

## Abdolkarim Soroush's Perspective: Relationship of Reason, Freedom, and Islamic Democracy

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### ABSTRACT

*Abdolkarim Soroush has emerged as one of the world's leading moderate revisionist thinkers. He and his contemporaries in other Muslim countries formed what might be the equivalent of the Islamic Reformation of Christianity: the period of questioning traditional practices and beliefs that ultimately became an upheaval. Soroush's thoughts include the freedom of Muslims to interpret the Qur'an, the necessity of change in religion, the necessity of freedom of belief, and the compatibility of Islam and democracy. Soroush emphasized the rights of individuals in their relations with government and God, explaining that an ideal Islamic state can only be defined by the belief and will of the majority. The foundation always used by Soroush to explain his political theory is reason. It is the reason behind the modern man to do all his actions. Soroush distinguishes traditional man from modern man is using all his ability to change the world. Traditional people are more passive and deterministic, so they are pessimistic about the life of this world. Reason can not be sustainable if there is no freedom, faith under pressure and compulsion of religion is irrational. One will not be considered religious if he is irrational because it is rational and reason will manifest in the absence of coercion and restraint from religion*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Abdolkarim Soroush in several of his writings criticized the Islamic government in the style of Wilayat al-Faqih. Iranian Muslims challenged his views on religious democracy and secularism, so he had to emigrate to Uncle Sam's country. According to people who often research Soroush, namely Sadri, that Soroush's political philosophy is rooted in freedom, rationality and democracy, what Soroush does is not merely to build the values of freedom, rationality and democracy, but what he builds are "Primary Values" as good that independent (as an independent virtues), nor as an expression of political and religious dogma (Bar, 2009).

The rigid forms of Islamic thoughts need to be reinterpreted and recontextualized to make them suitable with the current situations, without leaving behind the fundamental teachings of Islam. In other words, Islam must have a sense of inclusiveness of thoughts, ones that develop from time to time. This has in turn remind us of a great Shi'i thinker named Abdul Karim Soroush. This paper will focus his thoughts on the method of understanding Islam (Anshori, 2020).

Abdul Karim Soroush strives to offer solutions and restore philosophy-religion, government and democracy, amid the wrestling of identity and discourse of thought in the Islamic Iranian civilization and culture, from critical identity, psychological decline, to ontological dislocations that have obscured the authenticity of existential societies (Mulyadi, 2019). Political conditions in Iran led Soroush to engage in the existing social realities. After the Iranian revolution, Soroush often satirized the Islamic government of Iran through his essays. However, his involvement with practical politics at that time made Soroush in 2000 succeeded in winning Khatami as president of Iran. And during the reign of President Khatami, Soroush participated in the cleanup, including the successful implementation of democracy, which at least the people want to be able to express their opinion freely through newspapers. In fact, Soroush's most influential work was not on a practical political level, but was also able to revolutionize the theology and religiosity of Muslims.

For the past year, Soroush has been busy with a research project that he is doing at ISIM (International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World). Soroush is also a lecturer in political philosophy at the University of Amsterdam. Approaching the election days in Iran, Soroush is often interviewed about the religious democratic system that he advocates. The development of the world has brought modern humans to respect rights rather than obligations. This difference can be explained by the "language of religion" which is different from science and philosophy. The language of religion, especially Islam, often uses the language of obligation in the Qur'an and Hadith. In these two cases, humans are ruled by the highest authority using command language because the image of humans in religion is that of humans who have obligations. They are warned to pray, pay zakat, fast etc., if they violate it they will receive the consequences for what they have done.

Through the Shari'ah, humans are forced to carry out obligations. They describe humans as obligated subjects and then describe their obligations. No one has ever claimed to address certain rights. There is a clear difference between the rights and obligations of modern humans and traditional humans, obligations in modern law are marginal and on the other hand, traditional considers them as rights. This is part of the rift of the modern world with the traditional world. Humans who used to be only guests in the world are now hosts who design their own world.

