

MERIA

Islam, Islamists, and Democracy

By Ali R. Abootalebi*

Professor Abootalebi analyzes the differences among Islamic movements, as well as their contrasting attitudes toward democracy. He shows how reality is quite different from the monolithic models often presented regarding such ideologies and groups, including the debates among their leading activists and philosophers. The concept of Islamist and fundamentalist variations is especially useful, and important for analyzing the future direction of such organizations. He also discusses why this trend has not been more successful in winning over Muslims and seizing power in various countries.

The wide range of Islamic movements -- in social make-up, structure, and program -- have left many observers baffled. Since the Iranian revolution there has been a sharpened distinction between two approaches which might be called, respectively, fundamentalism and Islamism. Islamism can embrace both "progressive" 'ulema and those urban intellectuals who believe Islamic tenets are compatible with such modern values as freedom and democracy. The Islamist view stands in sharp contrast to those held by fundamentalist, traditionalist 'ulema who have had a historical monopoly over the right to interpret Islam and its tenets. (1)

There has been much confusion, especially, over the term "fundamentalist," which implies a return to the past in recapturing the roots of Islamic religion. There is also an implication here that other readings of Islam are illegitimate, since they supposedly neglect traditionally accepted concepts for innovations that are often imports from non-Islamic societies.

Robin Wright shows one side of this approach in pointing out that fundamentalist movements also incorporate a great deal of modernity and innovation. Thus, she denies that most Islamic movements today are: "fundamentalist": The various Islamic movements are often called

"fundamentalist" in the West, but most are in fact not fundamentalist in their agendas. Fundamentalism generally urges passive adherence to literal reading of scriptures and does not advocate change of the social order, instead focusing on reforming the lives of the individual and family.

Most of today's Islamic movements resemble Catholic Liberation theologians who urge active use of original religious doctrine to better the temporal and political lives in a modern world. Islamist or Islamism more accurately describes their forward-looking, interpretive and often even innovative attempts to reconstruct the social order."(2) The opposite standpoint is conveyed by Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi, who claims that all truly Islamic movements are "fundamentalist." As Yazdi puts it, there are:

"Two major trends in Islamic movements. One, we call the traditionalist. (The term 'fundamentalism' does not reflect the true facts. All of us are fundamentalists according to the definition in Western culture, that whoever believes the Bible is the word of God is a fundamentalist.) There are the tradition-oriented Muslim intelligentsia, the so-called 'ulema. Then there are the reformist or modernist Muslim intellectuals."(3) Both Islamic "fundamentalism" and "traditionalism" are used here interchangeably as referring to

opposition to Islamic reformists, or "Islamists," who are less rigid in their views of Islamic law (Shari'a) and of non-Islamic cultures. In any case, the classification of Muslim movements into traditionalist/fundamentalist and Islamist/reformist can be confusing, since Islamic doctrine itself allows for different interpretations and therefore different opinions on Shari'a and its principles. It is quite possible for a traditionalist religious leader (alim) to share similar Islamic values with an Islamic reformer on the overall position of Islam in society, economy, and politics. The late Ayatollah Taleqani, who played an important role in Iran's revolution, had an activist vision of Islam and an Islamic state, for example, much closer to Islamist views than to those of Ayatollah Khomeini.

Thus it should be stressed that fundamental disagreements remain even among traditionalists over divine versus popular sovereignty. Some, like Abul A'la Mawdudi, founder of the Jamaat-i Islami in India, have argued that if democracy is conceived as a limited form of popular sovereignty, restricted and directed by God's law, there is no incompatibility with Islam, but Mawdudi concluded that Islam is the very antithesis of secular Western democracy based solely on the sovereignty of the people. (4) On the other hand, Sayyid Qutb, a leading traditionalist theoretician of the Muslim Brotherhood, executed by the Egyptian government in 1966, objected to the idea of popular sovereignty altogether: Qutb believed that "the Islamic state must be based on the Quranic principle of consultation or shurah [on the interpretation of Shari'a], and that the Islamic law or Shari'a is so complete a legal and moral system that no further legislation is possible or necessary." (5)

