranian modernity with the Leftist paradigm.<sup>43</sup> Davari admits that the Marxist Tudeh party had considerable influence in Iran and even Davari was impressed at the ease with which Tudeh publications were made available in a small conservative town like Ardakan.<sup>44</sup> During this time, the University of Tehran experienced politicization and radicalization, becoming an intellectual battleground between the Tudeh and the National Front.

Unfortunately, geopolitical considerations of the Cold War and American dependence on oil hegemony led to the overthrow of the Mosaddeq government and the re-installment of Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi by American and British powers in 1953.<sup>45</sup> The second Pahlavi's approach to modernity centered on the infusion of external Euro-American scientific technology and internal pre-Islamic conceptions of local

<sup>42</sup> Davari adds that his father favored a traditional medical education for him since "in our town (*velayat*) and moreover in the city of Yazd, education was synonymous with studies in medicine and *feqh*." Reza Davari, *'Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 9, 46.

<sup>43</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 13.

<sup>44</sup> Reza Davari, *'Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 8.

<sup>45</sup> Dependence on oil hegemony means the need to set price and control market supply in cancelling the effects of actual oil dependence. In other words, the negative economic consequences associated with oil dependence (fluctuations for example) are offset by the positive and overriding effects of oil hegemony. Thus, the real dependence, one that affects political and economic policy, is set to maintain the hegemonic position – henceforth the dependence on oil hegemony.

identity.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, like the previous phases of Iranian modernity, Islamic identity was suppressed.

After the 1953 coup, which overthrew the Mosaddeq government, Davari went to Qom expecting to be called in, for his compulsory military service. The call never came and Davari used the opportunity to enrol in *Madreseh-ye Sadr* (Sadr Seminary Institute) and studied preparatory courses in Islamic jurisprudence, procedure, and methods.<sup>47</sup> Thus, before attending university, Davari was exposed to both modern and traditional systems of education in Iran, as well as becoming familiar with Marxist ideology, which was prevalent in this phase of Iran's modernity.<sup>48</sup>

Tehran in 1954 was a volatile place. The coup against Mosaddeq was fresh in living memory, yet social and economic life was returning to normal as compared with most of the Mosaddeq premiership. Members of the Tudeh party were being purged from the military and a newly signed oil agreement with the International Oil Consortium promised political stability in the near future. The situation was not much different at the University of Tehran, which had witnessed many demonstrations and calls for freedom during the oil nationalization crises. However, these demonstrations were localized to students and few faculty at the university. With Mohammad Reza Shah's return to power, the Pahlavi regime restored its relation with the University.

The University of Tehran served two state functions during the second Pahlavi regime. In addition to providing training and education in preparing Iranians for modern professions, including the ever expanding Pahlavi military and bureaucracy, the University became a site for the promotion of a state-sponsored nativist discourse on Iranian identity, which was needed in the legitimization of Pahlavi rule in Iran. Hoping to garner support from the growing educated urban middle class population, Mohammad Reza Shah's *Darbar* (Royal Court) favoured the production of an identity that promoted the Pahlavi's preferred mode of rule: a secular-modern monarchy based on the tenets of

<sup>46</sup> Farzin Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut*, 137.

<sup>47</sup> Ali Paya and Mohammad Amin Ghaneirad, "The Philosopher and the Revolutionary State," 195. Reza Davari, *'Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 46.

<sup>48</sup> Referring again to Mirsepassi's three phases of Iranian modernity, the second phase entails a Leftist paradigm in which socialist ideology becomes the core marker of a western identity giving legitimacy to its modern methods and practices. See Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 12-15.

ancient Iranian kingship.<sup>49</sup> One of the ways to promote this model was to employ Western philosophy and create a hybrid political theory that supported this secular-modern monarchy. Thus, the second Pahlavi's projected Iraniyat was a mixture of pre-Islamic Persian cultural and political traits, supported with modern Western science. In short, foreign methodology was used to authenticate a particular Iranian identity supporting a particular Iranian modernity. The Pahlavi regime wanted to use Western science for economic and social development while practicing an authoritarian political model disguised under the veneer of pre-Islamic Persian kingship. This system was linked to Western political thought through the efforts of a specific group of intellectuals, some of whom were teachers of Davari at the University of Tehran.

A member of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tehran at the time, Seyyed Hussein Nasr, was involved in this project. According to Mohammed-Reza Fashahi, while at the University, Nasr used Suhrawardi's philosophy to argue that the idea for *le despote éclairé* predated Voltaire and the "Enlightened" reign of Frederick the Second in Prussia, and can be seen in the twelfth century work of Suhrawardi titled *Hekmat al-Ishraq* (the Wisdom of Illumination).<sup>50</sup>

Tehran's Anjoman-e Shahanshahi-ye Falsafi-ye Iran (The Imperial Institute of Philosophy, est. 1975), conceived and created by Nasr, began a similar project in comparing thirteenth century Irano-Islamic philosophy with Hegelian and Voltarian philosophy in promoting historical underpinnings for the Pahlavi monarchy. The Academy was more of a dedicated site for the propagation of a national ideology than the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tehran. The Academy was similar in organization and purpose to the Prussian Royal Academy of Philosophy and was led by Nasr; he had the same role as Mohammad Ali Foroughi during the reign of Reza Shah, a state-sponsored ideologue promoting the Pahlavi monarchy.<sup>51</sup> As a perennial philosopher-academic, Nasr enjoyed good relations with the state while using his philosophy to critique certain aspects of Western thought starting with Galileo, Hobs and

<sup>49</sup> E. A. Bayne, *Persian Kingship in Transition: Conversations with a Monarch Whose Office Is Traditional and Whose Goal Is Modernization* (New York: American Universities Field Staff, 1968), 57-78. In particular, see pages 61, 73-74.

<sup>50</sup> Mohammad-Reza Fashahi, 172.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

Bacon. He also enjoyed good relations with Iranian religious intellectuals of a mystical type such as Tabatabai, Motahheri, Ashtiyani, Davari, Adel, Pourjavadi, and others.<sup>52</sup>

The Academy was a center for dialogue and did not provide any degrees. In addition to Nasr, the faculty included Henry Corbin, Toshihiko Izutsu, Mirza Mehdi Haeri, and Morteza Motahheri.<sup>53</sup> After the Islamic Revolution, the Institute was renamed the Iranian Institute for Philosophy and continues serving the same function albeit for an Islamic political model.<sup>54</sup> Davari was one of Nasr's students and became a member of the Institute's board of trustees following the Revolution. It is important to note that the use of Islamic philosophy by philosophers such as Nasr in support of the Pahlavi Monarchy was also a result of and a response to intellectual developments outside of the university.

## The Growth of Political Islam in Iran, 1960s-1970s

The 1960s were transitional years for Iran that saw the growth of political Islam. Mirsepassi identifies this era as the third phase of Iranian modernity and Mehran Kamrava associates this era as the third wave of Iranian intellectuals.<sup>55</sup> Davari's higher education and early career coincides with this era and was impacted by its ideological currents. The political events of the 1950s and 1960s such as the defeat of the National Front in the 1953 coup and again in 1963 created the conditions, which allowed for the

<sup>52</sup> Nasr contends that in 1978 Empress Farah Pahlavi asked him to become the president of her "Special Office." Due to the Shah's illness, Farah and her "Special Office" became the de-facto executive body in place of the Shah, and Farah directed the replacement and *paksazi* (purification) of many members of the *Darbar* (royal court). It was through his position in this office that Nasr was able to mediate between key Ulema and the *Darbar*. Nasr claims that the majority of the Ulema did not favour an outright revolution but rather reforms in Iran, and he, through his proximity and influence with the *Darbar* and his long-term relations with many of the Ayatollah's in Iran would act as a bridge for needed political reforms. In fact he claims that after the unrests in Tabriz, the Ulema approached him with a plan for the creation of an Islamic Constitutional Monarchy. See, Seyyed Hussein Nasr and Ramin Jahanbegloo, *Dar Josteju-ye Amr-e Qodsi* (Tehran: Nashrani, 2006), 185-187.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>54</sup> The official website of the Iranian Institute of Philosophy.  
<<http://www.irip.ir/about/index.aspx?lang=En>.>

<sup>55</sup> See Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization* and Mehran Kamrava, *Iran's Intellectual Revolution*.

emergence of Islamic oriented critical theories to the Pahlavi's modernization project.<sup>56</sup> The University's support for a Pahlavi-projected national identity prevented its emergence as an independent site for instruction and debate on various approaches to Iran's socio-political development. This deficiency in Iran's higher center's of education further strengthened the political vacuum, encouraging the growth of political Islam. Davari's entrance into the University of Tehran in 1954 coincided with a unique moment in Iranian history: The next twenty years was an accelerated move towards the Pahlavi vision for modernity and the growing momentum of a viable, political Islamic ideology.

Mirsepasi calls the 1953 to 1979 period, the third phase of Iranian modernity and associates it with the emergence of Islamic discourses of authenticity. The rise of political Islam at this time is seen as an alternative or reflexive discourse to overcome Western centric projects of modernization.<sup>57</sup> Several critical theories, such as those proposed by Ali Shariati, Morteza Motahheri, and Jalal Al-Ahmad, were developed during this period and contributed to the production of ideologies centering on the re-emergence of Islam as a "totalizing agent" to challenge the cultural aspects of Western modernity in directing Iran's scientific, political and institutional development.<sup>58</sup> The movement to politicize Islam while arguing for its compatibility with modernity gained intellectual currency within and outside the Pahlavi higher education system.<sup>59</sup> To be fair, certain clerics of the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911) had used the same rhetoric of compatibility between Islam and modernity in eliciting public support; however, as Keddie points out, many of these clerics were disingenuous in their Islamic beliefs.<sup>60</sup> The new proponents of Islamic modernism such as Ali Shariati, Motahheri, and Al-Ahmad genuinely believed in this compatibility and a brief look at their ideas strengthens Davari's historic placement within this era's ideological currency.

<sup>56</sup> The National Front never regained its prominent position, making it evident that the short lived provisional government of Mehdi Bazargan was the last step in the gradual marginalization of secularist politics in Iran.

<sup>57</sup> Ali Mirsepasi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 94.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 133-138.

<sup>59</sup> Here, I am referring to the writings of intellectuals such as Nasr and Fardid that were faculty at Tehran University, Irano-Marxist intellectuals such as Shariati, and intellectuals from within Iran's traditional Islamic centers of higher education such as Motahheri.

<sup>60</sup> Nikkie Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," 275.

Ali Shariati (1933-1977) was a twentieth-century Iranian intellectual who promoted the return to self, in his conception of an authentic Iranian identity. He became a popular intellectual in Iran during the 1960s-1970s and was an ideological influence for many urban middle-class Iranians who gravitated towards his ideas of the Irano-Islamic modern. Shariati wanted to reconcile Shi'ism with modernization by regaining Shi'ism's cultural and religious traditions as a precursor to modernization on its own terms, thus opposing the Pahlavi vision for modernization.<sup>61</sup>

There is an apparent contradiction in Shariati's ideology that needs to be addressed here. Shariati is opposed to Western cultural, economic, and political hegemony; but he is not opposed to Western science or theory. In fact, Shariati was trained in and employed Western social-scientific methodologies in his writings, even to attack traditional Islamic sciences. This is due to the fact that Ali Shariati's Islam was "Shi'ism combined with an eclectic synthesis of non-Muslim and non-Iranian ideas, including socialism, Marxism, existentialism, the writings of certain third world theorists, and esoteric themes and metaphors from the Perso-Islamic mystic tradition of Sufis."<sup>62</sup> He stated that a nation must regain its cultural and religious heritage before it can fight imperialism and incorporate Western technology.<sup>63</sup> The use of Western and Irano-Islamic knowledge in developing an alternative to Pahlavi models of an Iranian identity by Shariati displays a hybrid quality.<sup>64</sup> According to Mirsepassi, Shariati was influenced by the "anti-Enlightenment philosophical tradition of Heidegger, Corbin, and so forth,"<sup>65</sup> putting him closer to Davari, methodologically, through use of anti-Enlightenment philosophy. His political philosophy, however, differs somewhat from Davari's philosophical support of *Velayat-e faqih*. Shariati, borrowing from Marxism, postulates collective agency in arguing that the role of government is to cultivate society and

<sup>61</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 13.

<sup>62</sup> Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press), 97.

<sup>63</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 121.

<sup>64</sup> "He freely used a wide variety of arguments, concepts, and terminologies from both the Islamic tradition and western philosophies and social theories (notably Marxism and existentialism)." Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 98.

<sup>65</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Political Islam, Iran and the Enlightenment*, 40. Please note that the "anti-Enlightenment" characterization of Shariati is problematic and is contextualized here within the specific time and debates pertaining to a rise in the use of philosophy in support of political Islam.

individuals towards perfection. Thus, while limiting individual freedom, the concept of 'government' here implies a popular (socialist or Leftist) form of government.<sup>66</sup>

Another Iranian intellectual of this era who promoted an idea of the Irano-Islamic modernity is Jalal Al-Ahmad (1923-1969), a contemporary of Davari. Al-Ahmad is best known for his publication *Gharbzadegi (Westoxication)*, a term first coined by Ahmad Fardid (1912-1994), a professor of philosophy at University of Tehran. In this book, Al-Ahmad criticizes Western modernity and its impact on Iranian life and identity. However, his other publication, *Dar Khedmat va Khiyanat-e Rowshanfekran (On the Service and Treason of the Intellectuals)*, is more relevant to this study.

In this book, Al-Ahmad criticizes the formation of Iranian intellectuals starting in the Constitutional Revolutionary era, associating them with elitism and Europeanism; both factors in their, "alienation from their native traditional environment and having a 'scientific worldview.'"<sup>67</sup> More interestingly, Al-Ahmad points to the dualism in Iranian education as being detrimental to the propagation of native intellectuals.<sup>68</sup> Both of Al-Ahmad's criticisms point directly to the aforementioned intellectuals who played a role in the creation of modern education in Iran, including the founders of the University of Tehran. Ironically, Al-Ahmad was trained within this system, having received his primary and post secondary education in Iran, another similarity he shares with Davari.

While criticizing Westernized intellectuals and education in Iran, Al-Ahmad proposed the abandonment of universalism and a return to the roots of an Iranian identity, in order to create a localized synthesis for modernity.<sup>69</sup> He used the term "liberation to describe reconciling of Islamic tradition with industrial and technical modernity,"<sup>70</sup> without the adaptation of Western values. Thus, like Davari and Shariati, Al-Ahmad employs hybridity in presenting his ideas on a modern Iranian identity.

<sup>66</sup> Please note that Ali Mirsepassi views German nihilistic thought (Heidegger and Junger) as having the dominant effect on Shariati's envisioned role of government.

<sup>67</sup> Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 90.

<sup>68</sup> Jalal Al-Ahmad, *Dar Khedmat va Khiyanat-e Rowshanfekran* (Tehran, 1977), 45.

<sup>69</sup> Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 100-108.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

Another Iranian intellectual with an ideological impact on the politicization of Islam in Iranian society was Ayatollah Morteza Motahheri (1920-1979). Motahheri was part of a group of prominent clerics, many of whom became key figures in the 1979 Iranian Revolution and subsequent government of the Islamic Republic.<sup>71</sup> In the 1960s, this group of clerics began publication of texts and journals promoting an authentic Irano-Islamic identity and polity. The publication was known as *Maktab-e Tashayo* (School of Shi'ism), and consisted of three volumes and later a monthly lecture series called *Anjoman-e Mahiyaneh-ye Mazhabi* (Monthly Religious Society). According to Mirsepassi, "the clerics and lay intellectuals of the Monthly Religious Society paid little attention to the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions. They were more concerned with making Shi'ism attractive to youth, and with making a political impact, than they were with disseminating purely religious propaganda."<sup>72</sup> More significantly, they wanted to, "reform and modernize the structure of Shi'a clerical hierarchy and other religious institutions and practices, and more importantly, [worked] on the construction of a new theory of politics and political leadership by the Shi'a *faqih* (jurisconsult)."<sup>73</sup>

Shariati, Al-Ahmad and Motahheri, operating outside of the state's official centers of higher education, were ideologues if not educators, who influenced Iranian thinking about the role of Islam in modern politics and society. Furthermore, they combined elements of traditional Islamic culture with Western European modern culture when presenting their ideas. Thus, they shared the subject of Islam and Western modernity in a conciliatory approach with Davari. He differs from them mainly in the use of philosophical methodology and institutional support through his profession. These differences are clear in the context of Davari's university training.

<sup>71</sup> According to Mirsepassi, "the composition of the participants in the discussions is in itself very significant. They were Morteza Motahhari, later the most prominent ideologue of the Islamic Republic; 'Allamah Tabataba'i, the prominent Shi'i theologian and Motahhari's mentor; Mohammad Beheshti, the second most important political figure of the Islamic Republic in postrevolution-ary Iran; Mahmud Taleqani, a prominent nationalist clerical figure in Shi'i politics in Iran in the 1960s and 1970s; Mehdi Bazargan, a long-time nationalist religious activist and the first prime minister of the Islamic Republic; Abu al-Fazl Zanjani, a liberal clerical activist; and Morteza Jaza'iri, a member of the Shi'i clergy active in the movement of Islamic politics. The fact that these figures later constituted the most important leaders of the Islamic Republic should not be viewed as coincidental." Ali Mirsepassi-Ashtiyani, "The Crisis of Secular Politics and the Rise of Political Islam in Iran," *Social Text*, no. 38 (1994): 69.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 69.

## Davari at University of Tehran:

Davari developed his philosophical outlook at the University of Tehran that led to his eventual support of *velayat-e faqih* in the early 1980s.<sup>74</sup> After entering the University, Davari earned a Bachelor of Arts (1958) and a Doctorate (1967) in Philosophy, and he has remained there as a Professor of Philosophy. In the 1980s, Davari commented on the creation of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tehran and its relation to the teaching of philosophy at Iran's religious seminary institutions:

It appears that over sixty years ago when the school for teachers was established (*Dar al-Mo'lemine 'Ali*) philosophy became part of its curriculum...in the School of Humanities at the University of Tehran a discipline called philosophy and educational training (*falsafeh va olum-e tarbiyati*) was established...In sum, the teaching of philosophy in our country happened at two institutions; one was the teaching of Islamic philosophy in the seminaries in the fields of *feqh*, principles of *feqh*, *hadith*, *tafsir*, *kalam*, and medicine – this use of philosophy continues to this day. And the other way was an abbreviated study of Islamic philosophy and a shallow teaching of new European philosophy in the universities.<sup>75</sup>

Davari explains the reasons for this “shallow” teaching of modern philosophy in another publication. He states that, “when the school for teachers (*Dar al-Mo'lemine 'Ali*) and the University of Tehran were established, there were one or two people who had a limited understanding of new philosophy and there were no textbooks [in Farsi] for teaching this topic.”<sup>76</sup> He recalls that when he became a philosophy student in the faculty of philosophy and education at the School of Humanities in the University of Tehran in 1955, the lecturers in philosophy were either self-taught or had studied philosophy as part of their general curriculum in European universities.<sup>77</sup> In addition to the limited philosophical knowledge of the faculty, Davari notes that a type of confusion in curriculum led to this shallow understanding:

<sup>74</sup> He was a student at the University from 1954 through 1967. Many of his arguments in favor of an Islamic government appear in his book, *Enqelab-e Islami va Vaz'-e Konuni 'Alam*, which is discussed in chapter four.

<sup>75</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi* (Tehran: Beyn-ol-mellal Publication, 2007), 276.

