

Mehdi Bazargan: The Devout Engineer

“Tzu-Kung asked about government.”¹ This is how Confucius used to pontificate. The parable is everything. “The Master said: ‘Enough food, enough weapons, and the confidence of the people.’” Even Marx would agree. Weber too. The economic bases of legitimacy, then the ideological and state built up. Weber would call it “external means” (enough weapons), and “inner Justification” (food for and confidence of the people). But Confucius’ progressive dialectics unfolds. “Tzu-Kung said: ‘Suppose you definitely had no alternative but to give up one of these three, which would you relinquish first?’ The Master said: ‘Weapons.’” Clausewitz would disagree, but still the state would be prosperous and legitimate. Yet, the ultimate twist is to come. “Tzu-Kung said: ‘Suppose you definitely had no alternative but to give up one of the remaining two, which would you relinquish first?’ The Master said: ‘Food. From of old death has come to all men, but a people without confidence in its rulers will not stand.’”² The cruelty of the Confucian wisdom only reveals the supreme law of politics: legitimacy. Beyond that there is the last wisdom. The endurance of the collective confidence is much more urgent in the survival of a people than having its individuals fed. The confidence between the leader and the led is the supreme political covenant, the trust in which draws from the most sacred pool of common symbolics. Institutions and figures of authority sustain their legitimacy or lose their political truth in proportion to their approximation to or distance from that sacred pool. An old countenance, a kind frequency in voice, perhaps a beard, a pair of glasses, a certain kind of glance, one or two benign jokes: legitimacy always needs to work through the visible and audible conversation of gestures. Who commands the gestures? Where does the conversation lead? Interpreting the symbols, received and reconstituted, is everything.

A Muslim Goes to Paris

Mehdi Bazargan (b. 1907) was born in Tehran. His family, originally from **Azerbaijan**, had moved to Tehran with a wave of other provincials who were increasingly attracted to the capital. His father, Hajj Abbas Qoli **Tabrizi**, was a devout religious activist who was the head of the **Azerbaijani mosque** and the community in Tehran. Mehdi Bazargan was raised under the immediate care of a father whose senses of religiosity were assaulted by a towering dictator who bypassed everybody’s Islamicity to connect a fictionalized version of the “Ancient Persia” to a utopian notion of “the modern Iran.”

In 1928, Bazargan was among the first group of Iranian students whom **Reza Shah** sent to Europe. In addition to learning from the technological manuals, Reza Shah had intended for these students to bring back a proper dosage of the “patriotism” he had detected among the Europeans. Bazargan would later remember Reza Shah having received these students in his palace prior to their departure for France.

You are undoubtedly wondering [why] we are sending you to a country whose religion is different from ours. It is a free republic. Yet they are nationalists. You will bring back nationalism, arts, and sciences to Iran.³

During the 1920s, as Reza Khan styled himself Reza Shah, the order of the day was “modernization”: to orchestrate a massive and thorough reconstitution of the Iranian society—signs, symbols, and ceremonies—so that it would look more like the old tyrant’s mental image of “The West.” In manners and matters, inseparable in their command, Reza Shah wished to have things European transplanted to Iranian soil. The Turkish experience of Mustafa Kemal was particularly attractive to the Iranian monarch. To change the Iranian manner, he passed a law to have his subjects—men, women, and children—change their outer decorum, trade their turbans for *chapeaux*, their scarves for hats, their beards for ties, their longer *chadors* for shorter skirts, their grey yesterdays for their colorful tomorrows. This was the law: government down to the wardrobe. To change the Iranian matter, to transubstantiate the very stuff that makes an Iranian, he sought to transplant “The Western” age of technology to Iranian soil. Bazargan was among the emissaries of transmutation who were sent to Europe to facilitate the monarch’s wishes.

Students such as Bazargan were taken from (deeply) religious families. Their success was due more to their diligent ethical conduct than to a free-spirited encounter with matters educational: more a disciplined manner than a free-floating spirit. Upon his arrival in Europe, Bazargan is reported to have had a cautious attitude as to exactly what they could achieve. “If

in this educational trip," he is reported to have stipulated, "we do not gain anything, we should at least not forfeit our previous capital, [that is,] our religion and our ethics."⁴ Although deeply attracted to European and American achievements in technology and although undoubtedly optimistic about their ability to translate this technology into operative forces in their homeland, by disposition this group of religiously musical students was cautious in safeguarding their faith, what they were assured of, in the face of an unknown entity they termed "The Western Technology." The composition of this group, however, should not be assumed to be sternly dogmatic. A fellow student told Bazargan about a friend who had envied their going to a country where beautiful girls could be seen walking the streets without any veil.⁵

Bazargan spent seven years in France, from 1928 to 1935, where he received his degree in engineering. In France, and while he pursued his engineering courses, he underwent what was most common among such religiously alert students who were distanced from their origins for a long period of time. He began to develop a fresh attitude towards, a new interpretative bent on, his faith. This is precisely what would happen a few decades later to Shari'ati. Beginning with the conscious or unconscious, articulated or mute, premise that they ought to remain firmly attached to their Islamic consciousness, they begin to admire "The Western" achievements in arts and sciences—more the sciences, in their collective experiences, than the arts. They ask themselves, consciously or unconsciously, systematically or haphazardly, questions pertaining to the causes and effects of such achievements. They recognize a heightened state of ideological self-awareness on the part of "The West" that they identify as the source and cause of its achievements. They then look back at their own society where such technological achievements were lacking, a fact they attribute, in turn, to the absence of that heightened state of ideological self-awareness. At this stage they invariably develop a dual conception of their faith. They have no doubt that their faith, Islam, had to function as the medium of their heightened state of ideological self-awareness. In this instance, Islam itself is the root of the conviction. As a universal claim to truth, among other such universal claims, Islam cannot be set aside as a metaphysical matter between man and his Creator. Everything, every change and every continuity, ought to be in the context and in terms of some understanding of Islam. Consequently, one could not, being in Bazargan's position, formulate or adopt an acceptable answer to that state of heightened ideological self-understanding without a necessary and altogether inevitable recourse to Islam. At this stage they inevitably confront the historical Islam—Islam as it has been received and practiced in their immediate community of believers, in the neighborhood of their childhood, in the streets of their youth. At this point, where ideals and realities collide,

Bazargan, like most other transplanted Muslim intelligentsia, develops a dual conception of Islam: Islam as it exists now, which he considers backward and superstitious, and contrary to that there is "The True Islam," which he imagines as socially active and politically progressive.⁶

The Engineer Comes Home

"Active" and "progressive" was thus the collective image of "The True Islam" that Bazargan sought to propagate upon his return from France in 1935, at the height of Reza Shah's dictatorial reign. What welcomes Bazargan when he returns to his homeland is the establishment of the Tehran University (in 1934), where he taught for many years; the construction of the trans-Iranian railway, on which he took frequent trips to southern Iran; and the mandatory unveiling of Iranian women (in 1935), which he could only have opposed. The death of Ayatollah Shaykh Abdolkarim Ha'eri in 1933, while Bazargan was in France, and the gradual ascendancy of Ayatollah Borujerdi as the chief Shi'i jurist commenced several decades of official apolitical leadership in the religious establishment, thus giving Bazargan further leverage in his (lay) brand of Islamic activism.

Upon his arrival in Iran, Bazargan was conscripted, from 1935 to 1937, to perform his military services. When Reza Shah came to power in 1925, Iran lacked what can be properly called a standing army; there were only scattered regiments of Cossacks under the control of foreign mercenaries. Reza Shah was instrumental in creating a modern military service divided into an army, navy, and air force. The security of the villages and small towns was also entrusted to the gendarmerie. Military service became mandatory, and every capable Iranian male had to serve two years in the army.

When he completed his military service, Bazargan began teaching at the School of Engineering at Tehran University, while establishing a private company to earn a living independent of his governmental post. The establishment of Tehran University in 1934 was a remarkable achievement in modern Iranian history with grave consequences not only in education but also in social and political developments. Instrumental in making this historical achievement possible were four eminent Iranian statesmen and academicians: Mohammad Ali Foruqi, Qolam Hossein Rahnema, Isa Sadiq, and Ali Akbar Siasi. Ali Akbar Siasi was one of the first Iranians to receive a doctorate from the Sorbonne in 1931. When he defended his thesis in Paris, the event was so remarkable that the Iranian ambassador to France, Hossein Ala', attended. Siasi's dissertation, *La Perse au Contact de l'Occident*, received widespread recognition in the French and English press, and he was honored by a special award from the French Academy. When he returned to Iran in 1931, news of his remarkable academic achievement

preceded him through a dispatch from Hossein Ala'. Ali Asghar Hekmat, the Minister of Education under Reza Shah at the time, summoned Siasi and informed him that "on the auspicious occasion of this victory, I have asked His Majesty [Reza Shah] to permit us to establish a university in Tehran."⁷ Hekmat convinced Siasi to take charge of establishing the university. On 4 February 1935, Parliament ratified the bill for the establishment of Tehran University. Some eight years later, on 4 February 1943, Siasi was again equally instrumental in giving Tehran University autonomy from the Ministry of Education.⁸ When Bazargan finished his military services and began teaching at the Engineering School at Tehran University in 1937, he had good reason to be grateful to Ali Akbar Siasi, a fellow Iranian student he might very well have known in Paris. His teaching position would put him in touch with the most ideologically alert segment of the political community. He would come to know the latest and most compelling ideological forces that found their way into the Iranian youthful imagination. He would gain a great deal of experience from these formative years as he continued to fortify his Islamic convictions and sentiments and as he witnessed interest in the Marxist ideology growing among the youth on his campus.

In 1940, Bazargan became involved in the maintenance of a great national building, Bank Melli, where his engineering virtuosity was admired by the young Muslims working for him. Encouraged by the responses he received from young Muslims, Bazargan began contributing articles to *Danesh-amuz*, the journal that Sayyid Mahmud Taleqani published from the institute he had established, *Kanun-e Islam*, at Hedayat Mosque. His first article was called "Religion in Europe." With its publication, he began his lifelong collaboration with Ayatollah Taleqani which had an interesting background because it began a generation earlier with their fathers. The elder Bazargan, Hajj Abbas Qoli, and Taleqani's father, Sayyid Abolhasan, collaborated in the 1920s to establish an Islamic institute headquartered in Bazargan's residence. Founded in 1924, this religious organization was meant to proselytize Islam among members of other faiths. The elder Bazargan and Taleqani published a journal too, called *Balagh*.

A Rationalized Mind at Work

In 1945, Bazargan published the revised version of a speech he had delivered at Taleqani's *Kanun-e Islam*. *Motahharat Dar Islam (Purities in Islam)* was Bazargan's first contribution toward the pseudoscientific rationalization of the Islamic juridical injunctions. These injunctions, derived primarily from the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet and the Shi'i Imams, historically had been obeyed or disobeyed not because they conformed to (or deviated from) any set of given scientific validation, but because they

were the juridical mandates of a religious state of mind, ranging from hygienic regulations to ritualistic prayers, that were established parameters of identifying with the social manifestations of a sacred order. Taking them, instead, for practical verifications of a pseudoscientific view of the physical world, Bazargan sought to "prove" them scientifically viable. This endeavor, persistent with Bazargan, was symptomatic of a deeper problem. The technological advances made in "The West" were seen as predicated on a scientific worldview, something lacking in Islamic modernity. During his student years in France, Bazargan had come to acknowledge that scientific spirit as the condito sine qua non of the technological age. Consequently, if Islam were to instill such a scientific spirit in its believers, then its own binding commandments had to be proven scientifically. Thus the ritualistic aspects of the faith began to be rationalized scientifically. The language of this pseudoscientific verification of the ritualistic dimensions of the faith was directed towards young Muslim students who shared Bazargan's two essential concerns: (1) conforming to the scientific discourse of the mid-twentieth century and (2) validating the veracity of Islam by demonstrating its compatibility with this pseudoscientific discourse.

Totally oblivious to the fundamental distinction between a credal discourse, that of the Islamic juridical language, and a scientific semantic, Bazargan sought to validate the old faith through the modern lingo. That the very act would level the Shi'i juridical discourse, and with it the universal claim of Islam to truth, with a particular phase in paradigmatic changes in modern scientific discourse did not cross Bazargan's mind, nor could he be alert, given his historical exigencies, to such crucial issues. He had simply been fascinated by the modern scientific magic he had witnessed in France. In all sincerity he sought to vindicate his faith through his thermodynamic engineering. The result of this misplaced piety was the publication of *Purities in Islam* in which he tried to demonstrate that the Islamic rules and regulations concerning bodily and ritualistic hygiene conformed to biochemical and mathematical formulae. This staunch commitment to validate Islam with "scientific" accuracy would remain Bazargan's chief characteristic and principal contribution to the making of "the Islamic Ideology." To recruit the active royalties of as many diverse social groupings as possible, this ideology had to have a comprehensive agenda and a universal appeal. Bazargan's pseudoscientific verification of the faith appealed to a particular segment of this political constituency and thus further propagated the political domains of "the Islamic Ideology."