Yet the rapidly unfolding events of the 1980s and 1990s have helped popularize the message and broaden support for

moderate Islamists, compared to the revolutionary fundamentalists who flourished following Iran's revolution. The more radical forces have been somewhat discredited by criticism of the Iranian model, their use of violence, and their failure to seize power. The current trend is for Muslim political leaders who favor participation in the electoral process as the way of taking control of the state, and intellectual reformists, who have been engaging in a lively debate on Islam and modernity (e.g., the outlook of Islam on democracy, equality and human, minority and women's rights). The 'ulema have historically preoccupied themselves with the literal interpretation of the Quran (Koran) and the development of Islamic Law (Shari'a) which relies basically on the Quran and Sunna ("path" or "tradition," referring to the traditions about the conduct of the Prophet). (6)

In doing so, a great deal of analysis has been written on the contributions by such Muslim thinkers as al-Shafi'i (767-820), Ibn Hanbal (780-855), al-Ghazzali (1058-1111), Ibn-Taymiyya (1263-1328), and others. These thinkers paid less attention in their writings to the political dimension of Shari'a than to its theological aspects. Vital questions, such as the right of the individual versus the community (umma), the right to rule and the source of political legitimacy, and the right or duty to rebel against unjust government, have been left underdeveloped. Thus, the scholars have not examined the duties and functions of an Islamic government in detail. As a result, no concrete political philosophy based on Shari'a has ever developed, and Islamic political thought has remained purely speculative.(7)

In short, while a detailed theological discussion of the relationship between Islam and democracy is outside the scope of this study, (8) Islamists argue that shura (consultation) can be interpreted as a

democratic principle, since it demands open debate among both the 'ulema and the community at large on issues that concern the public. But traditionalists' unilinear and rigid view of society and politics has also come increasingly under question among Muslims. Fundamentalist militant groups like the Egyptian al-Gama', Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), or the Palestinian Hamas have neither been able to expand their bases of support beyond a certain point nor been able to gain power.

Their views on Islam and politics are too rigid and outmoded for modern problems, and are even, some would say, un-Islamic. The Taliban movement in Afghanistan in the 1990s under the religious guidance of some 'ulema, have imposed such restrictive "Islamic" laws in provinces under their military control that they have made both conservative and radical 'ulema in Iran look like liberal reformists. And Islamic militants, including Islamists in Egypt, Algeria, and elsewhere in the Islamic world, may be praised as martyrs by some clerics but are denounced as terrorists by others.

Not only are traditionalists everywhere under scrutiny in terms of what they say and what they do, but the foundation of their power as the only legitimate interpreters of the Shari'a has been shaken. The Arab fundamentalists have even been accused of a false representation of Muslim history, the presentation of a biased and incoherent account of Islamic thought, to further their position and interest. (9) And of course, their historically close association with the state further weakens the credibility of some fundamentalists.

The political and economic turmoil in the Middle East has sharpened the peoples' image and expectations of Muslim groups and their leadership. Increasingly, the capacity to deliver tangible economic goods and basic political rights has become more important than the politics of ideology

and rhetoric, Islamic or not. The Islamic governments of Iran and the Sudan, for example, remain somewhat isolated in the international community and face tremendous domestic problems that have led to popular discontent and even uprisings. Saudi Arabia, a self-proclaimed Islamic state, faces increasing economic problems, and while the monarchy claims legitimacy through fundamentalist Wahhabi Islam, it denies the population fundamental political and civil rights that are respected in Islam. The latest phase of the Islamic movement that began in the 1980s varies distinctly from the Islamic experience in Iran in 1979, in Lebanon after 1982, and among a host of small groups in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Syria, and elsewhere during the late 1970s and early 1980s. (10) The most conspicuous difference is the tactics of the new Islamists.

If extremism characterized a first phase of fundamentalist movements, the new ones attempt to work within the state system rather than outside it. Islamists, in other word, have not failed to recognize that pluralism and interdependence are the catchwords of the 1990s. (11) Historically, Islam as a religion had remained on the periphery of state politics, over-shadowed by authoritarian states that propagated secular ideologies and values. Furthermore, the overall structure of the post-World War II international political economy helped consolidate state power over most Muslim societies. The rent collected from oil and gas exports, and external support in the form of military, economic, and financial aid, for example, helped Middle Eastern states monopolize domestic power during the Cold War. The Arab-Israeli conflict also bolstered the Arab states' political hegemony by legitimizing their authoritarianism and providing an excuse for inadequacies in socioeconomic performance. (12)

