Authority in Absence? Shiʿi Politics of Salvation from the Classical Period to Modern Republicanism

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Abstract

Shiʿi Islam is often considered to be political *per se* because of its emergence historically as a movement with a strong position on authority and legitimacy in governance. This piece attempts to show how the politics of salvation in the tradition tie together one’s loyalty and devotion to the divine person of the Imam to one’s final destination, and how that relationship is complicated in the physical absence of the Imam. The occultation of the Imam has led to an attenuation of the theory and the rise of republicanism even Shiʿi Islamism which seems anathema to the traditionalist, normative theory because it makes the existence of the Imam an irrelevance. One needs to guard against a sacralisation of everyday politics and recognize that sanctity arises from the person of the Imam and not the office of his delegate. The authority of the Imam – an absent authority – is a governance of souls, even of their governmentality but not a government of power politics. At least that kingdom is deferred to the *parousia* of the Imam when he returns. Any government in the interim remains provisional and subject to the critique and judgment of political theology.

Key Words

Absence, presence, sovereignty, *walāya*, governance, republicanism, salvation

Shiʿi Islam is a religious tradition in which it is precisely the presence of the divine through the Imam as both vicegerent of God and of the Prophet (cf. Qurʾan 2:30, 35:39) and as*deusrevelatus*, intervening and defining human history, the immanence of God in the cosmos, that provides not only the foundations for authority and sovereignty in human communities of belief, but also the path to salvation.[[1]](#footnote-2) The everlasting and indeed ever-revealing countenance of the divine mentioned in the Qurʾan (28:88 *inter alia*) is glossed in the tradition as the person of the Imam.[[2]](#footnote-3) The Imam is not the defender of the Law; he is the Law – he is not the exegete of scripture, he is revelation itself.[[3]](#footnote-4) One recognises the Imam through their manifestation of divine attributes in their totality, not least in the particular privileging of knowledge, of the unseen, of the true nature of scripture and revelation, of the metaphysical, of how what come to pass and what will be.[[4]](#footnote-5) This ‘gnostic’ and sophiological aspect of the mode in which God presents herself to humans is critical.[[5]](#footnote-6) Through the person of the Imam is that transcendent divine, the origin and the true King, manifest, and through devotion and what the believers owe the Imam that the path to salvation is traversed – in fact, the theme of allegiance, association and dissociation (*walāʾ/barāʾ*) directly linking one’s communal personality in this world of trials with one’s afterlife seems to have been an early development in Islam.[[6]](#footnote-7) The Imams are witnesses of God over his creation and aware of both those loyal to them and those who reject them.[[7]](#footnote-8) It is because they are witnesses who teach the art of living that encompasses the governance of the self that they must also be martyrs teaching the art of dying.[[8]](#footnote-9) In what believers owe to the Imams encompasses a set of practices from recognition (including processes of anagnoresis as well as visitation and devotion in *ziyāra* to their persons and thresholds that are in the form of their shrines) all the way through to walking along their path to perfection. The way of imitation of the divine Imam indicates the centrality of *theosis*, of becoming god-like (*al-tashabbuh bi-l-bāriʾ*) as the art of living and dying in the Shiʿi tradition.[[9]](#footnote-10)

Therefore, Shiʿi political theology, in its rather normative sense, is concerned with the nexus of authority and salvation (*Herrschaft* and *Heil* in Assmann’s terms) – defined in the concept of *walāya* that is so central to the tradition.[[10]](#footnote-11) In one very famous saying (or rather a cluster of related sayings) attributed to the fifth Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 743) and cited in a number of early collections, it is said that Islam is predicated on four pillars of practice such as prayer and one foundation defined as *walāya*, and while there is latitude (*rukhṣa*) with respect to these practices there is none with respect to *walāya*, and ‘nothing was proclaimed more than *walāya*’.[[11]](#footnote-12) In that sense, political theology construed as sacral authority and the sovereignty of the divine in the human sphere lies at the very heart of Shiʿi conceptions of the way in which we should live as sacralised social and political beings. What we owe to the Imams in recognition of their status is further a recollection of what humans asserted in their preternal existence in the covenant with God indicated in Qurʾan 7:172 testifying to the existence of the creator and one’s fidelity to his countenance.[[12]](#footnote-13)