In its development, human rights changed into two stages. First rights are defined by freedom. For example, someone who wants to gain their knowledge may do so and no one has the right to prevent it. However, this slowly turned into this second demand. The people demand their rights from the government, with these demands, the government assumes new duties and responsibilities. In the theory of past government, kings often assumed that he was a representation of God in the world, so that what the king did was the same as what God did. In the understanding of many people, God is only having rights without having the slightest obligation, so the king is seen in the same view, namely having full rights and few obligations.

Hence, a secular government is a government that no longer demands obligations to the people but is more concerned with their rights as people. Because the government is the representative of the people, the representative is in charge of carrying out the demands of the demands they represent. This is very different from the religious government of wilayat al-Faqih, a government based on the guardianship of the fuqaha is only based on obligations and is contrary to the mentality of the modern world and modern political philosophy, which is based on the concept of the State and human rights. Haidar Bagir calls this term anachronism, namely the placement of events at the wrong time (Bar, 2009).

The government must prioritize the rights of its people, so the role of the government is defined as a servant compared to the ruler. In this case, the writer would like to elaborate on several things about

Abdolkarim Soroush's views on reason, freedom and democracy in Islam, before that, a biography of Abdolkarim Soroush will be presented.

## 2. BIOGRAPHY OF ABDOLKARIM SOROUSH

Abdolkarim Soroush was born on December 15, 1945, in South Tehran. He attended conventional elementary school. Then, after a year of junior high school education, he applied to the 'Alavi High School which two pious bazaar traders newly founded under the influence of prominent ulama who were concerned about the marginalization of religious education in the junior high school curriculum. In this environment, and through an acquaintance while still in school with the Husayniyye-ye Isrsyad institution, Soroush made contact for the first time with Murtadha Mutahhari and 'Ali shari'ati. The atmosphere at Husayniyye-ye Isrsyad did not seem very appealing to him, although these two figures greatly influenced the institution and continue to influence Soroush as well. Soroush continued his studies at the University of Tehran to study pharmacology and obtained a Ph.D. in 1968. He also personally studied philosophy for many years at his university with a religious scholar and bazaar merchant recommended by Murtadha Mutahhari. After receiving his doctorate in pharmacy from the University of Tehran, he entered military service, then spending brief periods at the Department of Public Health in Bushehr and Tehran. In 1973 Soroush left Iran for England to concentrate on his studies of modern philosophy. In London, he studied analytical chemistry and rational philosophy at the University of London, Chelsea College, for 5 years. However, his dissertation was not completed due to events in Iran that prompted him to return home in 1979 (Cooper, 2000).

While in Europe, he studied 'formally' on campus and joined the religious group "Imam Barah" in London. In addition, he also gave many lectures in various places. The results of Soroush's lectures were then printed and published in book form. Like Muhammad Iqbal, Arkoun, and Hassan Hanafi, this phase, Soroush experienced spiritual and intellectual enlightenment. Soroush's later works reflect what was learned during his studies, which was heavily influenced by Kant and Popper's 'rational-critical philosophy'. Meanwhile, he criticized the absolutist philosophy that was so deeply rooted in Hegel's legacy (Soroush, 2002).

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method, using the discourse analysis technique of the Teun A Van Dijk model. Discourse analysis focuses on uncovering the hidden aspects behind a text, such as ideology, social cognition, social change, and the historical context in which the discourse is produced. Discourse analysis of Teun A Van Dijk's model consists of three elements; text dimensions, social cognition, and social analysis (Van Dijk, 2009). Text dimension, view text consists of several structures that support each other. The first is the macrostructure which the general meaning of a text can be observed by looking at the topic or theme put forward in the news. Second, the superstructure which is a discourse structure related to the framework of a text, how the parts of the text are arranged into a whole story. Third, the microstructure is the meaning of discourse that can be observed from a small part of a text, namely words, sentences, propositions, clauses, paraphrases, and pictures. Social Cognition is related to how a text is produced, this element sees the journalists' awareness that forms the text. Meanwhile, Social Context is an intertextual analysis by examining why religious preaching such as umma has entered through a special application (Abdurahman, 2018).