It is clear to all Muslims that in the Quran and Shari'a, Allah is the ultimate

sovereign, and everything on earth and heaven is under His command. Yet, there is nothing in either source to deny Muslims' freedom of action to improve their individual and communal lives; nor does Shari'a promote subservience to the state as a proof of proper Muslim behavior. On the contrary, individuals are regarded as responsible for the salvation and well being of themselves, their families, and their communities. (13) So blind obedience to a self-proclaimed Islamic state can be as anti-Islamic as open defiance of such a state. If a government rules in the name of Allah, then it must respect the fact that Allah regards individuals and not the state as responsible for their actions, for it is they who will be punished or rewarded accordingly on Judgment Day. (14) On this basis, the Islamists dismiss the idea that further legislation beyond Shari'a is impossible, as confusing the boundary between the overall sovereignty of Allah and the particulars of popular sovereignty.

The debate among Islamists themselves and among some progressive traditionalists -- be it in Iran, the Sudan, Egypt, Algeria, or elsewhere -- is over the old question: how to reconcile the tenets of Islam with the modern notions of democracy liberty, justice, and gender equality. In terms of democracy, the traditional meaning of the concept of shura (consultation) is outdated, according to Islamists. After years of debate, according to Yazdi, "Many [Islamists] have come to the conclusion that general elections and a parliament properly serve that concept of consultation." (15)

It is the extent of popular sovereignty and not its existence that is debated. Because of economic, technological, and environmental changes, further development of Shari'a seems inevitable to the Islamists. The development of Shari'a, they argue, need not be looked upon as a move away from Islamic principles, but, on the contrary, as a necessary stepping-stone towards

reaching an ideal Islamic society -- a materially and spiritually developed utopia. An indispensable element in building such a society is freedom of thought and expression, including freedom from government control and suppression. In short, accepting the sovereignty of Allah does not necessarily contradict popular sovereignty.

Thus, Islamic traditionalists' re-evaluation of their historical position on socioeconomic and political values is necessary to bring them more in line with the ongoing social and economic transformations in Muslim societies. Indeed, religious personalities such as the late Ayatollah Taleqani, among the most prominent leaders of the Iranian Revolution, cautioned Iranians on relations between Islam and politics and on the position of the 'ulema in society and polity. As Hasan Turabi puts it, Islam exists in society "as a matter of norms and laws. It is an integrated and total way of life. Therefore government must be limited, because Islamic government would be omnipotent. Government has no business interfering in one's religion or religious practices." (16) So, regarding dress codes in Muslim societies, for instance, society would definitely exercise a measure of censure and encouragement for one form of dress over another. But no organization like the Saudi *amr bil-maarouf wal-nahi an al-munkar* (the injunction "to command the good and forbid evil") has legal authority to stop women or harass them...Segregation of women is definitely not a part of Islam. This is just conventional, historical Islam. It was totally unknown in the model of Islam or the text of Islam. It is unjustified." (17) As for the relation of civil society to the state, according to Turabi, "In general civil society should be left alone, but if a societal function fails, government should step in. Once society picks up the function, then it [the state] should withdraw once more to its

limit of security, organizing those aspects of society which must be legally organized." (18)

So, as one scholar of Islam has put it, "A major issue in democratization in Muslim societies is whether or not scholars and leaders have successfully made the transition from listing 'democratic doctrines of Islam' to creating coherent theories and structures of Islamic democracy that are not simply reformulations of Western perceptions in some Muslim idioms." (19) But the absence of a constructive dialogue between the traditionalist 'ulema and the reformist Islamists has widened the gap among Islamic movements and their supporters. The debate on creating and legislating legal codes, dealing with political rights and civil liberties of individual citizens and the overall state-society relationship (e.g., political, human, and minority rights, gender equality, the degree of government interference with society), is thus lacking.

ISLAM AND CIVIL SOCIETY

One recent premise about state-society relations in the Middle East is that states in the Middle East are weak and its societies are strong, while the opposite was long argued. The Iranian revolution, the rise of Islamist movements in the 1980s, and declining oil prices are cited as proof for this viewpoint. This is taken as grounds for optimism and has led to an increasing interest in state-society relations and in prospects for the emergence of civil society in the region in the 1980s and the 1990s. (20)

Thus, "today most scholars confidently affirm that the bases of civil society--both intermediate powers and autonomous social groups -- exist in the Middle East." (21) Even traditional social formations based on blood and marriage, or tribal ties (as in the Gulf monarchies and

Yemen), or bonyads -- the semi-independent trusts (as in Iran) are thought to be a part of civil society in the Middle East. (22) The mere presence of such groups, it is argued, deters the power of the state and leads to increased prospects for democratization.

