

The Sharia-Monarchy Discourse in the Early Qajar Era (1795-1847)

Somayyeh Arghiani¹ Hassan Zandiyeh² Hossein Abadian³ Ali Aghanouri⁴

Received: 04 July 2021 / Accepted: 05 October 2021

Abstract

The far-reaching relation between the institutions of sharia and monarchy, which continued through the Qajar era, gave rise to interactions between the two institutions. A discourse analysis of the relation in terms of the “discourse of power” and the “discourse of compliance” demonstrates that, during the reigns of the first two Qajar kings, the interaction of the clergy with the powerful and the monarchs grew for reasons such as the latter’s acquisition of legitimacy from the former, fondness of the monarchs for religious rituals, and Russo-Persian wars. During the reign of Mohammad Shah, however, the relation between the government and religious scholars tended toward hostility and bitterness, ending in aversion and antipathy to the Qajar monarch on the part of the scholars. In this research, we draw on the descriptive-analytic method, adopting a new approach to provide a proper analysis of the discourse between Shiite scholars and the Qajar government from 1795 to 1847. By giving an account of the relation between the two powerful influential institutions of the time, we offer a plausible picture of the political-social milieu of the Qajar era.

Keywords: sharia, monarchy, Agha Mohammad Khan, Fath-Ali Shah, Mohammad Shah.

Introduction

After the formation of the Safavid dynasty, two major events took place: establishment of a unitary government in Iran and recognition of Shiism as the official denomination in Iran. Although the Safavid dynasty was established through efforts by the Qizilbash as a Sufi uprising, it was stabilized with the aid of Shiite scholars. Early after the foundation of the Safavid government, no Shiite jurist (*faqih*) was involved, but jurisprudential Shiism began to be spotlighted since the period of Shah

1. PhD Candidate in Shiite Sects, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran.

Email: s.argiyani@yahoo.com (Corresponding Author)

2. Assistant Professor, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. Email: zandiyehh@ut.ac.ir

3. Professor, Imam Khomeini International University, Iran. Email: hoabadian@yahoo.com

4. Associate Professor, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran.

Email: aghanoori@urd.ac.ir

Tahmasp I (Ja'fariyān 1392 Sh, 1:293-94). In fact, the political doctrine of Safavid rulers began as a blend of monarchy, Shiism, and Sufism, but the doctrine went through many changes by degrees, and the tripartite balance changed into a bipartite balance between monarchy and Shiism (Muṭallibī and Īzādī Ūdlū 1397 Sh, 107). Indeed, the emigration of Shiite scholars from Jabal Amel (Lebanon) to Iran, particularly al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī, played a crucial role in changing the dominant view in favor of jurisprudential Shiism (Raḥmatī 1399 Sh, 134-35). This was, of course, due to al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī's rank and power within the Safavid government—a rank no other immigrant or Iranian jurist could ever hold (Farhānī Munfarid 1377 Sh, 107). To be sure, within this structure, the religious institution in the Safavid era fulfilled the needs of the government and the society, and in its formative period, it was inevitably associated with the institution of power (Şifatgul 1381 Sh, 16).

During the first period of the Qajar government, although we see a renewed presence of Ni'matullāhī dervishes (Shīrāzī 1382 Sh, 3:170-71) and the popularity of the Dhahabiyya order after Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nayrīzī,¹ they failed to find an occasion to engage the Sufi inclinations of Qajar monarchs, particularly Fath-Ali Shah, for a number of reasons, including the incidence of Russo-Iran wars in which the monarchs desperately needed the support of Shiite scholars, and thus, they had to favor the side of sharia leaders. Despite this, the scholars felt threatened about their status due to a possible power of Sufis, particularly after the Sufis gave the title “holder of authority” (*ulu l-amr*) to the king, and hence, the scholars adopted the policy of killing the Sufis (Zargarīnizhād 1395 Sh, 102).

In this way, since the Safavid era, the discourse between the institutions of Shiism and monarchy entered a new stage on account of serious and wide-ranging influence of Shiite scholars. One might say that the power had two branches in this period: “carriers of the rulings” and “holders of the glory from Islam,” that is, respectively, the clergy and the kings (Ābādian 1393 Sh, 86). In this way, deputyship was divided between the scholars and the monarchs, and so, the rulers gave up religious educations and were merely engaged in military science instead: “Mujtahids and scholars undertook one tenet—knowledge of religion and knowledge of the rulings of the Prophet—and the monarchs undertook the other tenet—the

1. The period of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nayrīzī's successor, Āqā Muḥammad Hāshim the Dervish, as the period of the promotion of *wilāya* (guardianship) (Khāwarī 1398 Sh, 410).

enforcement and promotion of those rulings” (Kashfī 1381 Sh, 2:899).

The two tenets collaborated at times, and were hostile at other times (Ābādian 1389 Sh, 170). For this reason, religion and government split up, instead of being united (Hā’irī 1380 Sh, 349).

The relation between the institutions of monarchy and clergy led to social and political transformations. It is therefore important to examine these discourses, particularly in the first Qajar period when the relation was solidified. In this paper, we deal with the dominant discourse between the two institutions.

As pointed out before, this paper is presented in terms of discourse analysis. Let us see as a preliminary what such analysis amounts to. A discourse constitutes circumstances, issues, knowledge, social identities, and relations between individuals and groups (Wodak 1399 Sh, 46). In other words, any kind of speech and writing is a social movement (MacDonell 1380 Sh, 55). A critical approach claims that implicit naturalized propositions with ideological characters might frequently be found in a discourse (Fairclough 1379 Sh, 20). In this light, social institutions involve various ideological-discursive formulations associated with different groups within them (Fairclough 1379 Sh, 25).