<sup>76</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh-ye Mo'aser-e Iran* (Tehran: Sokhan Publications, 2011), 255.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

Maybe the first class for new [modern] philosophy taught at the university level was methodology and this continued until recently as a class in philosophy and general education. And I taught this course for many years; albeit with some critical reflection... Methodology, although important on its own, should not be mistaken as philosophy.... We did not mould methodology as philosophy but rather thought that modern philosophy is the same as methodology.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, Davari argues that a lack of translated instructional texts made learning difficult for him and other students. Interestingly, his critique also extends to texts on Islamic philosophy: “not only were there few text books on modern philosophy but there were also few appropriate texts for the instruction of Islamic philosophy as well.”<sup>79</sup> To remedy the situation, faculty (*Ostad*) such as Fazil Tuni and Seyyed Kazem A’sar who taught Islamic philosophy created Farsi readers. Davari recalls attending Dr. Khansari’s lectures, instructed with the use of two textbook published based on Dr. Tuni’s lecture notes and complains, “how much can one understand from one to two hours of lecture in a week.”<sup>80</sup>

Davari has also commented on the courses offered during his undergraduate years at the University of Tehran. A closer look at them reveals the scope of Davari’s philosophical training, which led to his use of both Western and Islamic philosophy in his later publications and arguments. As an undergraduate student at the University, Davari studied logic and Islamic philosophy with Dr. Fazil Tuni, logic with Dr. Khansari, and names Seyyed Kazem A’sar Tehrani, Gholam-Hossein Sadiqqi, Yahya Mehdavai, Reza Sahfq, Mehdi Jalali, Ali Akbar Siyasi, Issa Sadiq, and Ahmad Fardid among his undergraduate faculty.<sup>81</sup> Thus, he was exposed to the thoughts of Siyasi and Sadiq who were among the founders of the University enjoying special relations with the *Darbar* (royal court).

Davari expands on the courses and offerings in the Department of Philosophy during the 1950s. He states that aside from a two-hour class called *Falsafeh* (Philosophy) and two courses, one on logic and one on Islamic Philosophy, there were

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>81</sup> Reza Davari, *‘Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 11.

five other courses offered in the discipline of philosophy. There were three courses on the history of philosophy, periodically separated into Greek, medieval and modern and taught by Dr. Gholam Hussein Saddiqi, Dr. Yahya Mehdavi and Dr. Sadeq Rezazadeh, respectively. There was a course on metaphysics and one on ethics taught by Dr. Muzaffar Baqai'i Tehrani. Davari adds that he had not completed his Bachelors Degree when Dr. Fardid joined the faculty in the Department of Philosophy: "He [Fardid] was oriented towards contemporary philosophy and spoke (*migoftand*) of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre."<sup>82</sup>

In 1958, Davari passed the entrance exam for his Doctorate studies and spent the next eight years earning his PhD. He mentions professors A'sar, Mehdavi, Saddiqi, Shafq, and Fardid among his PhD faculty, but does not mention Nasr.<sup>83</sup> Nasr, on the other hand, names Davari among one of his best students, and states that in 1958 Drs. Mehdavi, Khansari and himself were the main faculty supervising all PhD studies at the department of philosophy.<sup>84</sup>

The type of philosophy he was exposed to at the University of Tehran influenced Davari's thoughts and writings. In particular, he was exposed to German anti-modern critical theory, mainly Heideggerian philosophy, through Ahmad Fardid. As well, he was exposed to Islamic philosophers such as Mulla Sadra and Suhrawardi, through Seyyed Hossein Nasr. It was during his undergraduate encounter with Western critical theory that Davari became familiar with the philosophy of Fardid, who would become his mentor.<sup>85</sup>

Davari was introduced to Fardid in the political melancholy that followed the 1953 coup. There were government crackdowns of intellectual activists with Leftist or religious backgrounds. Davari tells us that it was hard to find politically correct philosophical topics to research at the university since both Marxist and non-Marxist professors were

<sup>82</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh-ye Mo'aser-e Iran*, 260.

<sup>83</sup> Reza Davari, *'Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 11.

<sup>84</sup> Seyyed Hussein Nasr and Ramin Jahanbegloo, *Dar Josteju-ye Amr-e Qodsi*, 106.

<sup>85</sup> Reza Davari, "Tarikh-e Tajaddod-e ma Zeyl-e Tarikh-e Qarb Ast," <http://bonyad-fardid.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=10> (accessed 9 February, 2010).

reluctant to teach.<sup>86</sup> Under these circumstances, Davari was introduced to Fardid as a contemporary philosopher. Davari admits that he had never heard of Heidegger before meeting Fardid and that Fardid, as his teacher, changed his philosophical views on positivism and socialism.<sup>87</sup> Davari's interest in Heidegger is primarily based on him being a student of and in some ways the ideological successor to Fardid's anti-Enlightenment, anti-Western philosophy. Despite this strong influence, Davari has denied being a Fardidian on several occasions.<sup>88</sup>

Fortunately for Davari, Nasr began to change and expand the curriculum found at the Department of Philosophy around the same time Davari began his graduate studies in 1958. Nasr states that the College of *Adabiyat* (Humanities) was truly the real center of thought in Iran and in the Department of Philosophy positivism - more in the tradition of Immanuel Kant and not in the new Anglo-Saxon tradition - was the prevalent school of thought in the 1950s.<sup>89</sup> According to Nasr, nineteenth century French positivism cast a wide shadow in the Department and was taught by faculty such as Dr. Siyasi, Dr. Saddiqi, and Dr. Mehdavi, who had all been educated in France. Nasr had a favourable view of Max Sheller and Edmund Husserl and their school of thought, phenomenology.<sup>90</sup> However, he was not impressed with Heideggerian philosophy: "Heidegger attempts to reconcile with "Being" but is never able to truly achieve that goal."<sup>91</sup> Nasr had an intellectual opposition to positivism and by extension Dr. Saddiqi. Thus, he tried to reintroduce Islamic philosophy, as well as Anglo-Saxon philosophy, to give a more balanced and complete philosophical education to students. To accomplish this goal, Nasr hired Dr. Abul-Hossein Sha'rani to teach Islamic Philosophy and Daryush Shayegan to teach Anglo-Saxon philosophy.<sup>92</sup>

Davari states that he had an interest in political philosophy from the very beginning of his studies at the University. He believed that politics had the capability of

<sup>86</sup> Reza Davari, *'Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 14.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>89</sup> Seyyed Hussein Nasr and Ramin Jahanbegloo, *Dar Josteju-ye Amr-e Qodsi*, 102.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 102, 89-91.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 89. Nasr does mention that he liked Heidegger's views on technology and poetry.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 103-104. Davari does not mention either faculty in his writings training at the University.

solving all social problems and later came to the understanding that politics needs a strong foundation to be effective.<sup>93</sup> His dissertation topic was on the foundational basis of politics with foundation coming to mean a philosophical approach: "Davari's doctoral dissertation was on Greek political thought and Islamic philosophy, and he has published two treatises on Islamic philosophy based on his dissertation."<sup>94</sup> It is evident from his research that he had a special interest in political ethics based on a Greco-Islamic philosophical tradition. It is also worth noting, that in addition to writing a PhD thesis, Davari was asked by Dr. A'sar to write an article about the "Unity of Existence," to act as a testimonial for his mastery of Islamic philosophy. Davari explains that some founding faculty of the Department, such as A'sar, Tuni, Homa-i, and Foruzanfar had not studied at universities, alluding to their traditional Islamic education at seminaries. Thus, the article he was asked to write acted as a *resaleh*, a treatise signifying the completion of seminary education in which a religious scholar becomes a Mojtahed.<sup>95</sup> The duality in Iran's education system existed even at its most modern center of learning affecting Davari's training.

This duality in training and education continues, even in the post-revolutionary era. Davari's comments about the University of Tehran's Department of Philosophy in the 1990s are reflective of this duality: "At the University of Tehran, the faculty of Islamic philosophy are usually graduates of seminaries while the faculty of European philosophy, or better stated the history of philosophy are mostly trained in Europe and the US."<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, according to Davari, the Department's faculty of Islamic Philosophy mostly belong to the school of Mulla Sadra and uphold the findings and teaching of this philosopher.<sup>97</sup> At the same time, philosophy continues to be taught at the seminaries: "In the religious seminaries, although *feqh* and the principles of *feqh* constitute the major disciplines, philosophy has always been taught as well."<sup>98</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Reza Davari, *'Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 49.

<sup>94</sup> Farzin Vahdat, "Post-Revolutionary Islamic Discourses on Modernity in Iran: Expansion and Contraction of Human Subjectivity," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 35 no. 4 (2003): 603.

<sup>95</sup> Reza Davari, *'Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 11.

<sup>96</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi*, 277-278.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

Davari has also commented on the curriculum, the availability of textbooks and unique position of University of Tehran in the field of philosophy in the 1990s. He states that the undergraduate curriculum in philosophy included: preparatory courses in psychology and sociology, a brief study of *feqh* (jurisprudence), *manteq* (logic), *kalam* (theology) and Islamic philosophy, the history of European philosophy, the philosophy of history, the philosophy of knowledge, natural philosophy, political philosophy, and the history of Islamic philosophy.<sup>99</sup> Thus, the curriculum expanded to include more Islamic philosophy and Western social sciences such as sociology in the post-revolutionary period. At the same time, one of the problems identified by Davari in teaching philosophy at the University is that while there were ample educational texts in Islamic philosophy, there were insufficient translated texts of European philosophy. In particular, according to Davari, it was very difficult to obtain an introductory book to both Islamic and European philosophy in the 1990s.<sup>100</sup> Finally, Davari states that in 1991, the University of Tehran was the only Iranian university that gave out a PhD in philosophy.<sup>101</sup> Thus, in the sixty plus years since the introduction of philosophy as a discipline in an Iranian university, the University of Tehran remains the only institution to train Iran's native doctorates of philosophy. This uniqueness helps to elevate the stature of the Department of Philosophy at this university.

It is clear that several historical factors affected Davari's training and academic life, which in turn contributed to his conception of a modern Iranian identity, defined and defended through the use of Islamic and Western philosophy. Davari was born and raised in a small, traditional Iranian town and moved to a rapidly modernizing capital in the 1950s. The University of Tehran, where he trained as an intellectual, was in part a site for the academic legitimization of the state's preferred national identity, a secular-modern-monarchy. Some members of faculty at the Department of Philosophy were involved in the creation of philosophies, fusing aspects of Western modernity to pre-Islamic Iranian models of kingship and medieval Islamic philosophy. These philosophies helped support why Iranians had to live the way they now did and how this way was compatible with and a continuation of their Iranian identity.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 279-280.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 279.

The Pahlavi's preferred mode of rule, a modern secular-modern-monarchy projected an Iranian identity that was a construct and not shared by the majority of Iranians in the 1960s. In addition, the suppression of the Tudeh and the National Front prevented the emergence of alternative politics and their accompanying models of Iranian identity to emerge.<sup>102</sup> This led to the growth of a political Islam in Iran that projected an Irano-Islamic identity. As an academic in the 1960s and 1970s, Davari was exposed to this growing intellectual current, including the works of Shariati, Al-Ahmad, and Motahheri. Even at the Department of Philosophy, faculty such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Ahmad Fardid had started incorporating aspects of an Islamic identity into their philosophies.

In my view, Davari's personal and academic experience during the Pahlavi period influenced his subsequent philosophy. Davari's conception of an Iranian identity, as expressed in his philosophy, is a product of his training during a stage in Iranian modernity that Ali Mirsepassi refers to as "Islamic discourses of authenticity." An overview of Davari's philosophy, from his ontology to political philosophy, in particular, the manner in which Davari utilizes philosophy in support of *velayat-e faqih* is the subject of the next chapter.

<sup>102</sup> In particular, there were Iranians who gravitated towards socialist political models of Western modernity, commonly known as the Left in twentieth century Iranian historiography. At the same time, there were Iranians that gravitated towards a democratic and secular political model of Western modernity, generally known as the National Front (*Jebhe-ye Melli*) in twentieth century Iranian historiography.

## Chapter 3.

### **Davari the Philosopher: An Analysis of Davari's Philosophy Supporting *Velayat-e Faqih***

In this chapter, several aspects of Davari's philosophy will be examined. In particular, I give an overview of Davari's philosophy from his ontology to his political philosophy, which reads in support of *velayat-e faqih*. I argue that Davari's philosophy in support of *velayat-e faqih*, while exhibiting both Western and Islamic philosophical traditions, is primarily rooted in Islamic philosophy, with a shallow understanding of Heideggerian philosophy used mainly in affirming his anti-Enlightenment stance. Next, I demonstrate the link made by Davari between his philosophy and *Gharbzadegi*, which he uses to strengthen his support of *velayat-e faqih*. Thus, this chapter is concerned with the technique used by Davari, resulting from his training as demonstrated in the previous chapter and leading to his ideology that supports a state-sponsored Irano-Islamic identity, as discussed in the next chapter.

### **Davari's Philosophy**

Davari's training in Islamic and Western philosophy at the University of Tehran primarily influences his philosophical outlook. He intertwines religion with philosophy in an asymmetric relationship that defines the application of reason, in which the sacred presupposes logic. In the 1980s, Davari repeatedly argued that once Iranian philosophy is cured and purified of its Western philosophical contamination, it could serve as the "true cultural fountainhead needed to rescue Iran from its ill encounter with modernity."<sup>1</sup> Since Davari holds the sacred as the premise of his ontology, he is able to incorporate

<sup>1</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh Chist*, 71.

religion, in general, and the theological argument for the Guardianship of the Jurist (*velayat-e faqih*), in particular, into his political philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in understanding Davari's philosophical support of *velayat-e faqih*, one must begin with a look at his ontology. This approach serves two functions. First, it outlines Davari's understanding of philosophy and its relation to society. Second, it provides the basis for his Heideggerian interpretation or the hybridity observed in his writings by scholars such as Mirsepassi, Kamrava and Boroujerdi.

In the 1980s, Davari defined philosophy as "the process engaged by the philosopher in which he expands on the meaning and essence of a question and not just answers the question."<sup>3</sup> He states that philosophy is "the travel from appearance to the depth of issues in reaching the source and the truth (*seyr az fetrat-e avval be fetrat-e sani*) [of that appearance or phenomenon]."<sup>4</sup> Thus, for Davari, philosophy is the uncovering of a deeper meaning in the ordinary, or the essence of a thought, a travel from an outward (*zاهر*) to an inward (*باطن*) truth.<sup>5</sup> In particular, philosophy is a "science in which the essence of things appears."<sup>6</sup> This phenomenological approach to philosophy resembles that of Mulla Sadra who drew distinctions between external objects and forms created by the mind.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Davari, in the tradition of Mulla Sadra and in the language of Aristotle, divides *fetrat* (essence) into primary and secondary (*zاهر* and *باطن*) and considers philosophy's nature to be of the secondary *fetrat*.<sup>8</sup> However, from this point, Davari, like Heidegger, departs from the Aristotelian tradition

<sup>2</sup> Reza Davari, *'Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 78-82.

<sup>3</sup> Reza Davari, "Falsafeh Chist?" 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Zailan Moris, "The Essential Relation between Revelation and Philosophy in Islam and Its Importance in Understanding the Nature and History of Islamic Philosophy," in *the Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, ed. Lewis Edwin et al, (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Co., 2001), 622.

<sup>6</sup> Reza Davari, "The Shared Quest between Islamic Philosophy and Modern Phenomenology," in *The Passions of the Soul in the Metamorphosis of Becoming*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2003): 241.

<sup>7</sup> Mulla Sadra plays an important part in the formation of Davari's philosophy. See Reza Davari, "A Glance at the World of Image," *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology on the Perennial Issue of Microcosm and Macrocosm*. ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Reza Davari, "Dar Dars-e Falsafeh Cheh Miamuzim va az Amuzesh-e an Cheh Bahreh Mibarim?" *Falsafenameh-ye Falsafi*, 9 (2004): 55. Reza Davari, *Falsafeh Chist*, 154-155.

by criticizing Aristotle's introduction of logic as a preliminary condition of philosophical inquiry. Instead, he argues that *manteq* (logic as analytics) plays a secondary or interpretive role after the phenomenological discovery of philosophical thought.

The classification of logic as secondary in the discovery of philosophical thought is significant in Davari's philosophy. Using logic, there is only one truth for a conditional if-then statement. This is also congruent with the Islamic concept of *sirat al-mostaqim* (the Righteous Path). Generally speaking, any conditional statement such as: "If John is ten, then he is in primary school," can only have one true answer along with infinite incorrect answers. Since logic concerns the relation of statements, Davari examines the origin of the statement, i.e. how we know John is ten.<sup>9</sup> Davari is arguing that we know this logical truth through a divine pre-logical process, described as *ishraq* (illumination) and found in the practice of *tasavvof* (mysticism). This relegation of logic also allows for the negation of pluralism in Davari's political philosophy, strengthening his argument in favour of *velayat-e faqih*.<sup>10</sup>

According to Davari, Aristotle introduced logic to philosophy and made it a precondition for the validity of philosophical argumentation. Davari argues that "Aristotle expanded and defined philosophy and introduced disagreements on the nature of philosophy and, in the process, Aristotle also negated the Socratic view of philosophy."<sup>11</sup> He states that logic cannot be the pre-existing condition for philosophy since philosophy predates it. Rather, logic is the creation of Plato and Aristotle and holds no sacred place in philosophy.<sup>12</sup> By arguing that philosophy predates the introduction of logic, Davari redefines philosophy, relegating logic to a secondary position. Next, he addresses problems in his omission of an analytical-first approach. First, he must account for

<sup>9</sup> This is an oversimplification, the obvious answer is as recorded in his birth certificate, and in the way we measure time.

<sup>10</sup> Davari's argument holds true, even if we consider other political models in Islam, such as the Shora (consultative assembly), for that only changes the process of 'how do we know' not the fact that there is only one truth, one correct way of implementing political philosophy in this case.

<sup>11</sup> Reza Davari, "Dar Dars-e Falsafeh Cheh Miamuzim," 62. Here, Davari is referring to Socrates' character in the *Republic* when he cannot forward the argument for love any further with the aid of reason.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

Islamic philosophical traditions, such as *kalam*, that also take an analytic approach to logic. Second, Davari must establish the role of logic in his philosophy.

Davari accounts for the Islamic tradition of *kalam*, first, through its history. According to Davari, during the Middle Ages in the Islamic realms, “a form of knowledge known as *kalam* came into being (*Elm-e kalam be vojud amad*) in which reason is employed for the proof of principled beliefs (*baray-ye esbat-e usul-e e’teqadi estedlal mishavad*).”<sup>13</sup> Davari states that it is a misunderstanding to see *kalam* as a method of using reason to substantiate belief since, “*kalam* does not come into being without the use of logic (*manteq*); however, logic became something different within *kalam*, in the same manner that the principles of *feqh* employ logic but are not governed by it [logic].”<sup>14</sup> Davari adds that within the practice of *kalam* grew a philosophy that, although not based in prophecy, considered existence synonymous with God.<sup>15</sup> Thus, for Davari, although logic is applied in *kalam*, the type of logic used is qualitatively different from that of philosophy. Davari does not elaborate on the topic any further; in particular he does not address the notion that *kalam* can be understood as theology, which defines the scope of its logic.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the introduction of philosophy into Islamic civilization was made difficult by the opposition of certain Islamic theorists and jurists, such as Ghazali, who opposed logic.<sup>17</sup> Davari argues that in the Islamic philosophical

<sup>13</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> According to Wolfson, the term *kalam* has several meanings and usages in the Islamic tradition. It could mean “‘speech’ or word,’ [and] is used in Arabic translations of the works of Greek philosophers as a rendering of the term *logos* in its various senses of ‘word,’ ‘reason,’ and ‘argument.’” In addition, the term *kalam*, “was applied to a particular system of thought which arose in Islam prior to the rise of Philosophy... its exponents called simply *mutakallimun* were contrasted with [philosophers].” Finally, another meaning of *kalam* according to Wolfson “means theology in contradistinction to *feqh*, which means jurisprudence.” It is my view that Davari’s conception of *kalam* is closer in definition to this third iteration, or the use of reason in theology. See Harry Austryn Wolfson, *the Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 1-4.

