Review Article


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Abstract

This is a good analytical book, which conveys meticulously the transformations of two prominent Shi‘i ‘ulamā’—Kāshif al-Ghita‘ in Iraq and Muḥsin al-Amin in Lebanon—who combined authenticity with modernity. While relying on an impressive host of original primary Arabic and Persian sources, the author is gifted in employing discourse and content analysis, which can capture the attention of both academic and lay readers. The monograph’s only liability is that it is void of ethnographic research; as such it lacks fieldwork, interviews, and empirical research, things that would have blown more life into the argument and would have helped the reader conceptualise and contextualise more.

Synopsis of the Book and its Contents

Elisheva Machlis’s *Shi‘i Sectarianism in the Middle East: Modernisation and the Quest for Islamic Universalism* begins with “Acknowledgements” (p. viii), “Note on transliteration” (p. ix), “List of abbreviations” (p. x), and an “Introduction” (pp. 1–15). This is followed by five chapters (pp. 17–218), a “Conclusion” (p. 219), “Notes” (p. 227), “Bibliography” (p. 282), and an “Index” (p. 311). The book centres on the progressive role of two leading ‘ulamā’s progressive thought, which is portrayed and disseminated within the diameters of authenticity and modernity: “... Kāshif al-Ghita‘ in Iraq and Muḥsin al-Amin in Lebanon [who] provided an important precedent of dialogue between reform-minded clerics and both the Sunnī and Shi‘i [Shi‘i] intelligentsia which led to an emphasis on a shared progressive world view (p. 226). Chapter one furnishes the necessary background on “Social Change and the Contest for Communal Leadership;” chapter two discusses the
prospects of “Muslim Unity” from the perspective of historiography; chapter three puts the spotlight on “Modern Shi’i Theology;” chapter four surveys the emergence of a pan-Islamic judicial system through the shift “From fiqh to Shari’a;” chapter five discusses “The Politicisation of Shi’ism;” finally, the “Conclusion” studies the possibility of “Muslim Networks” in light of the resurgence of political Islam and the revolutionary tenor of Shi’ism.

Shi’i Doctrine

All Muslims believe in َّلا َٰن (five pillars of Islam) and َّسَٰل (the fundamental principles of religion or the foundations of faith). The َّلا َٰن are the following: َّلا َٰن (Muslim confession or declaration of faith); َلا َٰن (the five daily ritual prayers); َلا َٰن (fasting in the holy month of Ramaḍān); َلا َٰن (pilgrimage to Mecca); and َلا َٰن (alms giving: 2.5% or 1/40) (pp. 81–85, 93–95, 97–101, 104–105, 123–124, 126, 145, 141–152). For Sunnis, َّسَٰل comprise the following three doctrines: َلا َٰن (divine unity); َلا َٰن (Prophethood); and َلا َٰن (resurrection). To َّسَٰل, the Shi’is add the following two doctrines: َلا َٰن (Imamate) and َلا َٰن (justice) (pp. 4, 13, 61–2, 84). Machlis writes, “… the exclusive Shi’i principles of imama and َلا َٰن, the belief in the authority of the Imams and their special qualities and the notion of justice, to be fulfilled only with the return of the vanished Imam at the end of days [day of judgement] … are the core Imami principles…” (p. 62). Furthermore, all Muslims believe in practicing َلا َٰن (struggle in the way of God) and َلا َٰن (enjoining the good and prohibiting the evil). However, Shi’is stresses the need to practice َلا َٰن (one-fifth religious tax) (pp. 60–61, 137, 142). Thus, َلا َٰن is another distinguishing feature of Shi’ism since the Sunnis confine themselves to َلا َٰن. Nevertheless, َلا َٰن remains to the Shi’is the most salient distinguishing tenet that sets them apart from Sunni Islam.

Imama, the most distinctive mark of Twelver Shi’i Islam, stipulates that the essential, primary, and sufficient attributes of the Imam [Imâm] boil down to three principles, which form the essence of the Shi’i theocratic dogma:

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1 Testimony that there is no god but Allah (God), and that Muhammad is His Prophet or Messenger.
3 A religious donation comprising 20% on a person’s surplus of income over necessary living expenses, according to the Shi’i understanding and interpretation of the Qur’anic verse (8:41): “And know that whatever booty you take [in war], the fifth thereof is for Allah, the Apostle, the near of kin, the orphan, and the wayfarer, if you really believe in Allah and what We revealed to Our servant on the day of decision [battle of Badr, decision between the forces of faith and unbelief], the day when the two hosts meet. Allah has power over everything.”
(1) apostolic succession; (2) *al-ʾismab* (immunity from sin and error); and (3) perenniality or perpetuity of the Imamate (pp. 106–113).

The third principle stipulates the necessity for the permanent existence of an Imam. Thus, the earth is not left without a living Imam who is the *hādi* (guide) and *bujjah* of God. The theory of the Imamate stipulated the necessity of the perpetual existence of a living Imam to guide mankind. The occultation of the Imam made him aloof from politics without encroaching on the principle of his perenniality. The sixth Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣadiq placed the Imam above the ruler, who must abide by what the Imam’s religious edicts since he is the supreme religious authority (pp. 106–113).

A corollary of this category is the necessity of recognizing the living Imam. Shāykh Ṣadiq or Ibn Bābawayh⁴ (306/918–381/991) asserted that remuneration is for belief in the Imam and recognizing him. Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣadiq stressed that God prepares the ground for the death of a prophet only after He has ordered him to appoint a successor from his lineage... The Shiʿis should always recognise their Imam and obey him as a religious duty. Therefore, the existence of the Imam is a necessary grace. Indeed, it is the religious obligation of every Shiʿi to recognise and obey the Imam of his time. He who perishes without recognizing the Imam of his age—even though he has recognized past Imams—is doomed to eternal damnation, condemnation, and *jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic pagan) death. Thus, a Shiʿi cannot ascend to heaven without acknowledging the living Imam (pp. 106–113).

