

# The Islamic Republic Has Weakened The Hold Of Islam Over Iranians

Do you remember, vaguely, those on the left who excitedly greeted, and appeared as the public face, of the new regime in Iran? Do you remember Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, whose face looked like a rubbery Halloween mask? What about Ghotzbadeh, the correct pronunciation of whose name was always a puzzlement, doing his imitation of what he thought were suave ways sure to appeal to a Western audience? Or to go back to the noblest, most tragic figure of all, Shahpur Bakhtiar, who had served the Shah as his last Prime Minister— and long before, in France, was said to have helped the Resistance — who was part of that secular and supposedly “left” opposition, and who had to flee Iran, and then was murdered by agents of the Khomeini regime, one of whom obtained entry into Bakhtiar’s well-guarded Paris apartment, presenting himself as a friend and admirer, and having been searched at the door, found a kitchen knife with which to stab Bakhtiar to death? Do you remember — did you ever hear — about the mass killings of dissidents, including former supporters of the regime, that is those who worked to overthrow the Shah — at Evin Prison? Do you know what is going on now?

No one sensible in Iran supports the Islamic Republic of Iran. Anyone who supports that regime will get what he deserves, when the time comes. The Islamic Republic of Iran has done two good things, however. By its support for Hezbollah in Lebanon ((and in Syria), and for the Assad regime in Syria, and for the anti-regime Shi’a protesters in Bahrain, and for the Houthi rebels in Yemen (support which may be exaggerated, for the locals don’t need much aid from the Iranians to fight their way into Sana’a), it has alarmed Sunni Muslims everywhere, but especially in the Gulf. Sunnis already

regarded the Shi'a mostly with contempt, mistrust, and hatred; to that has now been added fear, and rage over the suppression and mass killing of Sunni Arabs by Iranian forces, and Hezbollah, in Syria, and the behavior of the Shi'a government in Iraq, and the pushing out of so many Sunnis from Baghdad (which took place without the Americans seemingly aware of what was going on), and the loss of Sunni power to the Shi'a in Iraq. In Pakistan, where the Sunnis used to beat up Shi'a for sport, now the sport is blowing up Shi'a mosques, and killing Shi'a professionals – doctors, engineers – and none of that can be controlled by the military, even if it showed any signs of wanting to do so. The Islamic Republic of Iran may be alarmed, now, at all of those they call the "Takfiris" – that is, the Sunni Muslims who declare the Shi'a to be Infidels, and even the worst kind of Infidels, but there is nothing they can do to recover a semblance of Sunni trust, unless they were to pull back their forces completely from Syria, end all aid to Hezbollah in Lebanon, stop supporting the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'a protesters in Bahrain. And that they just can't and won't do.

The second thing the Islamic Republic of Iran has managed to do, over the past 36 years, is to damage Islam in the eyes of thinking Iranians. Islam may still be supported by the fist-waving-screaming-death-to-America primitives, and there are tens of millions of primitives, but there are also millions of advanced Iranians, far more advanced than the Arabs, because for those Iranians, their other identity, their Persian identity, gives them an alternative to Islam, now seen more and more as imposed by the invading, more primitive Arabs, an alternative that, for ethnic Arabs, does not exist. 'Uruba, Arabness, is so tied up with Islam – the "gift of the Arabs" to the world – that it reinforces the hold of Islam on Arab minds. Islam, the "gift of the Arabs," is seen by Iranians, and never more so than today, as a foreign import, imposed on them, and on their superior civilization, by primitive Bedouin.

The West could never have weakened the hold of Islam over Iranians as well as Ayatollah Khomeini, Judge Khalkhali, Evin Prison, Ayatollah Khamenei, the bezonians of the Basiji and the Pasdaran (or are they the same thing? I forget, but it hardly matters – of course they are all the same thing), and a cast of tens of thousands of mullahs. Always look on the bright side.