Islam or Communism

The active annunciation of "the Islamic Ideology" was always in need of institutional advancement. The Muslim Students Association was one of

the most serious and dedicated organizations that was actively involved, at least from the late 1940s, in propagating various aspects of the emerging "Islamic Ideology." In 1952, in the heat of the nationalization of oil movement, led by Mohammad Mosaddeq, the Muslim Student Association invited Bazargan to deliver a series of three lectures—"God-Worshipping and Self-Worshipping," "Islam or Communism," and "Eschatology"—which were subsequently collected, edited, and published in 1953, the year of the CIA-sponsored coup against Mosaddeq. In these lectures, Bazargan wishes to argue that worshipping God is in the nature of human experience and has been man's way of opposing his worshipping himself. Self-worship, even when projected and expressed in idolatry, could only have prevented man from historical growth. The gradual formulation of aggregate and complex human societies has been the result of man's God-worshipping tendencies. Science and civilization, prosperity and democracy, are all by-products of man's religious institutions. If today's man witnesses the decline of civilization it is precisely because his God-worshipping tendencies have been dulled by materialism. Modern man thinks, according to Bazargan, that such terms as "honor, patriotism, country, fellow man, ideology, etc." can substitute for religion, but he is wrong. "Man is either a God-worshipper or a self-worshipper."¹⁰

To the hypothetical question "Can man resign from God-worshipping?" Bazargan answers in the negative by arguing that we cannot lead an ethical life based solely on our conscience. Very soon, he argues, our conscience (independent of a metaphysics) would be countered by our growing rationality.

The higher [our rational] understanding and [sense of] distinction goes up, the weaker will become [our] sentiments and attributes which are based on conscience. Rationality, logic, intelligence, and science will substitute emotion, habit, sentiments, and ethics.¹¹

Communism, in Bazargan's perception, is precisely the end result of severe "self-worshipping" or individualism. If one thinks, as Bazargan believes a communist does, that everyone has done him wrong, and they do so because they are rich and powerful, then private property has to be eliminated.¹² He further explains to his young Muslim students that "the expression of dialectical materialism, or [other] philosophical issues and concepts, that are said about the Communist ideology are miscellanea that function as the make-up of a bride."¹³ With the foundation of ethics on conscience rather than on religion, in Europe the appearance of Communism has been inevitable.

Islam and Communism have quite a number of similarities. "But this similarity," Bazargan stipulates,

is like the encounter of two travellers who are travelling in two diametrically opposed directions, one going up, the other going down. Both ideologies (*maslak*) see individuals in perfect equality. But one [Communism] sees them equal in worthlessness and lack of character, and the other [Islam] considers all people creations of one God, holding them in honor like brothers.¹⁴

While Islam elevates man to the presence of God, Communism lowers him to the miserable existence of a short life on this earth. No higher aspiration is left for those who live under a Communist regime. A Communist society is an aggregate of selfish people.

If you sit next to a selfish person on a bus, you know how much trouble you have. Now imagine if the whole world was full of selfish people. Then what? What a stinking hatred?! What an awesome horror?! What trickery and tyranny?! . . . In short, what a hell!¹⁵

Absolute dictatorship is the ultimate end of Communism.¹⁶ "On one side a world of people; on the other side just one person! What servitude?! What baseness?!"¹⁷ If there is equality in Communism it is the equality of jackasses. The scheme that Communism promises for humanity is "an absolute animal society."¹⁸ The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were, for many decades, living examples of such conditions.¹⁹

The only salvation that exists for humanity, thus threatened by Communism, is a return. Man's return from selfishness to God-worshipping is the only way out of this horrid impasse Communism has offered humanity.²⁰ To survive, man "has to choose one of the monotheistic religions. [One has to] choose a religion that defeats selfishness in the last barrack of Communism, in the arm of materialism."²¹ Among the monotheist religions, Zoroastrianism is obsolete, Judaism has bred materialism, and Christianity is dictated by its church. Islam is the only way out.²² But which Islam? Not the Islam of Saudi Arabia.²³ But a new, "true," Islam.

The Coup of 1953

Until 1953, Bazargan's political activities were limited to a passive and tacit contribution to the dormant making of "the Islamic Ideology." His deep and faithful friendship with Taleqani would sow the seeds of still deeper and more persuasive political collaborations in the future. Around Bazargan and Taleqani, and centered in *Kanun-e Islam*, would gradually emerge a growing constituency of young followers who would later be instrumental in active political engagements. During the post-1953 period, when the CIA-engineered coup put Mohammad Reza Shah back in power and helped him to establish a brutally repressive regime, Bazargan assumed an increas-

ingly active political role. With a sense of humor distinctively his own, he explained his political activities during this period as follows:

[When] the people in position of responsibility . . . did not perform their duties, nay, they did precisely the opposite of their duties, being all thieves and treacherous, then everyone becomes a Jack of all trades. The university professor too turns into a political rabble-rouser.²⁴

Because of his political activities during the postcoup d'état period, Bazargan was arrested and swiftly incarcerated in 1955. While in prison, he wrote a number of books on various aspects of the Islamic faith and their relevance to modern life.

The Thermodynamics of Mehdi Bazargan

In 1956 Bazargan published a book with a rather peculiar title, *Love and Worship: Man's Thermodynamics*, in which he wished to tie together three apparently irrelevant issues: "love," as in the relationship between two human beings, "worship" as in the relationship between man and God, and "thermodynamics." Like almost all the other ideologues of "the Islamic Ideology," Bazargan apologizes to his readers for not having had time to attend to these matters in detail and with accuracy.²⁵ Confessing that he has personally never been in love or in any other way experienced this emotion,²⁶ he goes on to theorize about love as a sensation that attracts individuals to objects of satisfaction that stand outside themselves. He wishes to universalize that object from a person to a concept.²⁷ The same observation is "proven" through a thermodynamic discussion, all with charts and formulae,²⁸ to reach the conclusion that "the human being has been made to be always in need [of something] and should always remain that way."²⁹ In order to achieve his objects of desire, material or spiritual, the individual must spend the energy, in thermodynamic terms, that is invested in him.³⁰ This energy expenditure is regulated internally by such factors as physical activity, sickness, memory, sleep, years of heightened activities, and ultimately death.³¹ The same thermodynamic principles are equally applicable to a society and its various organs, particularly its economy.³² More important, ethics and metaphysics are equally governed by the laws of thermodynamics.

The finale of this book occurs in the last chapter, where Bazargan introduces the question of "worship" and provides a short history of socialism as a social and economic design to regulate man's thermodynamic energies, with a purposeful direction, based on justice and equality. But ultimately, in his judgment, socialism has failed³³ to fulfill man's needs. Returning to the notion of "love," he argues that in the absence of any human-made design to systematize man's thermodynamic functions, it is in

man's nature to search for a deeper and more permanent mode of "love," one that gives meaning to life. Here Bazargan believes that man has traversed a historical path of growth through which he has realized higher and more noble stages of "love," leading him, in the process, to the more perfect style of worship.³⁴ In the passage from all mundane forms of "love" to the highest stage of "obedience," he recognizes no motto more noble than Imam Hossein's assertion that "verily, life is conviction and struggle."³⁵ This motto leads to the realization of the highest stage of "love":

Thus [man] searches for the Beloved. What kind of Beloved? . . . A Beloved that is worthy of his growth, with His entrance so high and His court so vast that would occupy his services day and night, accepting him in "servitude."³⁶

That Beloved is God and the prophets are emissaries who lead obediently to His court.³⁷

In another book, *Angizah va Angizandah (Motivation and One Who Motivates)*, Bazargan further develops this idea of "love" as the overriding sentiment that has governed the relationship between Muhammad and God.³⁸ Discounting the view of "The Western" Orientalists that Muhammad was a social reformer, he argues, by statistically "proving that 97.7 percent of the Qur'anic verses center around God,"³⁹ that nothing other than mere obedience and love had moved the Prophet to serve his Lord.

Thus, tacitly but emphatically opposing the secular accusation that Islam is a violent faith forcefully imposed on Iranians, Bazargan sought to designate "love" at the center of his faith. But this particular mode of love, contrary to that of Christianity, was life-affirming, and its energy ought to be channelled towards the social and economic production of material life. Bazargan argues this fully armed with his thermodynamic charts and formulae, giving the new reading of the faith a "scientific" validity.

Religion: Conscience Collective

The "scientific" validity was to update Islam to meet the challenge of modernity. In the face of the increasing secularization and technicalization of the larger society, Bazargan wished to remake a religious collective consciousness actively present at the most politically relevant social levels. In a series of two lectures he delivered on 26 and 27 January 1960, on the occasion of the anniversary of the commencement of Prophet Muhammad's mission as the Last Divine Messenger, he reminded his audience of the crucial validity of such religious celebrations in bringing them together. Delivered to the Association of Muslim Engineers and the Muslim Student Association, the sites of these two lectures demonstrate the variety and multiplicity of institutional centers where revolutionary religious discourse found its audience. The "character" and "national identity" of Muslims,

Bazargan argued,⁴⁰ depended on such regular celebrations as that of the commencement of the the Prophet's Divine mission. Participation in such collective celebrations brings together "the engineer, the physician, the teacher, the student, the merchant, the worker, the cleric, the army officer; the old and the young, the literate and the illiterate."⁴¹

One crucial feature of this collective consciousness that Bazargan wants to establish and propagate among his audience is that the ceaseless passage of man towards "perfection" is a divinely mandated inevitability.⁴² Only God is Perfect. Imperfection is the prerogative of man. Even man's perceptions of God have gone through an evolutionary process. Such social and political God-terms as "nationalism" and "patriotism" have given way to higher ideals of "liberalism," "capitalism," "socialism," and "Communism."⁴³ This evolutionary view of the world inevitably necessitates an evolutionary and changeable reading of the faith, rendering it compatible with the realities of a given period.

Bazargan translates this evolutionary theory of human religious and social history into a theory of the universality of the Qur'anic language. Whereas both Judaism and Christianity are specific in how they address given human societies,⁴⁴ Islam represents a more rationalized stage of divine revelation whereby man has been addressed in his universal characteristics. From this Bazargan concludes that, contrary to the Orientalists' claim, Islam is not a religion revealed fourteen centuries earlier and thus irrelevant to contemporary realities.⁴⁵ Because it represents the highest stage of an evolutionary process in the divine message, the Qur'an represents a perfect paradigmatic model for constructing a human society. Quoting George Bernard Shaw on the flexibility of Islam and on the perspicacious character of the Prophet,⁴⁶ Bazargan concludes that, contrary to Judaism and Christianity, Islam (because of its universal initiation of humanity to Truth) can attend to individual human needs while guaranteeing the collective well-being of the society at large. In the end, Bazargan is critical of the established clergy⁴⁷ for having concentrated their endeavors exclusively on rules of ritual piety and for leaving the larger social and political issues to scientists. "The Muslim," he contends, "has to struggle against tyranny with his hands and his tongue, and if he cannot do that, then at least deep in his heart be discontent with it."⁴⁸

Political Uses of Religious Rituals: Hajj Pilgrimage

No stone should be left unturned in that struggle against tyranny. Every immediate or tangential aspect of the communal faith had to be reread and repoliticized. Compelled by the utilitarian and economic feasibilities of social programs offered by secular ideologies, Bazargan sought to explain the hajj pilgrimage in such terms. In May 1960 he performed his hajj

pilgrimage. When, a few years later, he gave a speech on the significance of the event, he reported to his audience that "the supreme objective [of hajj was to] prepare the international background for universal peace and the creation of a single nation and a single government for humanity."⁴⁹ Admitting that universal peace has been the great hope of all major world ideological movements, Bazargan goes on to argue⁵⁰ that the same goal has been the chief objective of the Qur'an and that the hajj pilgrimage has been intended as a massive celebration of equality where "the Arab has no privilege over the non-Arab."⁵¹ He clearly advocates the political uses of such occasions as the hajj pilgrimage.

The Shi'i Imams on many occasions took advantage of the hajj pilgrimage and guided the people. It was in Mecca that Imam Hossein refused to acknowledge the authority of Yazid, accepted the invitation of the people from Kufah, and proclaimed to the world his intention to go and fight [against Yazid].⁵²

More emphatically, Bazargan proclaimed that "Mecca has repeatedly, before and after Islam, been used to propagate, incite, and mobilize revolutionary movements."⁵³ Thus, by calling "the House of the People" what is ordinarily called "the House of God," by establishing a utilitarian function for the hajj pilgrimage, and, more important, by emphatically advocating an essential repoliticization of the event, Bazargan wished to bring perhaps the most religiously charged symbolic gathering of Muslims into an active engagement in political consciousness. This would have a dual effect: It would translate the otherwise metaphysical significance of the highest Islamic rituals into utilitarian functions; and then, by affixing a patently political posture to such functions, Bazargan would appeal to his young political constituency. These dual purposes would, in turn, strengthen the position of "the Islamic Ideology" vis-à-vis other (secular) ideologies.