But this position rests on shaky ground. Even the appearance of political parties and formal groups and associations in the Middle East by itself does not necessarily mean a fundamental move toward democracy by state or society. The augmentation of political parties in the region may be more a sign of the state's adjusting to pressure from Islamic groups and their allies than a genuine political opening on either side.

Political parties in the Middle East remain mainly ineffective and play a mostly ceremonial role that serves to legitimate the state and its policies. For example, in Iran the ruling religious elite affirmed the sovereignty of the people, but despite this, the new elite has been reluctant to share power with its political opposition. Although the formalities of a democratic state are in place (e.g., elections and debates), the people remain politically and economically without much functional power. What civil society there was in Iran is fading, although intellectual and associational life continues to resist the state which has come to dominate most aspects of life in Iran.

Moreover, embryonic associations, although they exist in Muslim countries, are poorly organized and remain dependent on patrons within the state. As Carrie Rosefsky Wickham puts it in discussing Egypt, "The emergence of independent sites of social and political expressions within an authoritarian setting is not the same as the emergence of civil society, at least not in its liberal conception." (23) The emergence of state-controlled quasi-pluralism in countries like Egypt or Jordan should not be seen as a shift from one-party rule to pluralism

(ta'addudiya) involving numerous political parties and associations. (24)

The real basis of state power in Middle Eastern countries is largely informal and not institutional, for it is personal, family, and group ties that help sustain the executive power of the ruling elites. The pattern of patrimonial leadership is not confined to the Middle East, of course, as many developing countries display the same phenomenon. (25) (Patrimonialism, though in milder and less rigid forms, have existed even in Portugal, Spain, and Greece, where they persisted longer than in most other European countries, except the Balkans; the modernization process has finally eradicated patrimonialism in Portugal, Spain, and Greece which have at last inaugurated or reestablished full formal democracy in the 1970s.)

The extent of ruling elites' autocratic power varies among the developing countries. Kuwait and the Persian Gulf sheikdoms, along with Saudi Arabia and Oman, are perhaps the primary examples of highly traditional autocratic rule. At the other extreme, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Turkey, Tunisia, and Brazil are examples that testify, to various degrees, to the changing balance of state-society relations in favor of society, as institutionalization of independent power relationships is gradually undermining informal and arbitrary state power associations.

The dominant position of the state in the Middle East has meant the domination of politics by powerful families, elites, and military and bureaucratic officers. The slow emergence and growth of independent groups and associations has been significant. For example, organized labor by itself, or through an alliance with the middle class, can be an effective force capable of checking the power of the state and promoting democracy, although most analysts ignore the role of organized labor in

the civil society debate. But in any case, labor unions, a primary agent of civil society, in the Middle East remain either non-existent or are repressed by the state.

Rachid al-Ghannouchi, the founder of the Tunisian Islamic movement, al-Nahda, believes that, "Once the Islamists are given a chance to comprehend the values of Western modernity, such as democracy and human rights, they will search within Islam for a place for these values where they implant them, nurse them, and cherish them just as the Westerners did before, when they implanted such values in a much less fertile soil." (26)

That is to say, Islam need not go through a process of secularization as did the West, but must face one of the foremost challenges it has encountered yet: "to outline a regime that is Islamic but also representative and accountable." (27) Ghannouchi advocates "an Islamic system that features majority rule, free elections, a free press, protection of minorities, equality of all secular and religious parties, and full women's rights in everything from polling booths, dress codes, and divorce courts to the top job at the presidential palace. Islam's role is to provide the system with moral values." (28)