<sup>17</sup> Reza Davari, “Chera Falsafeh Miamuzim?” *Elahiyat and Falsafeh University Publications* (11 November 2003), 2.

tradition, logic is based on Truth (*haqq*), while in the Western philosophical tradition logic has acquired independence from truth and has become a source of power.<sup>18</sup>

This particular understanding of logic allows Davari to account for analytical approaches to philosophy in the Islamic tradition and presents the proper station for logic in his own philosophy. He includes logic in his philosophical process by demoting it from a precondition for the validity of a philosophical thought to a secondary or interpretive role.<sup>19</sup> This shift is made apparent as Davari begins to criticize certain Western philosophical methodologies such as hermeneutics. For example, in his “Hermanutik va Ma’na-ye an dar Asr-e hazer,” “Hermeneutics and Its Contemporary Meaning,” Davari argues that hermeneutics is a part of modernity and has been reduced to theories of understanding. According to him, Western philosophy is based on hermeneutics, and he cites the works of Foucault and Derrida as examples of hermeneutical philosophical methodologies.<sup>20</sup> He states that, “contemporary Western philosophy is hermeneutics whether it goes by that name or not,” and gives credit to Heidegger’s *Being and Time* in reaching this conclusion.<sup>21</sup> Davari argues that what the West currently practices as philosophy is in reality an interpretative method of post-philosophical discovery.

According to Davari, “When philosophy appears it appears completely and in its entirety and is later categorized and analyzed with the aid of logic [by the

<sup>18</sup> According to Zailan Moris, “Islamic philosophers identified philosophy or falsafeh with *hekmat*, a Quranic term which means ‘wisdom’ and which is also used to denote the discipline of philosophy...The goal of the philosopher in theoretical knowledge is to gain truth and in practical knowledge to behave in accordance with that truth... the term *al-haqiqah* means both ‘truth’ and ‘reality.’ In the perspective of the Quran, that which is true is also real and that which is real is necessarily true. One of the Names of God is *al-Haqq* meaning ‘The Absolutely True’ or ‘The Absolutely Real.’ Both Suhrawardi and Mulla Sadra conceived of philosophy as the supreme science which seeks to discover the truth concerning the nature of things and which requires both the perfection of the theoretical faculty, as well as the purification of the soul. The philosophical truth must be realized within the total being of the individual and not merely in the mind (mind here means both reason/logic and intellect). In their philosophies, philosophical *hekmat* can only be attained through the combination of discursive philosophy and spiritual practice.” See, Zailan Moris, 620-624. Zailan Moris, like Davari, is a former student of Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

<sup>19</sup> Reza Davari, “Dar Dars-e Falsafeh Cheh Miamuzim va az Amuzesh-e an Cheh Bahreh Mibarim?” *Flasafenameh-ye Falsafi* 9 (2004), 63.

<sup>20</sup> Reza Davari, “Hermanutik va Ma’na-ye an dar Asr-e hazer,” <http://bonyad-e-fardid.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=89> (accessed 9 February, 2010), 16.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

philosopher].”<sup>22</sup> He states that philosophy appears from a divine source whose validity is unchallenged.<sup>23</sup> Davari states that real philosophy is akin to “a fire that engulfs the soul of the thinker and in its breadth, this fire becomes the foundation of all scientific and social understandings.”<sup>24</sup> This understanding of philosophy, or correctly stated, approach to philosophy is explicitly related to the sacred: “Philosophy is the divine knowledge which serves as the fountainhead for all other knowledge; this is due to its intrinsic quality.”<sup>25</sup> In short, Davari’s ontology postulates that the philosopher is divinely inspired, and applies logic to that inspiration in understanding being.

In grounding his ontological position in the sacred, Davari argues that the implementation of reason as a necessary condition of philosophical inquiry has caused separation (forgetfulness) towards this divine knowledge (Being). According to Vahdat, building on Heidegger’s premise that “the proper station of humans is to be attentive and heedful toward the Being,”<sup>26</sup> Davari argues that through the application of logic, man has neglected the real purpose of philosophy – the pursuit of knowledge – by reducing it to reason and mathematics in the form of theoretical physics. In this line of thought, logic has corrupted the true nature of philosophy in the Western tradition and this neglect is seen in the Heideggerian argument concerning the forgetfulness of man towards Being. Davari understands Heidegger’s concepts of “forgetfulness” (*vergessenheit*) and “Being”

<sup>22</sup> Reza Davari, “Dar Dars-e Falsafeh Cheh Miamuzim,” 63. *Padid*, the verb used here by Davari, has a phenomenological connotation and a supernatural quality related to the sacred. In fact, the Farsi word used for phenomenology by Davari and others is *padideh shenasi* or the study of phenomenon.

<sup>23</sup> Davari’s understanding of philosophy as appearing in entirety from a divine source is somewhat similar to the Islamic tradition of the Night of Power (*leylat al-qadr*) in which the Quran appeared in its entirety, from a divine source, and was placed in the Prophet’s heart.

<sup>24</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh Chist*, 76. Here, Davari’s utilizes evocative Farsi words with Sufi connotations, such as “spark” and “light up the heart of man.”

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>26</sup> Farzin Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut*, 191.

(*sein*) as “separation” (*jodayi*) and “existence” (*vojud*), respectively.<sup>27</sup> This is due to a shift here in connotation after translation into Farsi.<sup>28</sup> According to Farhad Khosrokhavar, this forgetfulness can be translated into a religious idiom by saying that “the abeyance in which the being has fallen in the West is equivalent to refusal by the West to recognize the sacred.”<sup>29</sup>

Davari states that in seeking a return towards true philosophy emanating from divine knowledge, mystical practices within Sufism (*Tasavvof*) should presuppose reason. In the Irano-Islamic Sufi tradition, sometimes known as *Erfan*, truth about reality is revealed in a meditative process. Davari argues that this meditative process is the fountainhead of knowledge, a stage that presupposes logic and reason in philosophical discovery. In particular, Davari is asserting that the true philosopher submerges his existence in divine truth through the Sufi lens known as the annihilation of the subject. Vahdat argues that,

Davari’s adoption of philosophy of Being, leads him to embrace the Sufi notion of annihilation of the subject, a process that involves a leap from the Heideggerian conceptualizations of the Being, arising from the European’s experience of modernity to the Sufi notions of submerging in the *Haqq* (Truth).<sup>30</sup>

In short, Davari links medieval Islamic philosophy to European modern thought through this leap. This mystical act of submersion in uncovering the Truth is part of the

<sup>27</sup> According to Michael Gillespie, “Heidegger locates the source of this misconception of Being in the thought of the Greeks and especially Plato. The forgetfulness of Being that ends in nihilism is the result of Plato’s redefinition of Being as eternal presence, or what stands in place unchangingly forever. This notion was so persuasive that it seemed to provide the definitive answer to the question of Being, and as a result the question itself was forgotten. In Heidegger’s view, however, this Platonic answer is insufficient. The forgetfulness of the question of Being that it engendered, however, subsequently made it impossible even to recognize this insufficiency. The Platonic conception of Being thus became the guiding premise of the Western [philosophical] tradition. The ever-deepening error that this insufficient premise engenders culminates in nihilism.” Michael Gillespie, “Martin Heidegger,” in *History of Political Philosophy*, edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 890.

<sup>28</sup> Davari most likely read Henry Corbin’s 1939 translation of *Being and Time*, (*Qu’est-ce que la Métaphysique*) and/or became familiar with its concepts through his teacher Ahmad Fardid. The first partial Farsi translation of *Being and Time* was in 2001 by Mahmood Navali and the first complete Farsi translation of *Being and Time* was in 2004 by Siyavash Jamadi.

<sup>29</sup> Farhad Khosrokhavar, “Neo-Conservative Intellectuals in Iran,” 10.

<sup>30</sup> Farzin Vahdat, “Post-Revolutionary Islamic Discourses on Modernity in Iran,” 608.

Islamic philosophical tradition: 'The unity of knower and the known' in the Islamic philosophical tradition is known as "*al-Tawhid*" or the doctrine of divine Unity.<sup>31</sup> This doctrine governed the basis for Islamic philosophical ontology and epistemology in the School of Illumination (*al-Maktab al-Ishraq*).<sup>32</sup> Heidegger is suggesting that we understand reality and Being from a phenomenological perspective; Davari concurs and adds that the correct phenomenological perspective is the one found in the Irano-Islamic mystical practice, this entails unity with Truth.

Having established the source of knowledge in his ontology, Davari expands on philosophy's utility. According to Davari, philosophy has two functions in society. Its first role is educational and determines its relation to other sciences. He argues that philosophy is separate from and above other sciences. He states, "Philosophy is the excellence in knowledge which helps define and explain all other knowledge."<sup>33</sup> For Davari, philosophical inquiry differs from scientific inquiry. Scientific theories are practical in nature while philosophical theories are the realization of the approach to knowledge and action. In other words, philosophy is a form of thought that determines the condition or boundaries of action, stated in a language or approach that differs from that of science.<sup>34</sup> This is most apparent in his use of the word *tahqiq* (the search for *Truth*) for philosophical inquiry. Davari echoes Heidegger's criticism of metaphysics by stating that "the interpretations of the meaning of humanity with modern science, meaning using theoretical physics, is an act of heresy (*yek amr-e shaye' ast*); those engaged in it are opposed to philosophy."<sup>35</sup> In other words, Davari, like Heidegger, is arguing that the deficiency of an analytic-first approach requires a phenomenological approach to philosophy.

Using this phenomenological approach Davari develops his argument for philosophy's second and greater role: public policy. He defines philosophy's relation to public policy by framing political action within rules established by Islamic philosophy: "Philosophy grows within us enabling us to perform certain tasks and to refrain from

<sup>31</sup> Zailan Moris, 621.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Reza Davari, "Falsafeh Chist?" 9.

<sup>34</sup> Reza Davari, "Dar Dars-e Falsafeh Cheh Miamuzim," 58.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 57.

others; thus philosophy sets the limits of power and freedom [in society].”<sup>36</sup> This growth, he argues, is linked to divine knowledge and is intrinsic in nature, a quality that made philosophy inert and deemed unusable in modern science. Plato, Davari argues, shows us the true utility of philosophy as the foundation for all sciences including the proper course of public action.<sup>37</sup> First, however, Davari needs to ground his political philosophy in the Islamic philosophical tradition.

## **Al-Farabi and Mulla Sadra’s Influence in Davari’s Political Philosophy**

In better understanding Davari’s political philosophy leading to his support of *velayat-e faqih*, it is necessary to examine his application of al-Farabi’s (d. 950) and Mulla Sadra’s (d. 1640) political philosophy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, al-Farabi’s philosophy influenced Davari’s thought to a great degree. His PhD dissertation, in 1967, was a comparative study of Greek and Islamic philosophy, paying particular attention to al-Farabi.<sup>38</sup> In his 1998 book, *Falsafeh-ye Madani-ye Farabi*, Davari agrees with al-Farabi in that the correct faith is one based on philosophy, with the understanding that philosophy is divinely inspired.<sup>39</sup> Mulla Sadra’s philosophy also plays a role in Davari’s philosophical development and he often mentions that he is a Sadraian philosopher. Davari links al-Farabi and Mulla Sadra’s political philosophy in several areas. This link is significant as Davari is making a case for the continuity of an Islamic philosophical tradition, extending to himself, which defines a certain type of Islamic

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>37</sup> Reza Davari, “Dar Dars-e Falsafeh Cheh Miamuzim,” 51-53. Here, Davari is using a phenomenological approach to define the premise of the epistemology in his political philosophy.

<sup>38</sup> Davari states that he later republished parts of his PhD thesis in two books titled *Farabi Moases-e Falsafeh-ye Islami* (al-Farabi the Founder of Islamic Philosophy) and *Falsafeh-ye Madani-ye Farabi* (The Religious Philosophy of al-Farabi) that further point to the relation between his political thought and al-Farabi’s philosophy. See Reza Davari, *‘Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 49. Also, on page 14 of this book Davari comments on al-Farabi’s philosophical style in which he often moves through an argument and reaches the conclusion without adequately addressing the premise of the argument, and compares his own writing style with that of al-Farabi.

<sup>39</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh-ye Madani-ye Farabi* (Tehran: Saqi, 1998), 34.

polity. Davari wants to give legitimacy to this tradition – and, by extension, polity – before arguing for its modern manifestation as the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Davari speaks highly of al-Farabi and his contributions to Islamic philosophy, in particular, in al-Farabi's mixing of philosophy and religion. He posits that al-Farabi accepted Greek philosophy and believed that religion and philosophy are one and the same, only differing in language.<sup>40</sup> He states that both philosophers and prophets, according to al-Farabi, gain their knowledge from the active intellect (*'aql-e fa'al*); however, the philosopher learns knowledge in the language of logic (*manteq*) while the prophet learns it from prophecy in the language of parable (*tamsil*). Thus, Davari argues that al-Farabi resolved the epistemological gap between philosophy and Islam, placing the sacred – in the language of divine intellect – as their common source of knowledge. Al-Farabi's solution, more or less, was important and practical in the history of Islam and in particular in Iran's Islamic history.<sup>41</sup>

The theoretical gap, according to Davari, occurs when people consider that the completeness of a prophet is limited to his powers of imagination (*takhayol*). He explores this notion, stating:

In truth, the completeness of a human means that he is complete in all areas of his being...but it is also possible that a human may have a greater growth in one of the four powers of sense (*hasaseh*), movement (*mahrekeh*), imagination (*takhayol*) and reason (*'aql*) than the other three.<sup>42</sup>

In his statement, Davari is arguing that a prophet must be complete in all four faculties (*ensan-e kamel*), whereas a philosopher can match a prophet in the area of reason and perhaps sense and movement, but not in imagination. Davari uses al-Farabi for two purposes: first, to show congruency between philosophy and Islam; second, to indicate the subordination of philosophy to religion. These two arguments are, later on, applied to Mulla Sadra's philosophy in order to establish the necessary qualities of an Islamic leader, an *ensan-e kamel*, even in the Islamic Republic.

<sup>40</sup> Reza Davari, "Molahezati darbarezeh-ye Masa'el-e Keshvar," 144.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Reza Davari, "Ra'is-e Avval-e Madineh dar Nazar-e Mulla Sadra," 67.

First, Davari shows the link between the two philosophers. He states that Mulla Sadra has utilized al-Farabi's philosophy and methods and frequently quoted him in his works, in particular, in regards to the position of philosopher and prophet.<sup>43</sup> Next, Davari shows the similarity between both philosophers' understanding of the complete nature of a prophet. According to Davari, Mulla Sadra stated that the finding of truth is dependent on the completeness of all powers of a human being, most importantly if a person is not a seeker of Truth, then truth will not manifest within him in a correct manner.<sup>44</sup> Also, Mulla Sadra states that a prophet connects to the active intellect through the realm of imagination, but also holds that a prophet, in viewing existence, is not limited to the realm of imagination but has mastered perception, imagination and reason.<sup>45</sup> He adds, "Mulla Sadra has expanded and analyzed al-Farabi's position to such an extent that there is no longer any doubt about the supremacy of a prophet over a philosopher."<sup>46</sup>

Davari concludes the discussion on the superiority of a prophet over a philosopher, by virtue of his perfection (*ensan-e kameh*), in pointing out the subordination of philosophy to religion:

al-Farabi's opinion is that philosophy and the philosopher be placed in the shadow of religion and prophecy, thus the saying about their particular method of acquiring truth no longer suffices in arguing that the philosopher is greater than a prophet.<sup>47</sup>

Davari makes a further distinction between religion and the philosophy of religion: "Hegel says that religion and philosophy are independent of each other and came into being (historically speaking) one after the other"<sup>48</sup> Davari responds to Hegel by arguing that,

Men of faith did not pursue philosophy in placing it as the *baten* of religion, rather they came up with a philosophy that is the philosophical

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 67. Furthermore, according to Davari "Mulla Sadra insists that the essence of a human is different from that of an animal, in that a human is not an animal whose essence has additional qualities, such as reason. This is because human senses and imagination are categorically different from that of other animals.... Essence is a unitary manifestation of a being in which all of a being's powers are united."

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>48</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi*, 117.

*baten* of religion.... And, we know that there is a big difference between religion and the philosophy of religion. If philosophy was truly the *baten* of religion then religion must have been brought to mankind (*zohur*) through philosophy, and everywhere that philosophy becomes stronger would in turn strengthen religion, now is this so? <sup>49</sup>

In short, Davari posits that true philosophy emanates from the sacred and is placed in the shadow of religion according to Islamic philosophers such as al-Farabi and Mulla Sadra. Having established al-Farabi and Mulla Sadra's positions in regard to religion and philosophy, Davari expands on their political philosophy regarding the virtuous city and its leader, drawing closer to a philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih*. To strengthen the overall argument, however, Davari shows continuity in Islamic political philosophy.

Davari postulates that in considering the writings of Mulla Sadra, it would be wrong to state that politics had no place in Islamic philosophy following al-Farabi. For example Mulla Sadra,

in his work, *Description of the Structures of Kafi (Sharh-e Usul-e Kafi)* spoke of the realities of politics and the limitations of a king's powers, and even stated that in the absence of a king, the popular consent for the judicial decrees of a just person (*shakhs-e adel*) is sufficient (to rule over a polity or legitimization of rule).<sup>50</sup>

Davari is arguing that, in the absence of an *ensan-e kamel*, popular consent for a *shakhs-e adel* meets the minimum requirement for the legitimacy of a ruler in an Islamic polity. Davari is indirectly referring to Khomeini as *shakhs-e adel*. He is also referring to the creation of Khomeini's political office in Iran's government, or *daftar-e vali-ye faqih*, following the ninety-plus percent ratification rate in a popular mandate and subsequently written into Iran's Constitution.

Davari is making a case for the continuity of Islamic philosophy, albeit a weak one, in his use of Farabian philosophy. This continuity is used for establishing an Islamic philosophical tradition that inherited parts of the Greek philosophy during the Middle Ages. He uses Western philosophy to help strengthen Mulla Sadra's argumentation

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Reza Davari, "Ra'is-e Avval-e Madineh dar Nazar-e Mulla Sadra," 70.

about man's relation to God. Davari claims that Mulla Sadra's political views are rooted on his knowledge of God. Moreover, Davari argues that this view is essential for the understanding of the essence of rationalism in the modern era, stating,

Nietzsche's criticism of rationalism, which argues that an animal orator transforms into an orating animal, although differed in meaning with Mulla Sadra, shares the view with him [Mulla Sadra] that reason can be the servant of animals and an ingredient for its form.<sup>51</sup>

He states that for Mulla Sadra the essence of a human is different from that of an animal, in that a human is not an animal whose essence has additional qualities, such as reason. This is because human senses and imagination are categorically different from that of other animals. Essence, for Davari, is a unitary manifestation of a being in which all of a being's powers are united.<sup>52</sup>

To be fair, Davari points to some philosophical errors in Mulla Sadra understanding of Platonic philosophy, although he does so without any specific references, and uses Ghazali, one of Islamic philosophies most vocal critics, to show that these errors were due to misunderstandings of meanings across several historic epochs. According to Davari, there is no doubt in that Mulla Sadra distinguishes and compares politics from *Shari'at* based on a platonic understanding and has spoken well of Plato, "Plato is the founding father of political philosophy and the guardianship of wisdom (*velayat-e hekmat*).... In truth, Plato in his book *The Laws* did not talk of the relationship between religion (*Shari'at*) and politics in the way Mulla Sadra understood and quoted him in his own work."<sup>53</sup> Thus, while ratifying Mulla Sadra's political philosophy in the tradition of Plato, Davari is arguing that Mulla Sadra's understanding of *din va dowlat* (religion and politics) exhibits some weakness.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 68. Also on page 67, Davari explains the difference between man and animal according to Mulla Sadra. He states that for Mulla Sadra the essence of a human is different from that of an animal, in that a human is not an animal whose essence has additional qualities, such as reason. This is because human senses and imagination are categorically different from that of other animals. Essence, for Davari, is a unitary manifestation of a being in which all of a being's powers are united.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 69.