The Freedom Movement of Iran

In 1960, Bazargan joined the Second National Front, formed after the fall of Mosaddeq. However, certain policies and the general antireligious atmosphere of this organization did not particularly appeal to him or a number of other members. In April 1961, Bazargan, Ayatollah Taleqani, and a mutual friend, Yadollah Sahabi, left the Second National Front and established the *Nehzat-e Azadi-ye Iran* (The Freedom Movement of Iran). Because of his involvement in the *Nehzat-e Azadi*, Bazargan was arrested in January 1962 and was imprisoned. He spent his years in prison writing a number of other books, chief among them *Bad va Baran Dar Qur'an* (*The Wind and Rain in the Qur'an*), in which he tried to prove that the Qur'an was a divine revelation rather than a human discourse,⁵⁴ and *Seyr-e Tahavvol dar Qur'an* (*The Course of Development in the Qur'an*)⁵⁵ of

which Shari'ati is reported to have said, "the significance of this book in Qur'anic and Islamic Studies is similar to Newton's discovery of the [law of universal] gravitation in the experimental sciences."⁵⁶

The Freedom Movement⁵⁷ was a particular crystallization of the general Islamic thrust in modern Iranian history that began to take shape from the early 1940s, when Reza Shah's abdication created unprecedented circumstances for free political expression. The 1940s was the crucial decade when the formation of left and liberal political and ideological groupings gave catalytic momentum to an equally powerful need for an "Islamic Ideology." From that time forward a series of crucial organizations began to provide institutional momentum to the rising Islamic concerns. Students, engineers, physicians, and teachers started to form professional associations with "the Islamic" as their chief identifying factor. Formation of such social groupings was concurrent with more radical movements, such as the Fada'ian-e Islam, which sought more drastic and immediate solutions to the ideological and political problems they perceived. Assassination of ideological and political opponents was high on the agenda of the Fada'ian-e Islam.

As the founders of "The Freedom Movement" saw themselves, their organization was the institutional expression of the deeply felt need to respond immediately to two simultaneous threats: "the corrupt Western culture" and "the aggressive Marxist culture."⁵⁸ In organizing themselves into this revolutionary body, the Muslim activists gave their radical interpretation of Islam as "a combatant, progressive, and forward-looking ideology [*maktab*] which is responsive to the material and spiritual needs and necessities of a society."⁵⁹ Accepting the popularly elected Mosaddeq as their legitimating and exemplary model, they promised to engage in open struggle against the "illegal" activities of the monarch.⁶⁰ "Freedom" was high on the agenda of this movement:

What the Iranian nation wants is just one word . . . "Freedom." The Iranian people say that one person does not have the right to govern a nation in an arbitrary and tyrannical way. This word [*freedom = azadi*] is Persian and easily understandable. This word is not Hebrew that for understanding it you need to hire advisors from Israel. If you know what we mean. . . . We want freedom. We say that the Shah does not have the right to establish law, to install [or] dismiss a government, and everything, minor or major, be done according to his views and will, and yet he be [considered] sinless, unaccountable, with a sacred, even everlasting, position. This is reactionary, this is despotism, this is dictatorship.⁶¹

The Freedom Movement opposed the Shah's "White Revolution," which it considered yet another plot to rob the Iranians of their national wealth and their cultural identity. It also severely criticized the Shah's suppression of Khomeini's uprising in 1963, calling his army "professional hoodlums."⁶² By June 1963, The Freedom Movement had openly called for the violent destruction of the Pahlavi regime: "Down with the Shah's despica-

ble regime. Death to Israel, the Shah's monstrous master! Salutations to the blessed spirit of the shroud-bloodied martyrs of the Iranian people!"⁶³ In the same month "The Freedom Movement" harshly condemned the imprisonment of Ayatollah Khomeini.

In Iranian history, this is the first time when the exalted position of the supreme deputyship of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, is insulted and the source of exemplary conduct, His Highness Ayatollah Khomeini is kidnapped and imprisoned.⁶⁴

The members of The Freedom Movement were quick to point out that while they were engaged in open rebellion against the Pahlavi regime, the Marxists were effectively silent between 1960 and 1964.⁶⁵

After the June 1963 uprising, the leadership of The Freedom Movement was imprisoned. But as the organization itself entered a period of effective eclipse, a more radical offshoot of it, *Sazeman-e Mojahedin-e Khalq-e Iran*, began to take shape in 1965.⁶⁶ It was not until 1977-78 that The Freedom Movement reentered Iranian politics in the wake of the Revolution.⁶⁷

The ideologues of The Freedom Movement themselves divide the history of their activities into three phases.⁶⁸ First, from 1960 to early 1965, the active participation of the Movement in the ideological and political preparation of the masses for the Revolution—included in this period was the Movement's involvement in Khomeini's June 1963 uprising. Second, from mid-1965 to mid-1975, the expansion of the Movement's activities into military operations through its radical offshoot, the *Mojahedin-e Khalq*—in this same period Shari'ati's public lectures in Hosseyniyyeh Ershad energize the Islamic consciousness of the youth. Third, from mid-1975 to late 1978, the crucial breakup in the *Mojahedin-e Khalq*, when an openly Marxist-Leninist faction briefly took over—during this period, and as the *Mojahedin-e Khalq* regains its patently Islamic posture, The Freedom Movement saw itself as the custodian of the Islamic revolutionary cause. In mid-1975, the Movement sought Ayatollah Khomeini's blessings in Najaf.⁶⁹ Upon Khomeini's arrival in France, The Freedom Movement, with Bazargan and Taleqani at the helm, actively participated in propagating Khomeini's messages by organizing mass demonstrations and by arranging for industrial strikes that ultimately shattered the Pahlavi regime.

Bazargan's Indictment of the Pahlavi Regime

The leading cadre of The Freedom Movement was arrested in the early 1960s, ostensibly because of its opposition to the monarch's "White Revolution." Bazargan and Taleqani, among others, were condemned to ten years imprisonment.

Bazargan turned the occasion of his defense into an opportunity for a resounding statement against the Pahlavi regime. His defense consists of

two long speeches. In the first speech, a considerable part of which is a splendid autobiography, he defends *The Freedom Movement* and its political ideals; in the second, he issues a sweeping condemnation of absolutist monarchy. At the very outset, he assured the court that it was not just the leaders of *The Freedom Movement* who were being tried, but, conversely, the Pahlavi regime itself was also on trial.⁷⁰ He recognizes the ultimate goal of the Movement to be the actual implementation of the Iranian constitution (in which the King's authority was restricted by the Parliament).⁷¹ At this stage he did not deny altogether the constitutional foundation of monarchy. In fact, in justifying the cause of his establishment of *The Freedom Movement*, he said, "the truth of the origin of the Freedom Movement of Iran" ought to be sought in Reza Shah's advice to Bazargan and his fellow students when they were sent to Europe.⁷² In articulating the conditions under which he and his fellow Muslim activists thought of establishing a political party, Bazargan asserted how they had come to the conclusion that they had to form a unified organization to engage in politics and that its ideological foundation had to be Islamic.⁷³ Summarizing the principles that he, as a leader of *The Freedom Movement*, believed in, he said: "We are Muslims, Iranians, supporters of the constitution, and followers of Mosaddeq."⁷⁴ Bazargan concluded the first part of his defense by emphatically rejecting the accusation that they were antimonarchical. "I have to demonstrate," he stipulated, "why and how I agree with constitutional monarchy for Iran."⁷⁵ His statement changes abruptly at this point, and he does not articulate "why and how" he supports constitutional monarchy.⁷⁶

The second part of Bazargan's defense, which was not delivered in court but was printed abroad eight years later,⁷⁷ is a sweeping condemnation of despotism. Throughout its long history, absolutist monarchy has been the cause of much misery and insecurity in Iran.⁷⁸ Even if we accept the fiction of good and benevolent kings, their actual number is dismal in comparison to tyrannical monarchs. Absolutist monarchy has been the cause of public and personal injustice and has had grave consequences for the moral, social, and even economic well-being of the nation at large. Absolutism in modern history has also been wed to colonialism, facilitating the plunder of the national wealth by foreigners. Contrary to the dominant propaganda, absolutist monarchy has not been the cause of national and cultural continuity in Iran. Rather, art, literature, and ultimately religion have provided such vehicles for historical and cultural continuity.⁷⁹

The only haven and refuge of the Iranian people from absolutism, and the [only] thing which, despite all the injustices, the corruptions, and the plunders of absolutism, has preserved a minimum of energy in us, saving us from being annihilated from the face of the earth, are certainly the spiritual matters and, more specifically, our religion. In the shadow of religion, the Islamic faith, the Iranian people have

stood up and reacted against despotism, and have thus attained a haven, as well as a measure of success in security, [political] activity, and salvation.⁸⁰

Bazargan continues to assert that religion has always been a locus of antigovernment activities, a banner under which people have fought for their rights. The clerical order has been the only social grouping resistant to despotic rulers. Shi'ism has found its way into the hearts and minds of people precisely for having championed their righteous cause. Opposing despotism on every front, Islam has initiated its own direct way of helping people in easing their burdens. Schools, public baths, mosques, water fountains, etc.—these have been among the range of public services that Shi'ism has provided.

Beyond its public damages, despotism is equally harmful to the growth and dignity of the individual character. The immediate result of absolutism is the creation and sustenance of a servile character. Corruption, deceit, duplicity, and dishonesty chiefly characterize those who live under a despotic regime.⁸¹ Humanity, decency, and belief in the progress of the human condition all disappear in an absolutist state. Deceit and duplicity are the very foundation of despotism and all social realities about it. Absolutism is "the mother of evil."⁸² Despotism leads to such debilitating social and individual malaise because, in effect, it propagates idolatry and polytheism:

The kings or the despots either like Egyptian pharaohs or Japanese emperors explicitly represent themselves as God, or as God's epiphany, or else they do not utter such titles [and yet] officially and effectively claim Divinity.⁸³

Bazargan proceeds to enumerate the causes of despotism in Iranian history.⁸⁴ The first factor has been the impact of the invading neighbors who, since ancient history, have imposed a rule of violence and despotism whenever they have invaded Iran. The second factor has been the geographic setup of Iran where small pockets of urban settlements are surrounded by inhospitable surroundings, thus creating a physical condition for despotic rulers. The third factor is the almost exclusive reliance of the Iranian economy on agriculture. Neither industry nor commerce but agriculture has been the chief source and organization of the Iranian economy. This has given water exclusive supremacy in Iranian national life. Control over water has been an added factor in the creation and sustenance of despotism in Iran. Thus rooted in such perennial factors, despotism has continued to the present day as the chief organizer of Iranian political life. The Pahlavi regime is the last inheritor of this long legacy of absolutism.

The balance sheet of more than forty years of tumultuous despotism after the Constitution[al Revolution] is approaching a scandalous and shaky end. Suffocated under the pressure of injustice, poverty, and shame, the majority of the people are in search of a liberating path, a leader, and a program.⁸⁵

People's Expectations From Religious Authorities

Where is that path? Who is that leader? What is that program? Bazargan, by disposition, was oriented towards Qom. When in 1962 a group of leading religious authorities gathered to address the crucial question of supreme religious and political leadership, *velayat*, in the Shi'i community after the death of Ayatollah Borujerdi, Mehdi Bazargan sought to speak for the multitude of followers and thus remind the Shi'i men of authority of their grave responsibilities.⁸⁶ At the very outset, he emphatically reiterates that the boundaries of Islamic law are not limited to matters of personal hygiene and private virtues. There are grave public and communal problems that are equally, if not more, important for the future of the faith and, as such, have always been at the center of juridical attention. "Contrary to Jews, Christians, (and perhaps Buddhists and Zoroastrians)," Bazargan stipulates, in Islam "every aspect and dimension of the material and spiritual life, and the [very] pillar of all hopes, thoughts, and activities of the Muslim society" are regulated by the sacred law.⁸⁷ Thus, Bazargan wished to address his ideas not only to "the exemplary sources of authority" (*marja'-e taqlid*), but also to those in positions of leadership (*ze'amat*), to the supreme religious and political authority (*velayat*), and to the clerical class (*ruhaniyyat*), in general.⁸⁸

"The People," as Bazargan designates his highest form of reference, expect a great deal from their religious leaders, much more than they expect from physicians or governmental employees. As time passes, these expectations become higher and higher. Bazargan admits that while religious authorities are the target of greatest expectations from "The People," they receive the least possible material gain. Here he wishes to establish for the ulama' a well-deserved ascetic and altruistic set of qualifications that are particularly congenial to the assumption of universal political authority in the context of the Shi'i juridical culture.