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. The Relationship between Reason and Freedom

Few things have gone beyond thinking of fighting in the way of freedom in the revolution. The author is ashamed when the author comes to love. The interpretation of the tongue reveals the essence, But silent love reveals more. No matter how well articulated this theme is, you will find that words fail after reaching the truth, essence, and value of freedom for human spiritual life. The author hopes to reach heights where it can advance beyond explaining freedom and its essence.

The title of the author's discussion is the relationship between reason and freedom. Wisdom has discovered several binary divisions in Intellect. They have divided the Intellect into pure [nazari] and practical [amali], innate [fetri] and acquired [kasbi], and particularly [jozvi] and universal [kolli]. They have contrasted Intellect to madness, foolishness, love, and wrath. They have taken turns applying the concept of Intellect to their reasoning or content. The latter means either an apparent arrest or an acquired truth. In the west "rationality" used to be associated with metaphysics, but now it is more or less connected to experimentation and quantity. It is also somehow related to the analytical and logical qualities of thinking.

It used to be against relativity, but today it has become relative. Each of these intricacies is worthy of investigation.

The same is true of the concept of freedom. It has been divided into civil and philosophical, external and internal. Some have observed differences between the spiritual and social varieties of freedom, between "freedom from" and "freedom to" or "negative" and "positive" freedoms. Freedom is contrasted with submission to the divine will, human slavery, or the law. There is even a difference between freedom and the feeling of freedom. Freedom is compared and contrasted with opposing concepts such as tyranny and democracy; at other times, it is used as a synonym of democracy.

Soroush's speech is about the kind of Intellect that functions as a dynamic factor for thinking and seeking the truth; it is about the kind of freedom required with Intellect (*Akal qua*). Therefore Soroush will attempt to clarify the relationship between reason and freedom. Soroush will ask if Intellect and freedom help or hinder each other (Soroush, 2002).

Soroush was sympathetic to freedom and demanded it is rational. Freedom and Attachment are a matter of indifference towards deranged beings. He can not describe freedom in the case of either a super angel or a super great beast.

- a. Able to have two visions of Intellect: Reason as a goal and a way. The first sees Intellect as the source and storehouse of truth. The second sees him as dynamic, yet compassionate, who seeks the truth by negotiating a tortuous path of trial and error.
- b. The vision of reason as a treasure trove of truth is not conducive to thinking about the origins and ways of seeking truth. Nevertheless, seeing reason as truth, sorting out, and judging agents requires as much concerning the method of attaining truth as it does for truth itself. Reason as a storehouse requires the idea of truth to be upheld. Considering Intellect prefers methodical errors obtained to contain the kind of flow which is the only guarantor of the life and longevity of reason. The proponents are given the truth that there will be questioning and doubting. Dynamic reason will look at the environment. Recognizing the difference between the two views of Intellect helps us understand the motives of those who pretend to be interested in freedom but end up punishing and denying it, ostensibly out of concern for peace and humanity, but are genuinely afraid that mistakes might contaminate the stock of the truth.
  - 1) 1. We are not talking about people praising violence here; who have never spent time on ideas, thoughts, and requirements. It uses opposition to freedom as a cover against reason itself. Instead, talk about people who care about people and the truth while advocating the limits of freedom. This view is only compatible with the storehouse-or fortress-view of Intellect. However, for those who prefer to put forward the faults for which truth is imposed methodically, truth must be chosen from among competing false opinions. Soroush's mission as a rational human being is to search actively for truth. This view attaches more value to earning a simple life in petty trade than finding treasure in the wilderness.
  - 2) 2. The second version of Intellect uses methods that everyone can practice, while the first version depends on luck and fate. The System that has attempted to dictate the truth has abused humans more than is open to the possibility, even necessity, of making mistakes as a prerequisite. Some scholars have argued that freedom should be denied to those who enjoy philosophical questions about human nature, happiness, and destiny because of the many confusing views that arise from such speculations. They have suggested a screening process to filter out harmful ideas. However, these same scholars have approved of conditional freedom of thought in the natural and empirical sciences, perhaps because these sciences are based on solid foundations that prevent such controversy. It needs more freedom with darkness and conflict of views, no less. Where the matter is in doubt, it is more in need of the views of others. Freedom is not just there for people to say their cut and spit out because they need each other's help against darkness and falsehood.
  - 3) 3. The early darkness is the path to reach the final light. History teaches that the conditions of freedom have prevailed wherever problems have been solved. The truths taken for granted today have not been obtained easily; they have also passed through the forums of criticism, judgment, and controversy. If he chooses the dynamic vision of Intellect as Soroush's guiding light, Soroush will not fear mistakes as a threat to freedom. Soroush will also not punish freedom of thought or clash of ideas. Soroush will gain a new respect for the mixture of tastes and colors and learn to seek the sweet truth in the midst of bitter guilt: "All the sweetness in this world and beyond / Is the shroud of bitterness that ever surrounds".
  - 4) 4. Those who shun freedom as an enemy of truth and as a possible breeding ground for wrong ideas do not realize that freedom is itself truth (haq). It is as if these people do not regard