Davari notes that it is important to consider that both Mulla Sadra and Ghazali's conceptions of Platonic politics is based on their contemporary conceptions of religion (*Shari'at*) and "if we compare their analysis based on our current understanding of politics are efforts will be fruitless... even more fruitless would be comparing their analysis of politics based on their conception of *Shari'at*."<sup>54</sup> Interestingly, in explaining the possible reasoning for Mulla Sadra's apparent misunderstanding of Platonic philosophy, Davari defers to the historicity of meaning, which puts him closer to Abdolkarim Soroush.

In short, Davari has grounded his political philosophy in his readings of Mulla Sadra and al-Farabi. He posits that philosophy is a way of uncovering the will of God. The philosopher is subordinate to a prophet, who is an *ensan al-kamel*, with an unbroken link to the active intellect. The philosopher has access to the active intellect with the use of logic. Philosophy's link to the sacred through its relation to the active intellect permits the construction of political theory using philosophical methodologies. From this foundation, Davari moves the argument forward towards the necessary qualities of leadership in an Islamic polity. This is an important step since Davari's description of the qualities of the leader of the virtuous city brings forth its relation to *velayat-e faqih*.

## **Davari's Philosophy in Support of *Velayat-e faqih***

According to Davari, in the Islamic philosophical tradition there are several necessary qualities for the leader of the virtuous city: "the six or eight conditions for the leader of the virtuous city as stated by al-Farabi, can also be found in the work of Mulla Sadra."<sup>55</sup> While qualities such as the soundness of body and mind, create a baseline for the position of leader, access to the active intellect (*'aql-e fa`al*) is of primary concern here, for this quality also resonates in the office of the *vali-ye faqih*.

Al-Farabi states that since the natural state of man is to travel from imperfection towards perfection, and the leader of the city is by definition the most perfect or complete

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 70.

man in the city, then the people of the city, in their deeds and conduct, must follow him (*ra'is-e avval*). One of the qualities of *ra'is-e avval*, according to Al-Farabi is the possession of an unbroken link to the active intellect (*'aql-e fa`al*).<sup>56</sup> Davari makes access to *'aql-e fa`al* a prerequisite in drawing a conceptual link from *ra'is-e avval* – as found in the Irano-Islamic philosophical tradition to *vali-ye faqih* as found in the Shi`a *feqhi* (jurisprudential) tradition.<sup>57</sup> He makes the transition with a discussion of the concept of political intellect (*'aql-e siyasi*).<sup>58</sup> In *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi* (2007), Davari draws a distinction between reason in political intellect and in *feqh*:

The meaning of intellect (*'aql*) in the principle books of *feqh* is different from the books of philosophy in that intellect in principles of *feqh* resembles *'aql-e 'amali* (the working intellect)... This working intellect is developed through an individual's intimate knowledge of the Book (Quran), ahadith, and familiarity with interpretations (*tafsir*).... Thus, this intellect is not independent from prophecy and the Book.... The truth of the matter is that intellect in the two aforementioned instances do not mean the same thing. The meaning in one is the human-developed intellect (*'aql-e parvardeh*)... and in the other instance it is God-given intellect (*'aql-e parvande*).<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Chapter twenty-seven of Al-Farabi's book, *On the Principles of the Views of the Inhabitants of the Excellent State* contains a passage on the mental qualities of the *ra'is-e avval*: "The leader of the city must have traveled the road to completion (mental and spiritual), and posses the power of creative thought, through an unbroken link (while awake or sleep) to the active intellect (*'aql-e fa`al*); nothing is hidden or unknown to his mind. Any human that reaches this level: the unity of the divine mind and the thinker create an intellect that is greater than the passive mind (referring to thought generated by chemical reactions in the brain based on material [empirical] stimulation) and is approaching the active mind (*'aql-e fa`al*)." Seyyed Ja'far Sajjadi, *Andisheh-ye ahl-e Medineh-ye Fazeleh* (Tehran: Sazman-e Chap va Entesharat-e Vezarat-e Farhang va Ershad-e Islami, 2000), 218.

<sup>57</sup> Before making this transition, it must be noted that there are various, often conflicting views about the role and scope of *velayat-e faqih* among Irano-Islamic *feqhi* scholars. In fact, Salehi-Najafabadi maintains that it is through a *shora* (consultative assembly) and the will of the people that the *vali-ye faqih* is selected. He states that there are two understandings of *velayat-e faqih*: *Khabari* and *Ensha'i*. "The *Khabari* position postulates that, "Just Juristconsults are selected to rule by God," while the *Ensha'i* position maintains that "it is the people who select the *vali-ye faqih* based on the qualities described in article five of the Iranian constitution." See, Salehi-Najafabadi, *Velayat-e Faqih*, 46. Also, Hojjat-al-Islam Mohsen Kadivar, who has written nine variations on Shia feqhi governance, including *velayat-e faqih*, affirms the *Ensha'i* view of *velayat-e faqih*. See Mohsen Kadivar, *Nazariyat-e Dowlat dar Feqh-e Shi'a*, (Tehran: Nashrani, 1997) and *Hokumat-e Velai* (Tehran: Nashrani, 1998).

<sup>58</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam* (Tehran: Markaz-e Farhangi-ye Allameh Tabatabai, 1982), 84.

<sup>59</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi*, 115.

In the above example, Davari makes the distinction between developed and given intellect, in essence between reason and prophecy, and states that intellect in the tradition of *feqh* is akin to developed intellect. At the same time, since this intellect is premised in the Quran and other established Islamic traditions; it has a link, albeit an indirect one, to the active intellect.

The difference between developed and given (divine) intellect becomes less apparent in Davari's 1982 book, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*. In this book, Davari argues that sometimes the meaning of the word 'aql (intellect) is the one that appears in philosophy and *Hekmat-e Nazari*.<sup>60</sup> Davari applies semantics to the concept of intellect ('aql) in drawing closer the philosophical and *feqhi* concept of political intellect.<sup>61</sup> For example, he states that 'orafa va motesafavveh-e haqqiqi (prophets and real mystics) when they speak of 'aql (intellect) have different meanings for the term. In their opinions, 'aql-e mo'ash (common sense) and 'aql-e falsafi (philosophical intellect) have little worth. The 'aql that is used in the fields of *kalam*, *feqh*, philosophy, and ethics, is an 'aql loosely translated into 'aql-e 'amali (active intellect), and this active intellect is the type of intellect that determines right from wrong and positive from negative.<sup>62</sup>

As can be seen, political intellect, in both instances is bound to active intellect ('aql-e siyasi beh 'aql-e 'amali), which has a divine nature in the Islamic philosophical tradition. The distinction becomes inconsequential as Davari moves forth in his argument. He states that *feqh* is an instance when active intellect has to do with earthly actions, containing knowledge relevant to the way people live and define their relations with each other. At the same time, the one who becomes aware of this *feqhi* knowledge

<sup>60</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 84. Davari defines *Hekmat-e Nazari* as a multi-disciplinary study consisting of natural sciences, mathematics, and divine knowledge.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 88. Here Davari states that there are six types of 'aql: "The first 'aql is the power to understand good and bad, gains and loss. The second 'aql is the power that enables one to act in accordance to goodness and refrain from evil (acts). The third 'aql is the angel with which a person puts his life in order with. Fourth 'aql is 'aql-e nazari (theoretical intellect) which comprises of four subcategories ('aql-e hayulayi, 'aql-e bel-malalkeh, 'aql-e bel-fa'al, 'aql-e mostefad). The fifth 'aql is (*Nafs-e Nategheh* – a Sadrian term which differentiates the fully developed soul of man that, in itself, differentiates a human being from man the animal. The sixth 'aql is Sader-e avval (dissolution of the individual mind into the divine Mind, when there is no longer an I, or separation between Creator and creation or human being and Being)."

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 85-86.

must be familiar with theory as well, meaning that if one is not an expert in theory he/she cannot master *feqh*. In other words, *feqh* is practical in nature and rests on more general theories whose validity and application requires philosophical training. Therefore, the *faqih* is using an intellect that is different from '*aql-e falsafi* and is closer in nature to '*aql-e 'amali* (active intellect):

*'Aql-e 'amali* rules with a theoretical understanding in action and the necessities of current life (historic validity, not eternal validity), of course with the precondition that it is in tune with *Vaha* (loosely translated as the unseen link between a prophet and God). '*Aql-e 'amali* can illuminate and distinguish between right and wrong within the individual.<sup>63</sup>

Davari concludes his argument on variations of '*aql* by referring to *ishraq* and *tasavvof*, "Suhrawardi called this '*aql*, '*nur-e abhar*,"<sup>64</sup> which literally means the amazing light and is a reference to a stage of illumination in which all is known without limitations to time and space.

Next, Davari distinguishes between modern Western philosophical views on political wisdom, and by extension political intellect, and directly proposes the type of leadership envisioned for the Islamic Republic. First, he makes the distinction:

Political wisdom is akin to Aristotelian concept of the virtuous mind. Political wisdom enables us to see the world in which we live, the possibility of action in that world, determine the goals and obtain the means of reaching those goals," whereas, "Political intellect allows us to determine the goals and intentions of others (politics)."<sup>65</sup>

Davari relates political intellect to *shari'at*, arguing that political intellect ('*aql-e siyasi*) is the result of faith and belief in the structure and laws of knowledge ('*elm*). For example, "Active figures in political Islam, in addition to operating within the boundaries of political intellect, must also operate within the boundaries of religion, and establish the foundations of political wisdom from religious law (*shari'at*)."<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 85-88.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 84.

Following this assertion, Davari negates the Western concept of political intellect and proposes a religiously based one in the form of *velayat-e faqih*. He says that in the West, philosophy gave birth to the political wisdom and the practical intellect of its people. In other words, in the West, philosophy is manifested in the form of rights, politics, new science, and technology.<sup>67</sup> Davari calls this Western manifestation of political intellect *'aql-e jadid* (modern intellect) and states that in contrast to it “there is another kind of intellect whose essence is *velayat* and *nabovvat* (guardianship and prophet hood). This *'aql* is not a follower of the negation of human dignity and in politics and daily affairs is not merely concerned with signs, results and profits.”<sup>68</sup> Now, Davari is ready to subordinate political intellect to *shari'at*:

*'aql-e siyasi* (political intellect) is not independent. If politics is religious politics, then political intellect rests on prophecy (*vahyeh*) and someone has this attribute whose powers of understanding and perception are transmitted words [through *vahyeh*]. However, in non-religious politics, there is political intellect, which needs a foundation, and this foundation in the West is philosophy.<sup>69</sup>

Finally, Davari makes the connection between the Islamic Republic and the type of ruler qualified to lead it: “The fundamentals and sustainability of the Islamic republic is dependent on *velayat*, and justice (*'adl*), and the virtuous city (*medineh-ye adeleh*) is a tool in this *velayat*.”<sup>70</sup>

In sum, we can see that following al-Farabi's approach in *Medineh-ye Fazeleh* Davari's political philosophy concerning *velayat-e faqih* is composed of two parts: the justification for the type of rule and the justification for the type of ruler. As for the type of polity, Davari argues that since politics is governed by philosophy which derives its inspiration from divine knowledge, then man, as a member of the political community, is subjected to God: “As a being belonging and subordinated to the divine truth (*haqq*) our human polity is determined by God.”<sup>71</sup> The concept of *haqq* is very important in Davari's specific reference to Islamic polity: “Islamic polity is the exercise of divine sovereignty

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>71</sup> Farzin Vahdat, “Post-Revolutionary Islamic Discourses on Modernity,” 610.

through agents that are both familiar with Islamic tenets but more importantly are divinely inspired through their immersion into *haqq* (their eyes become His eyes, ears become His ears).<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, Davari's statement regarding human polity being determined by God concurs with the second article of the Islamic Republic's Constitution.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a government based on faith in the one and only God, (Who) only has the right to rule, determines faith, and requires submission to Him; He has divine decree and a foundational role in the determination of laws; (Who) plays a constructive role in man's path of completion towards God.<sup>73</sup>

As for the type of ruler, Davari again turns to al-Farabi's political philosophy. Davari argues that al-Farabi envisioned an Islamic philosopher-prophet as the ruler of *Medineh-ye Fazeleh*. This would be the true philosopher who derives his knowledge from God: "The true philosopher knows God's justice, pays homage to His sovereignty, and becomes familiar with knowledge through His grace (*tadbir*)."<sup>74</sup> Thus, the true philosopher is one who perceives philosophy as the truth in the relations of things being examined.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, the theory of state as defined by *velayat-e faqih* and the office of *Vali-ye faqih* fulfill the conditions for the type of rule and ruler in Davari's political philosophy.

Davari adds strength to his theory in support of *velayat-e faqih* by criticizing the historical development of the West's current political systems and their relation to Western philosophy. The historical overtaking of philosophy's relation to *haqq* and its replacement with man during the Enlightenment helps shape his argument. Davari argues that the "West is the same as philosophy,"<sup>76</sup> Since the main axis for the understanding of the West's culture is philosophy. Thus, "in order to understand the

<sup>72</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 254.

<sup>73</sup> The official website of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, [http://imj.ir/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=583:1388-11-17-15-39-46&catid=84:1388-11-03-08-40-10&Itemid=222](http://imj.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=583:1388-11-17-15-39-46&catid=84:1388-11-03-08-40-10&Itemid=222). It must be noted that the word *velayat-e faqih* does not appear in any of the 177 articles of the Constitution; rather it appears twice in the introduction to the constitution under the subheadings of Islamic Government and *Velayat-e Faqih*.

<sup>74</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh-ye Madani Farabi*, 160.

<sup>75</sup> Farzin Vahdat, "Post-Revolutionary Islamic Discourses on Modernity," 611.

<sup>76</sup> Reza Davari, "Philosophy and Culture," *Spektrum Iran* 14 no. 1 (2001): 75.

West, it would be necessary to immerse [oneself] in its philosophy.”<sup>77</sup> Here, Davari is not praising the West or its philosophy. Rather he is setting up the argument that knowledge and religion shared an epistemological core that was fractured by Kant and Descartes based on an approach dating back to Plato and Aristotle.

This argument, I believe, is not original to Davari and was likely a carryover from his studies with Nasr. For example, Nasr also states: “Descartes separated himself from the supernatural and the eternal philosophy. He replaced the divine mind with the human mind, and thus began neo-philosophy (Enlightenment philosophy and beyond).... this was the point of rapture between traditional and new philosophy.”<sup>78</sup> Likewise, according to Davari, “Descartes ignored a central tenet of ancient philosophy, i.e., the unity of the knower and the known. Instead, he asserted the mind body dualism and the congruence of the knowledgeable and the knower.”<sup>79</sup> In other words, Descartes is incorrect in violating the doctrine of Divine Unity as the basis for philosophy; hence, his subsequent findings are invalid.

Once Davari lays out his argument that the West has incorrectly conceived of and utilized philosophy, he can argue for *velayat-e faqih* as the solution for Iran’s socio-political instability. Davari states that the West creates a universal utopian philosophy implemented through coercive political, social, and economic practices such as imperialism and colonialism.<sup>80</sup> This occupation even encompasses human beings in the impoverishment of the native through universalism. Again, we can refer to Nasr and see the intellectual roots of Davari’s position, for Nasr categorically denies being a citizen of the world and its universal implications.<sup>81</sup> However, impoverishment of the native through universalism, as stated by Davari, is specifically referring to one of the most fundamental Iranian critical theories of the twentieth century: *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>78</sup> Seyyed Hussein Nasr and Ramin Jahanbegloo, *Dar Josteju-ye Amr-e Qodsi*, 263.

<sup>79</sup> Reza Davari, “The Shared Quest Between Islamic Philosophy and Modern Phenomenology,” 242.

<sup>80</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh Chist?* 202.

<sup>81</sup> Seyyed Hussein Nasr and Ramin Jahanbegloo, *Dar Josteju-ye Amr-e Qodsi*, 199-200.

*Gharbzadegi* is a concept developed by one of Davari's teachers at the University of Tehran, Ahmad Fardid, although the phrase was made popular by Al-Ahmad's book bearing the same name, as well as Khomeini's countless references to it at the time of the Iranian Revolution. According to Fardid, *Gharbzadegi* is a process through which the native or local thought and material culture is forcefully overtaken by Western thought and materialism.<sup>82</sup> Davari regards *Gharbzadegi* as a process that occurs at both the personal and societal level and has had two historical precedents in Iranian history.<sup>83</sup> This merits a closer look at his philosophy of *Gharbzadegi*.

According to Davari, the first level of *Gharbzadegi* begins with the absence of thought and the loss of self: "the worst type of loss is the loss of self due to the absence of thought,"<sup>84</sup> a condition that has come to an unfortunate reality in modern Iran as a direct consequence of European contact. The West, in Davari's argument, strives for the imposition of a universal and unobjectionable regime through a transformation in the realm of philosophy and thought. This process entails the separation of the natural person from the spiritual world existing within his being. Thus, the Westoxication of self occurs by separating man from his link to God.

This separation, then, affects the second level of Westoxication: "the modern self devoid the natural person of his religious, historical and cultural links thus denying him his true essence [i.e. his identity and by extension his human rights]."<sup>85</sup> At the same time, the function of knowledge becomes the attainment of comfort and security while losing its independent pursuit towards ethics and Truth. According to Davari, political

<sup>82</sup> Being mostly an oral philosopher, there is little written by Fardid on the topic; however, the term has been used and reinterpreted by three of his students in their subsequent works: Al-Ahmad, Daryush Shayegan, and Reza Davari Ardakani; coincidentally, all three use Heideggerian philosophy in their interpretations of *Gharbzadegi*. See Mehrzad Boroujerdi's, "Gharbzadegi: the Dominant Intellectual Discourse of Pre and Post-Revolutionary Iran," 30-56.

<sup>83</sup> According to Davari, Westoxication first happened with the infusion of Greek thought into Iran (Hellenism) and was accelerated, secondly, in the Iranian encounter with European modernity.