Bazargan begins his discourse on the grave responsibilities of the religious authorities by recalling a meeting with the French Islamicist Henri Corbin, in the course of which he is reported to have said that while both Christianity and Sunni Islam have ceased to address the contemporary realities of modern man, only Shi'ism has the built-in mechanism of attending to the compelling contemporary exigencies. He gives particular credence to this statement. It has been uttered by "a man of knowledge who is neither a Muslim nor an Easterner."⁸⁹ The key reason for this privileged position of Shi'ism among the world religions is the doctrinal belief in the occultation of the Twelfth Imam who is believed to bring, in his Second Coming, eternal justice to the world. Bazargan complains, though, that in the contemporary reading of the doctrine, the Shi'is have turned this revolutionary belief into a cause of "disappointment, delegation [of responsibil-

ities], and idleness."⁹⁰ If read and practiced properly, Shi'ism provides both an illustrious past and a glorious future. But the key link between the virtuous Imams of the past and the expected Twelfth Imam of the Age is the historical and doctrinal position of the contemporary religious authorities. This fact imposes grave responsibilities upon the clerics who ought to mobilize the best in the Shi'i past, master the immediate exigencies of the present, and actively plan and lead towards a prosperous future. Thus, Bazargan provides an active and involved interpretation of the presumption that the gates of *ejtehad* are closed in Sunni Islam, while they are open in Shi'ism:

The fact that we pride ourselves vis-à-vis the Sunnis and assert that while they have closed the gates of *ejtehad* . . . after the four great *mojtaheds* . . . Malik, Abu Hanifah, al-Shafi'i, and Ibn Hanbal, we Shi'is are obliged to follow the most learned living *mojtahed* and have thus kept these gates open, so that our faith is kept fresh and alive, progressing with the changes and developments of the world. This honor and privilege are true only when they correspond with reality. [This would be the case only when] in truth the gates of *ejtehad* are kept open, and the problems and issues of the day, in whatever form and capacity they may be, can enter and exit from it. If the ideas, knowledge, and limits of observation of our *mojtaheds* are kept at the level of the issues of the bygone centuries, what is the use of the changing names and transference of positions from a deceased ayatollah to an accepted [living] one? [In such a case] still the gates of *ejtehad* would be dead closed.⁹¹

The religious manuals of exemplary conduct (*al-risalah al-amaliyyah*) that are issued by the high-ranking clerical order principally address matters of personal hygiene and private pieties, while leaving larger and more important issues of public concerns beyond and outside their immediate purview. The context of these manuals is strictly limited to matters of concern "some ten or twelve centuries ago in Arabia."⁹² In those days the dizzying problems of modernity—commercial, geopolitical, etc.—could not have been addressed. What is particularly pertinent to Shi'ism, as Bazargan momentarily forgets the Iranian history since the Safavid period, is the fact that for centuries this has been the faith of a persecuted minority. As a result, Bazargan concludes, most of its juridical and doctrinal developments have occurred around personal pieties and individual transactions. Political and administrative aspects of the larger community, particularly when Shi'ism is not a minority faith, have been left largely unarticulated. The world is changing rapidly, so must the jurists.⁹³ "The mentality of three-hundred years ago" is not sufficient anymore. The world is shrinking in size. "Even if we do not want to, the foreigners will not leave us alone and, willy nilly, they will drag us into the larger arena and take us for a ride."⁹⁴

Bazargan suggests that Shi'i jurisprudence ought to emulate the developments in modern sciences and thus change its method of learning and teaching. But more important, it must be divided into subspecialties, "like

physics," in order to permit both further advancements in jurisprudence and more direct responses to modern issues. On the authority of Morteza Motahhari, Bazargan reports that even Ayatollah Hajj Shaykh Abdolkarim Ha'eri, the founder of the Qom seminary system, had advocated such subdivisions in Shi'i juridical learning, and thus authority. Should this happen, Bazargan anticipates, once again Muslims will assume ascendancy in sciences and learning. "Why should . . . Muslims be humiliated and poorly fed by the Christian and infidel world?"⁹⁵

To achieve such glorious things, Shi'ism ought to be revived and repoliticized. It is the great honor of Shi'ism, Bazargan reassures his audience, that throughout its history it has been the standard-bearer of resurrection against injustice and tyranny.⁹⁶ The Sunnis, on the other hand, have always put their stamp of approval on every act of injustice, simply because it is issued by a companion of the Prophet. Throughout its history, and particularly in Iran, Shi'ism, as Bazargan saw it now, has insisted that "government has to be combined with legitimacy, justice, and piety; and [that] it should have permission, from the Imam and the *ommat* [that is, the Shi'i community]."⁹⁷ "In short," Bazargan reasserts his history of Shi'ism, "for Shi'ism the clerics have been both *marja'* [that is, exemplary model of righteous behavior] and *malja'* [that is, where Shi'is have turned for protection from tyranny]."⁹⁸ This independence from political authorities, Bazargan insists, has been maintained even when governments have officially adopted Shi'ism as the state religion:

During the reign of devoted Shi'i dynasties, too, like the Safavids and the Qajars, the religious authorities still kept their independence and superiority vis-à-vis the powers that be. Except for certain religious authorities who were either related to or appointed by the court, and except for the periods of Shah Tahmasp and Shah Abbas who were particularly powerful, other religious figures never obeyed or supported the kings. That which has been practiced in the past is [now] expected [from the religious authorities, to] move vigorously and appropriately now and in future.⁹⁹

Under present circumstances, Bazargan insisted, secular governments have appropriated all the civil and legal rights of their citizens. (He puts it in these general terms but he means Iran.) Thus they should at least leave people alone to decide for themselves who their religious leaders should be. Obviously taking issue with the increasing attempt on the part of the Pahlavi regime to influence the post-Ayatollah Borujerdi developments in religious matters, Bazargan warned the ulama' against being, "God forbid,"¹⁰⁰ used by foreign powers and their local agents. People trust their religious leaders as their last reliable refuge. Religious authorities should not betray that trust.

While Judaism, Bazargan comparatively states, has been the religion of the world and Christianity the faith of the world to come, Islam has combined this- and other-worldly affairs in its doctrinal foundation. A Shi'i "source of exemplary conduct" (*marja'-e taqlid*) ought to be as close to his archetypal models in the prophets and Imams as possible in leading the community towards this ideal state where matters of politics and religion coincide. For this coincidence to be beneficial to the Islamic (Shi'i) community, mere old age should not be a determining factor in choosing a supreme religious leader. "At any rate," Bazargan clarified, "that supreme leader and source of exemplary conduct is our hope and expectation who, even though on a lower scale, like Ali is both a man of knowledge and a man of battlefields."¹⁰¹ Here Bazargan joined Motahhari and certain other revolutionary ideologues in asking for specialization in juridical learning whereby each jurist is expected to command only certain aspects of jurisprudence.

The ramifications of this suggestion, particularly in the political domain, are worth considering further. On the surface, and as it pertained to matters of juridical learning, the suggestion to specialize in certain fields seemed quite innocuous, if not rather beneficial. The idea, in fact, was much older than these revolutionary ideologues imagined. At least since the nineteenth century such specializations were suggested by certain jurists on primarily juridical and practical grounds.¹⁰² The expansion of the field of juridical studies had been so pervasive that no particular individual could be expected to master every aspect of it. But when advocated by such revolutionary ideologues of "the Islamic Ideology" as Bazargan or Motahhari, the issue assumed new and quintessentially political dimensions. The primarily apolitical tenure of Ayatollah Borujerdi and the essentially conservative and perhaps even promonarchical tenure of Ayatollah Ha'eri Yazdi, both as supreme juridical figures, had demonstrated to these religious ideologues that once one particular juridical figure was invested with such overwhelming and singular authority, combined with the fact that years (rather decades) of learning would inevitably render a jurist effectively apolitical, it was not conducive to expect a revolutionary disposition from them. The living example of such great apolitical figures of religious authority, then and now, were grand ayatollahs such as Ayatollah Kho'i who had spent their lives poring over the minutiae of the Shi'i Shari'ah, with no visible signs of political concern. By advocating the cause of specialization in the fields of juridical studies, the revolutionary ideologues would have created a situation where no one individual would have achieved the high status of learning concomitant with supreme juridical authority over the Shi'i community. Learning breeds authority in Shi'ism. By wishing to equalize and thus level this aristocracy of knowledge, the revolutionary ideologues would have created a situation where no one, by virtue of encyclopedic knowledge

(and the sanctity it endowed), would have become a living memory of Shi'i scholasticism, in its very juridical nature accommodating, though never totally congenial, to the powers that be.

While grave issues, Bazargan charged, challenged the fundamentals of the Shi'i doctrinal beliefs, Ayatollah Borujerdi's juridical might was wasted on insignificant and irrelevant questions of ritual piety.¹⁰³ Bazargan was grateful that at least such people as Allamah Tabataba'i were in Qom who could address the more critical issues facing the younger generation. He seems to be under the impression that Allamah Tabataba'i's philosophical teachings were advocated in Qom, whereas, in fact, and as we noted earlier, Ayatollah Borujerdi had registered his disapproval of such teachings in his jurisdiction.¹⁰⁴

"For every manual of exemplary conduct," Bazargan charged the religious authorities, "ten scientific, intellectual, principal, social, economic, and political . . . ought to be written."¹⁰⁵ The religious seminaries, echoing Khomeini's views, Bazargan demanded, ought to be concerned principally with the ethical rectitude of the students. Based only on such well-balanced foundations of ethical virtuosity and ideological dialogues with modernity, Bazargan stipulated, could the religious authorities expect the reverence and obedience of their Shi'i followers.

Bazargan also offers this other, rather drastic, suggestion, advancing the practical and social responsibilities of the religious authorities. Following the exemplary conduct of the Prophet and Ali, the Shi'i religious authorities ought to be engaged in practical and professional jobs. There is nothing wrong with having a practical profession. Both the Qur'an and the Prophetic and Imami traditions have blessed it. It also puts the clerical order in touch with more mundane realities. Equally instrumental in rendering the juridical class more socially relevant would be, in Bazargan's approximation of the Shi'i clerics to Christian missionaries, their active involvement in such public programs as establishing "hospitals, orphanages, high schools, universities, guesthouses, factories, qanats, villages, [etc.]. . ."¹⁰⁶ As these suggested areas of endeavor would expand the domain of social responsibilities for the clerical order, they would, of course, detract equally from their time and energy exclusively devoted to matters of juridical concerns. Bazargan's suggested program here, whether he knew it consciously or not, would ultimately lead to the effective liquidation of the clerical class as it had been historically developed and established. Systematically distanced from being the professional doctors of law (the Shari'ah) and simultaneously assimilated into the commercial and managerial groupings, the Shi'i jurists would be rendered effectively obsolete as the institutional guardians of the sacred Law. But Bazargan is adamant in his recommendation:

Had our religious leaders done such [practical] things earlier . . . for long now the true Islamic government which is both nationalistic and democratic and divine, would have been established. Without resorting to revolution and bloodletting we would have achieved our rights; and tyranny, corruption, and sin would have been eradicated from the country. It is still not too late, and, as the saying goes, better late than never.¹⁰⁷

The Wind and the Rain

As the clerics had to be repoliticized, the Qur'an, too, needed some updating. No stone unturned for the revolution to come; no sacred text unreinterpreted. There are one hundred and five times, as Bazargan actually went through the Qur'an and recounted, that God mentions Wind and Rain in the holy Text.¹⁰⁸ This attracted his attention, and he wished "to prove that the particular way the wind and rain, and their related conditions, are mentioned in the Qur'an have a peculiarly accurate correspondence with [modern] meteorological discoveries and with scientific knowledge."¹⁰⁹ Upon this observation, he wishes to conclude that "he who has sent the Qur'an . . . is the same who sends wind and rain."¹¹⁰ He concludes that no one could have said these things about wind and rain without having a "global" view of the world, and that person, fourteen hundred years ago, was God Himself.¹¹¹

What is the meaning of this? Why should a man concern himself with the number of times wind and rain are mentioned in the Qur'an? Bazargan is writing this book, as he argues himself, for "those who would be attracted to modern science more than before, and [conversely for those] students and intellectuals who would be attracted to the Qur'an."¹¹² After a short summary of the state of the art in meteorology, all with charts, diagrams, formulae, and maps, he sets out to prove¹¹³ that, point by point, those one hundred and five Qur'anic references to wind and rain correspond to the latest scientific observations in meteorology. Supported by the Qur'an, he wishes to argue that "the source and the manager of that energy [which sustains the world] is 'God.'"¹¹⁴

The Wind and the Rain in the Qur'an is the epitome of Bazargan's pseudoscientific contribution to the making of "the Islamic Ideology." For the growing constituency of Muslim intellectuals, that ideology needed a putitative foot in the almost magical kingdom of science. That constituency was, by and large, students and young professionals who had been educated either in American or European universities or even in modern Iranian secular universities. For them there had appeared an increasing and deepening bifurcation between their historically received religiosity and their recently acquired scientific methods and knowledge. A trained engi-

neer by profession and, as a professor at Tehran University, intimately aware of the young students' disposition, Bazargan recognized this debilitating and, in his judgment, dangerous bifurcation and sought to close it. The result is this pseudoscientific discourse, this systemic recentering of a bewildering world on the relentless facticity of a sacred text, delivered with all seriousness, which must have convinced his constituency, at least partially, of not only the miraculous nature of the Qur'an but, perhaps more important, of the compatibility of science and religion. That putitative compatibility, the presumed "validation" of the Qur'an by the latest scientific discoveries, would put "the Islamic Ideology" in the bosom of modern, and constantly contemporary, time: atemporality of the Word of God verified by the timely supremacy of the man of science.