freedom as a blessing, truth or virtue. They act as if it is so much hot air, illusion or myth, failing to recognize that the realization of freedom leads to strengthening the truth and weakening the falsehood. Only those own weak ideas will fear freedom, while lovers of truth cannot help but love freedom more. Freedom may interfere with personal beliefs, but it is impossible to offend the truth except for those who think to embody absolute truth.

- 5) 5. According to Amirul Mukminin: "Justice broadly feels limited by justice. It will find injustice even more limiting." Justice leads only to injustice, where there is even less in the way of freedom, rights, and growth. There is no reason, logic, and the opposite. Reason has a certain expansiveness, an alternative to the narrowness and darkness of ignorance. Furthermore, the same goes for freedom: anyone who finds it frustrating will find even more alternatives.
- 6) 6. Some humanitarian sympathizers (not about dangerous, stupid, and people who glorify violence and the wages of war against reason) might mistake presenting freedom because it can allow the forces of darkness and corruption to surround the truth. This group must realize that denouncing freedom is a worse crime than those they may wish to fight back. No person who is blessed with foresight and wisdom will rely on evil to establish good government. The application of autonomy is based on the misguided idea that ends justify means. There is no end apart from the means. The final constitutive means are as many places as determining the conclusion. Moreover, reaching the truth in an open environment is fundamentally different from reaching it in a closed one. These are two different species of truth obtained in two different ways.

If the truth is bare to reveal itself to Soroush, Soroush will not agree and prefer the truth even if it is subject to methodically derived error. Nevertheless, all human experience shows that truth is often hidden a hundred times over. If truth were bare and straightforward, word discovery would not arise or gain much respect. Discovery means uncovering the truth, a public, protracted, and challenging task.

The fact is that freedom in is not the currency that bribes people to feel better, but the necessary tools they need to uncover the truth. Only those who consider themselves directly inspired by Allah, who claim to have absolute truth, and who find their Intellect on the benefit of the help and consultation of others, will refuse the gift of freedom. Others will find themselves seriously in need of the freedoms that allow public participation and discourse. Freedom is the slogan of the humble and the needy; it is the slogan of those who are aware of improving their Intellect. Humans still need light from the stars even if they have reached the sun; they are unable to refuse bottled water even in the middle of the ocean.

- 7) 7) Emotionalism breeds people, while Intellect fosters autonomous individuals. The lightning of emotion dazzles Intel's eyes. In emotional turmoil, when Intellect is paralyzed, rational analysis is replaced with an urge to act out of blind devotion, often leading to regret. Of course, it cannot go forward without leaning on the staff of emotions, but without seeing through the eyes, Intellect might stumble into the sewers of fanaticism. Emotions that kill a reason easily butcher freedom. Emotional ones should not replace rational discourse among human beings. Emotionalism alone cannot support a thrifty social system based on a master's blind devotion. Emotions dim or extinguish the light of reason and dissolve human autonomy. Intellect indeed causes conflict, but its main product is autonomy.