Recognising the Imam has been a complicated process for the Shiʿi community after the disappearance of the Twelveth Imam, al-Mahdi, at the age of seven, thus starting the Lesser Occultation in 874 CE. With this eventuality, the line of the twelve Imams came to an end. For the next 67 years Imam al-Mahdi maintained communication with the Shiʿi community through four directly appointed intermediaries or private deputies. In 941 CE, a few days before the death of the fourth deputy, Imam al-Mahdi is believed to have declared the end of the Lesser Occultation, thus he severed communication with the Shiʿi community and declared the beginning of the Greater Occultation. In the Greater Occultation no deputies were appointed as intermediaries between Imam al-Mahdi and the Shiʿi community, rather the mode of representation of Imam al-Mahdi changed to a *nāʿib ʿamm* (general deputy) by high-ranking *mujtabidiun* (pl. of *mujtabid*—a Shiʿi jurist) whose integrity is unquestionable and who possess insight into temporal and religious matters. And so, the Shiʿi community has been waiting for the Mahdi’s return,

⁴ Ibn Bābawayh Al-Qummī is the author of *Man Lā Yahḍurarubu Al-Faqīh*, one of the four Shiʿite authoritative collections of *ḥadīth*. 
who will found justice and peace on earth by establishing an Ideal Islamic order (nizām Islāmī). Around the end of the eighteenth century, the leading mujtahid became synonymous with the faqih (jurisprudent) or marja’ al-taqlīd,5 who is considered the supreme Islamic legal authority to be emulated, or accepted for emulation, by the majority of the Shi’is in matters of religious practice and law since he is regarded as the most knowledgeable (ālīm) (pp. 57–58, 106–108, 213, 216, 171–172).

The Development of Marja’īyyah (Religious Authority)

Shi’i history has been replete with or characterised by a plurality, polarity, and multiplicity of marja’s (religious authorities) who monopolised religious knowledge. Marja’īyyah came about as a result of a struggle between the Akhbarī and Usuli schools of jurisprudence a struggle that slumbered for centuries and was only finally adjudicated a few centuries ago in favour of the Usulis, who stressed the right of the ‘ulama’ to ijtihād (independent reasoning) and the taqlīd ( emulation) of living mujtahids, practices which were totally opposed by the Akhbarīs. Marja’īyyah in Shi’ism got its prominence as a real power in society since the beginning of Safavid Dynasty in 1501 (pp. 146–148, 172–173, 214–215). In fact, religious knowledge has been for centuries the sole prerogative of the institution of marja’īyyah that appropriated, constructed, and disseminated that religious knowledge to the faithful Shi’i populace, and through this process it accumulated and transformed this religious knowledge into religious legitimacy. Since the marja’s authority is measured by the following they muster, the relationship between them and the populace has been one of interdependence whereby the populace, through their payment of al-huqūq al-shar’īyyah (legal rights) of zakāt and khums financially sustain the institution of marja’īyyah, and in return the populace is granted a religious authority to emulate. Since the hierarchy of the marja’s is measured by the size of their following and wealth, and is not solely determined by their religious-academic qualifications—adhering to a certain marja’īyyah not only wielded religious legitimacy, but also conferred a certain religious ideology to the populace. In principle, the Shi’is follow the marja’ whom they feel īṭmi’nān (peace of mind) with (pp. 4, 89, 116, 128, 134, 213–215). Machlis writes that the Lebanese Ayatullah [Āyat Allāh] Fadlallah6 (d. 2010) and the Iraqi Ayatullah al-Sistani (b. 1930) “suggested that one can simultaneously emulate

5 Noteworthy, I have replaced Machlis’s unclear translation of marja’ al-taqlīd as “Supreme Exemplar” (p. 213) with “the religious authority of emulation” or “the religious authority to be emulated.”

6 The late Sayyid Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah [Muhammad Husayn Faḍl Allāh] (1935–2010) was the highest ranking Shi’ite religious authority (marja’) in Lebanon.
different mujtabids [sic] in accordance with their expertise on different topics" (p. 134). Thus, depending on the specialty and the level of expertise of the mujtabid, the Shi‘is employed the doctrine of ‘summing from here and there’ (tabā‘ūd) in order to follow the most knowledgeable mujtabid in the field that they seek counsel in.

**Stages of Ijtihād (Independent Reasoning) Leading to Marja‘īyyah**

The person who intends to become a marja‘, also called muqallad (emulated or followed), should fulfil certain scholarly requirements to attain the degree of marja‘īyyah. Basically, he has to cover the following three levels: al-muqaddimāt (the prolegomena), al-suṭūh (corpus of knowledge), and al-bāḥth al-khārij (extracurricular research). In al-muqaddimāt the student spends an average of three to five years learning grammar, rhetoric and logic. In the al-suṭūh the student studies jurisprudence and positive law (man-made law). The student spends three to six years in this stage, where he could freely choose his mentor/s who would recommend certain textbooks to be studied, in preparation to exercise independent reasoning. Al-bāḥth al-khārij is the third and final stage of religious study in which the graduate student heavily participates, in a seminar setting, in the ongoing debates taking place in the religious seminary. It is worth mentioning that this stage is referred to as the extracurricular research since there is no specific textbook; rather the mentor would lecture from his own notes, which are based on his knowledge. After fulfilling these criteria, the student acquires the title of mujtabid. It is note worthy to mention that only after the mujtabid publishes his judicial decisions or fatwas (religious edits), he becomes a marja‘ (pp. 4, 63, 66, 116, 129).

The essential function of the marja‘ is to guide the community of those who “imitate” his teachings and follow his precepts, in particular concerning the following two issues: (1) the application of the rules of the shari‘a as furū‘ al-din (subsidiary principles of religion) and (2) abkām (judicial solutions or legal qualifications) in regard to the problems of contemporary life. Theoretically, the imitation or following of the marja‘ has no connection with usūl al-din, which are derived from imān (faith) and from yaqīn (inner conviction). The mujtabid established as marja‘ must pronounce judicial decisions and write one or more books as a risālah ‘amaliyyah (practical treatise) in order to guide his followers. Only after publishing his risālah ‘amaliyyah he becomes recognised as a Grand marja‘ or Grand Ayatullah (pp. 121–127, 132, 134, 136–137, 209, 213, 216).