It is in line with this analysis that we inquire into the social circumstances and major identities of the Qajar era—namely, the institutions of monarchy and clergy, their interactions, and their discourse. On this approach, both institutions deploy specific languages of their own given their social position. In fact, since the institution of clergy saw itself as the legitimate power buttressed by sharia, it had a discourse with the institution of monarchy from a position of power. For this reason, we chose to refer to this as the “discourse of power.” On the other hand, although the institution of monarchy had the governing power, it needed to interact with the clerical system in order to gain their support and legitimize its government. This is why we refer to this as the “discourse of compliance.”

1. Research Background

Many books and articles have been written about the relation between religious scholars and the monarchy during the Qajar era within the period discussed in this paper. Here are some of the books: (1) Religion and state in Iran (Elgar 1396 Sh); (2) Khāqān Šāhibqarān and the scholars of the time (Kāzīmī Mūsawī 1398 Sh); (3) The political role of Shiite scholars (Khāliqīnizhād 1390 Sh); (4) History of Iran during the

Qajar era, the period of Agha Mohammad Khan (Zargarīnizhād 1395 Sh); (5) Thought and politics in Iran in the Qajar era (Zargarīnizhād 1398 Sh); (6) The first encounters of Iranian thinkers with the two layers of the bourgeoisie civilization of the West (Hā'irī 1380 Sh).

And here are some of the articles: (1) Development of Shiite concepts in the Qajar era (Ābādian 1389 Sh); (2) How the Qajar government encountered the problem of legitimacy (Khānsārī 1393 Sh); (3) Fath-Ali Shah's measures to acquire political legitimacy based on the current methods in the Islamic period (Āqāzada 1396 Sh); (4) Mīrzā Qummī and the Qajar government (Mahdīnizhād 1388 Sh).

These works often provide reports of events and historical encounters and sometimes they offer analyses as well, but the dominant approach in these works is historical, pointing only to some properties of the events or discussing a figure in historical terms, without presenting systematic accounts. In this paper, however, we explain the issue in line with "discourse analysis" in terms of a coherent systematic framework, and in this respect, it is characteristically different from the above works.

2. The Sharia-Monarchy Discourse

The religious legitimacy acquired by the Safavid government through their relations with Shiite scholars was also significant to the Qajar dynasty. For, in addition to legitimization of the government, it helped stabilize the government as well. In fact, the importance of religious scholars in this period was due to their recognition of the rulers as representatives of the power (Lambton 1375 Sh, 15). However, since a major jurisprudential idea then was to "keep the limits [*iqamat al-hudūd*] and discharge guardianship duties," jurists or mujtahids "saw themselves in a position of power, and the king in a position of recognition of, and compliance with, their own social and doctrinal influence" (Zargarīnizhād 1398 Sh, 1:426-28).

That being the case, we can adopt two approaches to examine the discourse between the scholars and the monarchy: the scholars' approach to the court and the king, which was associated with authority in that they saw themselves as legitimizing the royal court. To this we shall refer as the "discourse of power." On the other hand, the king's discourse with the scholars is the "discourse of compliance" in that they needed legitimacy and social acceptability through endorsements by the scholars.

1.2. The Discourse of Power

Shiite scholars were influential and powerful in the Qajar era; that is, they were effective in social and political activities. This was because they were believed to be protectors and promoters of religion. Their act was indeed the discourse of sharia, and it was for this reason that people had a high regard for them. It should be noted, however, that Qajar kings also had religious inclinations (Department of History 1369 Sh, 480; Varahrām 1385 Sh, 156-59) or at least they tried to display a religious character. Thus, when talking to kings, the scholars always talked from a position of religious power, they gave them advice, and sometimes reprimanded them. In order to secure their social position, however, this position of power was always exhibited with a “soft tone.” In this way, they managed to keep the political power onside.

To be sure, the king needed legitimacy for his government, and the scholars needed the king’s power—not the king himself—to enforce the sharia rulings. This can be seen from the beginning of the Qajar government as Agha Mohammad Khan was not widely respected by Iranians, and the Shiite scholars who were aware of this “explicitly said that, in the absence of a just government, a government by an unjust Muslim is preferred” (Zargarīnizhād 1398 Sh, 1:429). In fact, the scholars of the time preferred Agha Mohammad Khan, his monarchy, and even his successors over anarchy and breach of the rights of Muslims and even their own rights.

The regard to Shiite scholars in the Qajar period was to an extent that some people believed “a very harmful calamity in this period [i.e., the beginning of the Qajar dynasty in Iran] was the extraordinary artificial power given to some clergies. For this reason, since the beginning of the dynasty, they gave the royal clergy a power over people—the same clergy whose support they had gained” (Nafīsī 1383 Sh, 441).

In the period of Agha Mohammad Khan when the Qajar government was in its formative stage, two scholars—Mullā Muḥammad Ḥusayn Māzandarānī and Mīrzā Muḥammad ‘Alī Bihbahānī—were associated with the royal court. In turn, Agha Mohammad Khan displayed regard and respect for the scholars, but the relation was not intimate, and Agha Mohammad Khan’s inclinations and political requirements were more relevant to these relations, as we will discuss in the section on the “discourse of compliance.” Moreover, in this period, Mīrzā Qummī (d. 1815) who had implicitly accepted the title of “divine shadow” for the king

wrote a “letter of instruction” (*irshād-nāma*) in order to inform the king and prevent the slaughter of people (Qā’im Maqām Farāhānī 1380 Sh, 70). In this letter, Mīrzā Qummī advises Agha Mohammad Khan to treat his inferiors with mercy and kindness, and stop showing anger and reprehension (Mīrzā Qummī 1384 Sh, 22).