This important group of sayings actually clarifies the idea that ritual and moral practices are supposed to arise from ontological foundations of how humans relate to the divine. The Shiʿi art of living involves both prayer to God and petition to the Imam, recognition of the existence of the Creator and the divine grace of providing humans with the divine friend who is the Imam. It is the sacral kingship of the Imams that underpins monotheism – God who is beyond our understanding can only be grasped analogically through her theophanies – and hence the Imam acts as a bridge, the *anthroposteleios* (*insānkāmil*) who manifests God for the cosmos, but also acts as the face of the cosmos, as the means of the return to God.[[13]](#footnote-14) The Imams are the ‘repositories’ of the divine in the heavens and the earth and the decisive proof of God.[[14]](#footnote-15) Just as God as divine in all that exists and beyond that, so too does one encounter the divine through the Imams in all that is manifest.

The sayings of *walāya* indicate a key aspect of Shiʿi thought that *lux in tenebrislucet* but most people failed to perceive it. That failure to recognize – just like human acts of evil – does not diminish the kingdom of God. Truth is not hostage to the historical contingency of mere politics. Thus, the triumph of *walāya* (as opposed to *siyāsa*, a much more mundane and ‘secularised’ conception of power politics) lies in the very fact of its political incompletion, in the very act of the Imam’s lack of the apparatus of government in history, to be ultimately completed in the *eschaton* with the *parousia* of the Imam that is awaited. Messianic expectation thus acts as a politics deferred with the kingdom of God to come at the end of time. The very goal of revelation is the *walāya* of the Imams and not the establishment of a political and social order – and in that sense what then happens in modern Shiʿi thought constitutes a major rupture with the tradition – but we will return to that later.[[15]](#footnote-16) The main challenge for the Shiʿi tradition emerges not through the alternative Sunni political theology of the normative authority of the community of faith or that of those in authority (*ūlū-l-amr*, in which power precedes authority, because power determines the wielding of sovereignty), but through the absence of the Imam in the occultation that began in the 9th century. But before we turn to that – and consider how Shiʿi thought and political theology interact, I want to comment on what I think political theology is for.

Fundamentally, it seems to me that political theology constitutes not only an attempt to produce a normative discourse of how political behaviour and theory is underpinned by theological conceptions, not least that of authority (as famously indicated by Schmitt), but also a critique that seeks to uncover, to engage in a quasi-esoteric reading of the political to reveal the metaphysical and theological. However, that revelation takes place precisely within polities that are marked by liberalism, itself a tradition of theory and praxis arising in modernity from roots within traditions of Protestant Christianity. (and arguably Kahn takes this even further into American exceptionalism).[[16]](#footnote-17) In this sense, political theology seems to be a critique of liberalism itself, a revolt against the closure and finality of a historical process in which liberal democracy has won the day, predicated upon autonomy, social choice and forms of institutionalized accountability. In the face of some liberal theorists’ disavowal of ontological foundations for moral agency (one thinks of Rawls, for example), it seeks to revert to (or at least recover) foundationalist approaches to politics.[[17]](#footnote-18) But the question then arises: if it is a critique of liberalism, which liberalism does it seek to overcome? The pluralistic face of a modus-vivendi political contract that allows for the flourishing of multiple visions of society and salvation in which the autonomy of the individual moral agent remains rooted in a social context but also differentiated from the wider community,[[18]](#footnote-19) or a universalizing liberalism intolerant of difference that has been much implicated in the rise of imperialism and colonialism and which fails to consider communities as contexts for human agency?[[19]](#footnote-20)

This notion of critique is essential, and furthermore signals that political theology needs to be more than an exegesis that discovers that political conceptions like authority and sovereignty are secularized theological doctrine.[[20]](#footnote-21) It needs to be a critique that breaks down the barriers between the categories of the political and the theological that we have assumed to be the case in a secular society, and to admit that the teleological view of human history progressing from the theological sacralisation of the cosmos and humanity to the secularized politics of modern human societies fails to account for the fact that our discourse of religion/secularity are products of a common history of constructed traditions.[[21]](#footnote-22) Thus political theology may critique our very privileging of the political over the religious that deeply affects the way in which we speak, for example, of Islamisms in the Middle East. In this way, just as the distinction between the religious and the secular may not hold in an epoch that we may call ‘post-secular’, similarly the distinction between political philosophy and political theology cannot be justified.[[22]](#footnote-23)