Others, like the Iranian Islamic reformist, Abdul Karim Soroush, have argued that there is no contradiction between Islam and the freedoms inherent in democracy. "Islam and democracy are not only compatible, their association is inevitable. In a Muslim society, one without the other is not perfect." (29) Soroush believes that the will and beliefs of the majority must shape the ideal Islamic state, and that Islam itself is evolving as a religion, which leaves it open to reinterpretation: Sacred texts do not change, but interpretation of them is always in flux because the age and the changing conditions in which believers live influence understanding. Furthermore, everyone is

entitled to his or her own understanding. No one group of people, including the clergy, has the exclusive right to interpret or reinterpret tenets of the faith. Some understanding may be more learned than others, but no version is automatically more authoritative than another. (30)

The prospect for the emergence of civil society depends on the characteristics of the people who form that society in the first place. The better educated, healthier, wealthier, and more organized the people, and the more broadly these resources are spread, the stronger will the society be in protecting itself from domination by the state. Moreover, these resources allow for the formation of institutions that act as the focus of activity where differences in opinions and policies can be debated and resolved without resort to violence.

Thus, institutionalization is essential for political stability, for systematic, orderly channeling of contesting elites' demands for political leadership. To be democratic, political parties, whether religious or not, must function within an independent institutionalized organizational network where final decisions are made and executed without constant interference from various layers of their country's state bureaucracies. Associational groups and formal institutions that have played a critical role in Western political systems, however, have been considerably fewer in less developed countries. (31) Chances for a crisis from their non-participation increase where the opposition lacks an institutional basis for exerting pressure for participation (e.g., religious opposition to the Shah prior to the Iranian revolution) or where the state and its participants fail to adapt to changing social and economic forces (e.g., Lebanon prior to 1975). On the other hand, institutionalized opposition, whether religious or not, can be successfully incorporated into the political process (e.g., Jewish religious parties in

Israel and to some degree Islamic opposition in Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan and Egypt).

In fact, Samuel P. Huntington's pessimistic view of the incompatibility of Islam and democratic norms is undermined by his own argument for the destabilizing effects of modernization itself and for the stabilizing effects of institutionalization. He points to the revival of Islamic fundamentalism and the poverty of many Islamic states as the fundamental reasons for his pessimism. (32) Yet the revival of Islam and the rise of fundamentalism in Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East has not been an anti-democratic movement aiming at the destruction of democratic values. Given the wide range of Islamic responses to the West and to each other, the appeal in Muslim countries to unconventional forms of political conduct, including mass uprisings and rioting, is not due to any inherent intolerance of Islam toward democracy and the peaceful settlements of disputes. Islam in its various denominations has always been, throughout its history, a source of both social protest against and social support for given regimes. The hostility toward the West by some -- though not all -- Islamic religious groups is aimed not at democratic values but at Western domination and interference in the domestic affairs of these countries.

CONCLUSION

There seems to be no immediate resolution to the debate among traditionalists, Islamists, and intellectual reformers on Islam and democracy. However, the attempt to develop the political doctrine of Islam by Islamists, intellectual reformists, and some traditionalists need not necessarily be viewed by other traditionalists as an attempt to entirely undermine the legitimacy of the religious establishment in Muslim countries. (33) Traditional religious leaders in the

Muslim world, whether in power (Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the Sudan) or in opposition, must face the fact that, in light of complex socioeconomic and political problems facing Muslim societies in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, their position as legitimate religious/political leaders is bound to erode.

The greatest threat to the traditional 'ulema come from either their own meager performance as heads of state (e.g., in Iran, and the Sudan) or their failure in political opposition to formulate and propose comprehensive agendas for resolving socioeconomic and political problems (e.g., as in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait) or their sectarian fighting that has resulted in violence and acts of terrorism. Further rifts among traditionalist 'ulema can be expected, as in Iran, as religious leadership in Muslim states finds itself under pressure to deal with modern problems. The progressive 'ulema will benefit from an open dialogue with the Islamists in streamlining the tenets of Islam to take into account modern values without abandoning the fundamentals of Islam itself. For example, "The experience of Iran and the Sudan has shown that fundamentalism in power cannot solve every problem, and actually complicates the challenge of implementing Islamic values in public life." (34)

The potential for religious debate and political dialogue between traditionalists and Islamists, including the reformists, can be promising. The Islamists' pragmatic view of Islam and the popularity of the traditionalists in the late twentieth century can be mutually beneficial in their common struggle for political sovereignty and development. This, however, can occur only when the religious establishment itself favors fundamental socioeconomic and political restructuring of the status quo. While it is not easy to predict the behavior of Islamist groups in their quest for power, it is possible to enhance cooperation between