There were scholars, however, who remained indifferent to Agha Mohammad Khan himself because of their great-heartedness and magnanimity. A case in point is the following report: “When the king Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar went to visit him [the scholar Mullā Muḥammad ‘Alī Iṣfahānī], the servants saw Mīrzā coming from outside while he had washed his underclothes or other clothes and put them on a piece of wood to dry, heading toward the house. He exhibited many instances of such asceticism” (Ḥabībābādī 1337 Sh, 1:70).

In the period of Fath-Ali Shah, however, for a variety of reasons that will be elaborated in what follows, the mutual discourse between the scholars and the monarchy reached a pinnacle. Thus, we can see a notable “discourse of power” on the part of the scholars. Indeed, this led to the concept of “permitted monarchy” in the sense that the monarch controls the government as permitted by the jurist (*faqīh*). Fath-Ali Shah explicitly thought of his monarchy as “deputyship to the mujtahids of the time” who “struggle to be blessed with the service of the guiding Imams” (Hidāyat 1380 Sh, 13:7515). Such deputyship could somewhat compensate the religious illegitimacy from which the Qajar kings suffered (Ābādian 1389 Sh, 167). According to Amīn al-Dawla, however, Fath-Ali Shah approached the religious scholars in order to “compensate his own religious sins, infelicitous acts, and demagoguery” (Amīn al-Dawla 1370 Sh, 7).

Mīrzā Qummī was a scholar who frequently utilized the “discourse of power” in his exchanges with Fath-Ali Shah. For example, he sometimes grabbed the king’s long beard in his hand and advised him not to do such and such “lest the fire burns your beard on the day of resurrection” (Kāzīmī Mūsawī 1398 Sh, 120). Moreover, whenever Fath-Ali Shah went to Qom, he visited Mīrzā barefooted, and sometimes Mīrzā Qummī welcomed him on his hinny (Mīrzā Qummī 1378 Sh, 1:44).

On the other hand, scholars such as Shaykh Ja’far Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’ (d. 1812) had such a spiritual and social influence that he appointed the king as his deputy, and set conditions for that, including the condition that the king should “appoint a mu’adhdhin [i.e., a person who calls for prayers] as well as an imam of congregational prayers in his army, the imam should

preach and teach sharia rulings once a week” (Tunikābunī 1389 Sh, 237).

In fact, Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’ gave Fath-Ali Shah the permission to act as a monarch on behalf of the jurists, without allowing him to claim legitimacy unless permitted or endorsed by the scholars. He dedicated his book *Kashf al-Ghiṭā’* to Fath-Ali Shah, in which he praised the Qajar king (Khāliqīnizhād 1390 Sh, 125), but in order to preclude any possible misuses on the part of Fath-Ali Shah, he explicitly stated that his government does not enjoy intrinsic legitimacy (Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’ 1388 Sh, 4:332-35; Ḥā’irī 1378 Sh, 231).

It should be noted, however, that Russo-Iran wars that broke out in this period were major factors in reinforcing the Shiism-monarchy discourse. In this period, the scholars were so authoritative that *Kashf al-Ghiṭā’* talks in his book about the role of the scholars in administering people’s affairs and permitting the government to engage in jihad. In *Kashf al-ghitā’*, written in the middle of the first Russo-Iran war, he talks about assigning the king to handle the affairs of the army on behalf of the mujtahid, who is in turn a deputy of Imam al-Mahdī (the twelfth Shiite Imam).

It is noteworthy that people began to consult and follow the fatwas of mujtahids more frequently, and in some cases such as Russo-Iran wars, the followers asked mujtahids about their jurisprudential views of the matter. Riḍā Qulī Khān Hidāyat wrote a piece about fatwas of jihad that not only bear on the issue of following the fatwas of mujtahids, but also reveals that religious scholars were effectively involved in different political and social issues in the Qajar era. Above that, this reveals public opinions, as well as the king’s opinion, about religious scholars (Ābādian 1389 Sh, 160). Here is what Hidāyat says:

His majesty the knowledge-promoting king, the triumphant Šāhibqarān Qajar, who was a wise, knowledgeable, careful, and competent monarch and was well aware of the rules of Twelver Muslim scholars, knew that Muslim mujtahids saw themselves as deputies of the Imam and saw the kings of the time as deputies permitted by themselves. Otherwise, they would incite laypeople, make plots for corruption, and rebel against the kings of the time based on the law of people. (Hidāyat 1380 Sh, 14:7831).

What is crucial here is that Riḍā Qulī Khān Hidāyat believes that the king acquiesced in entering the second Russo-Iran war “in compliance with the people” or public opinions, which followed the views of religious scholars, thus asking “the highest-ranking mujtahid,” that is, Āqā Sayyid

Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī (known as Sayyid Mujāhid), to issue fatwas concerning jihad (Hidāyat 1380 Sh, 14:7830-31). Interestingly, in the Russo-Iran war when the crown prince was defeated, the only person who could report the defeat to the king through parables and stories and without arousing his anger was Ḥājj Mullā Muḥammad Taqī Baraghānī (see Tunikābunī 1393 Sh, 201).