**Choosing the Marja‘**

This is one of the hotly debated issues in Shi‘i history that has not been
resolved yet, simply because there is no clear cut established method for choosing the marja'. The process of choosing a marja', i.e. deciding on whom is the most knowledgeable ('alim) among the mujtahidûn (pl. of mujtahid), is influenced by many factors such as political, social, and even geographical considerations. Another problematic has to do with ethnicity; for instance, being an Arab or a Fârsî (Persian). Being a graduate of the Iraqi Najaf religious seminary or the Iranian Qumm religious seminary is also at stake since the two religious seminaries have been in fierce competition over the leadership of the Shi'i community. Usually the person who intends to become a marja', who is a mujtahid, is “marketed” by a narrow clique that constitutes his entourage, who usually are either his disciples or his relatives. He is often promoted to attract more followers who emulate his religious authority, and thus pay the khums to him. Although the religious seminary has not provided a crystal clear method of choosing a marja', nonetheless two very important elements has been accounted for in this regard. First, is the number of followers and their proximity. Second, is the number of mujtahidûn attending his lectures. A third less salient factor to be taken into consideration is his practical treatise and publications. Upon the fulfilment of the aforementioned premises the marja' enjoys shaya' (wide reputation), which enables him to join the club of grand marja's who could have a say in establishing him as such (pp. 26–29, 31–32, 48–49, 60, 63, 67, 99, 116, 121, 123, 126, 128, 139, 143, 210–214).

From Taqiyyah (Expedient Dissimulation, Passivism) to Ta'bî'ah (Mobilisation)

The most interesting and rich chapter is chapter five, which is dedicated to a thorough exposition of “The Politicisation of Shi'ism” (p. 169–218). Machlis writes that in “Najaf and Karbala a quietist tendency remained the rule. . . [an] apolitical tendency. . .” (p. 172). She implies that the Shi'i 'ulama' gradually shifted from endorsing taqiyyah (expedient dissimulation, in line with the centuries-old quietist doctrine or passivism) to ta'bî'ah (mobilisation), which culminated in Imam Khomeini’s [Khumayni] propagation of the wilayat al-faqih [wilâyât al-faqîh/wilâyât-e faqîh] (guardianship by the jurisprudent) doctrine. Machlis’s achilles heel is that she starts from Mullâ Ahmad Nâraqî and ignores to mention his predecessors who initiated this trend. Therefore, I find it absolutely necessary to fill this conceptual gap.

Wilayat al-faqih refers to the rule of the religious jurist. Throughout the course of history many Shi'i 'ulama' have contributed to the wilâyât al-faqîh doctrine with varying degrees, from a rudimentary perspective to an evolutionary one. “The Safavids, who adopted Shi'ism as the state religion [in
Iran” (p. 146) invited Lebanese ‘ulamā’ who were instrumental in the dissemination of Shi‘ism in Iran during their Dynasty (1501–1722 CE). Al-Karakī (1465–1533) or al-Muḥaqiq al-Thānī, a Lebanese activist from Jabal ‘Amīl, was the precursor who paved the way and laid the foundation of this doctrine by pioneering the suggestion that the ‘ulamā’ were the nā‘īb al-‘āmm of Imam al-Mahdī. Al-Karakī’s disciple, al-Shāhid al-Thānī (1506–1558) is considered as the founding father of the doctrine. His contribution to the wilayat al-faqīh consists in broadening the mandate of the concept of nā‘īb al-‘āmm in the religious domain and applying it to all the religious functions and prerogatives of the Hidden Imam, al-Mahdī. The result was that the authority of the Imam was transferred to and reflected in the judicial authority of the ‘ulamā’.

Baḥbahānī (1706–1792) had the conviction in the mujtahid’s ability to establish ḥujjat. Prior to that, the title of ḥujjat al-Islām was only confined to Imam al-Mahdī. Moreover, in addition to his endorsement of the Usuli school on the right of the ‘ulamā’ in ijtihād, Baḥbahānī settled the way for recognizing the legitimacy of the transfer of the Hidden Imam’s religious authority, but not his political authority. A mujtahid was no more considered a general deputy of the Hidden Imam; rather, mujtahid and faqīh became one and the same. Thus, Baḥbahānī considered the mujtahids as vicegerents of the Prophet in religious matters only. Therefore, his contribution lies in fusing the religious and social dimensions, but not the political.

Mullā Ahmad Nāraqī (1771–1829), Baḥbahānī’s disciple, supported the legitimacy of the legal speculation on the part of the faqīh in the absence of the Hidden Imam. His emphasis on Prophet Muhammad’s succession as being the prerogative of religious authority is of special importance since it brought the political dimension into the wilayat al-faqīh doctrine. As such, al-Nāraqī was the first to recognize the faqīh’s right in political authority. Moreover, when he compared a faqīh and a king, he placed the former above—not even juxtaposed to—the latter, thus, making him the supreme political figure of the community. And so, al-Nāraqī was the first to stipulate that the political, religious, and social authority of the Hidden Imam can be transferred to and vested in the faqīh. To recapitulate, his major contribution lies in adding the political dimension to the religious and social ones (pp. 203–4).

Sha‘īykh Muhammad Husayn Na‘īnī (1860–1936) became the leading marjā′ in Iran in 1920. Na‘īnī stressed that in the Greater Occultation period, the best way to prevent an authority from becoming wayward is to abide by

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8 Ibid., 43.
an Islamic constitution that guarantees the rights and duties of the citizens as well as those of the state. He recommended establishing a council comprised of leading mujtahids, intellectuals, and wise men who act in the interest of the people by supervising the implementation of the constitution and the affairs of the state. Na’înî stressed wilâyat al-umma’ al-nafsih (the governance of the umma by itself) as a legitimate right in the period of the Greater Occultation because this issue falls under the hisbî domain (things that God does not allow that we forsake), rather than general taklîf (delegated responsibilities, plural of taklîf) i.e. the governance of the ummah by itself is a political and not a sharî (religious-legal) issue. Since it is a practical impossibility for a Shi’î to have the delegated responsibility to establish God’s Governance, then he has delegated responsibility to institute the political-hisbî domain in conformity with the interest of the ummah. This implies that his enrolment in politics is for the sole purpose of transforming a tyrannical power to a ‘democratic authority’ that represents the ummah.9