This critique of the practice of current political ethics, that has become fetishized as the normative, becomes all the more important within the conflicts of identity current in Europe and the debates over religion in the public sphere, an argument that arises precisely because of the supposed absence of theological reason in both the imaginary of Europeans and within rational deliberative forms of democratic agency. It plays about the anxiety of the very nature of Europe and its diverse, and even Muslim, origins.[[23]](#footnote-24) In this sense, the very ‘return’ of faith, through the phenomenon of Islam and the question of Islam within Europe gives a further boost to political theology as a means for unpacking the questions that we discuss on the relationship between religion and politics that were assumed to have been either settled or discarded to the margins beyond Europe. However, can a critique of contemporary politics and its liberalism be rescued from lapsing into some form of conservatism or neo-conservatism?[[24]](#footnote-25) Is democracy so inextricably linked to liberalism that any critique will necessitate a revival of some form of totalitarian despotism, whether charismatic or institutional?

To what extent can Shiʿi theology speak to the critique that is modern political theology, and what can political theology as a normative and critical discussion reveal to us about the nature of Shiʿi thought? This paper is therefore a brief historical exercise in Shiʿi political theology tracing developments from the classical period to the modern and will culminate with some concluding thoughts that bring us full circle to a consideration of what political theology is for.

**I: The ‘Normative Theory’**

The supposed normative theory of authority in Shiʿi Islam as indicated above assumes that the divine roots of sovereignty and the process of revelation that defines the roles of prophecy and of *walāya* means that while others may wield power, and practice sovereignty as understood at least today, legitimate authority only exists with the Imam who remains the one to whom obedience, allegiance and devotion are owed (*al-imām al-muftaraḍ al-ṭāʿa*). All other claims to authority – while historically real as holders of power and perhaps even as holders of social capital that justified their power – were illegitimate insofar as they were not divinely mandated. This radical refusal to recognize power – which is a feature of the *rafḍ* central to established Shiʿi self-identity and attitudes towards power – meant dissociating from the public sphere and at the very least a dissimulation (*taqīya*) in the public sphere with respect to the wielders of power, who did not share Shiʿi beliefs. The absence of the Imam – from the time of the occultation of the 12th in the 9th century – meant that the community deferred its expectations of establishing the authority of the kingdom of God to the end of times, a messianic anticipation of the *parousia*. The paradox is that messianism instead of leading to social and political upheavals and revolution – although of course these did occur in the medieval period[[25]](#footnote-26) – actually leads to a practical acquiescence with power already in the Buyid period with the recognition that one could conditionally work with power in the best interests of the Shiʿi community awaiting the true revelation of sovereignty at the end of times.[[26]](#footnote-27) The religious scholars and the community seems to have adjusted well to the absence of authority in their midst in a way that arguably the new imperial exigencies of power and authority in Sunni Islam never accommodated itself to the absence of charismatic authority after the Prophet (and perhaps the period of the initial caliphs – indeed the persistence of resistance theories among Sunni thinkers throughout the medieval period and beyond seems to suggest precisely this).