The Islamic Ideology: Foundations of the Divine Ideology

As a result of the political circumstances of the post-1963 uprising, Bazargan's writings take on more aggressive momentum, less of science now and more of ideology. By the mid-1960s the term "Islamic Ideology" had assumed its commanding position among the rising urban Muslim intellectual elite. When Bazargan was invited to deliver his annual lecture, always on the occasion of the Prophet's designation as the Divine emissary (*Id-e Mab'ath*), to the Association of Muslim Engineers in 1966, he was asked specifically "to talk about ideology, the Islamic Ideology."¹¹⁵ The currency of "the Islamic Ideology" by 1966, some three years after the June 1963 uprising, is an indication of the growing significance of an alternative revolutionary reading of Islam independent of the juridical discourse centered in Qom. "The Islamic Ideology" thus essentially remained a product of Tehran where the competing presence of the old religious sentiments and the emerging agenda of the modern (secular) political forces could have a fateful rendez-vous.

At the very outset of this lecture, Bazargan confesses that there appears to be a considerable difference between "ideology" and such a generically Islamic concept as *be'that* ("the designation of Prophet Mohammad as the last divine emissary").¹¹⁶ He then gives the following definition of "ideology":

Our operative definition of this word is the same current meaning as used by political parties and intellectuals; that is to say, that constellation of beliefs, or philosophical and theoretical school, which is adopted by a person or a group as the intellectual foundation of their political and party orientation, and as an instrument of evaluation for designating the path and method for social struggle.¹¹⁷

Bazargan concludes that this definition of ideology, which is based on a general understanding of how the term is used by "political parties and

intellectuals," is precisely the purpose of Divine missions as well, because prophets, too, have tried to "give man an ideological and intellectual foundation, and the designation of a path and a method for living."¹¹⁸ This ideology is not a particularly new phenomenon; and human history has always witnessed man's fundamental need for an ideology. However, there is an element of gradual evolution and perfection in man's search for the good ideology. Quoting Marx (through a Persian translation of an English secondary source on the history of political ideas) on the compatibility of every ideological stage with its corresponding mode of economic production, Bazargan concludes that the Iranian youth "should not merely imitate and be hasty"¹¹⁹ in adopting radical ideology, because for every stage in the history of a society, according to Marx himself, there is a normal and inevitable ideology. Paraphrasing the Persian translation of his source, Bazargan gives a brief summary of ideologies from ancient Greece to socialism and fascism.¹²⁰ "What a long and arduous road!" he marvelled, "has man traversed in his search for the perfect ideology! Whom shall we believe?" he asks. "What ideology should we accept? Under the protection of which school and what government can we find security, prosperity, and blissful existence?"¹²¹

At the conclusion of his summary of world political ideologies, Bazargan asserts that a number of prescriptions can easily be discarded. Kings and rulers have no Divine origin as their claim to authority; individuals have no absolute or relative preference over societies; states do not follow the medieval practice of following a religious institution; rationalism does not totally cover and command man's political experiences; and utilitarianism cannot be the foundation of any acceptable political ideology.¹²² While all these ideological traits are to be "thrown away," there are certain others that are generally acceptable: Centrality of the government and its sovereignty, the rule of the majority, the necessity of an ideology, recognition of natural and human realities (as opposed to merely rational principles), and the necessity of programming and leadership.¹²³

Upon the rejection and adoption of these two sets of ideological principles, Bazargan turns to the Qur'anic passage 62:2 in order to elucidate the basic tenets of "the Islamic Ideology."

He it is Who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the Scripture and wisdom, though heretofore they were indeed in error manifest.

According to Bazargan's reading of this Qur'anic passage, God's recognition of the necessity of an ideology for formation of a proper human society precedes all other human stipulations. God's command that the Divine emissary ought to be from the people themselves conforms to the principle of the rule of the people. His command that this mission ought to be

carried out by reference to His earthly manifestations conforms to the necessity of recognizing natural and human realities. Moreover, this "Divine Ideology" is entrusted with the task of purifying its followers. Persistent teaching and guidance is a concomitant feature of this "Divine Ideology." Before following this ideology, and should they fall short of its requirements, people would be led astray.¹²⁴

Bazargan seems to be quite conscious of the kind of secularist criticism that his brand of "Islamic Ideology" would invite. That religion is a "reactionary" phenomenon, that Islam is a religion that appeared fourteen centuries before and is thus incompatible with modern realities, and that all religions are dogmatic and intolerant of freedom of expression are all charges that he is sure would be leveled against "the Islamic Ideology."¹²⁵ Bazargan's answer is that all such charges stem from a Christian view of religion, and that "in Islam, from the very beginning, faith and action have been intertwined, religion and politics . . . have progressed jointly."¹²⁶ Politics is integral to Islam. For political struggle, ideology is indispensable. Iranians have been a backward nation. They cannot know and practice "The Western" ideologies better than their originators. Their dignity is at stake to come up with their own ideology and fight their political battle against corruption and foreign domination with intrinsic ideological arms.¹²⁷ Using the French word for "totalitarianism,"¹²⁸ Bazargan insists that "the Islamic Ideology" ought to be all-inclusive and universal, covering every aspect of life, "security, politics, economics, culture, health, art, thought, opinion"; all these have to come "under the shadow" of "the Islamic Ideology."¹²⁹ Consequently, and forever, "the ideal ideology is absolutely the Divine Ideology."¹³⁰

Bazargan's indubitable conviction in the absolute superiority of "the Islamic Ideology" ought to be seen in the process of two simultaneous forces. Bazargan was not only the inheritor of a faith that has constitutionally and doctrinally tried to regulate the minutiae of public and private life; he was, at the very same time, responding positively (although he may have thought otherwise) to the totalitarian claims and tendencies of Marxism to every aspect of social life. Institutionalized in the Tudeh Party, propagated through a range of partisan literature, and followed by thousands of secularized intellectuals, Marxism was gaining ground not just at the expense of private pieties of lapsed-Muslims but also on account of their public (political) commitments. Bazargan was relentlessly charged to reclaim these lost grounds. The more intensely and comprehensively such grounds were lost, the more they needed to be equally reclaimed. Thus "the Islamic Ideology" reached for totalitarian dimensions far beyond the already expanded claim of Islam upon public and private pieties. Marxism provided the added momentum, and the prototypical model, to reach for ever larger shares of individual liberties for the presumed salvation of the public.

There is nothing innately wrong, Bazargan contends, with having a religion as the foundation of an ideology, especially if that religion is Islam, with a doctrinal and constitutional belief in all three mottos of what else but the French Revolution. "Equality, Fraternity, and Liberty" are all essential and existential to the very doctrinal basis of Islam.¹³¹ The remarkable aspect of Bazargan's version of "the Islamic Ideology," however, is that even as he rushes forward to make a claim on the political viability of the term, he can pause and assert that

the essential difficulty is that the Divine Ideology is not the work of man and that we cannot construct it. As you can see, it is very easy to claim [to have constructed a Divine Ideology]. [But] it is precisely such misplaced claims, and false or incomplete Divine Ideology, which is the cause of various differences and quarrels. The Divine Ideology, which is issued from the high court of God Almighty, by definition can only be the work of God and nobody else. That which we fathom and build is just dust in the wind. Except for that case in which He would disclose to one of us aspects of His secrets and hand us His commands. In other words, [only if we claim that] inspiration and revelation are at work.¹³²

No other ideologue under our examination has had a similar courage of introspection, that rare gift of "on-the-other-hand" self-doubt that distinguishes a modest access to practical (political) wisdom from a superlative claim to absolute (ideological) truth. To be sure, Bazargan's effective denial of contemporary revelation, which would have been a blasphemy to have thought otherwise, does not prevent him, or any other ideologue, from assuming a prophetic and visionary voice in delivering his ideological statements. In a comparative perspective, however, Bazargan has a firmer foot on the ground of mundane practicality. He does not, for a moment, share either Shari'ati's prophetic zeal or Motahhari's missionary convictions. His salvation is his occasional doubts, his sense of humor, his ability to laugh and doubt, attested to not only by those who have known him but also by his written words. When he was the Dean of the School of Engineering at Tehran University, the school began to accept female students for the first time. Bazargan is reported one day as having been approached by senior students who asked, in jest, whether these female student could start their courses from the fourth year and work their way down to the first, so that the male seniors could have female classmates before they graduated. Bazargan is said to have responded "No! Otherwise I would have them start from the Dean's office!"¹³³

"The Islamic Ideology": Bazargan's Manifesto

With saving laughter or with damning conviction, with absolute certainty or with hesitant doubt, the task of "the Islamic Ideology" was pressing and

underway. The culmination of Bazargan's share of "the Islamic Ideology" was his open manifesto. He characteristically predicated his manifesto of "the Islamic Ideology" on the doctrinally mandated principle of Divine intervention in human affairs through His prophetic emissaries. Human fallibility can only produce incomplete and false ideologies. Only an ideology based on the actuality of Divine intervention in human affairs can claim any measure of truth. And that necessitates the doctrinal acceptance of prophethood through which agency God speaks to mankind.¹³⁴ Following this premise and based on the Qur'anic text, the prophetic and Imami traditions, and his "incomplete intellect,"¹³⁵ Bazargan sets out to chart the essential features of his manifesto of "the Islamic Ideology." With the exception of *ijma'*, or legal consensus among the Shi'i doctors, the three bases upon which Bazargan wishes to build his version of "the Islamic Ideology" are precisely those that support Shi'i law. The remarkable historical fact is, however, that in constructing this reading of "the Islamic Ideology," Bazargan did have *ijma'* with other ideologues who contributed equally to this most revolutionary doctrinal offshoot of the Shi'i faith. Consequently the conceptual foundations of "the Islamic Ideology" were identical with those of Shi'i law. Whether accidental or deliberate, this constitutional identification of "the Islamic Ideology" with Shi'i law (which is the quintessential substance of Shi'ism) is perhaps Bazargan's most revolutionary contribution to the historical process of legitimizing the chief driving force of the Islamic revolution.

In Bazargan's version of "the Islamic Ideology," man's free will, in this politically mandated theological choice, actively predisposes him to create an ideal state. The primary function of this state is to materialize God's government on earth and help men to realize their Divinely originated virtues.¹³⁶ This ideological principle, Bazargan likes to insist, is very similar to the philosophical foundation of many "Western" ideologies, except that it postulates the existence of an Omnipotent God. Emanating from this God, as Bazargan amplifies his "Divine [Islamic] Ideology" further, is the set of laws that guarantee man's salvation. "No one," he insists,

whether the king, or the people, or its [various] classes, either through houses of lords or representatives, or through referenda or such similar mechanisms, has the right to establish law or mandate responsibilities.¹³⁷

This principle, too, once understood as the rule of law (as opposed to one group or another), is compatible with "progressive governments."¹³⁸ But to implement these Divinely mandated laws, man has an active role to play in history. Means of production, as Marxists claim, are not the instruments of history. "Law and ideology" have been the cause and course of history and civilization.

That the Muslim community ought to be governed solely by Divine law,

Bazargan stipulates, does not mean that there is no need for an intermediary state apparatus. As Ali responded to the Kharijites' rejection of the necessity of government, "people necessarily need to have a prince (*amir*), whether good or bad, to collect the taxes, fight the enemy, secure the highways, and protect the weak against the powerful."¹³⁹ Upon this Bazargan collects a barrage of Qur'anic, prophetic, and Imamic references in support of the inevitability of government, concluding that in Islam the necessity of state, based on the will of God and the democratic participation of the people, is proscribed religiously.¹⁴⁰ Here, too, Bazargan assures his audience that democracy is not exclusive to Islam, and that once upon a time in Athens this form of government was practiced.