By increasing the independence of the mind, Intellect prevents the dissolution of the individual personality, which is essential for the preservation of freedom. Emotional submission is even more tragic and devastating when manipulated by corrupt authorities. Affective states such as anger and lust, which shackle the Intellect from within, also limit external freedom. Soroush is indebted to those philosophers and theologians who have eaten the fire of reason, even if they have been embroiled in speculative controversies, by focusing people's attention on trivial and often misleading matters. Otherwise, the world will be shrouded in darkness, deprived of love, reason, and order. It is not surprising that the hatred of Intellect rises under tyranny and dictatorship.

Fascists find a friend in youth lust and an enemy in mature rationality. The Nazis hated democracy and public deliberation because they carried the scent of Reason; and this could not be achieved except by strengthening the Intellect. The author informs that external freedom strengthens Intellect to eliminate all kinds of slavery and oppression.

- 8) 8) Can Ideology enslave intellect? Here the word ideology is not used in common usage to imply a school of thought (eg, "Islamic ideology" or "Marxist ideology"). On the other hand, ideology

in this context clearly shows its meaning: ideas with causes but no Intellect. This is the veil of Intellect; it is the enemy of rationality and clarity.

Idealism and dogmatism often accompany an ideology, but the essence is the quality that masks falsehood by placing it above rational discourse. We can only love ideology or be infatuated with it; one can never rationally evaluate it. No Intellect can be appropriately put forward for a false idea. If trying to find a rational Intellect or Intellect for ideology, the only thing to do at this point is to find the cause and origin of the idea.

Here one can trace the interests and advantages of various groups as they are the cause of specific ideas. It indicates the ideological nature of ideas or called "class origins" in Marxist terms. By this definition, fighting ideology cannot be a rational one because ideology is antirational. To fight ideology, then, becomes a real struggle, and since ideology has no rational Intellect, any attempt to eliminate its causes must be rational ideas.

Ideology consists of systematic errors resulting from thought, disturbance of the basic functioning of the Intellectual scale. However, that does not mean that freedom from ideology is the same as immunity from guilt. In the latter case making an error is not a systematic result but a random occurrence. The extent to which freedom and reason need each other should be clear from the outset. To see Intellect as a permanent slave to ideology requires hostility to freedom. Accepting error as an intentional uncorrected by product of reason generates respect for public and free discourse, which is the only way error can be eliminated.

- a. It emphasizes that pursuing freedom with unremitting devotion is due to possessing a precious gem, namely: Intellect. A spirit from a different world; in Rumi's words, a "really different,"? His mind is by nature a free zone. Several philosophers have used the chain of causality to make a case for determinism. They say the feeling of freedom is just an illusion because it is limited by causality: born into a specific family, between followers of a particular religion, and under the domination of a given government. Everything is instilled in you during childhood. Soroush is indebted to others for everything.

The author would like to argue that If causality is an unavoidable sum of chains, the Intellect is free from these chains; otherwise, His Intellect is free in all directions. The reason is not "nature"; the chain of causality does not bind it. It can be penetrated only with "Reason." emotions are tied to the chains of causality, and as such, they can bring hardship and even bondage.

The reason is by definition resistant to coercion. So the instructions of any nonrational element (such as ideology, passion, or anger) interfere with his purity and freedom. The freedom of pure reason does not mean freedom from logic, which is the nature of Reason. To remain free and pure, Intellect needs free range. By granting external freedom, Soroush helps the individual Intellect to merge, lose all their insulating nature, and become more pure and radiant. Another condition for purification of Intellect that resists the flesh's temptations, masters the passions, and tames the beasts of anger: Hiding from strangers, not a friend of Coats the inner ring made for winter, not blooming spring. If Intellect joins the forces of Intellect seeking pleasure, the Light prevails, and the Way will be bright. Should desire pair with desire and trade, Darkness will descend and the path must fade. "Strengthening Intellect with the help of reason. Summons 'verse consultation' for each season.