**II: Medieval Practice and Reality**

But could one speak truth to power and resist illegitimate claims to authority? With the absence of the Imam, the messianic promise of divine justice manifest in this world was postponed: the most radical precepts of the law could not be implemented (the status of jihad as warfare, Friday congregational prayers, the criminal law, among other issues, were either considered to be in limbo or postponed until the will of the Imam was manifest), socio-political justice rendered sterile, and the moral precept of commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong made highly conditional upon its consequences (although the literature was scholastically rich).[[27]](#footnote-28) Resistance theory – that seemed to have flourished with the various legitimistShiʿi revolts of the time of the Imams – dropped out of the discourse. Furthermore, the modern notion of an essentially and historically deep tradition of religious scholars – a hierocratic class of ʿulamāʾ speaking truth to power – was not present but rather scholars acquiesced in power and accepted the Persian-Turco-Mongol model of divine kingship, of the ruler as possessing the spark of the divine light (*farr-e īzadī*) and acting as the shadow of God on earth mingled at times with the Graeco-Arabic notion of the *platonopolis* that seemed to dominate at the very least the Islamic East regardless of one’s theological affiliation.[[28]](#footnote-29) The advice literature in the form of *akhlāq* works did not postpone justice but urged it as the primary virtue of the ruler; and arguably in this sense Shiʿi thinkers did speak truth to power, their theoretical treatises on statecraft and socio-political justice holding up a cruel mirror to rulers who could not possibly live up to the ideal exemplars of the text. *Siyāsa* rejected in the classical normative theory was thus revived as a conditional virtue and means for establishing justice in as imperfect a manner as could be before the *parousia* of the messianic Imam.

Insofar as political thought in the medieval period made both advice literature and theology handmaidens to power, the further accommodation emerged with the declaration of Shiʿi empires in the early modern period, especially the Safavids from 1501. The absence of the Imam underpins the claims to legitimacy of the Shah as the vicegerent of the Imam, as a theophanic manifestation of the Imam’s immanent hiddenness in the world. This was quite clear in the more radical, and later clearly marked as heterodox, doctrine of Shah Ismail and his followers in the earliest period of Safavid rule, who claimed to be theophanies in their own right, and later added to this a charismatic descent from the Prophet, a common claim to authority in central Asia and the Islamic East at the very least since the 12th century. Monarchy as revealing monotheism was once more affirmed – with the mediation and the blessing of the hidden Imam. Moving into the modern period, the authority of the King was legitimate insofar as he embodied representation of the Imam and manifested his justice in consultation with the ʿulamāʾ, although one already saw from the 19th century, in a period of political instability, the rise of political claims articulated by the ʿulamāʾ as true repositories and heirs of the Imams upon whose sufferance rulers were allowed to practice power.

**III: The Republican Turn – Absence as Presence**

Modern republicanism as expressed in the Iranian revolution of 1979 and its doctrine of the authority of the jurist (*valāyat-e faqīh*) as revealing the will of the Imam and standing in the stead of messiah shifted the idea of the conditional authority of the monarch to its absence. The hierocratic institution stood within the new constitution but perhaps mirroring the immanence of the Imam, above and beyond it. What these Islamists understood well was that the claim of establishing the sovereignty of God against the secular sovereignty of the Shah entailed an affirmation of the claim of the clerics to sovereignty – just as the privileging of the scripture as the transparent expression of the divine that is clear to understand entails a claim to authority by those engaged in its exegesis. Nevertheless, this was not a simple clerical absolutism but an Islamist takeover of a republican ideal: sovereignty in theory lay with the people who elected parliaments and governments, but also in a diarchic manner with a cleric whose authority was above and beyond that of the electorate and who was not accountable to the electorate. At the very least this was one of the key paradoxes of the Islamic republic. A more direct theocracy, the republic dismantled the shadow of God on earth and effected an Islamism in which the religion was the state and not an absence of politics. Unlike other Islamist demands, it did not see Islam as both a faith and a state – rather Islam was the state (and this was not,*pace*Devji, because they failed to appropriate politics).[[29]](#footnote-30) The routine authority of the state seemed to suggest an institutionalization of the absence of the Imam and its political implications – it sacralised the state in the name of the Imam, whilst in affect marginalizing the Imam. Revolutionary ideology was thus not only a rejection of liberalism, it was a rejection of *walāya* in the name of *walāya*. Insofar as the state monopolized the sacred, it effaced autonomy and the possibility of individual moral agency. The question of hypocrisy, of the dissonance between a public persona in conformity and a private sphere of the conscience did not arise because the latter had no recognition, in contrast to more classical conceptions in which the public persona was an act of dissimulation that safeguarded the conscience which remained loyal to the Imam. However, the messianic moment of 1979 and the charismatic and regal figure of Khomeini evoked a memory of both Shah Ismail and the earlier theory of the shadow of God of earth, but here bolstered with the idea that Khomeini was a philosopher-mystic-King whose authority mirrored that of earlier figures such as SayyidMuḥammadNūrbakhsh in the 15th century.