Of course, some scholars in the period of Fath-Ali Shah were indifferent to the king and his requests. For example, Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Shaftī, known as Ḥujjat al-Islām (d. 1844), had limited relations with Fath-Ali Shah: he refused to serve as an imam of congregational prayers in a mosque in Tehran, asked the king to shut down the royal house of *naqqāra* (a kind of drum), paid part of the expenses of the Bīdābād building, and asked the Shah to increase his bureaucratic payments (Zargarīnizhād 1398 Sh, 1:494). Interestingly, Sayyid Shaftī was so influential that when Mohammad Shah ascended to the throne, Amin al-Dawla took refuge to Shaftī in Isfahan to save his own life, and with the support of Shaftī, he ignored governmental efforts to take him back to Tehran or banish him to Iraq, and tampered in the duties of the rulers who were sent to Isfahan (Bāmdād 1387 Sh, 2:280).

Shaftī was so powerful during the reign of Mohammad Shah that even when the Sufi-leaning king managed to open the gates of Isfahan with force, no one dared mistreat Sayyid Shaftī (Ābādian 1389 Sh, 182). Moreover, when Khusraw Khān (the former ruler of Gilan) who was not in good terms with religious scholars arrived in Isfahan, Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Shaftī and a number of other scholars incited people to rebel against him in 1837, and then imprisoned him in Haft-Dast Mansion. The government meddled in the event, but things proceeded in favor of the scholars. Khusraw Khān was removed from office and was summoned back to Tehran (Bāmdād 1387 Sh, 1:479-80). His influence was to an extent that it is said that in Isfahan, the imam of Friday prayers—that is, Sayyid Shaftī—was not less powerful than the king (Count Desersie 1362 Sh, 195).

Moreover, during the reign of Fath-Ali Shah when the interaction and discourse between the Shiite scholars and the monarchy reached a pinnacle, the theory of the “guardianship of the jurist” (*wilāyat al-faqīh*) began to be propounded, as developed by Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī (d. 1829), a prominent scholar of the time (see Narāqī, n.d., 185ff). In fact, for the first time he provided an independent treatment of the issue of the guardianship of the

jurist, and by collecting nineteen hadiths, he demonstrated that the political status of an Imam is inherited by the jurist as well (Kāzīmī Mūsawī 1398 Sh, 124).

This suggests how the discourse of power was socially and objectively developed, and prominent scholars were aware that sharia can be developed under the monarchy of a “king supported by the holders of sharia” such that Kashfī writes in his “Tuḥfat al-mulūk”: “Forty years of an unjust cruel monarch are better than one hour in which laypeople are left to their own devices” (Kashfī 1381 Sh, 2:893)

In fact, in this period the interaction between the king and the clergy was a sort of an “unstated agreement” (Halm 1385, 200).

2.2. The Discourse of Compliance

In this period, the kings tried to engage religious scholars in the government so that the institution of monarchy could persist with legitimacy (Mīrahmadī 1395 Sh, 691). To do so, Qajar kings devised a policy of establishing close relations with the scholars in order to utilize their religious social reputation to stabilize their government (Elgar 1396 Sh, 47-49). There were two reasons behind establishing such relations with the scholars: first, the need to legitimize the government as a political-religious measure, and second, the king’s personal interest in a particular scholar for non-political reasons. Thus, in order to have a better understanding of the “discourse of compliance,” our discussion will proceed in two sections.

2.2.1. Political Tendencies

The necessity of legitimizing the government is evident early after the foundation of the Qajar dynasty, since Agha Mohammad Khan knew that Iranians did not have much sympathy with him. For this reason, he intended to legitimize his government by means other than force, which is why he met many clergymen or received and praised them (Nafīsī 1383 Sh, 441). During his reign, the relation between scholars and the monarchy began to take shape, but it was limited on account of the king’s personal circumstances and the status of his government (Elgar 1396 Sh, 79).

Since Agha Mohammad Khan did not allow the scholars to gain much influence, he chose imams of Friday prayers and “Shaykh al-Islāms” of every city on his own (Malcolm 1308 Sh, 832). Nevertheless, the clergymen gained power among masses of people.

This is also evident during the reign of Fath-Ali Shah. The king's own treatment of Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Shaftī shows that, although Shaftī was indifferent to the king, it was the king who needed to attract Shaftī's support for the court. A subtle remark by the king implies Shaftī's influence at the time: Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Nūrī, a student of Ḥājī Kalbāsī who was reprimanded by Shaftī, said to Fath-Ali Shah that he intended to have a debate with Shaftī, but the king responded: "You are out of your mind! Would a person like Aqa Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir come from Isfahan to Tehran just for you and me?" (Tunikābunī 1389 Sh, 186).