In the Islamic state, thus based on "the Islamic Ideology," the security and prosperity of both the individual and the society are guaranteed. To reach that ideal state, "the Islamic Ideology" does not approve of just any method. The end does not, in this "Divine Ideology," justify the means.¹⁴¹ Equally essential to this ideology is "freedom," which Bazargan considers "a Divine gift and a key for [human] progress."¹⁴² Equality and justice are eminently present in "the Islamic Ideology." No discrimination based on race, status, or knowledge is tolerated.¹⁴³ Women are equal to men, and they should be given a voice in the political administration of the state.

The legitimacy of the Islamic state thus engendered is based on the notion of *velayat*, which Bazargan considers as the delegation of authority from the people to their representatives.¹⁴⁴ To ensure the righteous execution of this delegation, he advocates general political education for the masses.¹⁴⁵ Such public education in social responsibilities, he contends, would prevent corruption in a democracy. In this respect, he takes strong exception to those of his contemporaries who consider Islam essentially antidemocratic. In a long footnote,¹⁴⁶ he totally rejects the ideas of a certain writer who had argued that Islam is an essentially elitist type of meritocracy or gerontocracy.

Although "the Divine Islamic Ideology" guarantees both social and individual security, it is the duty of the individual to place public necessities ahead of personal objectives.¹⁴⁷ Should discrepancies arise between personal and social objectives, Bazargan stipulates the necessity of an arbitrating body (*anjoman-e hall-e ekhtelaf*) that would pass judgment in such issues.¹⁴⁸ Through the righteous intervention of this arbitrating body, both social and individual liberties are secured. The questions of war and peace are also in a state of balance and harmony in "the Islamic Ideology." Whereas "Islam" generally advocates peace and tranquility, Bazargan contends, should the Muslim community be threatened, it, of course, has to defend itself.¹⁴⁹ The Qur'an never commands fighting without immediately calling for moderation and peace.¹⁵⁰

Following the Marxist prototype, "the Islamic Ideology" is equally at-

tentive to matters of economy.¹⁵¹ The economic production of life is an essential component of every community, but does not, as some (that is, the Marxists) have contended, take priority over everything else. In "the Islamic Ideology" economic matters are not separable from ethical and religious obligations. As ownership pertains to the question of property, because God Almighty is the actual and ultimate owner of everything, then men have only relative ownership of what is in their temporary possession. But no one should deprive them of any property thusly owned. In "Islam" there is a negative attitude towards poverty and asceticism and a positive attitude towards economic activities. But at the same time, too much accumulation of wealth is condemned. Quoting Taleqani from *Islam and Ownership*, Bazargan divides land ownership into three categories: (1) that which belongs to all Muslims and only the infallible Imams can manage it for the community, (2) that which belongs to the infallible Imam personally, and (3) that which has no ownership and is to be divided to Muslims for their benefit.¹⁵² Usury is prohibited. He who cultivates a piece of land owns it. There is nothing wrong with the accumulation or the active use of capital.¹⁵³ Thus, with certain limitations, there is principally nothing wrong with capitalism according to "the Islamic Ideology."¹⁵⁴ But this is not to be seen as a rampant rule for a free market economy. In "the Islamic Ideology" the rights of workers are properly guaranteed and protected. Basing his proposition on two prophetic traditions, Bazargan suggests that, although there was no organized labor during Mohammad's time, "Islam" has always been attentive to the needs of the working class. As it equally attends to the compelling question of the equal distribution of wealth in society, "Islam" is quite unique in proscribing mandatory religious taxation through which accumulated wealth is redistributed.¹⁵⁵

For the supreme political/religious leader, whom he does not distinguish as two and simply calls, in one figure, an "Imam,"¹⁵⁶ Bazargan stipulates widespread responsibilities. The leader is legitimized to have "vast authorities in granting and confiscating lands and properties, in fixing fees and taxes, and in deciding rights and limitations."¹⁵⁷ Despite such sweeping authorities, Bazargan insists that the rights of individuals are protected in "the Islamic Ideology."

Finally, Bazargan turns to the all-important question of nationalism and identifies two opposite extremes: those who have a racist and ultranationalist tendency, and those who have a cosmopolitan and internationalist disposition. Both extremes are blameworthy. "The Islamic Ideology," Bazargan insists, recognizes its historical mission as a universal religion that, more than any other, has advanced the cause of the brotherhood of mankind.¹⁵⁸ The Qur'an, as the very word of God, is addressed to all humanity and calls all mankind to its Truth and veracity:

Thus the Islamic Ideology is the vastest and most sublime universal and humane way of thinking. In its perspective, such concepts as "nation" and "nationhood," as separating and distinguishing brands, have no significance or meaning.¹⁵⁹

Yet again, Bazargan insists, "Islam" is such a balanced and all-inclusive faith that does not neglect the more immediate needs of man for intimate group affinities. Thus the love of one's family or country is not in any way forbidden in Islamic universality.¹⁶⁰

Predominance of the Marxist Discourse

Reading Bazargan, it becomes abundantly and repeatedly clear that the Marxist discourse had successfully and thoroughly established the Iranian political agenda from the 1940s through the 1970s. Virtually every term, concept, and concern with which Bazargan chooses to identify and circumscribe "the Islamic Ideology" is mandated by the tacit, and thus compelling, legitimacy of the Marxist discourse. Beginning with the economic foundations of the society, Bazargan wishes to update Islam with Marxism and provide a one-to-one correspondence to its social and historical agenda. His misplaced attention to the working class and to questions of capitalism and private ownership, as well as his abrupt reference to the question of nationalism vs. internationalism, are all mandated by the Marxist language he thought he was refuting. Sincerely adopting this language, he did not recognize that, while on the surface he appeared to refute Marxism, he, in fact, through the agency of "the Islamic Ideology," was paying tribute to and thus further legitimizing it. He thought he was adopting the language of the Marxists to use against them. But a simple layman in any branch of Islamic learning, he did not, and could not, recognize how drastically he was approximating the faith and the doctrinal complexity of his ancestors to the appeal of the secular ideology. To be sure, the success of this language with Bazargan's chosen audience was quite noticeable. Unaware of the grave doctrinal implications of his Marxist metamorphosis of Islam, both Bazargan and his audience went on believing they had reached a bona fide Islamic response to the model of all secular ideologies: Scientific Socialism.

Freedom in India

Sometime in the mid-1960s Bazargan wrote a book on India. The obvious purpose of this book, as its publisher was quick to point out,¹⁶¹ was to provide a model for revolutionary conduct in achieving political freedom. The Iranians, particularly "the youth,"¹⁶² had to be taught how other

nations have achieved their freedom so that "inshallah we would see the day when such sentiments and devotions [to freedom] come to fruition, and [then] our people will progress alongside the free nations of the world."¹⁶¹ Bazargan was explicit, from the outset, that imitating other nations in what they have done is a bad habit. There are no two completely compatible historical circumstances. There cannot be any nation blindly following another in its path to freedom. A comparative assessment, however, is something that can lead to fruitful conclusions.

From early 1962 Bazargan was imprisoned for his political activities in the Freedom Movement of Iran, during which time he wrote his book on India. At the beginning of the book he has a sarcastic reference to how prison gives people ample time for reading thick books. This period had given him ample time to reflect on a variety of issues, including the various national movements for freedom. Although Iran and India had long been compared and contrasted from a variety of perspectives, Bazargan suggested, social movements for independence and freedom have been excluded from such studies. There are many points of difference between the two nations. Yet they share the two essential features of being backward and "Westoxicated."¹⁶⁴ There are also economic, historical, and racial similarities.¹⁶⁵ Bazargan was particularly attentive to the fact that in India religion was the quintessential foundation of social and political movements. "Gandhi himself" had said so.¹⁶⁶ Upon this premise, Bazargan ventures a tentative theory about the religiosity of "the Aryan race":

It is rather strange that as the Aryan race moves from the East to the West, its religious taste and spiritual power diminish. The Indian civilization and kingship is derived from and assimilated into religious beliefs and inspirations. In Iran the great monotheistic religion of Zoroastrianism emerges, yet at a slightly inferior level, slanted towards practical ethics that are accepted and celebrated by the monarchy. And yet religion and kingship are separate from and independent of each other. When they [= "the Aryans"] reach Asia Minor and Europe, they cease to have a religion of their own, and they have to get it from the Semites.¹⁶⁷

Bazargan concludes that in Iran and India civilization is derived from and based upon religious and ethical principles. The forms of government engendered by these civilizations are consequently more "gentle" and conducive to peace and prosperity. The Assyrians, the Semites, and the Turks, he expostulates, lack such qualities.¹⁶⁸

The rest of Bazargan's account of Indian independence is a sympathetic short history of the sacrifices and heroism of this neighboring nation towards freedom. In this account, Bazargan is quite specific about the ideological and political preparations for the revolutionary movement,¹⁶⁹ about the necessity of getting the revolutionary message across to the machinery of the revolution: "The People." When referring to the hegemonic influence

of "The West" in India, he makes a passing reference to how "Westoxication" has afflicted Iranians too. "Having lost their selves to Europeans" is how he identifies some of his compatriots such as Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh, who once said, "from head to toe, the Iranians ought to become Westernized."¹⁷⁰

Bazargan gives particular attention to the role Muslims played in the Indian independence movement. But beyond Islam, religion in general was instrumental in this movement. Bazargan quotes Nehru as having said that "the revival of nationalism in India, as in other Eastern countries, will inevitably have to be religious [in nature]."¹⁷¹ Bazargan found the revolutionary and reformist characters of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Iqbal particularly timely and praised them for their universal appeal to all Muslims regardless of their sect.

Bazargan's Atomic Theory of Revolution

Bazargan reserved his highest praises for Gandhi whom he considered a genius. Gandhi's centrality in the Indian independence movement led Bazargan to some interesting reflections on the nature of revolution. These reflections, in light of what would later actually happen in the course of the Iranian Revolution of 1979, have a premonitory aspect to them. "It is easy to say 'revolution,' " Bazargan suggested.¹⁷² The actuality of the event is much more complicated. It is much easier to sit down in a room, or deliver a public lecture, and draw the battle lines of a revolutionary movement than actually implement it. The main determining factor, he thought, was the ability of the revolutionary participant to endure hardship and sacrifice. This is particularly difficult because the outcome of the movement is not, in any way, guaranteed. "All calculations and predictions may turn out as ill-conceived."¹⁷³ Even long ideological preparations are not enough. "Fiery speeches, persuasions, and proving the benefits of the movement are not enough."¹⁷⁴

Even the material means at the disposal of the revolutionary movement are not absolutely necessary or, if present, enough. "Should we glance at the process of the [Indian independence] movement from its very inception, we see that it never had military power or [other] material instruments at its disposal."¹⁷⁵

Thus neither the ideological nor the material instruments are the *conditio sine qua non* of a revolutionary movement.

"The movement," Indian independence or any other, began by a spiritual and mental revolution and conviction, with a pure spiritual force. The spiritual and mental revolution gave rise to action and then social, national, and democratic ideals emanated from it. It penetrated the hearts and minds of the educated class. It created leaders and sympathizers.¹⁷⁶

"Fiery mountains and steel walls" are needed for a revolutionary movement to gain momentum.¹⁷⁷ The Indians, and with them any other nation seeking liberating ideals,

need a force more powerful than the material military and economic might. [They need] a source of internal resistance and sustenance, with spiritual majesty, so that they can carry forward the weight of that initial impetus and lead the country to success.¹⁷⁸

Upon such stipulations, Bazargan proceeded to define exactly who could lead such a revolutionary movement:

A leader ought to enter the battlefield, raising the banner of the movement, who is the symbol and source of such [spiritual and revolutionary] attributes. Those leaders whose ultimate significance and influence is to understand or execute revolutionary ideals among the limited intellectual middle classes, cannot assume mighty and vast responsibilities.¹⁷⁹

In the wake of Khomeini's June 1963 uprising and with Taleqani in the same prison, Bazargan could have had either of these two Muslim revolutionary figures in mind when writing these words about Gandhi.