Nevertheless, this seizure of Shiʿi political theology has not happened without critique – and they have multiplied after Khomeini, not least associated with reformers such as Mohsen Kadivar, Abdol-KarimSoroush, Muhammad MojtahedShabestari and others. Serious theologians such as MihdiHaeri (d. 1996) questioned how anyone could claim *valāyat* in the absence of the Imam and that any political order, not least one led by clerics, could only be representation (*vakālat*) and then only of the people. Others such as Kadivardecentred and relativized *valāyat-e faqīh* by arguing that it was one of eleven current theories of state in Shiʿi thought.[[30]](#footnote-31)

Perhaps more interesting are two further turns in the post-revolutionary period. First is the accommodation of liberalism to Shiʿi theology that draws upon the serious rejection of Plato and the embrace of Kant among some of the clerical establishment.[[31]](#footnote-32) The absence of the Imam in this sense allows for flexibility in political theology as critique of *valāyat-e faqīh* as well as embrace of conditional, modus vivendi liberalism. The second is a sacral defence of secularism by the reformers predicated upon both the Qurʾanic notion of human dignity (*karāma*, cf. Q 17:70) as well as liberal notions of autonomy and liberty.[[32]](#footnote-33) The most radical manifestation of this is both Shabestari and Soroush’s evocation of personal experience of the believer as a rehearsal of the prophetic experience of revelation, of ethics as a critique of politics that in its espousal of a rather personalized religion as artistic expression devoid of communal practice and feeling ends up being an absence of politics as such. The absence of the Imam in such theories almost entails his non-existence just as the apophatic approach to God and what one owes to God that was asked by the medieval theologians is rejected here in favour of a form of agnosticism. This is political theology as an affirmation of liberalism – and a rather radical critique of traditional monotheism. At the same time it ushers in a troubling paradox of how one can reconcile a normative theory of the absolute authority of the Imams and their representatives with a democratizing discourse sometimes justified in terms of human dignity; how can the divine human, the Imam’s own authority, be mitigated by the democratic authority of citizens in the state who all in their own way manifest the divine?[[33]](#footnote-34)

In a situation in which Islam is the state – and the experience and example of Iran thoroughly affects all contemporary Shiʿi political theology – nothing lies outside of politics. No discussion of art, culture, philosophy, or theology can exist without a clear implication for notions of authority and sovereignty, of the self and of the community. In this sense, nothing lies outside of political theology. While there are elements of a traditionalist response – from those adhering to scripture, to a return to the absence of authority and sovereignty in the present occultation of the Imam, and from the school of thought that insists that one can compartmentalize the understanding of the faith from the human and exact sciences (*maktab-e tafkīk*) – all responses seem to exist within the discourse established by the Islamic Republic. An advocacy to a ‘return’ to the normative theory must inevitably by affected by this current reality.

**IV: Concluding Thoughts**

So what sort of critique can Shiʿi political theology effect in the present? In what sense can political theology be a properly comparative exercise? Shiʿi political theologies bring us back to the root notion of revelation in the modern practice, the idea of uncovering and re-theologising political ethics and thought, to the notions of absence and presence, and the ultimate relationship between inter-subjective ethics and metaphysics. But there is a sense in which theologians arguably have a vested interest in doing so. Perhaps what the Shiʿi case reveals most is that even in the presence of a most normative theory, the reality in practice, emergence and development within intellectual history suggests that the self-identification and understanding of the community and how it reads its own thought and history constantly shifts.The engagement with the tradition finds in each epoch an attempt to discern authority within processes that are imperfect, whilst holding out for the messianic perfection of a deferred future in which justice will be manifest and in which the absolute triumph of authority will be such that it will have no opposite. The culmination of that tradition of political theology hence works through critique until there is nothing to critique or displace but a pure sense of accord – and that in itself is the notion of justice deferred. The messianic Imam as the ‘remnant of God’ reminds us of the authority of the divine – but also that in the final analysis, all that remains of theology, politics and thought is the person of the Imam, or as the Qurʾan puts it: ‘everything perishes save hiscountenance’ (Q 28:88).

