



Maghreb (The Sun Rising in the West, one of the signs of the return of the Mahdi), issued first in 1963 and reissued in 1979, is the Babi sentiment that khalq-e ke dar entezar zuhur-e mosleh be sar mibarad bozad khod saleh basbad (a people awaiting a reformer must itself be reformed). Much of today's Islamic debate about Islamic government (Khomeini), about purification of Islamic terminology of literalist and excessively otherworldly meaning (Shariati), and about social reform are continuations of nineteenth-century terms of debate. There are striking parallels between the millenarian-theocratic visions (theosophically-graded individuals, hierarchy, creating a pure land of believers) and social programs (rich should aid the poor) of Babis and Khomeini. One major difference is that Khomeini is more explicitly attuned to the need for long-term transformation of consciousness.

It is amusing to tag Khomeini as a latter-day Babi (it serves him right). But more seriously, just as there is a perennial debate in Islamic discourse over the role of force and over hierarchy, so too it seems that this repetition points to a perennial debate between millenarian activism and more liberal individualism. And thus, to slightly alter Bashiriyeh's argument, the reemergence of the Hojjiyya may not be so much a signal of Thermidor, as a sign of oscillation between the social demands for radical mobilization, economic redistribution, and an economic command structure on the one hand, and on the other hand for reassuring the independent middle class and bazaar. The result ultimately may be an uneasy mix of state socialism or state capitalism, cooperatives, and private industry.

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