Looking closely at the experiences of the Indian independence movement, Bazargan developed a number of detailed theoretical positions on every revolutionary movement. "In national movements," he theorized, "sometimes a point is reached where the revolution assumes a momentum."¹⁸⁰ At this stage of the revolution, "Every action of the illegitimate regime, whether mild or militant, serves in strengthening the movement and advancing it towards victory."¹⁸¹ The mechanism, as seen through the revolutionary eyes of Engineer Bazargan, was perfectly logical, with the laws of nuclear physics in its support:

If the enemy demonstrates mildness and retreats, the people use their front to advance a few more fronts, and thus they are encouraged and enticed. If [the enemy] intensifies the harshness and suppression, every person who is jailed or murdered angers the nation, propagates the innocence, and proves the righteousness of the movement. [This] would lead to a few new people substituting the eliminated person and entering the battlefield. . . . This is very much like the atomic nuclear activation when it enters the chain reaction phase. . . . Very soon all the radioactive material is activated, and a universal explosion and sudden revolution take place. The atomic bomb becomes the source of an almost infinite and uncontrollable energy!¹⁸²

Every time Bazargan reaches such theoretical observations, anticipating what would indeed happen just less than two decades later, a boldface print appears (which in Bazargan's manuscript was probably underlined, or written with a different color, or perhaps even boldfaced by writing over the phrase), issuing a revolutionary staccato:

Every movement and revolution, should it have natural and legal grounds, and punched with good intentions and sacrifice, soon reaches such a phase. People's refusal to tolerate tyranny, their tolerance and resistance vis-à-vis the tyrant, forces the illegitimate and despotic ruler to commit greater suppression and atrocity. [He] would fall into a course of action that would increasingly reveal his pernicious countenance and bloody hands, [which, in turn,] would render more legitimate the righteousness and power of the revolutionaries.¹⁸³

Here is the power of implication at work. Bazargan here writes about (Iran or) India. With remarkable similarity and precision, these prison notes became the blueprint upon which the Iranian Revolution of 1979 was unfolded. The chess game played between the Shah and Khomeini was set on a course such that every move the king made, offering the carrot or raising the stick, advanced him further and further into the corner where he would be checkmated. The bishop used the pawns with merciless accuracy. The crescendos of successive *chellehs* ("the customary mourning, forty days after the death of a person") became the tempo of the game. Whether the king permitted the procession of the mourning pawns or ordered his own to charge, he was painted black into his white corner. By the time he had fled the board, the game was over.

Every revolutionary movement, Bazargan further theorized, has to calculate into its ideological and material build-up the possibility, or indeed the inevitability, of human loss. But compared to what is to be gained this is not such a big sacrifice. Natural disasters, or even traffic accidents, have similar, or more, casualties. Yet they lack this- and other-worldly rewards and honors innate to a revolutionary movement against the rule of tyranny.¹⁸⁴

To achieve such noble ends, revolutionary movements have a built-in mechanism of momentum and growth. Here Bazargan postulated a theory of decline in "natural phenomena" and a theory of growth in "human achievements."¹⁸⁵ In nature—for example, in human organisms—growth begins rapidly and then diminishes; in human achievements the opposite is true. First, the growth in human achievements, social and otherwise, is at a minimum speed. But gradually, as the growth assumes momentum, later advancements are at greater speed and tenacity. The same rule applies to revolutionary movements:

As soon as a force or a devotion towards a noble aim is engendered in a person or in a society, leading to activities in that direction, advancement is always with [geometrical] progressions and achieving [the goals] inevitable. Human achievements are, indeed . . . incremental, like a grain of wheat that is planted in a rich soil: The grain becomes a cluster, and then every grain in this cluster forms into a new cluster next year, and just like Kawthar goes into infinity. O how I wish in every nation such grains and such movements would blossom! *And From God is Success and Upon Him is Our Trust!*¹⁸⁶

The revolutionaries' most immediate task is to implant the seeds of grand revolutionary ideals that will gradually take root and come to fruition. When that final fruition would occur could not have been very clear to Bazargan and his comrades in the Shah's prison. But given his captivating dark immediacies, he dreamt very vivid visions of the future.

The Centrality of Religion in the Revolutionary Movement

Bazargan used yet another occasion in the Indian independence movement to argue for the necessity of religion in every revolutionary cause. When he reaches the discussion of religious hostilities in the Indian independence movement, where the Hindu-Muslim animosity seriously challenges the achievement of liberty, he pauses and suggests that the issue be considered from a "higher" point of view.¹⁸⁷ He first concedes that religious beliefs and sentiments can be used for conservative and counterrevolutionary forces. He then suggests two ways of confronting such uses. The first solution, "which is apparently straightforward and logical and is chosen by many intellectuals,"¹⁸⁸ is to eliminate the religious force altogether. This solution would necessitate fighting against religious beliefs and institutions, as the revolution is waged against the colonial and dictatorial forces. The second solution is "the recognition of the significance and influence of the religious factor, which is to say, seeking its help and, if need be, reforming it."¹⁸⁹

Bazargan condemns secular intellectuals such as Nehru who, despite the fact that they chose not to fight against the religious factor, still remained indifferent to it. He is more emphatic in his condemnation of the later leaders of the Indian independence movement who demonstrated "ingratitude"¹⁹⁰ towards the religious forces that were so instrumental in their success. He then clarifies his position and asserts that leaders such as Nehru should not, of course, have assumed valid "the superstitious"¹⁹¹ ideas of certain religious forces. Instead, he projects the Iranian and Indian revolutionary circumstances together:

With respect, and conceding the legitimacy of the religious factor, they should have sought the solution from religion itself. They should have seen the cause and nature of the problem in the superstitious nature of certain beliefs and rituals, and in distortions in religious [beliefs]. They should have turned their careful attention to the root of the pain, and to the germ that had caused the illness in the spiritual body of the patient. They should have sought the solution in the presentation of a correct thesis and in the creation and sustenance of living, intellectual religious leaders.¹⁹²

Anybody looking for such a solution among Muslims has an easy task because "Islam, from the beginning, is founded on positive, antislavery, and anti-ignorance social dynamism."¹⁹³

Islam, thus reinterpreted, is a quintessential religion of "The East." "In the East," Bazargan believed, "everything is impossible and everything is possible."¹⁹⁴ The dialectic of this paradox rests not on an archaic notion of how Islam was but on a revolutionary urge of what Islam is or should be. In "The East" everything is impossible "if they wish to launch a deep reform with the materialist tradition, with 'The Western' method, under the pressure of colonialism and despotism, and with imposed and imitative thoughts."¹⁹⁵ Upon the postulation of such an impossibility, which Bazargan targeted against his secular and "Westoxicated" contemporaries, he knew what was possible. "Yet it is possible," he closed the paradoxical dialectic, "when movements are launched with moral and noble ideals and with spiritual force."¹⁹⁶ If we were to launch, or to understand, the Indian independence movement "based on social, political, military and economic calculations of the West," it would have been a futile task. It was successful, and its comprehension is possible only because "it was predicated upon an ideological revolution, and upon a mental and moral movement," and perhaps more important because "the leadership was in the hand of such [men] as . . . Gandhi."¹⁹⁷ History would bear testimony to Bazargan's extrapolations from the Indian independence movement less than two decades later.

Bazargan does not particularly approve what has happened in India since its independence. They have abandoned their high moral grounds and succumbed to more mundane and material realities. Yet he closes his book on India with a laudatory note and then turns his glance to his compatriots and relates all he wishes to teach through this roundabout way with a remarkably precise and appropriate choice from the Qur'an (2:134): "Those are a people who have passed away. Theirs is that which they earned, and yours is that which ye earn."¹⁹⁸

To Have Faith: Against All Odds

In the late 1960s, with the increasing secularization of the Iranian intelligentsia (and with them the collective political consciousness), the problem that Bazargan and his like-minded activists seem to have confronted was how to continue to legitimate, along the lines he had articulated about India, the contemporary relevance of a religious language. Recognizing that science secularizes, Bazargan faced the particularly acute and compelling necessity of conforming the religious language to the scientific (technological) discourse. Here he felt compelled to prove the continued validity of believing in Islam. Prefacing Mehdi Bazargan's *Lesson in Religiosity*, published in 1965, Ahmad Aram, a distinguished translator and friend, proclaimed:

Discussing religion in the present time, in a way that is compatible with the advancements in scientific knowledge and method, is a task that can no longer be performed by [merely] studying [Arabic] syntax and morphology and things of that sort. What Plato, Aristotle, Avicenna, or Khajah [Nasir al-Din al-Tusi] have said is not enough anymore. It is important to know what Russell, Einstein, Heisenberg, Bergson and others have said in our time.¹⁹⁹

To reach for a "scientific" validation of his faith, Bazargan constructed an elaborate system of ethical mandates. The foundation of this system rests on the centrality of religion in the human constitution. Religion is natural to man. A society cannot function without a set of sacred beliefs. No matter how technologically advanced a civilization might become, it shall always need a system of metaphysical belief.²⁰⁰ Man's need for religion is as natural as his biological and emotional needs to love. Beginning with the love of physical gratification and comfort, Bazargan enumerates twelve successively nobler needs that end with the love of God.²⁰¹ These twelve phases are then divided into four categories: (1) love of self (wealth, prestige, etc.), (2) love of one's cohorts (family, country, etc.), (3) love of principles (truth, justice, etc.), and (4) love of God.²⁰² Love of God is the highest, and thus less frequently attained, of all. The more people are preoccupied by lesser loves, those of self, etc., the harder it is for them to attain the more noble and higher loves. Sacrificing lesser obsessions for higher ideals is the ultimate sign of nobility in man. The most complete and satisfying of all devotions is that given to God. The lower states are valuable only to the degree they contribute to man's well-being in his path to achieve the highest. Love and devotion to the highest ideal, God, automatically renders all lower states meaningful. Supreme monotheism, total devotion to God and all that He entails, is the ultimate salvation of man.²⁰³

There are two kinds of recognition of the highest Ideal: polytheism and monotheism. Because polytheism is the gradual construction of man's material conditions, it fails to meet his metaphysical expectations. But monotheism, which Bazargan identifies with "Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and even Zoroastrianism and Buddhism,"²⁰⁴ is the archetypal expression of supreme metaphysical reality by specific agencies of Divinity, for example, the Prophets. Muhammad, for authoritative sources of whose life Bazargan refers to no Arabic or Persian sources but instead to European titles he calls "la vie de Mahomet" or "Life of Mohammad" (he actually writes them in the Latin alphabet),²⁰⁵ was one of such Divine agencies. They had independently waged a moral battle against the prevalent corruption of their times. They had devoted themselves to the highest Ideal and thus unified their followers in one unique moral community. Devoid of any personal interest, and totally devoted to their Divine cause, these prophets had provided their immediate community with such archetypal models of justice and salvation that the more science and civilization advance the more their veracity has

become recognized.²⁰⁶ The moral communities they thus established have persisted in history. Monotheism, eschatology, and personal and social responsibility are the essence of prophetic teachings in this tradition.²⁰⁷ These are duties and obligations that prophetic teachings establish against the staunchest possible resistance. It is precisely in complying with these metaphysical and moral obligations that human salvation—both personal and social—is attained. Regardless of the metaphysical truth of prophetic teachings, their actual moral imperatives are absolutely indispensable for a conscious civilized living. The regulated life of a civilized individual, regardless of the person's religiosity or the lack thereof, is precisely comparable to the daily regiment of a religious person:

As a matter of fact, the [daily] schedule of a civilized person, obliged to clean and brush, read a newspaper, learn and propagate, earn a living, do military service, participate in elections, etc., is quite similar to the very same ritual bathing, ablution, praying, religiously acceptable trade, defense, holy war, enjoining the good, etc., that we have in Islam.²⁰⁸

Having thus originated a civilized model of virtuous living that, in fact, goes against the grain of human disposition, the Prophets' self-understanding was that they are the mouthpiece of a reality superior to themselves.²⁰⁹

That God created this world is a self-evident truth, Bazargan insists.²¹⁰ Yet there are people who deny this truth. But since religiosity is, ipso facto for Bazargan, in the nature of man, then those who deny it ought to prove their case, not vice versa. There are two sets of reasons for atheism: practical and philosophical.²¹¹ Practically, some people may feel unbearable pressure from the moral obligations of their religion, they may feel its ethical mandates outdated in the modern world, or they may see immoral acts perpetrated by religious authorities. Philosophically, they may consider the idea of God as something remote and incomprehensible, they may reject unbelievable and extraordinary claims of their religious doctrines, they may encounter events and experiences they cannot explain, or they may be attracted to alternative schools of understanding the world.²¹² Bazargan sets upon himself the task of proving all these excuses untenable. Islam is not the cause of backwardness. If "The West" is technologically advanced, it is not because "Westerners" are irreligious. Quite the contrary, "on the average they are more interested in, and act according to, their religion than we Muslim Iranians."²¹³ Backwardness is true, but it is precisely because Iranians have ceased to be good Muslims, not being Muslim. If certain religious leaders are not living up to the proper standards they otherwise preach, in Shi'i Islam they may be denied any obedience and other, more righteous, leaders may be followed. If God cannot be seen visibly, it is because His essence and reality are beyond the limits of ordinary human perceptions. But as in all other forms of knowledge, theology

deducts the existence of God from visible and tangible realities—very much like geology where changes and developments on earth are traced back to events millions of years earlier. These arguments all lead to the essentialist position that since everything has a cause, then so must this vast universe. Bazargan also puts up a valiant effort to rationalize such Qur'anically sanctified beliefs as those of creation, revelation, miracle, etc.²¹⁴ He genuinely believes in the gradual scientific verification of all religiously held doctrines. Medicine, for example, has proven that drinking is really hazardous to one's health. Fornication and gambling have equally been proven to be socially harmful. Although the question of revelation has not yet been proven scientifically, there are indications for its "seriousness and the possibility of its actuality."²¹⁵ As for the creation of the world in a few days: "It is possible that by 'day,' geological periods and phases of universal development are intended."²¹⁶