- b. Freedom gives only to freedom, just as reason gives only to reason. It is one of the points that pleases the convergence of these two blessings (the other is the expansiveness provided by reason and freedom, as opposed to the narrowness resulting from their absence). This feedback serves in two areas: self-correction and ability. To become proficient in reasoning, Intellect has to catch Intel's faults, Soroush must seek help from Intellect. The same applies to freedom. In order to find and fix the problem of freedom, freedom is needed. In order to make better use of freedom, it is necessary to be free and exercise freedom. Cannot prepare for public freedom by practicing in private. It is a machine driven by the product itself.
- c. Some of Soroush's orators have made disparaging comments about "Those who have raised freedom for principle." Of course. Why not be the primary principle? Freedom is important. Even those who adopt religion and submission are rewarded because they have chosen this path freely. True submission is based on the principle of freedom; indeed, they are the same. Is there any benefit in forced religion or forced prayer? Religion, by definition, is incompatible with coercion. Freedom has two virtues: it is a window into the life and its choices with meaning.
- d. No seeker of justice can ignore the question of freedom.  
To define justice as the embodiment of all rights, it would be an insult to justice to ignore the right to be free. Freedom is a component of justice. Freedom seekers are partly in the pursuit of justice,

and justice seekers cannot help pursuing freedom either. Without freedom, justice is incomplete. Why should then shy away from choosing freedom as a principle, especially when it is the freedom that complements justice and is so meaningful? The value of freedom is fundamental that even the enemies of freedom need it to express their opposition. The right to liberty is a component of justice and is included in it. At the same time, the discussion and illumination of justice require freedom, which in this sense is the forerunner of justice.

- e. Freedom and Intellect are yet another similarity: they can both be dismissed for imperfection or accepted regardless of them. Soroush sees both of these attitudes in society. The slightest use of reason is to squelch freedom, while others do everything possible to expand his reign. To be sure, freedom has unintended consequences, which is true of reason. The question is whether you are a friend or an enemy of freedom and reason at heart. As a friend, you will forgive freedom's mistakes and work to make amends for them. As an enemy, you will use a single weakness to leave freedom altogether. "He is a fake lover of flowers who does not bear the pain of his thorns."

Everyone who talks about freedom must answer this question: are freedom, human dignity, and reason worth their occasional failure? Is it the flower of freedom that is trampled on because it has some thorns? The same goes for Intellect. reason is always a harbinger of truth, common well-being, and happiness for humanity? Even the proponents of Intellect accept that many are led astray by their own Intellect.

Defenders of freedom are well aware of the problem, but they do not think that this problem can be solved by turning away from freedom. Advocates of Intellect do not assume that all false religions are valid or that the temptations and squabbles of infidels are accepted. Defending freedom is not the same as defending every obscenity, lie, or crime.

- f. Freedom is a contest. Internal freedom is achieved by freeing oneself from the control of passion and anger. A prerequisite for achieving external freedom is participating in the contest of freedom, a public process based on rules and regulations. Some people think that freedom means throwing caution to the wind and inciting anarchy, madness, and disorder. Nevertheless, freedom is far from a synonym for responsibility and to protect freedom is the duty of the free-thinking. "One must tolerate the enemy, except the enemy of tolerance." A critic of this wise saying says that this is an unreasonable exception to the maxim of freedom. Indeed, this is not the exception but the main rule of the game.

There is no contest between the people in a closed and oppressive system, so the government arbitrarily promotes some to leadership positions. People cannot compete, and truth does not get a chance to shine against lies. Instead, the distribution of rewards is determined by the dominant will of one group: the same "mediocre masters" who are bound to lose in a fair contest. However, there is no victory without competition. People who wish to rest on their laurels without taking part in the game use any intellect to interfere with the game and will not hesitate to use force. Conflicting laws do not contest rule-governed or liberties. This is a distraction from the game's rules as opposed to freedom.

- g. This game, like the others, improves with practice. There's no doubt that there will be a lot of loss and waste in the beginning, but there is no shorter or better way to learn the game. It is impossible to be a good player without actually playing. This is the meaning of Soroush's earlier assumption that "freedom eats only itself." A soccer player becomes a champion just by playing the game. The game of freedom is no less demanding.

- h. Is truth stronger than falsehood? In the author's conjecture, those who (in good faith, not because reason serves themselves) hold freedom in humiliation and reject it, fearing that lies may find a foothold, harbor two misgivings. For one thing, they suspect that human reason is weak and slaves. Others don't have much faith in the stamina of righteousness; they fear it will falter in an open clash with lies. The author is unsure about the origins of these two misgivings, but there is no doubt about their implications.