<sup>84</sup> Saeed-Reza Shakeri, "Andisheh Siyasi-ye Reza Davari Ardakani," *Falsafeh Nameh* 1, winter (2005), 71.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

modernity in the form of Western secular democracy represents the last stage of this Western utopian philosophy.<sup>86</sup>

In other words, the appearance and constitution of a Hegelian model of modern government causes knowledge's subordination to politics, making philosophy a political tool. This tool was ill-suited for political implementation in Iran.<sup>87</sup> Davari states that previous attempts at modernization did not work in Iran because it was the implementation of solutions based on Western philosophical methodologies to address a European problem at the time of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, namely Christianity. The incompatibility of Islam with Christianity at various levels caused this failed modernity.<sup>88</sup>

According to Davari, the transplanted European political models without their philosophical understandings caused Iran's ill-encounter with modernity through a loss of self or native identity. In addition, the imposition of Western knowledge had a debilitating effect on the Irano-Islamic philosophical tradition by extinguishing the 'spark' of knowledge in Iran: "By substituting their [the West's] solution [to our modernity] we also impaired the production of our own way. The philosophical underpinnings of modernity were ignored in Iran, by extension affecting or producing unstable political regimes."<sup>89</sup>

In conclusion, Davari's philosophy leading to the support of *velayat-e faqih* is presented with several distinct features. First, he employs the sacred in the Irano-Islamic tradition of *Tasavvof* in establishing his ontology. Doing so, he relegates logic to a secondary or interpretative role of post-philosophical discovery. He uses Heideggerian philosophy to supplement his ontological understanding and anti-Enlightenment views. His understanding of Western philosophy in general and Heideggerian philosophy in particular are qualitatively shallow as argued by Vahdat, Khosrokhavar, Mirsepassi and myself. In addition, his use of Western as compared to Islamic philosophy is

<sup>86</sup> Reza Davari, *Farhang-e Kherad va Azadi* (Tehran: Saqi, 1999), 360-363.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>89</sup> Reza Davari, *Vaz'-e Konuni-ye Tafakor dar Iran* (Tehran: Soroush Publications, 1984), 48. The use of the word "spark" by Davari most probably refers to the Socratic spark as a symbol of inquisitiveness or love of knowledge.

quantitatively shallow as demonstrated in my discussion of his philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih*. At the same time, Davari has a firm grasp of Islamic philosophy as he demonstrates key concepts such as the relationship between philosopher and prophet, various iterations of intellect (*'aql*), as well as the role and scope of Islamic political philosophy. Finally, his argument for continuity in the history of Islamic philosophy and his assertions regarding the relationship between *Gharbzadegi* and the philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih* is original and plausible.<sup>90</sup>

The 1979 Islamic Revolution presented him with opportunities to extend his theoretical philosophy in society, directly in the field of education and indirectly in the field of politics. His ideas were propelled from the classroom and academic circles into public discourse starting in the mid-1980s and continue to this day. Davari's transition from philosopher to ideologue and its impact on Post-revolutionary Iranian political ethics is the focus of the next chapter.

<sup>90</sup> Please note that given the historic approach of this thesis, I have not critically argued against Davari's political philosophy and have consistently maintained that the scope of this chapter amounts to an overview of his philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih*. It is my intent to provide a critical approach to his philosophy elsewhere.

## Chapter 4.

### Davari the Ideologue: Davari's Influence on Iranian Post-Revolutionary Political Ethics

By the time of the Islamic Revolution, Davari had been teaching at the University of Tehran for over a decade.<sup>1</sup> The revolutionary years were a time of turmoil and confusion but also of opportunity. The majority of the Iranian elite either fled the country or were arrested and removed from their positions. At the same time, the increasingly Islamizing regime wished to keep civic institutions open and operating. Since these institutions were filled with personnel trained under the Pahlavi education system that projected a secular-modern-monarchical national identity, the new government created mechanisms ensuring personnel and policy conformity to the revolutionary ideology that was increasingly becoming Irano-Islamic in nature. The University of Tehran, as a state-sponsored intellectual site for the projection of national identity, became a contested space for the ideological battles of the early post-revolutionary period.

According to Sohrab Behnam, on 11 February 1979, protesting students liberated the first tank from the Shah's army and moved it to the University of Tehran's campus.<sup>2</sup> Soon after, the *Moj'ahedin* (also known as MKO or MEK) set up headquarters in the Faculty of Sciences while the *Fada'ian* set up their headquarters in the Faculty of Engineering. The Islamist students created their own organization - Imam's Committee (*Komiteh-ye Imam* - and set up headquarters in the University mosque. More significantly, the University's soccer field became the territory of *Hezbollah* (Party of

<sup>1</sup> Davari mentions that he was on sabbatical living in a London suburb in 1977 and returned to Tehran in the fall of 1978. He was writing a book titled *Falsafeh Chist*, and cut his research short hearing news of social unrest in Iran. See Reza Davari, *'Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 50.

<sup>2</sup> Sohrab Behdad, "Islamization of Economics in Iranian Universities," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27 no. 2 (1995): 193. Please note, all facts from this paragraph are from page 193 of Behdad's article.

God) and became the permanent location for Tehran's Friday prayers. The new regime considered soccer, as well as sports like tennis and swimming a Western import and part of the materialistic culture associated with Westoxication.<sup>3</sup>

The University's student body was a microcosm of the coalition that overthrew the Pahlavi regime, and the University was established as a site used in part to train and enforce its state ideology and national identity. Thus, the anti-regime solidarity between various ideological groups at the University disintegrated following the success of the Revolution. The University grounds became a battleground between the supporters of the National Front, the Leftist parties such as the *Moja'hedin* and *Fada'ian*, and Islamist students known as the *khat-e imam* (Imam's Line).

By the spring of 1979, the campus was embroiled in political activity, and classrooms were used as revolutionary courts and detention centers.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the basements of many university buildings became weapons depots for opposition groups to the Islamic Republic. The unrest and political activity at University of Tehran's campus, as well as other university campuses across Iran, caused great concern for the provisional government and escalated into riots and the eventual closure of the University under Khomeini's order for the Cultural Revolution.<sup>5</sup>

Under these circumstances, Davari's personal gravitation towards Islamic values and his position as Professor of Philosophy at Iran's prominent post-secondary institute coalesced in catapulting his status in post-revolutionary Iran. He survived the closures of universities and the purging of educators across the country. Moreover, he became

<sup>3</sup> Davari has written on the negative effects of football and its link to capitalism and modernity in the article, "Jahan-e Ma be Futbal cheh Niyazi Darad?" *Etela'at-e Hekmat va Ma'refat*, 41no. 5 (2009): 4-8.

<sup>4</sup> Maghsood Farakhasteh, *Sargozasht va Savaneh-ye Daneshgah dar Iran: Baresy Tarikhi-ye Amuzesh 'Ali va Tahavvolat-e Eqtesadi, Ejtemai, Siyasi, va Farhangi-ye Mo'aser bar an* (Tehran: Rasa, 2008), 511.

<sup>5</sup> Many university students refused to leave and were forcibly removed from the campus. Thirty-one days after Khomeini's New Year's call for the Cultural Revolution, members of the Revolutionary Guards and Revolutionary Committees surrounded the University of Tehran. The situation quickly deteriorated into protests and riots between the Islamic and Leftist factions at the University. According to *Keyhan Daily Newspaper*, over five hundred people were injured and five were killed. The University was forcibly closed less than a week after the riots and few criticized the manner in which force was used to instill culture. See Maghsood Farakhasteh, 531.

instrumental in educational reforms, public discourse, and the promotion of the Revolution's political ideology based on Khomeini's vision of an Islamic society, unified by an Irano-Islamic identity.

Thus, this chapter deals with the influences of Davari's philosophy on Iran's post-revolutionary society. In particular, I examine Davari's ideological influence on political ethics in three categories: his academic publications, his involvement in public discourse, and his appointment to the High Council of the Cultural Revolution (HCCR). I argue that the Irano-Islamic national-identity desired by the Islamic Republic of Iran provided a niche for the projection of Davari's philosophy in support of *velayat-e faqih* into Iranian society.

## Davari's Political Ethics in Academic Publications

Davari's academic influence on Iran's post-revolutionary political ethics is most apparent in three of his publications in the 1980s: *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam (Islamic Revolution and the World's Current Situation)*, *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi (Philosophy in the Trap of Ideology)*, and "Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran" ("Observations about the Revolution").<sup>6</sup> These works, written and published in the 1980s, a time of heightened ideological and political uncertainty in Iran, exhibit a revolutionary tone while providing an insight into Davari's reflections about the purpose and direction of the Revolution. Compared with his later publications, written from the late 1990s onward, the rhetoric used by Davari in these earlier works reads with a political affinity.<sup>7</sup> For example, Davari's use of words such as *mostazaf* (downtrodden), *mostakbar* (arrogant elite), *na sharqi na gharbi jomhuri-ye Islami* (Neither Eastern nor Western [but an] Islamic Republic), echo the talking points of Khomeini. This was a prevalent practice by many intellectuals and regime officials in 1980s Iran, and perhaps the reason why many Iranian intellectuals in the West see Davari as an ideologue of the

<sup>6</sup> Reza Davari, "Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran," *Zaban va Adabiyat*, no 99&100 (1979): 1-18. Please note, *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi* was originally published under the title, *Falsafeh dar Bohran*.

<sup>7</sup> As compared to his later publications such as: *Falsafeh, Siyasat, Khoshunat* (2006).

Islamic Republic. Moreover, Davari's rhetoric in these publications helped establish his status as a fervent supporter of the Islamic Revolution and its socio-political ideology.

In the three aforementioned publications from the 1980s', Davari affirms the validity of the Islamic Revolution and its political ideology in the following manner. First, he establishes the problems associated with Western political ethics, in general, and its application to Iranian government, in particular. Second, he defines what he considers to be fundamental features of a true revolution. Third, he traces the relationship between the Constitutional Revolution (1907) and the Iranian Revolution (1979) in arguing that the latter was the completion of the former. Finally, he defines the goals of the Iranian Revolution and its association with the nature of leadership in the Islamic Republic that leads to his support of *velayat-e faqih*.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Davari's main argument against Western political theory is its reliance on man-made reason in the creation of laws governing a state. Davari argues that mankind has reached a stage that sees itself as an active actor in all earthly deeds and states, "mankind approaches things in a way, that whether he knows about it or not, the root of his talk claims his godliness."<sup>8</sup> Using clear Islamic rhetoric, he posits that mankind cannot be compared with any other animal, nor can he become an angel. In his most developed stage, he is greater than an angel and, in his downfall, he is less than an animal.<sup>9</sup> Thus, a political intellect created and employed by an individual or a group for their own welfare becomes an evil intellect (*'aql-e siyasi be 'aql-e sheytani*), because political intellect has its roots in faith, belief and rationality. In contrast, the evil intellect of power hungry individuals is the same as faithlessness, unbelief, and ignorance (*jahl*). The West has gained power through a specific use of *'aql-e 'amali va siyasi* (active and political intellect). This *'aql* is faithless in essence (*nafsanīyyat*) and comprised of ego. Davari argues that the *baten* of *'aql-e jadid* (new intellect) and modern intellect is the new technique and perhaps should be called *'aql-e teknik*.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 214.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

In the old days when *'aql* became dependent on logic (*manteq*), it created a type of destitution. Today in our era, our destitution is the same as *Gharbzadegi*.... Without divine will we cannot go to sleep at night with *Gharbzadegi* and wake up free from it.... The West is a complete system with its own *'aql*, technology, customs, and power... or in other words the *baten* of the West's power and politics is *'aql-e Gharbi* (the Western intellect).... Right now, if we don't follow the guidance of religion we will continue to be trapped in the West [*Gharbzadegi*].<sup>11</sup>

Davari argues that the main political ideologies of the West, socialism and democracy, in essence employ congruent methodologies with a singular goal. This common goal is to conquer everything with the new technique in reaching a state of power that can, with a push of a button, destroy an entire world, his reference to nuclear power and nuclear Armageddon.<sup>12</sup>

Using this developed concept of a Western intellect, Davari moves forward to establish a new political model free of Western ideology. He rejects the polemic that if you are against democracy then you are for despotism and if you are fighting despotism, it is because you want democracy: "Until Iranians free themselves from Western political theory and its polemics of despotism and democracy, it will be difficult for them overcome this dichotomy."<sup>13</sup> Davari proposes a new solution: "There is a third way to this dichotomy of the rule of one (despotism) and the rule of many (democracy). Mankind is a creature that belongs to God (*ta'alloq be haqq darad*) and travels [in his life] between truth (*haqq*) and falsehood (*bateh*)."<sup>14</sup>

In adding strength to his argument, he contends that the Western model of democracy leads to a decadent political order that erodes human dignity and freedom.<sup>15</sup> For Davari the essence of freedom lies in its relation to divine truth or the sacred:

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 100-102.

<sup>12</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi*, 91.

<sup>13</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 123

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>15</sup> Davari states that, "If someone says that freedom must be taken away from the people, that person is void of human qualities; however, if someone says that political and social freedoms as stated in the universal declaration of human rights must be adhered to under all conditions and in all costs, and does not think about the prerequisites of these freedoms and how these freedoms are guaranteed and who guarantees these freedoms, i.e. velayat-e faqih, that person is either invalid or void of political intellect." Ibid., 93.

If we think that we can [have freedom without the sacred] then we have lost freedom itself for he who speaks of Truth is free and fears no one but God, but he who wants freedom to speak whatever he wants has strayed from Truth.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, the creation of the original Islamic order was neither democratic, as compared with the current understanding of Western democratic theory, nor despotic in nature. The Caliphs were not free to institute their will in their conduct and in their rule. Davari contends that Islamic rulers merely carried out the orders of Islam, meaning that the basis for law was the rule of God and the rulers were merely guardians and executors of this divine order.<sup>17</sup> It then follows that this type of regime is a government of the people in that no class of people rule over another and personal interest and temptations have no place. This is why, according to Davari, it is the best type of government, a true democracy.<sup>18</sup>

Conveniently, this approach allows Davari to address one of the main strengths of Western democratic theory, namely the ability to change laws based on the will of the people.

When they say that although the rules and regulations of Euro-America were crafted in the past, [and that] they are changeable when deemed necessary by the people, the discussion then becomes to mean that mankind has the right to establish rules and regulations, and obedience to the sacred is a form of fundamentalism.<sup>19</sup>

Davari is not arguing that the rules established by man in an Islamic society are infallible; rather, he is limiting the scope of legal reform in an Islamic society to be congruent with the will of God. In other words, in an Islamic democracy laws can be changed so long as

<sup>16</sup> Reza Davari, "Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran," 10.

<sup>17</sup> A clarification is in order here. This position does not negate Davari's contention that the true philosopher uncovers knowledge through union with God, even though, as stated above, the ruler is more akin to a newscaster reading off the teleprompter. I believe what Davari means is that the method in which knowledge is gained by the true philosopher is the union of his mind with that of God; yet in his action, and because of this union, the philosopher is not free to act independent of the divine intellect.

<sup>18</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 123.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

they still conform to the core tenets of Islam and are not solely based on the will of the people – which is a problem for Davari in the Western democratic theory.

With the flaws of Western democratic theory having been firmly established, and having addressed issues surrounding freedom, democracy and mankind's ability to change laws in an Islamic democracy, Davari brings forth a millennial view of history (circa 1980s). This millennial approach informs Davari's views on revolution in general and the Iranian Revolution in particular. He states that Europe and the entire West are in need of another revolution:

If we view the past and the 1789 Revolution from an unbiased gaze, the eyes of France and Europe and in general all of the West's political, economic, and military players should be to the future and in doing so understand that the hunger for power, love of this earth [*Hobb-e donya* - referring to materialism] and duration of their actions will endanger Western culture.... Europe and the West must distance themselves from the French Revolution and in the first place learn from its teachers [*amuzegaran* - perhaps meaning intellectual critics to Western modernity such as Nietzsche and Heidegger] that when the conditions of *donya bini* [worldliness - a loose reference to secularism] has become prevalent within the being of a person, he can no longer resist the temptations of power, infamy, and wealth.<sup>20</sup>

The French Revolution for Davari is the political manifestation of Enlightenment philosophy that placed mankind and his reason at the center of politics and marginalized the political role of the sacred. In the same manner, the Islamic Republic can be regarded as the political manifestation of an Irano-Islamic philosophical revival at the hands of Nasr, Fardid, and Davari, among others. Furthermore, in the tradition of Persian narratives, Davari asserts that the Islamic Revolution took place in this darkest of hours when Western democracy had run its course and injustice engulfed the earth: "The Islamic Revolution took place at a time when the road to man's autonomous will and vision has come to an end...and this shows the revolution as a world event.... this revolution was not a mere political change."<sup>21</sup> Following this narrative, Khomeini is the contemporary Iranian heroic figure of Rostam who through his will, wisdom, and courage rescued at first Iran and then the entire world from this abyss.

<sup>20</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi*, 71.

<sup>21</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 215.

The question then becomes, what was the nature of the Islamic Revolution (1979) and how was it different from Iran's Constitutional Revolution (1906)? Davari's answer begins with a definition of revolution: "When we speak of a revolution in politics, we mean that with a revolution a set of customs, traditions, and laws are replaced with another."<sup>22</sup> Davari is referring to the scope of a revolution and what sets it apart from a coup d'état or a change in government, a vague reference and negation of the Mosaddeq era in Iranian history (1949-1953).<sup>23</sup> A true revolution, for Davari, goes beyond the replacement of figures in a government or the way in which state power is applied. Therefore, for Davari the post-World War Two revolutions in Asia, Africa and Latin America were not real revolutions since, "only a cosmetic change occurred and British, English, and Belgian rulers were replaced by native rulers who continued the same politics."<sup>24</sup>

A revolution is a successful revolt in which the rationale behind the application of power is changed and, according to Davari, not only a class of rulers is displaced and political power transferred to another, but the administration of power and its relation to the people changed.<sup>25</sup> More important, a revolution "belongs to the people and saying that the revolution belongs to this or that person makes no sense."<sup>26</sup> This statement reaffirms Davari's position that there is a popular, or democratic, aspect to the Iranian Revolution. He adds further strength to the democratic nature of a true revolution by arguing that every revolution has a nature and its leaders are intertwined with that nature: "the French Revolution was necessarily led by believers in a bourgeois democratic order, and the October Revolution was the revolution of [led by] Bolsheviks."<sup>27</sup> Elsewhere he states that in every revolution, the revolutionaries are familiar with the direction of the revolution and if the leaders of the revolution stray from this direction, they are abandoned by the revolutionaries. The relationship between the

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>23</sup> The prevalent view of Khomeini and other political figures of post-revolutionary Iran is that the Mossadeq era, although ending in a foreign-inspired coup, was, none the less, problematic in its application of a purely secular government.

<sup>24</sup> Reza Davari, "Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran," i.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., i.

<sup>26</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 111.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 114.

people and the revolutionary leadership is not accidental and the essence of a revolution can be found within this relationship.<sup>28</sup>

The essence of a revolution, according to Davari, can be understood by examining the articles of negation and affirmation that define it: “in every revolution the ‘*la*’ [negation] and the ‘*ila*’ [affirmation] are necessarily adjoined or the revolution is not real.”<sup>29</sup> That is why in the Islamic Revolution it was apparent to all that the Shah’s regime must fall, and all were united on its negation. However, one cannot negate without affirming an alternate, for negation and affirmation go hand in hand. He argues that revolution against the person of the Shah is completely without meaning. Here, Davari is saying that the revolution was against the social order put in place by the Shah including that order’s state-projected identity. Therefore, a revolution demands that a political or social order subsides and is replaced by another, and the nature of the post revolutionary order depends on the nature of the old order that the revolution negated. According to Davari, if the revolution negates despotism and its dependence on imperialism, it does not necessarily follow that the essence of the revolution is democratic, although sometimes this situation does lead to a so-called democratic regime.<sup>30</sup>

This last statement is a reference to Iran’s Constitutional Revolution. In strengthening the argument in favour of the Islamic Revolution and its leadership, Davari resorts to a comparison of the two revolutions. He states that the Constitutional Revolution had a negation and an affirmation. Its negation was despotism, injustice, and decline; while its affirmation was the desire to bring about a Western democratic order. However, Davari argues that this affirmation was not finished because its leaders were infatuated with Western modernity, including its political manifestations, but did not have a complete understanding of it.<sup>31</sup> In the French and Russian Revolutions, Western philosophy had preceded politics in permeating into society. In the case of the French Revolution, the bourgeoisie class was well developed within French society and culture before the Revolution. Davari argues that the French Revolution actually started with the

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 115-116.