Islamists and secular groups in their common struggle against the state and in their future plans for their country. Thus, the question is whether the secular state can pursue a policy of political inclusiveness and allow Islamists to take part in the political process, given widespread concerns over the long-term fate of individual rights and liberties should the Islamists take control of the state. Some scholars have argued that where the popular will dictates it, Islamists must have the opportunity to rule, even if the future of such rights are not guaranteed. Some have advocated a slow and partial political inclusion of the Islamists. But, as Jerrold Green has argued, some sort of a "national pact must be devised as the best way to secure the democratization process, although devising a means to enforce the pact remain[s] unresolved." (35)

Muslim countries, like other developing countries though in varying degrees, suffer from acute socioeconomic and political problems (e.g., strong and dominant states; weak associational opposition to the state, and an overall maldistribution of socioeconomic and power resources) that need to be addressed. Inauguration of democratic elections in Muslim countries without addressing the fundamental problem of uneven distribution of socioeconomic and political resources in these countries will not succeed. The religious debate on Islam and democracy must then deal with not only the question of justice and freedom, but also with developing mechanisms necessary to remedy the structural problem of maldistribution of resources.

An "Islamic" democracy will not embrace all the secular values adopted in the West. However, the initial steps taken toward such an end will need to include a process of institutionalization in Islam. The incorporation of an institutionalized Islam in the process of development will help the cause of democracy should Islamists

successfully challenge the hegemony of the traditionalists in both the religious and political arenas. To play the democratic game, religious leaders will have to better organize themselves, to propose alternative plans for socio-economic and political issues facing the country. This in turn can help them maintain legitimacy and popular support, facilitating their struggle for political power. Organization is the key to the success of any group seeking to achieve its goals.

**Ali R. Abootalebi has taught at the University of Arizona and Union College. He is currently assistant professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. He is author of "Democratization in Developing Countries: 1980-1989," The Journal of Developing Areas 29 (July 1995): 507-530; "Elections Matter," Center for Iranian Research and Analysis, CIRA14 (March 1998): 30-33; and "Ideological Currents in Islam" Center for Iranian Research and Analysis, CIRA, forthcoming. He has just completed a book on State-Society Relations in Developing Countries, 1980-1989.*

Notes

1. The difference between traditionalism/fundamentalism and Islamism is over their outlook on Islam's relation to the state, society, and the economy. Admittedly, the classification of religious leaders into these two broad categories may not suit everyone, but for the general purpose of this study this classification should be sufficient. Others have also made a similar distinction between fundamentalists and Islamists. See Wright, "Islam, Democracy and the West," Foreign Affairs, 71, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 131-45.

2. Robin Wright, "Islam, Democracy, and the West," quote from p. 144.

3. Dr. Yazdi, a university professor and political activist who served as deputy prime minister and foreign minister under the Ayatollah Khomeini, is now Secretary General in the opposition political party, the Liberation Movement of Iran. The status of the Liberation Movement of Iran as opposition political party must be viewed with caution, since officially no political parties exist in the Islamic Republic of Iran. See "A Seminar with Ibrahim Yazdi," Middle East Policy 3, no. 4 (April 1995): 15-28; quote from p. 16. In December 7, 1998, however, a new party was established by the supporters of president Khatami, called the Islamic Iran Participation Front.

4. Quoted in Esposito and Piscatori, Democratization and Islam, p. 436. See also Abul A'la Mawdudi, A Political Theory of Islam, in, Donohue and John Esposito, eds. Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 253-54.

5. Quoted in Hudson, "After the Gulf War," p. 436. For more on Qutb's views on Islam, see John L. Esposito, ed., Voices of Resurgent Islam (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

6. Both Sunni and Shia' 'ulema accept the authority of Sunna, although there are some differences in interpretation and the significance of the Prophet's Sunna. The Shia' 'ulema also rely on the traditions of the Imams, "the rightful heirs of the Prophet," the last of whom, the Mahdi, remains hidden until his return to rule the Earth.