The late Imam Khomeini (1902–1989) blatantly rejected the taqiyyah practice, which he considered to be one of the major sources of the passivism of the Shi’îs. According to Khomeini, taqiyyah sanctions a person—in order to safeguard his life, money, honour or those of others—to utter an injunction contrary to factual evidence (reality) or to commit an action against the shari’ah. He added that taqiyyah is a non-binding practical necessity, which is an exception to the norm, rather than being a basic sharî principle. His alternative was opting for mobilisation and political activism; thus, he rejected the passivism of some ‘ulamâ who argued that sins should proliferate for the Mahdi to appear in order to redress injustice. By contending that if sins did not proliferate then the Twelfth Imam would not appear, they retreated from their guidance role. And so, Khomeini considered that the practice of taqiyyah is legitimate only if it is intended to safeguard the self and others from the dangers resulting from the application of religious laws and rituals; however, he stressed that under the Islamic state the necessity and mašlabah (interest) of resorting to taqiyyah ceases to be. Khomeini affirmed that if Islam is in danger, then there is no room for taqiyyah or passivism; he also enjoins the ‘ulamâ not to practice taqiyyah and not to work for an unrighteous government. Moreover, according to Imam Khomeini another factor that contributed to the passivism of the Shi’îs was their belief that every government in the absence of the Hidden Imam is perverted and unjust even if it were headed by a Shi’î.10 As a result, the Shi’î ‘ulamâ used to recommend to their followers not to indulge with government and to refuse governmental positions due to

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9 Ibid., 43–44.
10 The Shah’s regime was classified under this category.
the fact that these governments were deemed unjust and kuffār (infidel), apostate governments anathematising the political order. According to Khomeini, this attitude seems to explain why the Shi’is until recent decades were not fairly represented in governmental positions; their negative attitude towards established government made them quietists and hampered their active participation in public and political life (pp. 61, 116, 147, 165, 171, 180).

Imam Khomeini depicted Mubarram as the month of the victory of blood over the sword, which he regarded as a characterization of the Islamic Revolution as such. Khomeini argued that everything that the Islamic Revolution has achieved is the result of ‘Ashurā’; he enjoined the Shi’is to generate an ‘Ashurā’ in their struggle for establishing an Islamic order. He added that if Imam Ḥusayn did not inspire the Islamic Revolution, then it would not have been victorious. Khomeini asserted that Imam Ḥusayn’s mourning ceremonies (majālis al-‘azā) should not be given up because they give life to the Shi’is and vitalise them. According to Khomeini, ‘Ashurā’ means the radical change and establishing the community and the state by Islam. That is why any Islamic revolution regards Imam Ḥusayn as its ideal, in the present and the future, by trying to emulate his revolution that rejected partial solutions and was adamant on Islam being the governing (or guiding principle) of all men’s activities in this life. Khomeini added, if it were not for the leading martyr (sayyid al-shuhada’), Imam Ḥusayn, then Yazid, and his successors would have made the people forget Islam (by their hereditary succession) . . . Husayn’s revolution protected Islam and led the way to the people to mobilise, revolt, and confront anything that would endanger the Message (Islam) through deflection and forgery . . . ‘Ashurā’ is the real perpetual revolution till God inherits the earth and everything on it (pp. 90–94, 104–106, 180–188).

**Imam Khomeini’s Contribution to Wilayat al-Faqih**

Imam Khomeini highlighted the crucial role of the faqih as a leader of the state and people through his theory of wilayat al-faqih. According to Imam Khomeini, wilayat al-faqih denotes the guardianship of the jurisprudent or jurisconsult who is the most just and learned in all branches of religious knowledge. Khomeini’s contribution to wilayat al-faqih doctrine is his bringing the theory of nā’ib al-‘amm to its logical end in the political sphere by stipulating and sanctioning the right of the faqih, not only to religious and social issues, as his predecessors have argued, but also to political leadership. In

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11 A literal translation states, “was not present.”

12 From now on, al-wali al-faqih will be referred to as faqih, who is the official Iranian marja’ al-taqsid (authority of emulation).
line with the doctrine of the Imamate—which stipulates the Imam as the most learned in all theological sciences as well as the legitimate authority in all religious, social, and primarily political spheres—the wilayat al-faqih sanctions the same legitimate authorities to the faqih (140–141, 149–151).

In other words, Khomeini’s contribution to wilayat al-faqih lies in his joining of Imama (Imamate) and Wilaya in one person for the first time after the Greater Occultation of the Twelfth Imam, which made possible, in the absence of the Hidden Imam, the establishment of an Islamic order. As such, wilayat al-faqih is bestowed upon and practiced by one person who is the universal authority in all religious, social, and political matters during the period of the Greater Occultation on behalf of the Hidden Imam. From this perspective stems its perennial importance to the Shi’is in the whole Muslim world since they believed that the legal and just government could not be re-established until Imamate and Wilaya were united in one person. Moreover, since for them there was no explicit recognition of the separation of temporal and religious authority, the Imams were considered the supreme political and religious leaders of the community. And so, the faqih, in line with the Imam, is deemed the nujjah of God to mankind, thus engendering a mandatory obedience (wājib) on each and every Shi’i. Imam Khomeini became the first supreme faqih who established the principal and tradition that future supreme fuqaha’ (pl. of faqih) should be selected by their predecessors, in line with the Imams who were designated by their predecessors (pp. 166–168).

Indeed, the bestowing of political authority, in addition to religious and social ones, upon a just faqih provided the legitimate and religious framework for the establishment of an Islamic order, which was previously considered as a practical impossibility due to the monopoly of political authority by the Imams, and later on due to the Greater Occultation. Imam Khomeini stressed the necessity of establishing an Islamic order: “It is taken for granted or self-evident that the necessity of abiding by the injunctions that stipulated the establishment of Prophet Muhammad’s government are not confined or limited to his time; rather they are a continuous process after his death.” Basing himself on a host of Qur’ānic verses, Imam Khomeini added that the injunctions of Islam are not transient, being confined to a specific place and time; rather, they are perpetual (religious) duties that should be implemented till eternity. On these grounds, Khomeini stipulated and strongly advocated that Muslims, in general, and Shi’is, in particular, have an obligation (wājib) to

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14 For instance: 14:52; 15:2; 22:49; 33:40; 36:70.
establish Islamic order that would enlighten the Muslim populace through the following process: making it conscious of its rights; by halting injustice and oppression: every non-Islamic system is polytheism (shirk) and its ruler is regarded as a tyrannical and illegitimate (tāghūt); by stopping the corruption in the land; by eliminating polytheism and illegitimate rule; by guiding people to the right path; and by protecting the Muslims from the tutelage of the enemies and their interference in the affairs of the Muslims (pp. 145–146, 198–202).