Renaissance and its new philosophy had a chance to develop for two hundred years: “in my opinion, the bourgeoisie class formed and grew as a result of changes in humanity, not that a bourgeoisie class formed and changed the mind of people.”<sup>32</sup>

His argument for the Russian Revolution is more significant, arguing that while the Renaissance and Western modernity did not originate in Russia; both had time to develop within Russian society and culture, as ideas, before developing into a political manifestation. Davari states that,

Russia interacted with the West [Western thought] in another way, and in any case benefited from Western philosophy and cultural tradition [adab-plural]. Russia tried to be European not only in politics but in its people’s hearts and minds as well. The works of Dostoyevsky is a testament of Russia’s peaks and lows against the West. He had read European philosophy but was not a philosopher and used poetry to describe the people of Russia and the ways in which Russia was becoming European and Western.... Russia has not completely broken with its past in this process. Russia in its current form and in particular in the works of Dostoyevsky cautions that it must break with religion if it wants to become Western.... This is related to the October Revolution in that from the nineteenth century philosophy in Russian literature paved the way for the acceptance of dialectic materialism and historic materialism.<sup>33</sup>

Davari is arguing here that the Russian way of moving towards modernity entailed a poetic and literary methodology as well as the suppression of religion. This is unacceptable for Davari. More importantly, he posits that philosophical inquiry and understanding must precede political change, elevating the significance of his endeavour in presenting a philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih*.

Returning to his analysis of the Constitutional Revolution, Davari points to two different things: the correct nature of the leadership and the incorrect nature of the leadership’s ideology. He states that we can partially separate the Constitution from the constitutionalists due to the atmosphere of injustice:

A wind blowing from the West (*farang*) caused their movement without themselves understanding the nature of this wind. The Constitutional Movement was a sacred revolt for the attainment of freedom and if the

<sup>32</sup> Reza Davari, “Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran,” iii.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., iii.

foreigners did not meddle in it with the intention of benefiting from it, this was not the fault of the constitutionalists but that of those who meddled.<sup>34</sup>

Davari states that, correctly understood, the Constitutional Movement had two faces: one was *Gharbzadegi* whose nature had nothing to do with religion and the other was the revolt against injustice, pressure, and socio-political strangulation. Thus, Davari posits that in the Constitutional Revolution the people revolted against the shah's injustice, not for democracy in its Western meaning, which is also true of the Islamic Revolution: "this is repeated again today [in the Islamic Revolution] that if the people are revolting against the injustice and force of the previous regime, is it because they want [Western] democracy?"<sup>35</sup>

Davari points out the reasons for the failure of the Constitutional Revolution in order to set up his argument for the success of the Islamic Revolution. According to him, the Constitutional Revolution failed because its intellectuals believed that politics were independent and could be applied anywhere and at any time.<sup>36</sup> Davari calls this condition *siyasat-zadegi* (politic-toxication), which "means that everything is dependent on and obedient to politics. It means that politics is the foundation, the goal, and a tool; politics is everything and everything is in the service of politics."<sup>37</sup> In affirming the invalidity of independent politics, Davari uses an example that attacks the Iranian Left who were also politically active during the formative years of the Islamic Revolution: "In a

<sup>34</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 119-120. On page 239 of this text Davari further explains his comments: "[In the past] we wanted to become Western but lost our way; in other words we were not going to reach the west using the old, failed methods and must change our way; but revolution is unaware and unaffected by these words and meanings, but is a kind of return. How and when did we start this journey to the West? This Western way was never really forced upon us. From the beginning we heard a calling from the West and saw a manifestation (*zاهر*) of it and started to follow it. Now, to where do we want to return? How do we return? This is a type of confusion and destitute. Let's imagine that we turn our gaze again to the West and decide to return to where the West began, how is this possible? What is our compass for this task? When we first became acquainted with the West, we did not understand the road and conditions that made it possible to become what it is, and what are the requirements and equipment that make Western civilization a possibility." Davari goes on to attack Iranian intellectuals at the time of the Constitutional Revolution who acted as incomplete transmitters of Western civilization, placing the majority of the blame with those intellectuals.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 121-122.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>37</sup> Reza Davari, "Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran," iv.

country that has no proletariat population, how could you first apply Marxist politics in society and then create the proletariat class?”<sup>38</sup>

According to Davari, the Constitutional Revolution was in truth a Western constitutional movement and the clergy could not have been its leaders since one of the demands of this revolution was the separation of church and state, meaning the clergy could not have entered politics for they would have to renounce religion.<sup>39</sup> In other words, he is comparing *mashruteh*, laws based on conditions and *mashru'eh*, laws based on the conditions set forth by *Sharia*.<sup>40</sup> Davari is making the argument here that the Constitutional Revolution (*Enqelab-e Mashruteh*) was, as the name suggests, a movement for the establishment of conditions (i.e. a secular-based constitution); whereas, the Islamic Revolution was a movement for the establishment of a Sharia-based constitution. In addition, it follows that the Irano-Islamic methodology for determining *Sharia*-based law is *feqh*. This argument makes it clear that the clergy were not the leaders of the Constitutional movement, and the necessity for Khomeini's continued involvement, as *vali-ye faqih* (Supreme Juristconsult), in the Islamic Revolution:

If the Constitutional Revolution was led by the clergy then the clergy must have led the revolution as clearly as Imam Khomeini is the leader of the Islamic Revolution...He is the leader of the people (*imam-e ommat*) and this is not just a saying but a reality.... In the Constitutional Revolution the clergy did play a role and helped the faction that was against despotism and injustice while affirming the Constitution; however the clergy did not determine the direction of the revolution.... Those who advocate Khomeini should have gone to Qom seminary after 22 Bahman (February 11, 1979), and limited his activity to teaching *feqh*, *usul va hekmat* [referring to various topics taught at seminaries: Jurisprudence, principles, and wisdom] are not just ignorant but opportunists.... The leader of a revolution cannot relinquish its reins and is not free to go where he

<sup>38</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 119.

<sup>39</sup> Davari has said, "The late Ayatollah Na'ini did not publish two chapters of his book *Tanbih-atol-allameh va tanzi-yatol almlet* that dealt with *velayat-e faqih*; that time was not ripe for an Islamic government. And they even killed Haj Sheikh Fazullah Nuri who was supporting *Mashru'eh* and no one raised any objections, because the era of imitation was a different era. Now people who have suffered from the works and deeds of a hundred years of imitation are happy to return to Islam and found sympathy from slogan of Islamic Republic that flows from the mouth of Mr. Khomeini." Reza Davari, "Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran," 9.

<sup>40</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 118.

pleases, because he is a manifestation of the revolution and not just a decor.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, according to Davari, the very nature of the Islamic Revolution demands a *faqih* as leader. In another article, published a few months after the Revolution, Davari supports his argument for the leadership of the Islamic Revolution by reversing the leadership role between the intellectuals and the clergy. He argues that intellectuals ideologically led the Constitutional Revolution, whereas the clergy ideologically led the Islamic Revolution. Davari states that, "Mr. Khomeini says that the Revolution is an Islamic revolution." Davari's referral to Khomeini as "Mr." instead of "Imam," 1979 versus 1982, is indicative of the historic Davari's concurrent ideological development alongside Iran's mainstream political ideology of the same period. He continues by saying,

Many intellectuals say that this revolution was a democratic and anti-despotic revolution and the people fought for freedom and against injustice. On the face of it, these two statements can be added together since the negation of despotism and injustice is contained within an Islamic revolution.<sup>42</sup>

In short, Davari is arguing that since Islam is about social justice, with its own democratic and anti-despotic ideas, then the intellectuals of the Islamic Revolution are, in essence, advocating for Islam.

Davari associates Iranian intellectuals with Westoxication in an attempt to further erode their objection to the direction of the Revolution.<sup>43</sup> He understands that Western educated intellectuals ran many of Iran's civil and government institutions and the

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 117-118.

<sup>42</sup> Reza Davari, "Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran," 5.

<sup>43</sup> "In my opinion, an intellectual is someone who is modernized or modern-toxified (*tajaddod zadeh*), and belongs to an ideology in the Western sense of the word, not to be confused with Islamic ideology. An intellectual usually supports one ideology and negates another and all of his efforts are in support of extending the politics of his ideology. This intellectual could be a writer or filmmaker or a poet but in any case his intellectualism becomes apparent when he begins participating [in his field] in critiquing social and political dimensions.... Every educated person who is the recipient of European knowledge from the eighteenth century forward is an intellectual in my opinion, and how difficult is it for us [perhaps referring to himself] who have read second and third hand foreign texts [translated works] to not be an intellectual." Ibid., 3.

government could not function, at least at this stage, without their expertise.<sup>44</sup> Davari associates many intellectuals with the provisional government and attempts to give them a way out of their objection to Islamic rule by citing what they inherited: "The institutions of a deceitful regime, on the other hand, have to deal with economic and social problems, and to make matters worse its [the regime's] provisional nature prevents it from making fundamental decisions on resolving these social, cultural and economic problems."<sup>45</sup>

Having argued the necessity for the Islamic nature of the Revolution and by containing and negating the objections of Iran's intellectuals to this nature, Davari expands on the purpose and leadership of the Revolution. This is perhaps one of the few instances of originality in Davari's work, where in grounding his argument in favour of *velayat-e faqih*, he mixes religion, philosophy, politics, and history. Davari argues that the goal of the Islamic Revolution was to detoxify the Westoxication present in Iranian society and politics in 1979. It then follows that the nature of the order brought about by the Revolution should be Islamic, meaning that the order it brings about in curing Westoxication emanates from the Sharia. Naturally, the political leadership of this order must itself be defined and sanctioned by Sharia in the Irano-Islamic tradition, paving the way for the affirmation of *velayat-e faqih*.

Davari begins with a definition of the Islamic Revolution. He states that what is certain is that a political revolution has taken place and an Islamic government has been created.<sup>46</sup> However the world that existed before it, "in *zاهر* and *baten* was non-religious and non-Islamic; in other words, it had an incomplete and Westoxified appearance."<sup>47</sup> He then addresses the question: Is it possible to solve the problem of *Gharbzadegi* with Islamic polity? The answer, of course, is affirmative for Davari:

when we say neither East nor West but an Islamic Republic, it means we accept neither socialism nor capitalism, but the Islamic Republic is not

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>46</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 251.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 251.

something in between [the two]; it is different from both and essentially differs from the conditions that made those two types of orders possible.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, the defining political nature of the Islamic Revolution is the creation of a third order that breaks free from both dominant political streams in the post-World War Two global context.<sup>49</sup>

Davari further explains this third order and its relation to Islam by countering the Islamic Revolution's ideological critics who argued that Iranians are living in a connected world, in conditions of interdependence. Davari argues against those who argue that the saying "neither East, nor West, but Islamic Republic" has no merit, by replying that, "we have said no to the current Western world order (and when I say the West, it includes Canada, Vladivostok, Japan, and in sum the entire political West and East)."<sup>50</sup> This negation of the two dominant global political orders, or '*la*' is accompanied by an '*ila*' (instead) and this is what defines an Islamic Republic:

We have an '*ila*' as well, and this '*ila*' is mixed with and a part of our being and must be made an external truth.... This '*ila*' is not a mere political slogan; rather using it we establish the truth of religion.<sup>51</sup>

Being aware that a religious political order can be criticized as backward and fundamentalist in nature, Davari argues for the progressive nature of the Islamic Revolution. He states that a *mortaja*' is a conservative that is opposed to progress (*tajaddod*) and advocates a return to the conditions of the past.<sup>52</sup> However, in this stage of the Revolution one cannot refrain from the use of new knowledge and technology, because the Islamic Revolution started in a complex and puzzling world situation and in

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>49</sup> For more information regarding scholarly debates on the theoretical nature of the Iranian Revolution, see: John Foran, "The Iranian Revolution of 1977-79: A Challenge for Social Theory," in *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran*, ed. John Foran (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). In addition, see: S. N. Eisenstaedt, *The Great Revolutions and the Civilizations of Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). Eisenstaedt refers to the 1979 Iranian Revolution as the last of the Great Revolutions that transformed the Axial Age Civilizations of their perspective societies on page 111.

<sup>50</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*, 227.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 227-228.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 282.

this situation the negation of everything Western is neither necessary nor conducive to the goals of the Revolution.<sup>53</sup> Davari sees the Islamic Revolution as a new and better form of modernity than that which is found in the West, claiming:

Our revolution was not a fundamentalist revolution advocating a return to the past.... The progress we are familiar with was the modernity we experienced before the revolution and we saw that it did not lead to benefits and progress in our society.... Our revolution was not for creating a completed version of new modernity, however, until the time the West starts to crumble from within (*baten*), not only do we not oppose technology and technological knowledge, but truly embrace this new knowledge.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, Davari holds a utilitarian view of Western technique and knowledge and adds that in the current stages of the Islamic Revolution an obtainable (*tahsili*) new knowledge, based in truth, is needed for the employment and utilization of Western knowledge, making it authentic to the Irano-Islamic tradition. More significant, he posits that a mixture of traditional Irano-Islamic religious values and modern Western technique will define the Islamic Republic's state-projected identity.

Having defined the nature and goals of the Islamic Revolution, Davari expands on the qualities of political agents needed in its governance. The quality enabling the distinction of truth for political agents of the Islamic Republic, according to Davari, is the presence of political intellect (*'aql-e siyasi*). He argues that this political intellect is permanently exemplified in the person of Khomeini: "we can see the nature of the political intellect to which the Imam of the people (*Imam-e ommat*) has referred."<sup>55</sup> It must be emulated by other political agents of the Islamic Republic in the same fashion that a Muslim emulates his *marja'-e taqlid*, a reference to a Grand Ayatollah as a "source of emulation." Davari qualifies this political intellect:

First of all this intellect (*'aql-e siyasi*) is part of *'aql-e 'amali* (the active intellect); however, it is different from the *'aql-e 'amali* seen in *feqh* and ethics in its validity, strength and mode of appearance (*nahveh-ye*

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 283.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 88.

*zohur*).... The active intellect (*'aql-e 'amali*) of the politician does not replace the *'aql* of the *faqih*.<sup>56</sup>

The above quote makes clear the subordination of political intellect to active intellect and by extension the politician to the *faqih*. At the same time, Davari posits that the leader of the Islamic Republic, being a *faqih*, possesses both types of intellect, making the case for the emulation of Khomeini's politics by lesser political agents of the Islamic Republic.

Davari resorts to the negation of the nature of rival political agents in Iran in strengthening his argument for the type of political agents in the Islamic Republic. He rules out the use of violence for political gain in a direct reference to the street battles of early 1980s Iran between the Left (*Moja'hedin and Fada'ian*) and, in Davari's view, the legitimate political agents of state, the Islamic Republic Party (*Hezbollah*) created by Khomeini. He states, "Some political factions think that they can gain power [in Iran] through open conflict with the Islamic Republic.... These groups are either dependent on foreign elements or else lack an understanding of political wisdom."<sup>57</sup> Elsewhere he states that there are some factions, either semi-Islamic or non-Islamic in nature, that desire the downfall of the Islamic Republic. According to Davari, if this regime were to fall, dependent and independent groups – the majority of the National Front and the Left – would not gain anything since there is no political party that has the political intellect to rule Iran. In this situation, he argues, the victory would go to the United States and the imperialist world order.<sup>58</sup> Thus, only the leadership of qualified Islamic political agents ensures the survival of the Revolution and by extension the freedom of Iranians from Westoxication.

In further negating rival politics in Iran, Davari compares them to the *Khavarej* of the early Islamic period. He states that the *Khavarej* in Islamic history were a group void of wisdom that endangered Islamic rule. They were not within the truth of Islam, but rather were sitting on the periphery waiting for someone to act against their understanding of Islam, and they would rectify this person's sin with a greater sin.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 95, 217.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 98.

Here, Davari is making reference to the fourth Caliph Ali and the *fitna* (revolt), a common reference also used by Khomeini comparing the formative years of the Islamic Republic to the early Islamic history. Davari goes further and argues that the political enemies of the Islamic Republic are worse than the *Khavarej*:

Currently it seems that we have groups that resemble the *Khavarej* and even more akin to *Azadeqeh* (followers of Ibn Azraq who were the most violent among the *Khavarej*) with the main difference that the old *Khavarej* were mindful of religious customs (*adab-e dini*) whereas these people [the new *Khavarej*] do not obey any religious law (*shari'at*).<sup>60</sup>

In sum, Davari's ideology, as presented in these publications, exhibits an ideological, as well as a rhetorical affinity with the regime. His critique of Western political ethics in general and the Constitutional Revolution in particular further supports this affinity. In addition, his support for Khomeini's position within the structure of leadership in the Islamic Republic, as well as his negation of opposing ideologies, including the Pahlavi-trained technocrats who remained within Iran's civic institutions, rightly points to his close association with the regime, and by extension its projected Irano-Islamic national identity. We can now examine his role as a public intellectual, representing the core of the regime's ideology in public discourse.

## **Davari's Political Ethics in Public Discourse, 1980-2011**

Davari's influence on public discourse relating to Iranian post-Revolutionary political ethics almost spans the entire life of the Islamic Republic. His 1980s intellectual debates with Abdolkarim Soroush, Ali Paya and, to a lesser extent, Akbar Ganji were a major factor in Davari's growth as an Islamic intellectual in the formative years of the Islamic Republic. In the 1990s, the use of his political philosophy by conservative elements of the Majlis created an additional obstacle to constitutional reforms during Khatami's presidency. Since the mid-2000s, however, some of Davari's publications began addressing his intellectual critics regarding the use of his philosophy in politics, his support for Heidegger and for the Islamic Republic. The combined effect of Davari's

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 98.

activities in public discourse, I argue, adds significance to his designation as a post-revolutionary public intellectual who supports *velayat-e faqih*.

Davari gained currency as an Iranian intellectual following his published correspondence with Soroush, in 1985, where they debated the merits of various configurations of Islamic governance in the context of political ethics. Soroush supported Popperian philosophy, which was seen as too liberal in some of its teachings by Islamic conservatives of the newly created regime. Ali Paya and Akbar Ganji more or less supported Soroush's views on the historicity of religion and the necessity for a contemporary understanding and application of Islam in Iranian society and politics. According to Ali Paya, the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tehran at this time was run by Heideggerians like Ahmad Fardid and Reza Davari who responded against Soroush, Paya, and Ganji using philosophical methodologies including the use of Heideggerian phenomenology and existential philosophy.<sup>61</sup>

Davari engaged Soroush in a series of debates published in *Keyhan-e Farhangi*; the first occurred in a 1985 article titled, "Observations Concerning the Open Society and Its Enemies."<sup>62</sup> The Soroush-Davari debates were an important stage in the development of post-revolutionary Iranian political ethics, as well as helping establish the status of Davari as an Iranian intellectual. These debates and their ideological outcome are among the best-studied aspects of Davari in Western historiography. Thus, I shall limit my discussion of them to a brief summary and instead focus on Davari's responses, published in several books between 2006 and 2011, in which he downplays the "Muslim Heideggerian" designation given to the Department of Philosophy, Fardid, and himself.

<sup>61</sup> According to Paya, "during the 1980s, Fardid ran his lectures parallel to Soroush's lectures. In these lectures, he would mount direct personal attacks on Soroush's Popperian views, branding them as representatives of a degenerate liberalism that recognizes no bounds and advocates the policy of 'anything goes' in ethics and politics. Fardid argued that Popper is preaching a religion whose god is the arch-enemy of Allah, and warned his audience not to be fooled by his views, which might appear as interesting but in reality and in essence are nothing but thick veils of ignorance." Ali Paya, "The Philosopher and the Revolutionary State," 192.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 196. *Keyhan-e Farhangi* was a monthly magazine that was a de facto forum for the exposition and debate of contemporary issues among Iran's remaining intellectuals. In the ideologically charged atmosphere of the 1980s, various political factions from Islamists to centrist and the Left published articles expressing their views on the desired direction of Iran's post-revolutionary society.

