

Although Razi did not compose a work on rulership or governance, he did address various political issues in his works on theology, philosophy, and Qur'an commentary. In so doing, he made significant contributions to the development of Islamic political thought. His views in this area were influenced by those of the Mu'tazilis as well as of the philosopher Ibn Sina.

The central concept of Razi's political thought is prophecy. Following the basic principles of Muslim theology, he held that prophets are human beings through whom God communicates with humankind. Among these prophets are messengers who bring new versions of God's laws, and thus new religions. Razi wrote that the prophets who communicate God's laws should be invested with political authority. He also argued that prophets are infallible, although he admitted that they could commit major sins before, and unintentional sins after, their prophetic missions.

Razi's political theory, which he discussed under the rubric of "practical science," was shaped by the philosophical tradition in Islam. In accordance with Ibn Sina's teaching on prophecy, he held that prophets are a sociopolitical necessity, since only prophets are capable of introducing laws that organize human life. Also following Ibn Sina, he defined prophecy as a perfection of the human soul. According to this teaching, a prophetic soul is one that has developed its imaginative and intellective faculties such that it may receive intelligible forms from the higher heavenly souls. It is the prophet's intellectual perfection that places him in a position to legislate and direct the Muslim community.

On the issue of the leadership of the Muslim community and the political concept of the imamate, topics that he addressed in his *Compendium* and *Book of Forty Questions*, Razi polemicized against the postulates of Twelver Shi'i theologians. These theologians have argued that the imamate is a logical consequence of God's benevolence or grace, and it is incumbent upon God by virtue of his benevolence to invest mankind with an imam, just as it is incumbent upon God to send prophets to humankind. Following his Ash'ari colleagues as well as many Mu'tazili scholars, Razi held that the imamate is necessary only as a matter of tradition and scripture. Also in opposition to Twelver Shi'i ideas, Razi held that it is incumbent upon the intellectuals of the Muslim community, not upon God, to designate an imam, by way of election.

Razi addressed the issue of the moral status of jihad against non-Muslims in his commentary on the Qur'an. In his milieu, many saw a tension between supporting jihad against non-Muslims and maintaining the Qur'anic precept that "there is no compulsion in religion" (2:256). The great majority of scholars interpreted this verse to mean that, while compulsion in religion was valid at the political level, it was inappropriate and futile to attempt to compel inner conviction. Under the influence of the Mu'tazilis, Razi interpreted the verse to mean that God intends that individuals have choice in religious belief. He argued that this world is an abode of trial or testing and that compulsion in religion at the level of conviction would nullify this idea. The use of compulsion in conversion, he argued, is incompatible with the moral responsibility that has been granted by God to human beings in this world.

See also Ash'aris; caliph, caliphate; Central Asia; exegesis; Ghurids (1009–1215); Ibn Sina, Abu 'Ali (980–1037); imamate; jihad; jurisprudence; Mu'tazilis; philosophy; Shi'ism; theology

Further Reading

Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam*, 2004; Fathalla Kholeif, *A Study on Fakhr al-Din al-Razi and His Controversies in Transoxiana*, 1966; Ann Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, 1981.

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rebellion

Rebellion is action undertaken by a group aiming to replace the government in a state or to secede from the state to form a new one. Direct references to rebellion are not found in the Qur'an, but there are numerous references to hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*) in Medina who publicly accepted Islam while continuing to oppose Muhammad, more through subversion than in open revolt. The Qur'an (9:107) alludes to a "mosque of dissension" (*masjid al-dīrār*) erected on the outskirts of Medina "by way of mischief and infidelity—to disunite the believers." This building was demolished on Muhammad's orders before the plotters' schemes could materialize. Rebellions marked the caliphates of Abu Bakr, 'Uthman b. 'Affan, and 'Ali b. Abi Talib. The Umayyad dynasty lasted barely 90 years before it was overthrown by an Abbasid revolt, and the Abbasids themselves had faced numerous rebellions already by the late ninth century.

Rebellion was, therefore, a timely and troubling issue for classical political and legal theorists. With the goal of preventing civil strife (*fitna*) and disorder or corruption (*fasād*), the theorists banned nearly all challenges to the established ruler. Qur'an 4:59, which reads, "Obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you," along with numerous hadith reports, was marshaled by scholars to prohibit revolt against the caliph or the sultan, regardless of how he had come to power. Disobedience to a ruler's commands was permitted only when the ruler contravened Islamic law in accordance with the hadith that states, "No obedience to the created in opposition to the Creator." An errant ruler should be admonished, counseled, and suffered patiently by his subjects rather than challenged by force. Only in extreme circumstances, such as when a ruler abandoned Islamic law altogether or committed apostasy, should the Muslim subjects overthrow him. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), for example, declared jihad obligatory against the Mongol conquerors of the Abbasid Empire, who, despite their conversion to Islam, ruled by the Yasa, the Mongol tribal law, rather than the shari'a. He castigated rebellion, however, against Muslim rulers over mainly political grievances.