And so, the faqih,—who like the Imam is infallible—is the only one who has the final say in all executive, legislative, and judicial matters. As God’s representative on earth, the faqih supervises the government and has the absolute power to declare its acts null and void. Khomeini affirmed, opposition to wilayat al-faqih “is denying the imams and Islam . . . I must point out, the government which is a branch of the absolute governance of the Prophet of God is among the primary ordinances of Islam, and has precedence over all secondary ordinances such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage.” Therefore, Khomeini stipulated that the mašlahah of the Islamic order or its agencies gains priority over any other principle in the social and political affairs. As such, Khomeini developed the theory of al-wilaya al-mutlaqa (absolute wilaya) in a way that could perfectly serve his political ends through giving the waliyy al-faqih absolute political and religious power (pp. 208–212, 214–218).

In conclusion, although the doctrine of wilayat al-faqih cannot be only ascribed to Imam Khomeini since it is deeply rooted in classical Shi’i thought; however, Khomeini was the first to implement the doctrine by combining the social, religious, and political dimensions, thus moving Shi’ism from Imama (Imamate) to wilaya (governance and spiritual guidance). The faqih, in the absence of the Hidden Imam is the political and a religious leader of the umma. Khomeini forcefully asserted that the faqih should depose or oust the ruler and rule in his place, thus establishing an Islamic order. And so, Imam Khomeini was the first faqih after the Great Occultation and in contemporary history to assume the title of the deputy of Imam al-Mahdi and to establish of an Islamic order through political revolution (pp. 211–212).

15 Islamic law and jurisprudence regards this as a crime in its own right that has its stipulated legal penalties and punishments (budūd).
16 It is worth noting that Imam Khomeini’s infallibility is of a different nature than that of Prophet Muhammad, the Twelve Imams, and Fatīmah Al-Zahrā’. However, there seems to be a consensus among Shi’ite jurists that Imam Khomeini has not committed any mistake. This claim is also substantiated by popular religion, where it is widely believed that Imam Khomeini conducted regular meetings with Imam al-Mahdi and did not take a decision except by consulting with him. However, according to official religion, Imam Khomeini is considered the deputy of Imam al-Mahdi in religious, social, and political domains.
17 Published in Fars in Kayhān 13223 (16 Jamādī al-Awwal 1409/6 January 1989).
Khomeini practically proved, by the application of his \textit{wilayat al-faqih} theory, that an Islamic order could be established during the period of the Great Occultation, before the return of Imam al-Mahdi. In other words, Khomeini’s \textit{wilayat al-faqih} made possible the establishment of a just government in the absence of the Hidden Imam. Such possibility turned out to be the springboard of mobilisation and political activism since it conferred upon the Shi’is the religious duty to establish such a government. Khomeini’s theory of government delegates a minimal role to the people (populace) because he passionately believed in the role of the ‘ulamā’ as leaders in both public affairs of the state and as spiritual advisors to the faithful. And so, the ‘ulamā’ were not quietist anymore; on the contrary, they resorted to political activism being regarded as successors of the Hidden Imam, thus, engendering complete allegiance from the masses. Thus, \textit{wilayat al-faqih} embeds and is flavoured by a revolutionary character because it calls for the active involvement (mobilisation) of the ‘ulamā’ in politics and government (pp. 203–204).

Khomeini’s innovation was to unequivocally and cogently metamorphose \textit{Wilayat al-Faqih} into a system of political administration. Khomeini in his capacity as \textit{al-waliyy al-faqih} and \textit{marja’ al-taqlid} (authority of emulation), blended \textit{Imama} with \textit{wilaya} with \textit{marja’iyyah}, which is a precedent in Shi’i religious ideology: “Khomeini equated \textit{velayat-e faqih} with the \textit{wilaya} of the Prophet and the Imams, which rendered the jurist [faqih] in a superior position almost comparable to these infallible leaders, without holding the same status” (p. 214). This is of vital importance since in Shi’i jurisprudence “the ruler’s ordinance abrogates the mujtahid’s fatwa” (\textit{bukum al-hākim yanqu’d fatwā al-mujtahid}), if the \textit{mašlahah} of the Islamic order requires such a course of action. Thus, Khomeini believed in and practiced absolute \textit{wilayah}.

\section*{Community and Society}

Throughout the book, there is loose usage of “modern;” “modernity;” “modernisation;” “modernised,” with hardly any conceptualisation or clear definitions of these key terms. Nevertheless, the crux of Machlis’s argument centres on modernisation. She writes,

\ldots a comparable process of modernisation unfolded among the Shi’is in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon \ldots modernisation had an asymmetrical influence on the older and younger generations, as well as on conservative and reformist elements \ldots

Despite these uneven effects, modernisation indelibly changed the social fabric of Shi’i society and the relationship between the traditional clerical elite and the

\footnote{Alagha, \textit{Hizbullah’s DNA}, 55.}
followers... A multifaceted approach to modernisation was also apparent among Shi'i reformers... [who] sought to delicately balance Islamic and modern knowledge; a Shi'i identity and the current necessity for Muslim unity; and a pre-modern passive eschatological worldview with a belief in human ability to achieve progress through socio-political action (p. 220; italics added for emphasis).

She adds,

The clerics... relegated Islam to the private sphere. Yet, these clerics transformed their view of Shi'ism from an essentialist claim to leadership to a more pluralistic vision of the community that embraced manifold affiliations, and implicitly accepted nationalism, in its Arab, Iraqi, Lebanese and Iranian forms... Modernisation therefore sowed the seeds for a more pronounced Shi'i revivalism during the later half of the twentieth century (p. 223; italics added for emphasis).

In weaving her narrative, Machlis also makes loose usage of the concepts of “community” and “society,” which ought to be contextualised and nuanced. This amounts to a serious methodological weakness. Although the author does not (directly) refer as such to the watershed sociological contributions of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, she seems to allude to Ferdinand Tönnies’s seminal—though static, passive—terms of ‘Gemeinschaft’ (community) and ‘Gesellschaft’ (society). It would have been better to employ Weber’s dynamic and active distinction between ‘vergemeinschaftung’ (‘communitarisation’: the process of community formation) and ‘vergesellschaftung’ (the process of socialisation). A close reading of her littering the book with key concepts such as “modern,” “modernisation,” and “modernise”—without even giving a definition of such terms—might suggest such an interpretation; or else she might be accused of name dropping. Another case in point occurs on p. 222: “... modern change and a modernising community...”