Questions of theodicy, free will or predestination, etc., are also outside the purview of human comprehension, and thus causes of distractions from a religious worldview. But here, too, Bazargan insists, there may well be explanations for apparently inexplicable phenomena. And as for alternative, man-made, schools of thought that seek to explain the world independent of a God, none is capable of satisfying man's eternal quest for a quintessential explanation of his being.²¹⁷

The Islamic eschatology is the last issue Bazargan valiantly defends in the face of the increased rationalization of his age. All religions, not just Islam, have had a fundamental belief in some form of an afterlife. It has a functional purpose to serve. "If we take the day of judgment away from religious teachings," warns Bazargan, "their value and impact are considerably compromised."²¹⁸ As for the skeptics who deny the rational feasibility of the day of judgment, Bazargan responds that if we are unaware of the whereabouts or possibility of something, it does not mean that it does not exist. Just to be on the safe side, we better believe that it actually exists.²¹⁹ As for science, although it has not yet proven that there is, in fact, a day of judgment, nor has it proven its impossibility. In the meantime, the actuality of the day of judgment is certain because "the prophets have said so."²²⁰ But even reason points to the possibility of resurrection. Nature is renewed every spring. So can man be renewed at a given interval.²²¹ There are also recurrent visible signs of renewal and resurrection in the animal, vegetable, and mineral organisms. There are also numerous reports of dead people having been resurrected and brought back to life.²²² "Thus, scientifically and principally," Bazargan concludes, "it is not impossible for a part of the human body, even a very small part, like a fetus, seed, root, or branch, under favorable circumstances to grow and thus recreate precisely the same person, with the same face, physiognomy, characteristics, and

memories."²²³ Believing in bodily resurrection on the day of judgment is thus a perfectly rational proposition.

Bazargan divides the Islamic acts of religious obligations into three categories: (1) personal responsibilities, (2) responsibility towards the people, and (3) responsibilities towards God.²²⁴ This triple set of responsibilities, defining and locating a Muslim in the community, is obviously inter-related. Referring to a French source on the content of the Qur'an, Bazargan points out the number of Qur'anic passages on matters of social and political concerns to be the highest in comparison to other issues. "Serving the people" is thus the highest and most fundamental common denominator of all these responsibilities.²²⁵ From man to God, there is an ascending ladder that necessitates a sacrifice of personal desires for communal concerns before one reaches the attributes of the Divine Presence. Put differently, only such social and political concerns are noble and trustworthy that direct the communal experiences towards God.²²⁶ In ennobling man's communal concerns and political purposes, Islam leads him away from his mundane personal pursuits and redirects him to publicly beneficial ends.

House of the People

Bazargan could not have completed the cycle of his attendance upon the ideological sedimentation of Islam reinterpreted without turning his attention to the most compelling communal symbolic of the faith. Early in the Spring of 1960, he performed his hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. A year later, in 1961, he published his notes from this trip in the widely circulated journal *Maktab-e Tashayyo*; eight to nine years later, in 1969, he published a book called *The House of the People* in which he reflected on the social and political significance of the hajj pilgrimage.

In Medina, Bazargan begins to see the important sacred sights and to reminisce about crucial historical events: the rise of Islam like a volcano in the black depth of a dark night, the taking of Imam Hossein's family into captivity, etc.²²⁷ He bitterly criticized the deplorable state of sanitation among the pilgrims. Yet he admired the cleanliness and majestic serenity of the Prophet's mosque. He was particularly impressed with the public prayers that emphatically reminded him of "the majesty and unity of Islam."²²⁸ He then proceeds to make a comparison between the serenity and majesty of the Prophet's mosque and the striking filth of where they resided in Medina. This difference, he thought, was precisely indicative of Islam as it was and as it is now. The mere confessing of being a Muslim is not enough, Bazargan retorted. "Accepting the [Islamic] faith is not the end of responsibilities and activities, [it is] the beginning of a life[long] program, and the commencement of an intellectual and practical movement, both personal

and social.”²²⁹ He blamed his fellow Muslims for merely repeating the words and phrases of their religiosity without the slightest attention to the actual “reforming of the world.”²³⁰ He objects to the Saudi flag depicting two swords and the Islamic confession of faith. He believes that while, like all other great “intellectual revolutions,” such as “socialism, communism . . . and Christianity,”²³¹ Islam has fought for its ideals, still the physical force does not represent this faith properly. Islam is not a religion of violence, he contends. Bazargan is severely critical, particularly of his fellow Shi‘ites:

As for what we Shi‘ites do: Should we [continue to] have this shameful and despicable ethical, civil, social, economic, and political situation vis-à-vis other nations, is that not a treason, a damage to the truth and veracity of Islam? By [failing to] give the world ([especially] our own citizens and youth) living and practical examples [to follow], are we not misleading them [to believe] that being a Muslim is equal to backwardness and misery?²³²

To advance further his rationalization of hajj for an audience he must have assumed secular, or at least skeptical, Bazargan decided to change the name of the pilgrimage destination, traditionally known as *Khaneh-ye Khoda* (“The House of God”) to *Khaneh-ye Mardom* (“The House of the People”). Changing to “the People” from “God” was no mere accident. It reflected the predominant political mood of the time, when, through the hegemonic order of Marxist discourse, such terms as “The People,” “the masses,” etc., had assumed wide currency.

In this book, as in most other things he wrote, Bazargan’s universe of discourse was dictated by the most compelling part of his imagination: “The West.” It was against a “Western” skepticism of what is the significance of a hajj pilgrimage that he sought to defend the contemporary relevance of this supreme religious act. The ultimate objective of hajj, as he now saw it, was to suggest the imminent possibility of world peace, through the formation of one single universal Islamic community. Such universal organizations as the United Nations are mere suggestions of similar possibilities inherent in this obligatory Islamic practice.

There has been a gradual but persistent growth in the Qur’anic language and its universal claims on humanity.²³³ Bazargan actually charted²³⁴ the frequency of the word *nas* (“the people”) as it appears in the Qur’an, from the first to the last year of the Prophetic mission. According to this chart, from beginning to end, the Prophetic mission, as reflected in the Qur’an, was quintessentially concerned with “The People.” Abraham, as the archetypal prophet, Ka‘bah, as the archetypal locus of the Divine Presence, and “The People,” Bazargan asserts, form a sacred triangle in the Qur’an.²³⁵ Against the Islamic goal of universal humanity, postulated in the archetypal language of the Qur’an, the non-Islamic world has been divided into reli-

gious and other sectarian factions. Even socialism has not succeeded in establishing a universal humanity. It has simply translated religious factionalism to ideological factionalism.²³⁶ Through its customs and practices, and true to its relentless monotheism, Islam has established clear guidelines and practical instruments by which the universal unity of humankind can be achieved.²³⁷ These ideals notwithstanding, Bazargan alerted his audience to the fact that in the course of Islamic history Muslims themselves have massacred each other on the very premise of the sacred precinct.²³⁸ Thus he advocated the establishment of “an International Islamic Brotherhood Group,” pending its more universal composition, to supervise the sacred precinct. “You may silently laugh,” he guessed:

In the modern world of science and technology, populated by innumerable people and states with mutually exclusive interests, possessing powerful and strange weapons, with wealth, knowledge, wisdom, and strategems, and in a world that on the whole rotates on might and money, in the face of the mountains of difficulties in the real world, what could be the significance of circumambulating around an old cubical, throwing out a few worn pebbles, and finally shedding the blood of an innocent animal?²³⁹

It is essentially a symbol, very much like the sign of a dove carrying an olive branch in its beak, that Bazargan sees in the unifying force of the hajj pilgrimage. This had to be universalized so that the Kingdom of Heaven could be materialized on earth.

A Man for the Last Season

Electrified by a full grasp of the increasing secularization of his age, Bazargan’s main concern has been to twist and turn his understanding of Islam into that formidable form and shape that would validate his high ideals for the young audience he targeted. Because of his French education, and because he earnestly saw the European and American technology as the chief magnetic force for his young compatriots, Bazargan believed that the only way he could render his version of Islam still relevant was by massively and popularly technologizing it. Thus, if “love” and “obedience” were the forgotten terms of a credal language, he translated them into “thermodynamic” and “steam machine” instrumentalities, constructed and implanted in man to move him towards God. The ultimate result of such wholehearted and sincere efforts lent a necessary helping hand in the making of “the Islamic Ideology.” There were students of physics, chemistry, and engineering, as well as young professionals, who were attracted to this particular vestige of “the Islamic Ideology.” Perhaps even more than social sciences and humanities, with their persistent streak of Marxism checked by conservative classicists who thought them, hard sciences had the great

propensity of leading the young Muslim students astray to the rocky roads of disbelief. Bazargan's brand of Islamic apoloia was a particularly welcome signpost for this segment of the potential revolutionary constituency. To be sure, his pseudoscientific religious discourse is more defensive than offensive. He wishes to safeguard in sincere piety grounds he felt were being gradually eroded and lost to the mighty secular language of "The West." The battle, he felt, was lost in "The West," in that Other world that most mattered to and chiefly defined him. But it was still possible to score a limited victory at home, where Bazargan felt he could be more in control of his environment. The Tudeh Party and, to a lesser extent, the National Front were the chief institutional forces that, oddly enough, in conjunction with the tyrannical monarchy itself, represented that outside "Western" world that he wished to curb before it was totally unleashed on what he held sacred in the Iranian society and valid in its long and arduous history.

A Good Man

"Only when good men have instructed the people for seven years," says the Confucian stipulation, "may they take up arms."²⁴⁰ Confucius would have considered Bazargan a good man, in the most simple, sincere, perfectly unsettling, and benign sort of way. He conveyed more than seven years of revolutionary instructions before his followers could take up arms. "To lead an uninstructed people into battle," again the Confucian wisdom adds, "may be described as throwing them away."²⁴¹ Putting "good men" and "battle" together, we may conclude the superior Confucian wisdom of the ethic of violence. There is no escaping violence in politics, especially when it turns revolutionary. "Good men" are the Confucian agencies of sustaining the moral imperatives that render violence legitimate. Cornered by the overpowering force of the secular god-terms that animated his age, Bazargan sought to train, to cause to be born again, a class of revolutionary professionals as professional revolutionaries: soldiers of high moral principles revolting against the injustice they saw and imagined in their world. He is less brutal than his chief enemies; and he is willing, and he has been forced, to pay for his ethic of responsibility. He is more ethical (which is to say he can see the wisdom of laughter and doubt) than his chief revolutionary cohorts; and he has no choice but to be swept away by their more brutal convictions in their more absolute truths. Less certain of his absolute, his supreme virtue, intuitive rather than acquisitive perhaps, his sign of salvation, is his sense of humor. The possibility of laughter, at self and at all the others, has retarded Bazargan's ascent to supreme political leadership, as it has, at the same time, advanced his claim on the more noble necessity of being human: all-too-clumsily human.

CHAPTER 7

Abolhasan Bani-Sadr: The Monotheist Economist

"There is also a subsidiary point that, at the present stage of things, it is **very** much easier socially and politically to influence the rate of investment **than** to influence the rate of consumption."¹ John Maynard Keynes noted this supposition to Josiah Wedgwood, a fellow director of the Bank of England. When "the present stage of things" is given, economists can only **ponder** and debate between investment and consumption, inflation and unemployment, deficit and depreciation, or any other two sets of binding variables. "No doubt you can encourage consumption by giving things **away** right and left. But that will mean that you will have to collect by **taxation** what people would otherwise save and devote to investment—all of which would be a stiff job in the existing political and social setup."² Keynes could continue the dialogical juxtaposition further, insofar as "the existing political and social setup" was to stand the logical and indubitable prerequisite. "Perhaps," Keynes conjectured finally, "you may say that that is a reason for getting rid of the existing political and social setup. But is it **clear** that expenditure on housing and public utilities is so obviously injurious that one ought to attempt a social revolution in order to get rid of it?"³ The question rhetorical, the answer was "no" for both Keynes and Josiah Wedgwood as well as for any other director of the Bank of England. For Keynes, social revolutions need more drastic reasons, necessitate more forceful causes, because they lead to more radical changes—beyond the limits of economy. But, and there is the distance, once the balance between the opposing economic forces becomes abstracted into graver ideological convictions, once the mysterious urges to construct a flesh-and-blood rational man, with equally rational choices of economy, wed the obsessive sensibilities to construct a social organization of puritanical economic proportions, and finally, once God is called on to bear witness to the monothe-