Both reason and truth are considered weak, and freedom cannot be cultivated. However, Soroush finds a different story in the Qur'an. When Moses was afraid that Pharaoh's sorcerer would spell the rational people and keep them from the right path, Allah firmly rebuked him. "Do not be afraid, for you indeed have the upper hand" This was not dealt with only for Moses, but for all the noble souls of Moses. Throughout the ages: they must not fear but be assured that they are superior.

The author does not state that because of Soroush's belief in the power of truth, it should deliberately promote lies. On the other hand, the author says that there is no need to exaggerate the power of those who peddle lies and worry that they may overpower the truth. Must do

Soroush's duty, struggle and jihad against lies, and put faith in God. Must know that deception will neither work nor be ruthless.

- i. In addressing the relationship between truth and freedom, the author has already rejected the assumption that the pursuit of truth and freedom is mutually exclusive. Only when all the opinions have been aired can one acknowledge the truth. So seeking the truth does not exclude the loving freedom of "hearing all and choosing the best."; two depend on each other. The fact is that what goes against the truth is not freedom but power. It is a mistake to think that suppressing lies will promote the truth. It has not happened that the corruptive consequences of power are far more dangerous than any lie.
- j. Dull, intelligent, sluggish, crooked, and indigent are afraid to enter a market full of bright and fast traders. In the words of Rumi: "The hatred of light is the blight of pretending'/ The pure gold worships daylight." Only those lacking in ideas need to fear the market of ideas. Because of their own poverty, they cursed the market and looked at the rich merchants with bitterness. Here the author engages in genetic analysis and motivation frankly because most enemies of freedom do not argue in good faith or according to the rules of rational discourse. To hide the fact that their coffers are empty, some exalt themselves above the truth and will be quick to sacrifice rather than admit their own bankruptcy. Their defense from truth and religion is only Intellect. their flimsy coats are their only shortcoming; their exile for lack of proper clothing. These people must acquire value and wealth not shut down the market. They have to get enlightened and allow the lights to stay on: "Don't burn the carpet to get rid of the fleas. /Do not waste your day on the pleas of flies." Why choose a forbidden course of deception, character assassination, intimidation, impotence, slander, and destruction when acquiring virtue is so much easier and more legitimate? Is it not better to adopt scientific humility, bow in alter the truth, and humble oneself to God? Instead of abolishing the contest, it is not easy to train and prepare to win? Why near a mosque when it is better to join the ranks of the congregation?
- k. There is no blessing more precious to humanity than the free choice of the ways of the prophets. There is nothing better for humans than a submission of free will. Happy are those who are guided in this way who are free to choose the path of the prophets and are immersed in divine grace: "For those who believe and do righteous deeds is (every) a blessing and a beautiful place from (final) home." In the absence of this state of grace, there is nothing better for humankind than the possession of freedom. All free societies, whether they are religious or non-religious, are human. Nevertheless, totalitarian societies obey either divinity or humanity. All that remains is cruelty and rudeness. Free societies are closer to prophets than totalitarian ones. Soroush's thinkers are by far more afraid of falsity than power. It is time to put excessive power at the top of the list of lies and reflect on the great potential for breeding corruption.
- l. Soroush needs both internal and external freedom.

This is all true, except for the part about killing external enemies. Soroush's sages neither killed external enemies nor were concerned with natural enemies. They did not care who ruled them the Mongols, the Abbasid caliphs or the Saldjuqid dynasty. This good sage and many others like him are only concerned with challenges, a decent but incomplete company as external enemies can easily distract from internal battles. The inner battle is dependent on overcoming the external enemy; sometimes, two conflicts are the same. Living under tyranny plunges the entire society into these crimes and leads to the legitimacy and institutionalization of corruption that combating internal enemies becomes impossible.