Culture and Soft Power: Geertz and Nye

Machlis’s implicit use of “soft power” occurs in her exposition of modernisation. She writes, “... modernisation helps provide insight into the dynamics of development from a cultural perspective” (pp. 220–1). To Machlis, the word “culture” encompasses the following: “local cultures” (p. 5); “cultural development” (p. 20); “rational and cultured people” (p. 72); “cultural heritage” (p. 158); and “cultural perspective” (p. 221). Machlis’s “cultural perspective” lacks background and conceptualisation and constitutes a logical gap, which I would like to endeavour to fill and clarify. Actually, the late
renowned anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) conceived of culture in terms of power. He defined culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.” Following his lead, the American social scientist Joseph S. Nye defines culture as a set of values and practices that create meaning for a society; stressing that both high and popular culture are a source of ‘soft power’.

Nye coined the concept of soft power and distinguished it from the commonly used notion of hard power, which usually refers to the military and economic capabilities of a nation through waging wars or threatening to employ sanctions, as measures of stick or carrot. According to Nye, soft power is different because it refers to the values and culture that characterise a nation and its people, ‘the image it projects, and the expectations it generates,’ and how these attract others in order to emulate these behavioural patterns. Nye stressed that a country, or for that matter the international community at large, ought to lead through the exercise of its soft power, rather than the traditional hard power. Nye argues that soft power “co-opts people rather than coerces them . . . It is the ability to entice and attract. And attraction often leads to acquiescence or imitation. Soft power arises in large part from our values. These values are expressed in our culture . . . soft power is more than just cultural power.” Nye cautions that culture is only one of the resources of soft power; other resources comprise values, ideas, institutions, and policies.

**Name Dropping, Weak Interpolations, and Digressions**

Other instances of name dropping or “the parachute syndrome” occur when Machlis mentions—en passant and without any adequate background or explanation—“Heidegger’s critique of Western modernity” (pp. 22–23); Leibniz’s arguments on the existence of God; and Plotinus’s “first cause”

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19 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, Basic books, 1973), 89.
20 Nye served as dean of Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, was an assistant secretary of defence in the Clinton Administration, and was former chair of the National Intelligence Council.
24 Ibid., 21. The optimal combination of hard and soft resources results in smart power, which, according to Nye “is an evaluative as well as a descriptive concept.” Ibid., 22–23.
The “first cause” is a key term that might not be familiar to the reader and which, unsurprisingly, does not figure out in her selective “Index.”

In this regard, Machlis’s speculative reasoning leads her to emphatically declare, “Leibniz assisted Mughniyya to further his cause, as Leibniz argued that every existence has a sufficient reason behind it, although in most cases these reasons are unknown to human beings” (p. 102). This amounts to an anachronism. How could Leibniz (1664–1716) “assist” Mughniyya (1904–1979) when there is a two-century margin between the two? A better word might be “influenced,” but again, the burden of proof of her unsubstantiated allegations falls on her.

Moreover, she portrays her prowess in classical Islamic philosophy when she dogmatically affirms that, “Mughniyya’s discussion here can even be seen as a return to classical ontological arguments outside the Muslim world on the notion of ‘the first cause’” (p. 102). This off-topic reasoning provides a non-enlightening digression since the “first cause” needs to be adequately explained in Aristotelian, neo-Platonic, and al-Farabi’s epistemic parameters, a topic/subject that is not the objective of the book in question.

Anachronistic dropping of concepts is extensive. Another instance is that “ecumenical” and “apocalyptic” are loosely used and out of context, thus they are confusing the way author applies them to Shi’i Islam (p. 212). It would have been better to replace “ecumenical” with “pan-Islamism” in compliance with the late Imam Khomeini’s views on the unity of the Muslims (3:103) and in conformity with his successor—Imam Khamenei’s establishment in 1990 of a special organ with an international Muslim dialogue network called “The World Assembly for Rapprochement among Muslim Schools of Law” with (3:103) as its motto.

Moreover, Machlis ought to have replaced “apocalyptic” with messianic, since apocalyptic has the negative connotation of violence and obliteration, while messianic does not.

**Factual Flaws: “The Perfect Man”**

In addition to the aforementioned methodological fatigues, Machlis refers to

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26 Khomeini’s repeated reference to this Qur’anic verse: “And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves.”


28 The standard translation as the “World Assembly for Rapprochement among Islamic Sects” does not capture the exact Arabic meaning.
the key concept of the “perfect man (al-Insān al-kāmil)” (p. 214), without furnishing any background information or offering adequate explanation, as such this serves as another illustration of the name-dropping syndrome. This warrants an elucidation. Imam Khomeini argued that greater jihad (jihād al-nafs) is conducsive to the development of a “full, coalescent human being” (al-insān al-kāmil al-mutakāmil). This usage is literally taken out from the section entitled, “The Grave Responsibilities of the Muslim ‘Ulama,” in Imam Khomeini’s salient al-Jihād al-Akbar [Greater Jihad]29, a book, which is surprisingly missing from Khomeini’s works listed on p. 285. Noteworthy, the same statement—of refining the self before refining others—is repeated and borne out in another primary source, in the article entitled, “The Spiritual-Dynamic Force of the Islamic Revolution—Second Episode: The Ideological and Social Change . . . a New Conception of Jihad.”30 Actually, Imam Khomeini’s repeated emphasis—on the need to rectify, reform, and refine the self, before rectifying, reforming, and refining others and the world at large—is a direct reference to his argument on greater jihād in his book that bears the same title.31

Khomeini stressed that the Qur’ānic understanding of the word jihād does not always denote holy war (smaller military jihād), but could also connote the effort exerted to accomplish the duties of the believer (greater jihād). As such, the freedom fighter (mujāhid) who is willing to engage in smaller jihad has to first discipline himself by exercising temperance (self-control). This is accomplished through a process of perpetual, non-abating jihad, in conformity with what Khomeini’s slogan, which stressed that the great powers (East and West) fear Islam because it develops an ethically and morally complete (mutakāmil) holistic-coalescent-monolithic individual (al-insān al-kāmil al-mutakāmil)—who is capable of striking a balance between spiritual, intellectual and cognitive aspects, on the one hand, and emotional,