A crucial case in which the king made recourse to the scholars to persuade them to issue fatwas was that of Russo-Iran wars. Sipihir writes the following in this regard:

In order to encourage Muslims to combat and fight the Russians, the king commanded Mīrzā Buzurg the deputy of the chancellor to ask the Twelver Scholars to issue fatwas [of jihad]. He sent Ḥājī Mullā Bāqir Salmāsī and Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Tabrīzī to reveal the issue to Shaykh Ja'far Najafī and Āqā Sayyid 'Alī Iṣfahānī and Mīrzā Abu l-Qāsim Jaylānī and meet them in al-'Atabāt al-'Āliyāt [the sublime thresholds: Najaf, Karbala, and Samarra] as well as the house of safety Qom. He also corresponded with scholars in Kashan and Isfahan, including his excellency Ḥājī Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī Kāshānī who was the greatest scholar in Iran, and Shaykh Ja'far, Āqā 'Alī, Mīrzā Abu l-Qāsim, Ḥāj Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥusayn Sulṭān al-'Ulamā (imam of Friday prayers in Isfahan), Mullā 'Alī Akbar Iṣfahānī, and other scholars and jurists of the divinely-protected dominions [i.e., Iran]. Each of them wrote essays with their stamps to the effect that it is jihad on the path of God to combat and fight the Russians, and it is obligatory for the young and the old to not refuse to act for the promotion of the evident religion and protection of the borders of Muslims, preventing the Russians from entering the boundaries of Iran. (Sipihir 1390 Sh, 1:188)

Even in the event of Shusha fortress, an enthusiastic preach by Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī and Mullā Muḥammad Mamaqānī led people to go to the crown prince in flocks and announce their readiness for the jihad (Jahāngīr Mīrzā 1337 Sh, 30).

In fact, the scholars were so politically influential that even opponents of the war also made recourse to the scholars to issue fatwas. For instance, Mīrzā 'Abd al-Wahhāb (Fath-Ali Shah's foreign minister), who opposed the war with Russia, asked Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī to issue a fatwa to prevent the war, but Narāqī refused to do so (Kāzīmī Mūsawī 1398 Sh, 124).

It might be said that even in the period of Mohammad Shah, with his Sufi spirits, he evidently showed the need for legitimization by the scholars early after he ascended to the throne. Mīrzā Abu l-Qāsim Qā'im Maqām asked Mīrzā Aḥmad Mujtahid and Mīrzā 'Alī Aṣghar Shaykh al-Islām (two eminent scholars in Tabriz) to announce the news of Mohammad Mīrzā's enthronement, and to collaborate in the process of the transfer of power (Elgar 1396 Sh, 154).

The political power of scholars in the enthronement of crown princesses was such that, during the reign of Fath-Ali Shah, princes established close ties with the eminent scholar of the time, Sayyid Maḥdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm, so that the king might take note of them (Tunikābunī 1389 Sh, 218).

During the reign of Mohammad Shah, however, the relations between scholars and the court (and the king) entered a new stage. In fact, unlike the period of Fath-Ali Shah, the peace between scholars and the king gave way to tension, and this had to do with Ḥājī Mīrzā Āqāsī as the chancellor because of his Sufi tendencies (Shamīm 1375 Sh, 130). Interestingly, such treatments of scholars led three religious authorities and scholars to abhor the Qajar dynasty, which culminated in public abhorrence of the Qajar government (Avery et al. 1387 Sh, 219).

It is worth mentioning that since the beginning of the Qajar era until the reign of Mohammad Shah, because of the need of Qajar rulers for the support of mujtahids, Shiite scholars and others wrote letters of advice. During the reign of Mohammad Shah, however, because of the widespread influence of Sufis within the government, such letters of advice were often written by Sufis and dedicated to the Sufi-leaning king Mohammad Shah (Zargarīnizhād 1395 Sh, 1:15). For instance, Mīrzā Āqāsī wrote an essay titled "Chahār faṣl sulṭānī wa-shiyam farrukhī" (the four monarchical seasons and auspicious natures) in which he referred to the king as the "just sultan," "the shadow of God," and other such Sufi terms (Īrwānī 1395 Sh, 249-51), and so, the king no longer needed the religious scholars.

After these events and the stabilization of the Qajar government during the monarchy of Mohammad Shah, and after the resolution of foreign conflicts through a number of humiliating treaties, close ties between prominent jurists and Qajar monarchs came to an end as a result of Mohammad Shah's policy of turning away from scholars, and the disappointment of eminent scholars after their widespread support of the Qajar government in Russo-Iran wars. Their relations turned into a deference without in-person contacts (Zargarīnizhād 1398 Sh, 1:503).

2.2.2. Personal Tendencies

As pointed out before, Qajar kings had religious inclinations, because of which they respected and honored religious scholars. Agha Mohammad Khan was allegedly familiar with Islamic jurisprudence and with some religious disciplines of his time, which is why he is described by some historians as *mujtahid al-salāṭīn* (the mujtahid among the kings) (Asef 1352 Sh, 449), which is of course an exaggeration, but is still indicative of his religious tendencies (Ābādiān 1389 Sh, 151). Agha Mohammad Khan saw himself as qualified to discharge monarchial duties, which is why “as it turns out, he did not issue execution rulings on Friday nights, and he never missed his prayers and fasting ... he strongly forbade wine drinking...” (Varharām 1385 Sh, 156-57).

Since Fath-Ali Shah believed in supernatural and hidden divine graces as a result of his companionship with scholars and spiritual figures, he believed that his monarchy was due to hidden divine graces and aids (Zargarīnizhād 1398 Sh, 1:428). In this way, the period of Fath-Ali Shah might be characterized as the best time and context for the promotion of *uṣūlī* scholars (who, unlike *akhbārī* scholars, favored the use of *ijtihād* to infer jurisprudential rulings). The main factor here was the peculiar manner of the king’s treatment of scholars and his attachment to Shiite scholars as well as his interest in supernatural acts and exotic sciences. More than anything else, it was Fath-Ali Shah’s own fanciful manner that changed the position of scholars toward him and raised his qualifications in administrative affairs of Iran. It was Fath-Ali Shah who changed the position of these (*uṣūlī*) scholars about his role in the government (Kāzīmī Mūsawī 1398 Sh, 119).