According to Mirsepassi, the debates concerned the West, the merits of historicism versus positivism, and the “exploration of in-depth philosophical and political questions and point in some measure to the future shape of the Islamic Republic.”<sup>63</sup> Farzin Vahdat has isolated the main argument about the future shape of the Islamic Republic between Soroush and Davari to be the issue surrounding the expansion and contraction of human subjectivity in Iranian political ethics. Soroush’s position on mediated subjectivity was that the goal of human activity is a move towards perfection, and humans are historic beings with an unfolding understanding of religion. This evolving religious understanding defines the contours of the move towards perfection favouring the expansion of human subjectivity.<sup>64</sup> Davari, according to Vahdat, disagrees with Soroush’s position and favours a static understanding of religion. His position argues for the contraction of human subjectivity as compared to Western democratic theory, and in favor of *velayat-e faqih*.

Ali Paya presents a clear summary of the published debates in a co-authored article, “The Philosopher and the Revolutionary State: How Karl Popper’s Ideas Shaped the Views of Iranian Intellectuals.”<sup>65</sup> In this article, Paya cites several articles published by himself, Soroush, and Ganji between 1984 and 1986 that upheld the views of Popper on rationalism and positivism and its application in the Islamic Republic. Davari is portrayed as their ideological antagonist who “accused Popper of not being a proper philosopher but a propagandist of degenerate liberal values... a defender of the hegemony of the West who has no concern whatsoever for the oppressed people of the third world.”<sup>66</sup> Paya subsequently argues that Davari

has not only not responded to the criticisms made in the earlier article, but also continued to make use of fallacious ways of reasoning including ad hominem arguments, misrepresentation of the ideas of his critics, and

<sup>63</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, “Religious Intellectuals and Western Critiques of Secular Modernity,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 26 no. 3 (2006): 431.

<sup>64</sup> Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut*, 199-200.

<sup>65</sup> Ali Paya and Mohammad Amin Ghaneirad, “The Philosopher and the Revolutionary State: How Karl Popper’s Ideas Shaped the Views of Iranian Intellectuals,” *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 20 no. 2 (2006).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

resort to category mistakes as a means of conflating and confusing issues at hand.<sup>67</sup>

If the 1980s published debates in *Keyhan-e Farhangi* were open intellectual warfare between these Iranian intellectuals, their 2000s' publications about the context and consequences of the debates was more akin to a cold war. More specifically, in the 2000s, Mirsepassi, Vahdat, and Paya all published books and articles referencing Davari's philosophy and ideology in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>68</sup> In addition to Paya's aforementioned article, published in 2006, Mirsepassi published two works dealing with the phenomenon of Heideggerian-Muslims.<sup>69</sup> In addition, Farzin Vahdat's book, *God and Juggernaut: Iran's intellectual debate with Modernity* (2001) provided a measured philosophical analysis of Davari and Soroush's thoughts regarding subjectivity in post-revolutionary Iranian society.

Davari's response to these publications and the portrayal of his philosophy as an instrument of the regime was equally measured. In 2006, he published a book *Falsafeh, Siyasat, Khoshunat* (Philosophy, Politics, and Aggression) as a clarification and defense of his philosophy and methodology. The book is written in dialogue format with each chapter exploring questions and accusations about Davari's philosophy. For example, in the first chapter Davari addresses the accusations that his philosophy promotes aggression. His response is that while philosophy can be used to promote aggression, he has never done so; more significantly, he states that those who correctly understand his philosophy also understand that its utility in politics is inert.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>68</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Ali Paya and Mohammad Amin Ghaneirad, "The Philosopher and the Revolutionary State: How Karl Popper's Ideas Shaped the Views of Iranian Intellectuals." *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 20 no. 2 (2006): 185–213. Farzin Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut: Iran's Intellectual Encounter with Modernity*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002.

<sup>69</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Ali Mirsepassi, *Political Islam, Iran, and the Enlightenment: Philosophies of Hope and Despair* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh, Siyasat, Khoshunat*, 14-15.

Davari does not name any of his ideological opponents and uses phrases such as ‘they said’ to indirectly respond to the accusations. In another instance, he directly responds to Paya’s article in which Davari was quoted as negating Popper’s stature as a philosopher. Softening his tone and position considerably from his 1980s articles, Davari states:

First of all I am not saying that Popper is not a philosopher, and I do not even believe that all of his writings are in support of neo-liberalism.... But since he [Popper] did not properly understand philosophy and did not respect its value, he perceived the political findings of great contemporary philosophers as independent and essential.<sup>71</sup>

Davari addresses Paya, Soroush, and Ganji more directly in another book titled, *‘Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha (Thought and Time: Discussions)*.<sup>72</sup> In a section of the book dealing with the limitations of negating modernity in Iran, he mentions that the meaning of logic (*manteq*) and being logical has been loosely utilized with many who have a limited understanding of the philosophical term since their professions concern “poetry, politics, [and they are] historians and journalists.... I say to these gentlemen, you do your work but allow me to do my work. You be positivists and I shall continue to correct your Continental Philosophy.”<sup>73</sup> Davari next turns to his previous comments regarding Popper and states that if he made comments about Popper and the translations of his work outside of academic and university circles, a reference to *Keyhan-e Farhangi*, it was not because he was opposed to the propagation of Popperian thought or work. In a conciliatory tone, Davari states that, “I now understand that you can be a Popperian in politics and at the same time a practitioner of religion; however, religious politics is incongruent with Popperian philosophy.”<sup>74</sup> This statement somewhat weakens Davari’s argument that politics cannot be practiced independently of religion, as written in his other work *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz’-e Konuni-ye ‘Alam*.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>72</sup> This book is a reprint of articles published in several Iranian magazines and is done in an interview format.

<sup>73</sup> Reza Davari, *‘Aql va Zamaneh: Gofteguha*, 124.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>75</sup> Reza Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz’-e Konuni-ye ‘Alam*, 225.

Although softening his tone and response in the aforementioned works, Davari's clearest rebuttal against being labeled a "Muslim Heideggerian" is found in his latest publication, *Falsafeh-ye Mo'aser-e Iran* (Iran's Contemporary Philosophy, 2011). In this work, Davari attacks Popper's philosophy, defends Fardid and the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tehran and, in the process, answers the charge of being a "Muslim Heideggerian." This is an important book in establishing Davari's continued maintenance of his philosophy supporting a religiously sanctioned political ethics while distancing him from political factions based on his philosophy.

Davari's more recent critique of the use of Popper's philosophy falls into two categories. First, he associates Popperian philosophy with Iranian politics and then he compares Popper to Heidegger. In *Falsafeh-ye Mo'aser-e Iran*, Davari argues that Popper is the currency of those who use their writing to negate philosophy and if their writing contains any philosophy, it is the philosophy of the bazaar.<sup>76</sup> He attributes this phenomenon to a historic shift in the last thirty years: "an incident has occurred which is the politicization of philosophy, in that a party or political group has claimed a certain philosophy. This incident has two sides labeled Heideggerians and Popperians [in Iran] and is symptomatic of the shortcomings in the understanding of philosophy for us."<sup>77</sup> Davari's comment here is interesting in that while criticizing the political use of Popper's philosophy he equally places blame on the political use of Heidegger's philosophy. In other words, he is distancing himself from the use of philosophy in politics in general.

Davari begins his analysis of the problem of the politicization of philosophy with an historic account. He posits that starting in the 1980s, two camps have written on modernity and various intellectual interpretations using Islamic philosophy, *kalam*, and religious hermeneutics:

In one camp there are those who have paid attention to religion, the relation between religion and *kalam*, and the interpretation of religion. And there is the other group that has paid attention to the state of thought in the world and the historic condition of Iranians.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh-ye Mo'aser-e Iran*, 84.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 205-6.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 328-329.

According to Davari, the first group who later became the Popperians, had political aspirations from the outset and only used philosophy that was congruent with their interpretation,

In the beginning, they thought that religion and politics could complement each other and did not condemn a religious political order; however, they said that religion must be counted with modernity, human rights, and democracy; or in other words, [they] wanted an interpretation of religion that was congruent with the modern order. This approach was accepted and cherished by a great many people and the philosophy of Popper who is its [ideological] support became popular for this reason.... But they never considered Popper's utility between religion and modernity and ignored questions posed about the subject.<sup>79</sup>

Davari's comment about ignoring questions is a reference to his 1985 article, "*Din va Tajaddod*" (Religion and Modernity), in *Keyhan-e Farhangi*, in which he attacked Soroush and other Popperians. Davari states that in the 1990s the Popperians realized that they no longer needed Popper's philosophy because it was incapable of complimenting religion and democracy.<sup>80</sup>

Davari supports his critique on the use of Popperian philosophy in politics by directing his argument towards America. He states,

Perhaps you can create a political party based on the decorations (*araye*) of Karl Popper. The current government in the United States could have introduced Karl Popper, instead of Leo Strauss, as the teacher of its political methodology, since firstly Popper defended freedom and liberalism (whereas Leo Strauss negated liberalism) and secondly [Popper] considered violence a necessity for [liberalism's] defense and expansion, and in this regard introduced some methods on dealing with Saddam Hussein. Thirdly, he [Popper] considered American democracy as the best form of democracy.<sup>81</sup>

The implications here are twofold. First, Davari is saying that ideological political congruency does not necessarily entail the use of a particular philosopher's philosophy, for if that was the case Karl Popper instead of Leo Strauss's philosophy would be associated with American democracy. Second, Davari is indirectly associating Popperian

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 329.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 330. Notice the shift from religion and modernity to religion and philosophy.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 206.

philosophy with American politics and suggesting that those who support Popper support the Islamic Republic's nemesis - the United States.

Next, Davari posits an historic account of Popper and Heidegger in weakening Popperian philosophy. He states that while Heidegger and Popper were contemporaries, they never referenced each other or wrote of each other since Popper considered Heidegger, "to be a dark writer [nihilist] and opposed to an open society," while Heidegger "could not have considered Popper a philosopher."<sup>82</sup> Davari does not expand on either interpretation. He merely states that it would be irrational to place them in opposition to each other and concludes by referring to Soroush's philo-religious hermeneutics. "When Popperian philosophy becomes one with Islamic thoughts and gravitations of a person, then why is it different and wrong to have Heideggerian thought with its similarities with religious thought towards the sacred?"<sup>83</sup>

After his critique of Popper and the use of his philosophy, Davari returns to the greater problem of the politicization of philosophy in post-revolutionary Iranian society in order to defend philosophy in general and Fardid, himself, and the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tehran, in particular. Davari, in 2011, tries to distance himself from some of his 1980s comments regarding the use of philosophy in politics. However, this is not to say that he has changed his position, as seen through his differentiation of political philosophy and the use of philosophy in politics.

Davari argues that some Iranian philosophers refrained from writing, specifically because they feared its political use. Davari is, of course, referring to his mentor Ahmad Fardid. He states that a number of writers have published books and articles on Fardid accusing him of meddling in politics. Davari agrees that Fardid was entangled in politics, although, "If we consider all those who considered thought [philosophy] to be greater than politics, Fardid's name should be among them and in my opinion at the top of the list."<sup>84</sup> Instead, Davari's view is that Fardid, himself and the University of Tehran's Philosophical training group (*Goruh-e Amuzeshi-ye Falsafeh-ye Daneshgah-e Tehran*) were wrongly accused of meddling in politics.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 289-290.

Davari expands on his support of Fardid. He states that from the time of their acquaintance at the University of Tehran, Fardid considered himself to support the same type of philosophy as Heidegger. However, Davari believes that Fardid did not consider himself a Heideggerian based on comments such as: “in philosophy there is no relation of pupil to teacher (*morid be morad*) and secondly Heidegger is not the type of philosopher [whose philosophy] that can be replicated.”<sup>85</sup> Davari instead argues that it was Fardid’s historic understanding of Iran’s encounter with modernity that led him to produce writings such as, “Sadr-e Tarikh-e Tajaddod-e ma Zeyl-e Tarikh-e Gharbi Ast” (“The Zenith of Our Modern History is a Footnote in the History of the West”).<sup>86</sup> Davari states that if someone does not understand what Fardid had in mind when he used the word history then he cannot properly understand the above argument. However, “if someone understands what Heidegger meant by history, even in a loose sense, then the understanding of Fardid’s argument becomes apparent.”<sup>87</sup> Interestingly, Davari does not elaborate on either Heidegger or Fardid’s meaning of the word history (*tarikh*).

Instead, Davari extends his defense of Fardid to include Iranian philosophers who taught alongside Fardid at the Department of Philosophy in the University of Tehran. Davari states, probably referring to the late-1960s to mid-1970s, that “Fardid had a circle of intellectual followers, about ten to fifteen, who engaged with him and each other in dialogue, and I knew them and was present in this circle.”<sup>88</sup> Among them were Dr. Abul Hassan Jalili, Dr. Daryush Shayegan, Daryush Ashouri and Reza Davari himself. Davari also mentions that Dr. Amir Hussein Jahanbegloo was also present but generally had questions and criticisms.<sup>89</sup>

Davari refers to the comments of Kamrava and Jahanbegloo in regards to the influence of “Muslim Heideggerians,” “that they have recently said that the philosophical group of the University of Tehran is Heideggerian, and this has no merit. I have no idea

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 290.

<sup>86</sup> Davari gave a speech with a similar title at the 1998 commemoration ceremony of Fardid (d. 1994).

<sup>87</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh-ye Mo’aser-e Iran*, 290.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 311.

<sup>89</sup> This might be Davari’s way of alluding to Ramin Jahanbegloo’s ideological opposition to Fardid and Davari as presented in the article “Ideas Whose Time has Come: Conversations with Ramin Jahanbegloo.”

where this idea came from or for what ends it's being repeated, but I know that these sayings are a form of propaganda."<sup>90</sup> It is important to note that Davari is not denying that Heidegger's philosophy was discussed and debated among this group; rather that the discussion of Heidegger as an influential philosopher took place alongside other influential philosophers without preference and for the intellectual advancement of the group as a whole. Davari specifically states,

our group is not Heideggerian either and except for me who was a student of Fardid and have read some of Heidegger's writing and consider him the great thinker of the twentieth century, none of my colleagues have a particular memory of Heidegger much less being a Heideggerian.<sup>91</sup>

By affirming his familiarity to Fardid and Heidegger's philosophy, Davari redirects the defense towards himself,

I consider Heidegger among the great philosophers of the new era and consider it a necessity to know the way in which he approaches a particular Western historic era with a view towards the end of this history and thinks of an alternate future [after the end of western history]. But this does not mean that I follow Heidegger or am a Heideggerian. The importance I hold for Heidegger, I also hold, more or less, for Descartes, Hegel, Kant, Nietzsche, and of course Plato and Aristotle, so since I'm not a Platonist or an Aristotelian, then I can't be considered a Heideggerian either.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, in the 2000s Davari has somewhat softened his tone and position when compared with his original ideological debates of the 1980s. None the less, his 1980s publications in *Keyhan-e Farhangi* were responsible for his elevation to the status of a pro-regime public intellectual and neo-conservative factions used his views and philosophical methodology in the 1990s within the Islamic Republic to impede the progress of the reform movement.

Davari's philosophy and ideology has grown in Iran's post-revolutionary period. That is not to say that he has a large following, in fact his public discourse in the 2000s

<sup>90</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh-ye Mo'aser-e Iran*, 312.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

and efforts at the promotion of a softer version of Islamic society in international academic conferences point to a shift in his methodology if not beliefs. At the same time, his defense of the regime's theory of state in the intellectual debates of the 1980s, subsequent rebuttals and defense against opposing Iranian intellectuals in the 2000s and the use of his philosophy by conservative supporters of the regime in the Reform Movement of the 1990s and early 2000s, affirms his role as a public intellectual in the propagation and implementation of the Islamic Republic's vision for an Islamic society, and by extension an Irano-Islamic identity. Furthermore, his influence extends to the fields of education and acculturation starting with the Cultural Revolution, which merits a discussion.

## **Davari's Political Ethics in the Cultural Revolution and the Islamization of Education**

A significant by-product of the Islamic Revolution, exerting real influence on the Iranian education system and society while projecting a state-sponsored Irano-Islamic identity, is the Cultural Revolution. While the actual event dates back to the early 1980s and is synonymous with university closures and faculty and student purges, its greater impact concerns the formation of a high council overseeing the Islamization of education and culture in Iran. Davari as a permanent member of the High Council of the Cultural Revolution (HCCR) since 1984 has a voice and vote on this council that effectively operates as an arm of the office of the *vali-ye faqih*, superseding Iranian constitutional law and ensuring cultural affirmation to the regime's Irano-Islamic identity. Davari's perspectives on the Cultural Revolution will help substantiate this point.

Davari welcomed the Cultural Revolution, evidence of which appears in his 1979 article, "Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran." He states that at this time, Iranians support the Revolution with a fervent ideology and enthusiasm; of course, this condition will naturally weaken over time and needs to be replaced with something else that will guarantee the continuation of the Revolution.<sup>93</sup> Davari posits that this revolutionary fervour has encouraged people towards a new education requiring some rethinking

<sup>93</sup> Reza Davari, "Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran," 8.

about this education.<sup>94</sup> Specifically, Davari mentions changes to the university associated with the Cultural Revolution,

Let us consider the university. In my opinion the university was seldom a place of teaching knowledge and now with the expulsion of a few faculty, staff and students you cannot reorient the university. Some of those who had been expelled are better than or similar to some who have remained.... The entire structure of universities must be deconstructed and reconstructed, but this reconstruction cannot be done at the hands of the government and those in charge of the universities; rather, this reconstruction must be made at the hands and to the satisfaction of the faculty, staff and students. Right now, few are thinking about guarding and teaching proper knowledge and if there has been a talk about the organization of universities, it is meant the organization of bureaucracy and the division of power in them.<sup>95</sup>

It is interesting that Davari, in practice, refutes his above statements about the independence of the university and advocating internal structures for reform.

Khomeini initiated the Cultural Revolution in his *No'ruz* (Persian New Year) message on 21 March 1980.<sup>96</sup> Davari, then professor at the University of Tehran, recalls Khomeini's directive for the Cultural Revolution: "the goal of the Cultural Revolution, as stated many times by the imam [Khomeini] was: 'the elimination of western culture and strife in the re-acquaintance and reestablishment of Islamic culture in its place.'"<sup>97</sup> He goes on to explain Khomeini's vision for the Cultural Revolution using his familiar philosophical terminology:

The Cultural Revolution only takes place with a reorientation to the truth of Islam and Islamic thought, and if it acts in a corrective manner, that manner must be in line with the ethics of religion. The causes, symptoms, and habits of the West that we complain about so much must be

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>96</sup> Khomeini stressed the necessity for the creation of an "Islamic Revolution in all of Iran's universities" for the purpose of "cleansing Eastern and Western lecturers" and "the conversion of the university into a healthy environment for the teaching of Islamic sciences.... My dear students, you must strive in saving yourself from Westoxication and find what has been lost [within you]. The 'East' (*mashreq zamin*) has lost its indigenous culture and you who want to be free and independent must resist Westoxication. Maghsood Farakhasteh, 527. Khomeini explicitly called for the Islamization of education: "Colonial education must be uprooted; the Islamic university must be instituted." Sohrab Behdad, 194.