30 In al-‘Abd (Beirut), Shawwāl 10, 1405/June 28, 1985, page no. 9 (See also, Joseph Alagha, Hizbullah’s Documents: From the 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 202.
31 Khomeini said in more than one occasion that if people knew that a shop owner is dishonest and immoral, then they say that Mr. X is dishonest and immoral; if they found out that a trader is cheating then, then they say that Mr. X is a cheater; however, if they knew that a Muslim religious scholar (‘ālim), God forbid, is not upright, then they would generalise and say that all religious scholars are not upright (perverted) and the religion (Islam) as a whole is not upright. Hizbullah appropriated this section of the Open Letter, almost word by word, from the section entitled, “The Grave Responsibilities of the Muslim ‘ulama,” in: Imam Khomeini’s Al-Jihād Al-Akbar, 9–10.
physical, and psychological aspects, on the other hand, thus controlling his inner self.\textsuperscript{32}

Few months after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in April 1979, Ayatullah \textsuperscript{32}Muṭahhari admonished that the danger that surrounds Iran lies inside the selves of the Iranian people (greater jihād), rather than being an external threat. In a similar vein, Khomeini’s argument on greater jihād emphasised that the distinguishing traits of society and the development of good morals are things that could be put to practice, through exercising concepts such as honour, piety, virtue, trustworthiness, chastity, probity, diffidence, assertion, integrity in honouring oaths and commitments, rectitude, self-sacrifice, kindness, justice, mercy, sharing one’s fate and caring for others, and upholding human rights.\textsuperscript{33} These concepts, which are the product of the vigilant conscience of the individual, run against personal benefit and individual egoism. Thus, greater jihād could be practiced but it needs a perpetual process of training, building, and refining the self to exercise temperance.\textsuperscript{34}

The Repeated Blunder: “Fadlallah Spiritual Leader of Hizbullah”

The cliché of “Fadlallah” is the “spiritual leader of Hizbullah” plagues the book. The alleged “spiritual leader” contention—which ought to be stated on first mention—is littered throughout, though it is of minor importance to the main argument of the book\textsuperscript{35} (pp. 10, 32, 119, 212, 134). Belatedly, a few pages before the end of the last chapter, we learn that “Fadlallah was later to become the spiritual leader of the Shi‘i [sic] Islamic movement in Lebanon [Hizbullah] (p. 212). What is the most ironic is that Machlis substantiates this shallow, reductionist, superficial and superfluous “journalistic” mistake of principle by reference to Fadlallah’s own publishing house “Dar al-Malḵ” (p. 119; p. 257, note 14). This is clearly a figment of her imagination, since Fadlallah had vehemently argued against this allegation. Besides, in addition to her conceding Fadlallah’s “separation between the marja‘iyya and the wilaya” (p. 216), Fadlallah vocally—using the strongest terms possible—censured Khomeini’s notion of absolute wilaya. Illustrating this, elsewhere I wrote,

32 \textit{Al-Jihād Al-Akbar}, 8.
33 Ibid., 10–11.
35 Likewise, we learn in the chapter before the last—chapter four—that “Hizbullah” is “the Party of God,” 141.
Although many social scientists consider the late Lebanese Ayatullah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah (1935–2010)—the godfather of al-balab al-Islamiyyah (Islamic religio-political sphere)—in Lebanon, as Hizbullah’s murshid ruhi (spiritual leader), Fadlallah has repeatedly stated that he did not have and does not have “any organizational role, link, or ties with Hizbullah.”36 He added, “I do not concede to this alleged organizational role . . . I’m the one who reared this generation [of Islamists] . . . they exercise their own ‘ijtihād’ [independent reasoning] or ‘hypocrisy’ and attribute to me this characterisation of murshid ruhi, an accusation that is totally unfounded. I never was and would never be the murshid ruhi of any Islamic movement . . . I’m totally independent and would never confine my role to that.”37 However, this does not rule out informal ties. Fadlallah unequivocally stated that in Islam there is no murshid ruhi.38 Even though Fadlallah is not listed as one of Hizbullah’s leaders or ideologues on its official website39, he was the leading Lebanese Ayatullah whom Hizbullah owed reverence to, even after his death.40

The following exposition serves as a summary of the contestations on the issues of marja’iyyah and wilayah. Machlis writes,

While Kashif al-Ghita’ accepted diverse knowledge, he did not question the judicial authority of the mujtahids. Shi’i reformers such as Kashif al-Ghita’ did not doubt the theory of marja’ [al-]taqlid, according to which the common believer must emulate one living mujtahid. Yet they opened the door for an educated public to interpret Islamic texts as they reached out to this audience through simplifying the judicial discourse, discussing contemporary issues and incorporating modern knowledge (p. 132).

She adds,

Mughniyya clearly opposed Khomeini’s broad-ranging theory of velayat-e faqih, relying on both religious-based arguments and more universal notions (p. 216). . . Hizbullah, in contrast, endorsed Khomeini’s velayat-e faqih, yet also maintained

37 Personal Interview, 14 December 2005. Of course, I also substantiate this by reference to Fadlallah’s own works. For the pressure of space, I cannot list them here. Nevertheless, the interested reader can do so by consulting my Hizbullah’s DNA book.
40 Alagha, Hizbullah’s DNA, 21.
the right to exercise its own policy in accordance with the particular situation of the Shi’ites in Lebanon... [Thus,] Hizbullah adopted a clear pan-Islamic vision that was eventually balanced with a more national outlook (p. 212)... The marja’iyya entailed religious leadership over the broad Muslim nation [umma] while wilaya reflected multiple authorities, in the different political systems. In this fashion [sic, fashion], Fadlallah balanced an adherence to a pan-Islamic vision under the guidance of the Islamic republic [sic, Republic] with a more localized religious leadership attuned to national interest [maslaha] (p. 216)... 

Machlis concludes her exposition away from ideology and politics, delving into foundational ritual practices. She highlights

... Muhsin al-Amin’s campaign for the reform of the ‘Ashura Ceremonies, which was adopted later by Hizbullah in its insistence on a more authentic commemoration of Husayn’s martyrdom. Khashif al-Ghita’s idea of transforming the image of Husayn into a symbol of active struggle for justice was enhanced in the second half of the twentieth century in Iran by Shari’ati to galvanize the people behind the Islamic Revolution (p. 224).\footnote{Noteworthy, both ideas were previously mentioned, to the letter, on p. 10.}

four books on the subject) do not appear. Moreover, there are serious omissions in the list of “Published primary sources” (p. 283) such as not mentioning or referring to the foundational book of Hizbullah’s Deputy Secretary General, Shaykh Na’im Qasim. What is also surprisingly missing from the “Bibliography” (pp. 282ff), are the works of Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, even though some of them are scattered in the “Notes” (for instance on p. 280).