Fath-Ali Shah established close ties with *uṣūlī* scholars and mujtahids, believing his monarchy to be a kind of deputyship on behalf of mujtahids of the time (Kāzīmī Mūsawī 1398 Sh, 105). In fact, in the words of Riḍā Qulī Khān Hidāyat, “his majesty Fath-Ali Shah persistently tried to reinforce the brilliant sharia and honor the guiding Imams” (Hidāyat 1380 Sh, 13:7475).

It should be noted, however, that the kings did not always stick to the “discourse of compliance” with scholars. Sometimes due to political exigencies, some scholars were ignored, or even exiled and threatened. For instance, during his imprisonment in Shiraz, Agha Mohammad Khan was reprimanded by his paternal aunt’s husband, who was a clergy. When he became a king, he retaliated and tore the clergy’s stomach apart (Mustawfī

1388 Sh, 1:6). Moreover, in the event of sieging and plundering Kerman, he rejected the intercession of Shaykh Muḥammad Iḥsā'ī (Malcolm 1380 Sh, 163-64).

Conclusion

“Political legitimacy” was a major factor in the emergence of the discourse between the institutions of monarchy and clergy. In this context, a discourse of “power-compliance” took shape. An analysis of this discourse shows that, in different periods, depending on the degree of the monarch’s compliance with scholars for personal reasons or because of political necessities, the discourse was reinforced. Moreover, the presence of eminent influential clergies required the monarchial institution to respect the clergy.

During the reign of Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, the discourse was more or less in place. The king acquired his legitimacy from the scholars and was rather close to them. Given his tempers, however, this was more of a “personal inclination” than a political requirement. It might be said that during Agha Mohammad Khan’s reign, there was a political requirement for closeness to scholars only in the formative period of his government, and later, it was his personal interests that sustained the discourse with scholars. In contrast, the scholars were often concerned with the legitimization of the government rather than that of the king; that is, they preferred the existence of a king to anarchy.

In the period of Fath-Ali Shah, the “power-compliance” discourse was at its highest, from which the theory of the “guardianship of the jurist” arose. It was in this period that the king explicitly received deputyship on behalf of scholars, and even the king emphasized his role as a representative or successor of scholars, and the institution of sharia in general. In this period, the discourse of power is evidently exhibited by scholars.

The king, on the other hand, turned to scholars because of his personal interests and serious political requirements of the period. One major factor contributing to the reinforcement of the discourse between the institutions of monarchy and sharia consisted in Russo-Iran wars during the reign of Fath-Ali Shah.

In the period of Mohammad Shah, however, the dominance of the rival discourse—namely, that of Sufism—undermined the sharia-monarchy discourse. Although Mohammad Shah still acquired his legitimacy from

religious scholars, he did not pay much attention to them because of his tendency to Sufism and the influence of Ḥāj Mīrzā Āqāsī.

From the above remarks, it becomes evident that the monarch's relation with scholars was political, and sometimes personal. In contrast, the scholars' relation with the king aimed to establish a government based on sharia and the enforcement of divine laws. However, one should not ignore the presence of powerful influential scholars in deepening the discourse, because such figures could provide the royal court with power, as it could pose threats. This is why the monarchy-clergy discourse was the strongest during the reign of Fath-Ali Shah when there were many eminent scholars, there were serious political requirements, and the king was personally interested in establishing relations with the scholars.

Acknowledgments

This article is taken from the First Author: "Relations between Denominations and Intellectual Currents of Shi'a and Sufism in the Qajar Period from the Beginning to the End of the Mohammad Shah's Kingdom (1264-1210 AH)", PhD diss., Supervisor: Hassan Zandiyeh, Assistant professor, University of Tehran, Iran, September 2021.

References

- Ābādian, Ḥusayn. 1389 Sh. "Taḥawwul mafāhīm Shī'ī dar dawri Qājār." *Faṣṣl-nāmi 'ilmī-pazhūhishī Shi'a-shināsī* 8, no. 29 (Spring): 143-91.
- Ābādian, Ḥusayn. 1393 Sh. *Taqdīr tārikhī andīshi dar Iran dawri Qajar* (The historical predestination of thought in Iran in the Qajar era). Tehran: 'Ilm.
- Ābādiyān, Ḥusayn. 1389 Sh. "Taḥawwul mafāhīm Shī'ī dar dawri Qajar" (Development of Shiite concepts in the Qajar era). *Shī'a-shināsī* 8, no. 29 (Spring): 143-91.
- Amīn al-Dawla, Mīrzā 'Alī Khān. 1370 Sh. *Khāṭirāt siyāsī Mīrzā 'Alī Khān Amīn al-Dawla* (A political memoir of Mīrzā 'Alī Khān Amīn al-Dawla). Edited by Ḥāfiẓ Farmānfarmā'iyān. Tehran: Amīr Kabīr.
- Āqāzādī, Ja'far. 1396 Sh. "Iqdāmāt Fath-Ali Shah Qājār barāyi kasb mashrū'iyat siyāsī bar asās rawish-hāyi jāri dar dawri Islāmī." *Faṣṣl-nāmi pazhūhish-hāyi tārikhī* 9, no. 1, 33 (Spring): 107-26.
- Asef, Mohammad Hashem (Rostam Al-Hokama). 1352 Sh. *Rustam al-tawārīkh*. Edited by Mohammad Mushiri. Tehran: Sepehr.