<sup>97</sup> Reza Davari, *Falsafeh dar Dam-e Ideologi*, 309.

eradicated from our thought, because these traits, themselves, have a *baten* that must be confronted and changed; otherwise when you prune a branch of Western thought in its *zaher*, many other branches grow in its place.<sup>98</sup>

From the onset, Davari agreed with the directive for the Cultural Revolution, which he saw as congruent with his own philosophy on the West, in particular, *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication) and its influence on Iranian universities and, by extension, the Pahlavi-developed modern bureaucracy. He states that the fact that until now there has not been any effort to change bureaucratic and educational institutions and change has been limited to filtering (*tasfiyeh*) is symptomatic of the unique position of intellectuals in the Revolution.<sup>99</sup>

Davari views education, in particular modern Iranian schools, as a place of teaching science, religion and culture to students. These views are most apparent in two of his articles, “Amuzesh va Parvaresh Mazhar va Aineh-ye Vaz'-e Keshvar Ast” and “Enqelab dar Amuzesh: Molahezati dar Bab-e Barnameh-ye Amuzesh-e Doreha-ye Rahnamai va Dabirestan.” In the first article he argues that, “when modern schools were first created in Iran, no thought was given to the cultural underpinning of this educational modernity. This is significant because knowledge and education grow and prosper under a specific cultural regime.”<sup>100</sup> According to Davari, there is a relationship between what is taught at schools and universities and the beliefs and customs of society.<sup>101</sup> This is Davari’s clearest reference to the university as a site for the acculturation of a specific identity. Since “culture is a path and every path leads to a destination,” Davari continues, “education needs to be in tuned with our culture so that it can help lead us to a destination.”<sup>102</sup> Thus, “the education system of a nation is indicative of its current condition [socio-political].”<sup>103</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>99</sup> Reza Davari, “Molahezati dar Bab-e Enqelab-e Iran,” 2.

<sup>100</sup> Reza Davari, “Amuzesh va Parvaresh Mazhar va Aineh-ye Va’ze Keshvar ast,” *Mahnameh Mohandesi Farhangi*, 2 no. 16 (2008), 80.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 82.

According to Davari, there is a disconnect between Iranian cultural and educational development and this has negatively influenced the natural growth of knowledge in Iranian society: “Students need to have an appetite for learning. Unfortunately, our schools have failed to produce this appetite for knowledge, especially, in the fields of ethics and religious studies.”<sup>104</sup>

The function of education, according to Davari, is preparation and practice for entering into society. The problem with Iran’s education system is that, “we essentially imitated the European and American education system here in Iran.”<sup>105</sup> In particular, secondary education served as a bridge to the university and the training of clerical administrators while less than ten percent of secondary school graduates move on to the university. Concurrently, “the demands of the modern world such as information technology requires specialized training which lie outside of secondary school curriculum and are often acquired at the post-secondary level here in Iran.”<sup>106</sup>

His proposed changes to Iran’s primary and secondary education system included the use of modern technology and a shift towards theoretical learning. According to Davari, the two priorities for the education system in Iran are better universal secondary education and better training for administrative support (*nezam-e edari*).<sup>107</sup> He argues that it would be better to teach fifty pages of theory to students than have them memorize hundreds of pages of data, which while time consuming, is not useful to those who do not move on to post secondary education.<sup>108</sup> Davari calls for internal mechanisms of change in Iran’s education given that, “education is a type of social engineering which is culturally driven (bottom up not state driven or top down),”<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, he is ignoring his participation in and the direct influence of HCCR on Iran’s educational policy.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>106</sup> Reza Davari, “Enqelab dar Amuzesh,” 118.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>109</sup> Reza Davari, “Amuzesh va Parvaresh Mazhar va Aineh-ye Va’ze Keshvar ast,” 85.

Directives for the Cultural Revolution were initiated by the HCCR. In addition to the retirement or expulsion of faculty deemed un-Islamic, the HCCR made efforts at reorienting education in Iran. The first regulation regarding the goals and responsibilities of the Department of Education since the 1979 Revolution came out in 1986 and was passed by the HCCR. Article one of this new regulation stresses,

The role of education in the strengthening of beliefs and ethics of the students by using the method of teaching the history, foundations, and meaning of Islam based on Twelver *Shia* tenants; as well as, the growth of a political vision based on the realities of *velayat-e faqih*, and spiritual development which fosters reliance on God. As well, requirement of loyalty to Iran's constitution and *velayat-e faqih* are prerequisites for employment in the Department of Education.<sup>110</sup>

Perhaps a significant issue addressed by the HCCR and one which brings insight to the presence of Davari's thought in post-revolutionary Iranian educational reform is the issue of identity (*hovviyat*). As mentioned, identity is multifaceted. It is both self imposed and created through a common social understanding while encompassing many traits from ethnicity to education and language that makes arriving at a definition next to impossible. Iranians in the twentieth century had to contend with three types of national identity: Persian, Islamic, and Western. Davari's Iraniyat centering on an Irano-Islamic identity is as much responsible for his views on education and its implementation through the HCCR, as it is in the formulation of his philosophy.

Since the HCCR is not defined in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, its advocates argue that it was created by the Office of the Supreme Leader (*vali-ye faqih*) and is an extension of his absolute power.<sup>111</sup> The scope and structure of the HCCR, plus the power of its members who effectively represent the head of the most influential government institutions in Iran, amount to a shadow government that is the de

<sup>110</sup> Said Peyvandi, "Vaq'iyat hay-e Nezam-e Amuzeshi Emruz-e Iran," 734.

<sup>111</sup> Thus, the HCCR operates freely and outside of constitutional boundaries. Legally speaking then, the regulations passed by the HCCR, created under the extraordinary powers of the *velayat-e faqih*, are not considered laws in the common meaning of the term and can be seen more as directives. Therefore, under normal circumstances a law passed by the parliament supersedes a law passed by the HCCR, unless the Office of the Supreme Leader ratifies the HCCR position, in which case the powers of *velayat-e faqih* ensures the supremacy of the law passed by the HCCR.

facto ruling body of Iran.<sup>112</sup> Davari has been a voting member of this small body since 1984, which creates a mechanism to project his Iraniyat into Iranian society. Davari's relation to the HCCR, I argue, is symbiotic in that his views are expressed in the Council and the Council's overall directive helps shape Davari's philosophy and ideology. The softening of Davari's rhetoric and the recantation of his anti-modern position is symptomatic of the HCCR's policy shift in accommodating increasingly modern methods and practices into their program of Iranian cultural development.

In conclusion, Davari's growth as a public intellectual is attributed to several factors. The primary reason for this growth was the congruency between Davari's philosophical ideology and the preferred Irano-Islamic identity of the new republic. This congruency is demonstrated starting with Davari's publications in the 1980s. Also in the 1980s, Davari participated in a series of published debates contesting various forms of an Islamic society with other Iranian intellectuals. As the religious establishment, including the Qom seminary, preferred his point of view, Davari gained ideological currency with the hard-line Islamists that filled key positions within the government. Appointments to several state-sponsored institutions supplemented his intellectual growth. In particular, Davari's membership in the powerful HCCR ensured the infusion of his Iraniyat into post revolutionary Iranian culture. Finally, his participation in international academic conferences and his domestic recognition in the form of academic and cultural awards point to his relevance as a post-revolutionary Iranian intellectual of consequence.

<sup>112</sup> The HCCR has extra constitutional powers, combined with a mandate from the office of the *vali-ye faqih* to determine and enforce the proper cultural direction of Iran. In effect, the HCCR operates freely and outside of the Islamic Republic's constitutional boundaries. See Farajollah Hedayat Niya Ganji, "Jayegah-ye Hoquqi-ye Shora-ye 'Ali Enqelab-e Farhangi," *Ravaq Andisheh* 8 (2002), 66-68.

## Chapter 5.

### Conclusion

This thesis explored a philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih* by one of Iran's living intellectuals, Reza Davari Ardakani. Davari, as he prefers to be called, was trained and continues to lecture at the University of Tehran's Department of Philosophy. Following the Iranian Revolution of 1979, he became a public intellectual through his support of the Islamic Republic's ethos. This ethos gives legitimacy to a cultural identity that supports a political ethics or theory of state. Davari used philosophical methodologies in support of Iran's current theory of state, *velayat-e faqih*.

The politics of the Islamic Republic are not an attempt to reconstruct the original Islamic community. Rather, they are an attempt to build a modern state with political ethics that accounts for the role of the sacred as defined in Shi'ism. This political ethics is legitimized through the promotion of the state's preferred Irano-Islamic cultural identity.<sup>1</sup> Modern schools and universities, as well as state-funded civic institutes, are exposed to and help foster this cultural identity. Davari's academic and professional writings exhibit this affinity and, as I have argued, fall within this practice.

One of the goals of this thesis was to complete certain aspects of the existing Western historiography on Davari. As mentioned in the introduction, the historiography on Davari is limited and contains disjointed accounts of the philosopher's thoughts and influence. In addition to placing Davari as the central focus, this thesis provided an account of Davari's location within Iran's modern education system. I argued that changes within the University of Tehran's Department of Philosophy contributed to the formation of his philosophical views. In particular, the shift from French positivism to German phenomenology, in addition to the shift towards mystical Islamic philosophy

<sup>1</sup> As Charles Taylor has argued, this type of national or political identity "serves the space for religion in the modern state," Taylor, 193.

concerning Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination, influenced Davari's philosophical development.

I also addressed historiographical deficiencies that existed concerning Davari's philosophy while providing the most complete rendition, to date, of the manner in which Davari's philosophy supports *velayat-e faqih*. Both Mirsepassi and Vahdat have emphasized Davari's anti-Enlightenment philosophical methodologies in negating the West as a "totality," setting up the argument for the necessity of the sacred as the source of his epistemology. Through a discussion of his philosophical understandings, in particular the role of logic (*manteq*) and mysticism (*erfan*), I argued that Davari was mainly an Islamic philosopher with a shallow understanding and utilization of modern Western philosophy. Davari attempts to draw links from Classical Greek philosophies through medieval Islamic philosophy to postmodern European phenomenology. Furthermore, I demonstrated that his linking of the philosophy of al-Farabi and Mulla Sadra to *velayat-e faqih* did not appear in his philosophical writings until shortly after the Iranian Revolution. This led me to a discussion of his philosophy concerning *Gharbzadegi* and the differences he saw in the infusion of Western thought into Islamic philosophy between medieval and modern times, i.e. the voluntary versus forceful infusion of Western thought into Islamic society.

There are larger implications that concern Davari's use of Heideggerian philosophy. This is significant, for the existing historiography on Davari classifies him as a "Muslim Heideggerian."<sup>2</sup> According to Mirsepassi, the reason for Davari's interest in Heidegger is the anti-modern German intellectuals' influence on Iranian intellectuals in the third phase of Iranian modernity.<sup>3</sup> Going beyond existing historiography, I have located part of this influence to be the University of Tehran's Department of Philosophy, where Davari developed his thoughts on Heidegger. In Heidegger, Davari found a prominent Western philosopher who was openly criticizing the West and Western metaphysics. In addition, Heidegger was denouncing Western decadence in a spiritual and non-materialistic way, as a consequence of his phenomenological approach to

<sup>2</sup> In particular Iranian scholars such as Ali Mirsepassi, Ramin Jahanbegloo, and Farhad Khosrokhavar.

<sup>3</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 13.

ontology. This approach resonated with Davari's training in Islamic philosophy leading to his use of Heideggerian language and philosophy.

More significantly, this thesis points to an intellectual bridge that has been created by Davari's methodology. In other words, more important than what the theory is about, is how it was constructed. In this case, Davari has linked modern academic philosophy to Shi'a *feqh* using variations of *'aql* (reason, intellect). Iran's Supreme Leader, the *faqih*, clearly approves of this approach as witnessed through Davari's growth and influence in Iran's public intellectual sphere. This implies the legitimate use of phenomenology, in particular the Heideggerian variant, to construct other philosophical arguments that affirm or challenge *feqhi* rulings. This can lead to further intellectual engagements, using this method, between university-trained and seminary-trained Iranian intellectuals, shrinking the epistemological gap that has strained Iran's dual education system.

Another implication addressed by this thesis is that of cultural identity. Cultural identity is significant in modern Iranian historiography since its boundaries, although constructed or "imagined," define a national identity.<sup>4</sup> The introduction of Western methods and practices influenced Iranian cultural identity, or *Iraniyat*, for more than a century. Iranian intellectuals, who influenced the concept of *Iraniyat*, grappled with the Persian, Islamic and Western traits in their publications and professional efforts. Given the relation between Iran's modern education system and the State, these intellectuals often worked to support or modify the regime's preferred national identity. Kamrava has argued that this historical process created a cycle in that the theories of the older generation of Iranian intellectuals influenced the younger generation, who in turn, produced their own theories on Iranian cultural identity. He has identified four "waves" of Iranian intellectuals in this cycle.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Ali Mirsepassi has identified three phases of "modernity" that roughly define Iran's socio-political development between 1850 and

<sup>4</sup> As Taylor argues, "The social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy." Taylor, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Mehran Kamrava, *Iran's Intellectual Revolution*, 45-53.

1979.<sup>6</sup> Davari was trained during the third stage of Iranian modernity and belongs to the third wave of Iranian intellectuals, respectively.

Davari's conception of an Iranian identity is significant. He argues that identity must be seen and analyzed within Iran's society since, "currently in the fields of development, governance, politics, and economics, every discourse that takes place has in one way or another been concerned with identity (*hovviyat*)."<sup>7</sup> His understanding of Western identity is associated with the development of the modern state and its projected national identity.<sup>8</sup> His Western understanding of identity is supplemented by the existence of the "other."<sup>9</sup> His professional activities and public discourse, following the 1979 Revolution, consciously moved his views on identity towards the Irano-Islamic variant projected by the Islamic Republic. In particular, his PhD dissertation paper on Greek and Islamic philosophy was reformulated to argue for an Islamic political ethics, conforming to Khomeini's theory of state (*velayat-e faqih*). Davari's influence on Iran's post-revolutionary political ethics and his appointments in Iran's state-sponsored institutions distinguished him as a "neo-conservative" and have even earned him the title of, "the Secular Vanguard of the Islamic Republic" by Iranian scholars in the West.<sup>10</sup>

Returning to the existing historiography, Boroujerdi has commented on Davari's Iraniyat. Boroujerdi calls Davari "an ideologue in pursuit of *homo islamicus*."<sup>11</sup> Boroujerdi posits that since Davari calls for a negation of Western modernity and views the West as a totality, the West becomes the "other" in Davari's Iraniyat.<sup>12</sup> It, then, follows that *homo islamicus*, which is Boroujerdi's reference to an Irano-Islamic identity, can only manifest

<sup>6</sup> Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Reza Davari, "Bohran-e hovviyat: baten-e Bohranha-ye mo'aser," *Nameh-ye Farhang* 9 (1993): 9.

<sup>8</sup> Davari states, "the question of identity is a philosophical question, and it is a new term associated with Hegel and those who came after him such [Karl] Marx." Reza Davari, "Bohran-e hovviyat," 9.

<sup>9</sup> Davari states, "In the field of sociology, another meaning of [identity] is that against an 'other.'" Reza Davari, "Bohran-e hovviyat," 15.

<sup>10</sup> By Mehran Kamrava and Ramin Jahanbegloo in particular, and indirectly referenced by Ali Mirsepassi, Farhad Khosrokhavar, and Mehrzad Boroujerdi in their publications.

<sup>11</sup> Mehrzad Boroujerdi, "Gharbzadegi," 47.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

with a negation of Western identity and a return to Islam.<sup>13</sup> In this thesis, I argued that while Davari identifies the West as a totality and the “other,” he has repeatedly stated that for practical and progressive reasons, Iranians cannot dispense with certain aspects of Western modernity such as scientific technology or civic institutions.

In fact, Davari has mentioned his anti-fundamentalist views and the need to embrace certain aspects of modernity such as technology in *Enqelab-e Islami va vaz'-e Konuni-ye 'Alam*. Moreover, in 1993 Davari stated that, “talking about identity is not for the purpose of saying we have to dispose of everything that is foreign and external to our tradition, returning the structure of society to what it was a few hundred years ago.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, while Boroujerdi has correctly identified the strong Islamic core-identity present in Davari’s Iraniyat, I argue that a weaker Western identity still exists. Moreover, I think that the Islamic Republic of Iran can’t justify its legitimacy without some semblance of Western, philosophical judgement and Davari serves that purpose, filling the Western vacuum in the tripartite structure of modern Iranian identity. Therefore, an Irano-Islamic identity cannot really function without its already internalized Western component.

This cultural identity can be seen in Davari’s ideology. While other scholars have pointed to his 1980s publications and intellectual debates with Abdolkarim Soroush in promoting him as a “Heideggerian Muslim,” I examined Davari’s response to these charges in his later works starting in 2006. In the process, I demonstrated a shift in rhetoric between his 1980s publications, at a time of heightened ideological sentiment following the revolution, and the softer, almost apologetic, account of his philosophy in the latter half of 2000s. In short, Davari, though not changing the core of his philosophy, has evolved from a radical to a conservative supporter of *velayat-e faqih*. This evolution entails a reconceptualisation of his Iraniyat that supports certain civic and cultural notions of Western identity.

Another implication of this thesis was that although Davari gained his intellectual fame through his political philosophy, his views and professional life points to him being more of a philosopher of culture. Two institutional affiliations are demonstrative of his cultural influence. He is a permanent voting member of the High Council of Cultural

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>14</sup> Reza Davari, “Bohran-e hovviyat,” 20.

Revolution (HCCR) whose mission statement reads “expansion and promotion of the influence of Islamic culture in the society and consolidation of the Cultural Revolution and enrichment of the public culture.”<sup>15</sup> In this thesis, I have argued, that the HCCR is a select body with extra-constitutional powers directing cultural practices and by extension influencing cultural identity in Iran.

In addition to his involvement with the HCCR, Davari holds the directorship of the Academy of Sciences, extending his cultural influence abroad. The Academy is an institution with the dual purpose of cultivating scientific development within the country as well as promoting Irano-Islamic views on scientific technology and research abroad. In short, Davari, as President of the Academy of Sciences reformulates the regime’s religious understandings of scientific and political ethics in order to make their ideas more palatable to foreign audiences. Iran’s academic community has even given him an award as Iran’s Philosopher of Culture.

In conclusion, I have argued that Davari’s philosophical interpretation of *velayat-e faqih* is best understood as the latest reiteration in the conciliatory practices of hybrid identity production of a modernizing Iran. My thesis has also produced some questions that require further research. These questions include the relationship between Iranian universities and native political developments, the tension in the duality of theory of knowledge in Iran since the implementation of modern education, the efforts of successive Iranian governments to bridge the gap between Western secular knowledge and Irano-Islamic theories of knowledge, as well as the on-going efforts of a new generation of post-revolutionary Iranian scholars developing political theories rooted in their conception of Iraniyat.

To answer these questions, other Iranian intellectuals need to be researched, including, Ahmad Fardid, Sayyed Hussein Nasr and Mohammad Ali Foroughi. In addition, I have located other Iranian institutions, such as the Iranian Institute for Philosophy, the Academy of Sciences and the powerful HCCR that merit more substantial research. These institutions’ intellectual products have not been researched by academics outside of Iran. Furthermore, these institutions were government sponsored under both the Pahlavi Monarchy and the Islamic Republic, elevating the

<sup>15</sup> Available from <http://iranculture.org/en/about/ahdaf.php>; internet; accessed 23 May 2010.

importance and perceived political utility of their intellectual products in the continuity of epistemological hybridization.

This research will be useful to scholars of other areas of the Middle East. I have demonstrated the development of a historic process with a unique emphasis on the interrelationship between philosophy, religion and politics that seeks to bridge gaps between modern, traditional and religious modes of life. This process carries implications in the production of knowledge. The general Islamization of politics in the Middle East and North Africa can be examined from this point of view. In Iran, the Islamic Republic infuses religious identity into the civic through the adaptation of cultural norms that are selectively inclusive of Islamic, Persian and Western traits. The greatest arena for the promotion of this activity is the education system. Thus, the role played in conciliatory hybridization by modern national education systems in Middle Eastern states deserves further research.

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