**Other Weaknesses: Repetitions, Typos, and Transliteration mistakes**

Mistakes in diction, syntax, and the plural of Arabic terms are widespread throughout the text. Machlis writes, “This generation of Shi’i reformers kick-started judicial change in the Shi’i world” (p. 119). “Kick-started” exemplifies non-academic, sloppy writing; it ought to be replaced by words such as “initiated” or “inaugurated.” Besides, the plural of “madhhab” and “mujtahid” is not madhbabs and mujtibids (p. 118); rather, “madhabib” and “mujtahidun.”

At certain instances Machlis sounds like a broken record through her irritating redundancies and repetitions, which are carried out mostly in a “copy”-“paste” fashion, or a close paraphrase. Here are some instances. On p. 2, we learn that “. . . Sayyid ‘Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din al-Musawi [is] a contemporary of Muhsin al-Amin. . . .” This is repeated on p. 7 in a reverse fashion: “Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin al-'Amili was a contemporary of Musawi. . . .” On p. 218 Machlis writes, “. . . Khomeini’s velayat-e faqih was unsuitable to the situation of the Shi’is of Iraq and Lebanon as minority communities living within a broader Arab and Sunni world.” On p. 222 she repeats: “. . . velayat-e faqih was alien to Sunni thought and unsuitable to the socio-political conditions of the Shi’is in Iraq and Lebanon, as minority communities living within a broader Arab and Sunni world.” Another case in point is Khomeini’s book on Hajj, which is mentioned twice: erroneously on p. 183, when it should be listed under Khomeini’s publications on p. 185.

There are plenty of typos. For instance, “Assaf Bayat” (p. 260, note 56) should be Asef Bayat. On p. 309, Touraj Atabaki is listed under his first name “Touraj.” However, he should have been listed under “Atabaki,” his family name. Thus, the reader who is searching for “Atabaki” in the “Bibliography” will not find his name. “In this fasion” (p. 216) should be “In this fashion.”

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43 Alagha, Hizbullah’s DNA; Hizbullah’s Identity Construction (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011); Hizbullah’s Documents: From the 1985; The Shifts in Hizbullah’s Ideology.

44 Na’im Qasim, Hizb Allah: Al-Manhaj, Al-Tajribah, Al-Mustaqbal [Hizbullah: the Curriculum, the Experience, the Future] (Beirut: Dār al-Hadi, 2002). The book contains foundational, normative chapters on wilayat al-faqih and Hizbullah’s relations with Iran.
Likewise, inconsistent and erring transliterations and translations are rampant throughout the book. The name of the founding ideologue and supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution is spelled in two inconsistent ways: “Khumayni” and “Khomeini” (p. 185); when he is listed as “Khomeini” in the “Index” and spelled as such throughout the book (p. 313). Marjaʾ al-taqlid should be translated as “the religious authority of emulation,” or “the religious authority to be emulated.” Thus, “Supreme Exemplar” is unclear (p. 213). Another inconsistency occurs in the translation of uṣūl al-din: “the fundamental principles of Islam” (p. 60); “fundamentals of religion” (p. 61); and “principles of religion” (p. 84). Another inconsistency, or maybe a typo, is visible in the transliteration of zakat (p. 126) and zakāt (p. 145).

Problems in transliteration are unbridled. “Shi’i [sic] Islamic movement” (p. 212) should be Shi’i Islamic movement; “Beqāʾ” (p. 311) should be “Biqāʾ”; “bidʾa” (p. 311) should be “bidʾa”; “daʾwa” (p. 312) should be “daʾwā” ilm (p. 312) should be ‘ilm; “jaʿafarʾ court” (p. 313) should be “jaʿafari” court; “mutʾa” (p. 314) should be mutʿa; “Shariʿa” (p. 315) should be Shariʿ; “Shariʿati” (p. 316) should be Shariʿ; and “Shiʿi” (p. 83) should be Shiʿi; etc.

In addition, I wish there were a glossary and a comprehensive subject and name index, instead of the available short, selective index. For instance, key names such as Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah are not exhausted in this non-inclusive index, which misses to include that Fadlallah is mentioned on page 119. A similar case in point is the “First cause” (p. 102), which also does not appear in the “index.” Moreover, instead of long intervening explanations in the text, an elaborate glossary of Arabic and Farsi terms would have been useful to the non-specialized readers. For instance, the author defines “fitna” between brackets as “(trial, discord and civil strife; the development of infighting during the early period of Islam)” (p. 184). Another case in point is illustrated by “rakʿa” that is defined between brackets as “(the sequence of bodily positions and movements performed during the salat)” (p. 144). Conceding that these explanations are necessary; however, placing them in the text distracts the reader from keeping pace with the flow of the argument, which makes the length of the referred to sentences, in each case, a short paragraph of five lines. In addition, Khomeini’s key ideological and Qurʾānic term of mustadʿaffin45 (p. 59) or “downtrodden” is surprisingly not included in the index. Also key words and personalities such are the following are omitted from the index: “gender” (pp. 161 and 222); “jaʿafarʾ court”46 (p. 39); khums

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46 P. 117 is the only listed page in the “Index.”
In conclusion, despite the aforementioned shortcomings—in addition to the lack of fieldwork, interviews, and empirical research—content wise, this is a good monograph that maps the transformations of two leading Shi'i 'ulama—Kashif al-Ghita in Iraq and Muhsin al-Amin in Lebanon—who fused authenticity with modernity. While relying on an impressive use of original primary Arabic and Farsi sources, the author is gifted in employing discourse and content analysis, which can capture the attention of both academic and lay readers. She ends up with a good forecast, which is also applicable to date, albeit an omen if one considers the current Sunni-Shi'i rift rupturing the umma: “At the turn of the twenty-first century, the prospect of a full-blown Sunni-Shi'i reconciliation looked bleak . . .” (p. 226).

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47 Although it is listed in the “Index” under numerous pages.