Classical sources generally treat rebellion (*baghy*) as a type of criminal activity along with apostasy (*ridḍa*) and brigandage

representation

(*hirāba*), yet they devote considerable attention to differentiating the way rebels are to be treated compared to apostates, highway robbers, or pirates. People were deemed rebels if they formally withdrew from the Muslim community (*khurūj*) by disavowing allegiance to the ruler, provided a reasonable religious pretext for their disobedience (*ta'wīl*), and constituted a group with demonstrated power to challenge the state (*shawka*). If they met these criteria, they were subject to treatment under the laws governing the suppression of rebels (*ahkām al-bughāh*). Because these laws were based largely on precedents set by 'Ali in dealing with his enemies, especially the Kharijis, there was general agreement between Sunni and Shi'i legal schools on these matters. As Mawardi writes in *al-Ahkām al-Sultāniyya* (The ordinances of government), fighting rebels differs from fighting infidels, apostates, and brigands in eight ways: the intent is to deter rather than kill rebels; they should not be pursued when they are retreating; their injured may not be killed; captured rebels may not be killed; their property may not be seized and their women and children may not be enslaved; the aid of *dhimmīs* (protected communities) cannot be sought in fighting rebels; the Muslim commander may not give them assurances of an indefinite truce or conclude a peace treaty in return for monetary payment; and their homes and farms may not be despoiled. Clearly, the goal of these strictures was to rehabilitate rebels back into the body politic as quickly and completely as possible.

The political quietism proposed in the classical theory was always in tension with more popular themes of renewal (*tajdīd*) and reform (*iṣlāh*), which led periodically to violent movements aimed not only at overthrowing corrupt rulers but also at purifying society. One such insurrection was the Wahhabi revolt in 19th-century Arabia that in many ways laid the intellectual basis for the Muslim revivalist movements of the 20th century. To the Wahhabi creed of purging Islam of internal, heretical innovations (*bid'a*), 20th-century activists added the goal of thwarting Western political and cultural domination of Muslim countries. Thus modern writers espouse not so much rebellion but revolution, in the sense of a thoroughgoing sociopolitical change in norms and institutions.

Sayyid Qutb, in his influential essay *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones), never openly declares jihad against the Egyptian or any other Muslim government, but his argument that Muslim societies are in a state of *jāhiliyya* (ignorance) akin to that against which the Prophet fought has obvious revolutionary implications. 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, the author of *al-Farida al-Gha'iba* (The absent duty), the manifesto of Anwar Sadat's assassins, took Qutb's views to their logical conclusion. Citing Ibn Taymiyya, Faraj declared the Egyptian government to be an apostate regime; thus rebellion against it was a religious obligation. In responding to this document, the 'ulama' (religious scholars) of Azhar University denounced Faraj's justification of tyrannicide by resorting to classical arguments that so long as a ruler was a Muslim and did not interfere with the performance of Islamic obligations in the country, rising up against him was prohibited.

A number of Shi'i theorists also figure prominently in contemporary debates on the legitimacy of rebellion. For centuries, Shi'i 'ulama' generally espoused dissimulation (*taqiyya*) and compliance with political authorities, tracing this policy back to the views of the sixth imam, Ja'far al-Sadiq. The views of Ayatollah Khomeini fundamentally challenged this legacy. Beginning in the 1940s with criticism of the two Pahlavi shahs, Khomeini moved to open defiance and by the late 1960s called for the regime to be overthrown. In *Hukumat-i Islami* (Islamic government), published in 1970, Khomeini outlines his theory of *wilāyat al-faqīh* (guardianship of the jurist). At the end of the treatise, he calls for tyrannical rulers (*tāghūt*) to be overthrown through civil disobedience and for the creation of parallel Islamic institutions. Similarly, the most prominent lay intellectual of the revolution, 'Ali Shari'ati, focused on mobilizing a grassroots movement led by the youths. Shari'ati criticized what he labeled "Safavi Shi'ism," after the Safavid dynasty, characterizing it as an ideology of quietism and political repression. True Shi'ism, Shari'ati argued, was "'Alavi Shi'ism," after 'Ali b. Abi Talib: a dynamic, politically active faith that required action to implement a just Islamic order.

See also coup d'état; dissent, opposition, resistance; quietism and activism

Further Reading

Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law*, 2001; J.J.G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins*, 1986; Ruhallah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, translated by Hamid Algar, 1981; J. L. Kraemer, "Apostates, Rebels and Brigands," *Israel Oriental Studies* 10 (1980); Fazlur Rahman, "The Law of Rebellion in Islam," in *Islam in the Modern World*, edited by Jill Raitt, 1983.

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representation

As a concept in political analysis, "representation" can refer to a variety of forms of decisions, judgments, and actions made on behalf of a larger group of persons by a smaller group (including a group of one). For the term "representation" to be appropriate, there must be some sense not only that the decisions of the smaller group are binding on the larger group (a relationship better expressed by the idea of "authority") but also that the smaller group is making decisions for the larger group by appointment or designation, or in the best interests of the larger group. Nonetheless, representation and authority are clearly companion concepts as long as the decisions of representatives are enforced on the larger population as legitimate, binding rules.

In classical Sunni political thought, perhaps the predominant emphasis was on communal unity (*ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā'a*) and