7. On this and related issues, see Zubaida, Islam, The People, and the State.

8. For a recent discussion of various Islamic concepts with implications for democracy (e.g., tawhid, shurah, khilafah, etc.), see John L. Esposito, Islam and Democracy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

9. As'ad Abukhalil, "The Incoherence of Islamic Fundamentalism," Middle East Journal, Vol. 48, 4 (Autumn 1994): 677-94.

10. Robin Wright, *Islam, Democracy, and the West*, p. 131. Wright believes that this second phase of the Islamist movement is marked by a different constituency as well.
11. Wright, "Islam, Democracy, and the West," p. 132.
12. See Simon Bromley, *Rethinking Middle East Politics* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).
13. Surah (chapter) 10, Aya (verse) 108, *The Quran* (N.J. Dawood, trans., New York: Penguin, 1993).
14. Surah 38, Aya 26, *The Quran* (Dawood trans.).
15. "A Seminar with Ibrahim Yazdi," p. 18. Yazdi claims his interpretation of shura is correct, based on years of debate among Muslim scholars, like Rashid Reza, Maulana Maududi, Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Naini, Mehdi Bazargan, Ayatollah Taligani, and Ayatollah Mutahhari.
16. Quoted in Cantori and Lowri, "Islam, Democracy, the State, and the West," p. 52.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
19. Esposito and Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, p. 31.
20. See for example the article by Emmanuel Sivan for the Social Science Research Council project on Civil Society in the Middle East, entitled "The Islamic Resurgence: Civil Society Strikes Back," *Journal of Contemporary History* 25 (1990): 353-64. See also, Hudson, "After the Gulf War;" Esposito and Piscatori, "Democratization and Islam."
21. Yahya Sadowski, "The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate," *Middle East Report*, (July-August 1993): 14-21; quote from p. 17.
22. Richard Augustus Norton and Farhard Kazemi, eds., *Civil Society in the Middle East*, vol. 2, (New York: Brill, 1996), p. 8.
23. See Carrie Rosefsky Wickham's analysis of the case of Egypt, "Beyond Democratization: Political Change in the Arab World," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 17, no. 3 (September 1994): 507-09, quote from p. 507.
24. Michael Hudson, "After the Gulf War."
25. On "patriarchalism" and "patrimonialism," see Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947) and Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962), pp. 330-60. See Bill and Springborg, *Politics in the Middle East*, for patterns of patrimonialism in the Middle East.
26. From a lecture by Sheikh Rachid al-Ghannouchi, Chatham House, London, 9 May 1995, in Robin Wright, "Two Visions of Reformism," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 2 (April 1996): 64-75, quote from p. 74.
27. Mohamed Elhachmi Hamdi, "The Limits of the Western Model," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 2 (April 1996): 81-85, quote from p. 85.
28. Robin Wright, "Two Visions of Reformism," p. 73.
29. Soroush expressed his views in one of several interviews in Tehran and Washington, D.C. in 1994 and 1995, quoted by Robin Wright "Two Visions of," p. 68.
30. Quoted in Wright, "Two Visions of Reformism," p. 70.
31. On the role of groups and associations in the Middle East, see Bill and Springborg, *Politics in the Middle East*, p. 88.
32. Samuel Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?," *Political Science Quarterly* 99 (Summer 1994): 193-218.
33. The writings of Hasan Turabi, Mehdi Bazargan, Ali Yazdi, Abd al-Karim Soroush, as well as the late Ayatollah Taleqani, are some examples. Mehdi Bazargan, for example, in response to Samuel Huntington's assertion of "the clash of civilizations," commented, before his death, on the positive relationship between Islam and individual rights, peaceful coexistence with non-Muslims, economic

development, freedom of action, and democracy. See Mehdi Bazargan, "Is Islam a Global Threat?" (Aya Islam yek khatari Jahani Ast?), *Rahavard* no. 36 (Tir 1373 [1994]): 48-57.

34. Laith Kubba, "Recognizing Pluralism," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 2 (April 1996): 86-89, quote from p. 88.

35. Jerrold Green, "Civil Society and the Prospects for Political Reform in the Middle East," (New York University Press, 1994) pp. 1-20, quoted from p. 13. The conference was sponsored by the Civil Society in the Middle East Project, convened at the Aspen Institute Wye Conference, Queenstown, MD, September 30-October 1, 1994. Green was among the minority who advocated inclusion without reservation if commanded by popular will, but others like Graham Fuller and Richard Norton have mixed feelings and more reservations about the inclusion of Islamists in the process of democratization.