- Avery, Peter, et al. 1387 Sh. *Modern Iran, Cambridge: History of Afshar, Zand, and Qajar*. Translated by Murtaḍā Thāqibfar. Tehran: Jāmī.
- Bāmdād, Mahdī. 1387 Sh. *Sharḥ ḥāl rijāl Iran (Biographies of Iranian figures)*. Tehran: Zuwwār.
- Count Desersie. 1362 Sh. *Iran in 1839-1840*. Translated by Iḥsān Ishrāqī. Tehran: Center for the University Press.
- Department of history. 1369 Sh. "Agha Mohammad Khan." In *Encyclopedia Islamica*. Tehran: Encyclopedia Islamica. Vol. 1.
- Elgar, Hamid. 1396 Sh. *Religion and State in Iran*. Tehran: Ṭūs.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1379 Sh. *Critical Discourse Analysis*. Translated by Fāṭima Shāyista Pīrān, et al. Tehran: Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture.
- Farhānī Munfarid, Mahdī. 1377 Sh. *Muhājirat 'ulamā' Shī'a az Jabal Amel bi Iran dar 'aṣr Ṣafawī* (The migration of Shiite scholars from Jabal Amel to Iran in the Safavid era). Tehran: Amīr Kabīr.
- Ḥabībābādī, Muḥammad 'Alī. 1337 Sh. *Makārim al-āthār dar aḥwāl rijāl du qarn 13 wa 14 hijrī* (The honored works concerning the lives of figures in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries). Tehran: Nashr-i Naqqāsh.
- Ḥā'irī, 'Abd al-Hādī. 1380 Sh. *Nukhustīn rūyārūyī-hāyi andīshigarān Iran: bā du rūyi tamaddun burzhuwāzī gharb (The first encounters of Iranian thinkers with the two layers of the bourgeoisie civilization of the West)*. Tehran: Amīr Kabīr.
- Ḥāj Īrwānī, Mīrzā 'Abbās (Ḥāj Mīrzā Āqāsī). 1395 Sh. "Chahār faṣl sultānī wa-shiyam farrukhī" (The four monarchial seasons and auspicious natures). In *Siyāsāt-nāmi-hāyi Qajarī, sī wa yik andarznāmi siyāsāt 'aṣr Qajar* (Qajar political letters: thirty-one political letters of advice in the Qajar era), edited by Ghulāmḥusayn Zargarīnizhād, vol. 1. Tehran: Nigāristān Andīshi.
- Halm, Heinz. 1385 Sh. *Shiism*. Translated by Muḥammad Taqī Akbarī. N.p.: Adyān.
- Hidāyat, Riḍā Qulī Khān. 1380 Sh. *Rawḍat al-ṣafayi Nāširī*. Edited by Jamshīd Kiyānfār. Vol. 14. Tehran: Asāfīr.
- Ja'fariyān, Rasūl. 1392 Sh. *Siyāsāt wa-farhang rūzigār Ṣafawī* (Politics and culture in the Safavid era). Tehran: 'Ilm.
- Jahāngīr Mīrzā. 1337 Sh. *Tārīkh naw* (New history). Edited by 'Abbās Iqbāl. Tehran: Library of 'Alī Akbar 'Alamī.

- Kashfī, Sayyid Ja'far. 1381. *Tuḥfat al-mulūk* (The gift of the monarchs). Edited by 'Abd al-Wahhāb Furāfī. Qom: Būstān Kitāb.
- Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', Ja'far. 1388 Sh. *Kashf al-ghīṭā' 'an mubhamāt al-shari'at al-gharrā'* (Removal of the veil from ambiguities of the brilliant sharia). Edited by Muḥammad Riḍā Dhākīrī, 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ḥillī, and 'Abbās Tabrīziyān. Qom: Būstān Kitāb.
- Kāzīmī Mūsawī, Aḥmad. 1398 Sh. *Khāqān ṣāhibqarān wa-'ulamā' zamān* (Khāqān Ṣāhibqarān and the Scholars of the Time). Tehran: Āgāh.
- Khāliqīnizhād, Amīrḥusayn. 1390 Sh. *Naqsh siyāsī 'ulamā' Shī'a dar 'aṣr Qajar* (The political role of Shiite scholars in the Qajar era). Qom: Būstān Kitāb.
- Khānsārī, Ruyā. 1393 Sh. "Chigūnigī muwajihī Qājār bā mas'ali mashrū'iyat." *Faṣlnāmi 'ilmī-takhaṣṣuṣī farhang pazhūhish* 19 (Autumn): 147-76.
- Khāwarī, Asadullāh. 1398 Sh. *Dhahabiyya, taṣawwuf 'ilmī -- āthār adabī* (The Dhahabi order, scholarly Sufism – literary works). Tehran: University of Tehran.
- Lambton, A.K.S. 1375 Sh. *Iran during Qajar*. Translated by Sīmīn Faṣḥī. Mashhad: Jāwīdān Khirad.
- MacDonell, Daniel. 1380 Sh. *An Introduction to Theories of Discourse*. Translated by Ḥusayn 'alī Nawdhārī. Tehran: Fargang Guftimān.
- Mahdīnizhād, Sayyid Riḍā. 1388 Sh. "Mīrzā Qummī wa-ḥukūmat Qājār." *Hukūmat Islāmī* 14, no. 4 (Winter): 95-128.
- Malcolm, Sir John. 1380 Sh. *History of Iran*. Translated by Ismā'īl Ḥayrat. Tehran: Afsūn.
- Mīraḥmadī, Maryam. 1395 Sh. *Tārīkh taḥawwulāt Iran-shināsī dar dawri Islāmī* (History of developments in Iranian studies in the Islamic period). Tehran: Ṭahūrī.
- Mīrzā Qummī, Abu l-Qāsim b. Muḥammad Ḥasan. 1378 Sh. *Ghanā'im al-ayyām fī masā'il al-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām: kitāb al-zakāt wa-l-khums* (Blessings of days in problems of halal and haram: the book of zakat and khums). Edited by 'Abbās Tabrīziyān. vol. 1. Qom: Būstān Kitāb.
- Mīrzā Qummī, Abu l-Qāsim b. Muḥammad Ḥasan. 1384 Sh. *Irshād-nāmi dar maktūbāt wa-bayānāt siyāsī wa-ijtimā'ī 'ulamā' Shī'a* (Letters of guidance in political and social writings and statements of Shiite scholars). Edited by Muḥammad Ḥasan Rajabī and Fāṭima Ruyāpūr Umīd. Vol. 1. Tehran: Nay.