1. Henry Corbin, *En islamiranien* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), I: 32ff, 229–34. A quick point on method is required here. I attempt in this piece to present a normative study of Twelver Shiʿi political theology predicated on my reading of some of the foundational, perhaps canonical, texts of the early tradition. That canon is somewhat contested not least between those who see the Imams as the foremost of their peers without having an ‘supernatural’ quality as infallible, divine beings, a position often rejected as ‘shortcoming’ (*taqṣīr*) in faith, and those who insist on the divine aspects of the Imams, often criticized for deifying the human Imams through exaggeration (*ghulūw*). This even affects the academic study of the field as suggested by Robert Gleave, ‘Recent research in the history of early Shiʿism’, *History Compass* 7/6(2009) 1593–1605. My own sympathies perhaps lie with the latter – and it is clear how there would be a more creative dialogue between it and some Christian traditions such as Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the large amount of theological material on the nature of the Imams found in those early texts is difficult to set aside – and I focus on, perhaps following the lead of the late Henry Corbin and Mohammad Ali Amir Moezzi, the works of al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī [d. 903] and AbūJaʿfar al-Kulaynī [d. 940] in particular, in which Shiʿi Islam is not just a sectarian political and legal formation, but in its very essence a learned, spiritual doctrine and way of life in which one’s relationship with the person of the Imam is pivotal. It is al-Kulaynī’s*al-Kāfīfīʿilm al-dīn* [The Sufficient Knowledge of the Religion] that is the earliest of what the later early modern period canonized as the ‘four books’ or compilations of the sayings of the Prophet and the Imams. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajātfīmanāqibĀlMuḥammad*, ed. MuḥsinKūche-bāghī (rpt., Qum: Manshūrātṭalīʿat al-nūr, 2008), 97–98. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, 86–91, 137–53. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Cf. Rowan Williams (ed), *Sergei Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Patricia Crone,,*God’s Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 24–27.There are calques for this socially embedded nature of soteriological action in relation of a privileged figure in many other religious traditions. For example, one thinks of the notion of the *tathagatha* and the role of the *boddhisatva* in society in Mahayana Buddhism – see Paul Williams, *Buddhist Thought* (London: Routledge, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Sajjad Rizvi, ‘A Muslim’s perspective on the good death, resurrection and human destiny’, in David Marshall and Lucinda Mosher (eds), *Death, Resurrection and Human Destiny: Christian and Muslim Perspectives* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 99–109. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Jan Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil: politischeTheologie in Altägypten, Israel und Europa* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2000) . [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. AbūJaʿfar al-Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfī*, ed. ʿAlī-Akbar Ghaffārī (Tehran: Dār al-kutub al-islāmīya, 1986), II, 18–24. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, 111–13. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, 97–99. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, 94–97, 136–39. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Cf. Al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Paul Kahn, *Political Theology: Four New Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Kwame Anthony Appiah*The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); John Gray, *The Two Faces of Liberalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); DomenicoLosurdo, *Liberalism: A Counter-History* (London: Verso, 2011); Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. TalalAsad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), and *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Clayton Crockett (2011), *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics After Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 160–61. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. RemiBrague, *Europe: la voie romaine* (Paris: Criterion, 1992). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Crockett, *Radical Political Theology*, 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), and Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. WilferdMadelung , ‘A Treatise of al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā on the legality of working for the government’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 43 (1980), 18–31. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 252–301. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Crone, *God’s Rule*, 151–89. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Cf. Faisal Devji,*Landscapes of the Jihad* (London: Hurst, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. MuḥsinKadivar, *Naẓarīyeh-hā-ye dawlatdarfiqh-e shīʿeh*(Tehran: Nashr-e nay, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Hamid HadjiHaidar, *Liberalism and Islam: Practical Reconciliation between the Liberal State and Shiite Muslims* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Mahmoud Sadri, ‘Sacral defense of secularism: the political theologies of Soroush, Shabestari, and Kadivar’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 15.2 (2001), 257–70. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. This seems to me to be a central problem for Orthodoxy as well and I am intrigued by Aristotle Papanikolaou, *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), in particular whether it can speak to the Shiʿi case. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)