- Mustawfī, ‘Abd Allāh. 1388 Sh. *Sharḥ zindigānī man* (The story of my life). Vol. 3. Tehran: Zuwwār.
- Muṭallibī, Mas‘ūd, and ‘Azīm Īzādī Ūdlū. 1397 Sh. “Barrasī munāsibāt Šūfiyān bā nahād salṭanat dar dawri Šafawiyya wa-Qājāriyya” (Consideration of the relations between Sufis and the institution of monarchy in Safavid and Qajar eras). *Sipihr siyāsāt* 5, no. 18 (Winter): 105-124.
- Nafīsī, Sa‘īd. 1383 Sh. *Tārīkh ijtimā‘ī siyāsī Iran* (Social-political history of Iran). Tehran: Ahūrā.
- Narāqī, Mullā Aḥmad. n.d. *‘Awā’id al-ayyām*. N.p.: Maktaba Bašīratī.
- Qā’im Maqām Farāhānī, Mīrzā ‘Īsā. 1380 Sh. *Aḥkām al-jihād wa-asbāb al-rashād* (Rulings of jihad and grounds of guidance). Edited and prefaced by Ghulāmḥusayn Zargarīnizhād. Tehran: Buq‘a.
- Raḥmatī, Muḥammad Kāzīm. 1399 Sh. *Faqīhān imāmī wa-shahriyārān Šafawī: justārḥāyī dar tārīkh tashayyu’* (Imāmī jurists and Safavid monarchs: inquiries into the Shiite history). Tehran: Nīgāristān Andīshi.
- Shamīm, ‘Alī Ašghar. 1375 Sh. *Iran dawri salṭanat Qājār* (Iran in the period of Qajar monarchy). Tehran: Mudabbir.
- Shīrāzī, Muḥammad Ma‘šūm. 1382 Sh. *Ṭarā‘iq al-ḥaqā‘iq*. Edited by Muḥammad Ja‘far Maḥjūb. Vol. 3. Tehran: Sanā‘ī.
- Šifātgul, Manšūr. 1381 Sh. *Sākhtār nahād wa-andīshi dīnī dar Iran ‘ašr Šafawī* (The structure of religious institution and thought in Iran in the Safavid era). Tehran: Cultural Services of Rasā.
- Sipihr, Muḥammad Lisān al-Mulk. 1390 Sh. *Nāsikh al-tawārīkh Qājāriyya* (History of the Qajar period). Edited by Jamshid Kiyanfar. Vol. 1. Tehran: Asāṭīr.
- Tunikābunī, Muḥammad b. Sulaymān. 1389 Sh. *Qīṣaš al-‘ulamā’* (Stories of scholars). Edited by Muḥammad Barzagar Khāliqī and ‘Iffāt ‘Abbāsī. Tehran: ‘Ilmī-Farhangī.
- Tunikābunī, Muḥammad b. Sulaymān. 1393 Sh. *Tadhkirat al-‘ulamā’*. Edited by Muḥammad Riḍā Aẓḥarī and Ghulāmriḍā Paranda. Mashhad: Foundation of Research in Āstān Quds.
- Varahrām, Ghulāmriḍā. 1385 Sh. *Nizām siyāsī wa-sazmānhāyi ijtimā‘ī Iran dar ‘ašr Qajar* (The political system and social organizations of Iran in the Qajar era). Tehran: Mu‘īn.

Wodak, Ruth. 1399 Sh. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. Edited by Ken. Translated by Muḥsin Nawbakht. Tehran: Samt.

Zargarīnizhād, Ghulāmḥusayn. 1395 Sh. *Siyāsatnāmihāyi Qājārī sī-wa-yik andarznāmi siyāsī ‘aṣr Qajar* (Qajar political letters, letters of political advice in the Qajar era). Edited by Ghulāmḥusayn Zargarīnizhād. Vol. 1. Tehran: Nigāristān Andīshi.

Zargarīnizhād, Ghulāmḥusayn. 1395 Sh. *Tārīkh Iran dar dawri Qājāriyya ‘aṣr Agha Mohammad Khan* (History of Iran in the Qajar era, the period of Agha Mohammad Khan). Tehran: Samt.

Zargarīnizhād, Ghulāmḥusayn. 1398 Sh. *Andīshi wa-siyāsat dar Iran dawri Qajar* (Thought and politics in Iran of the Qajar era). Vol. 1. Tehran: Nigāristān Andīshi.