In contrast, contemporary Westerners have completely abandoned internal fighting. The battle against will had disappeared from their discourse. Their worries in words and deeds revolve around an external enemy. "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" was the slogan of the French Revolution, which sought liberation from the king, the church, the nobility, and unjust taxation. Liberation from lust and ambition is not at issue. The truth is that if internal and external freedom is not combined, both will suffer. In Rumi's joyful language, those who have not tasted internal justice and moderation will not appreciate external justice.

Thus, the Western world sees injustice, colonialism, and arrogance towards other countries and the pursuit of freedom. There is external freedom, but no one is interested in internal freedom. Internal liberation can be attained only by the light of submission and by following divine messengers' guidance. Those who are deprived of guidance cannot fully embrace either type of freedom. What is needed today is to take cues from freedom seekers and from religious and mystical cultures to combine external and internal freedom: freedom is based on submission, and surrender is based on freedom. Bind the two together and the desire that at once must lift the one at the expense of the other. Birds that have flown on one Author must be equipped with two Writers in order to reach the nest of happiness (Soroush, 2002).



## 4.2. Islamic democracy

Democracy is a political concept that comes from the tradition of Western thought. The history of the encounter of Muslims with Western civilization, one of which gave rise to debates about accepting or rejecting democracy. Muslim intellectual responses to democracy are mapped into three groups, namely fundamentalists, secularists, and moderates. The first group tends to reject democracy, although there are those who accept it but are apologetic. The second group accepts democracy, without needing to refer to religious traditions. The third group synthesizes the relationship between Islam and democracy as two compatible things. Abdolkarim Soroush is a Muslim intellectual who views Islam as compatible with democracy, and both belong to the moderate group. The concept of authority in Islam is not only understood as a form of God's sovereignty, but more importantly that this concept also pays attention to aspects of human rights and sovereignty. Sharia needs to be reinterpreted to suit the context of changing times and can lead to achieving its goals (*maqashid ash-syariah*), namely aspects of human benefit. To support democratic political life, freedom needs to be upheld, including freedom of religion. Freedom, equality, and tolerance are values embodied in democracy. Soroush believes that religious identity needs to be embedded in the idea of a state (democracy), by promoting the idea of a religious democratic government. He also agreed and even supported the implementation of sharia in the country because it was considered to be very supportive of the government's political process (Susanto, 2006).

Abdul Karim Soroush has a basic understanding of religion that all human understanding of religion is historical and can be wrong. Abdul Karim Soroush claims that the Al-Quran is not only a product of history, but is also the product of the thoughts of the Prophet Muhammad with all his human limitations, so that the Prophet acts as the "creator of revelation". What the Prophet received from God was the content of revelation. However, the content of this revelation cannot be given to humans because it is beyond comprehension, even words cannot reach. The content of the revelation has no form, and the task of the Prophet was to create form so as to make it understandable. If Muslims insist on the idea that Al-Qur'an is uncreated, and is the eternal word of God to be taken literally, then they will be stuck in an insoluble dilemma (Mulyadi, 2019).

According to Abdul Karim Soroush, the historical fact motivated the importance of merging religion and democracy. In the political culture of a liberal secular society, the government and its people act as if there is no God, running completely ignoring His existence and non-existence. never consider His blessings and prohibitions in their policies and behavior. On the other hand, the past forms of religious government were considered only concerned with God's mandate, not humans. They see people's satisfaction as a natural by-product and dependent on God's satisfaction. From this, the question arises: How should an Islamic government be formed in the current context? Is it possible that the freedom of modern democratic government can be enjoyed without ignoring the existence of God? (Soroush, 2002).

The combination of religion and democracy is an example of the compatibility between religion and reason. The fact is clear that these efforts at the same time contain religious values, are useful, and are good signs. Such thinking does not mean being tainted by anti-religious tendencies or taking unfair sides to replace religiosity with worldliness. The combination of religion and democracy is a metareligious intelligence with some extra religious epistemological dimensions. For example, in an autocratic government, decision-making rights are left only to power, in a democratic government it is left to dynamic public policy, and in a religious government it is left to God (religion). This is not the case in the administration of government. However, religious communities are supporters, sponsors, sources, and encouragement of policies based on religion, so that without a religious community, democratic government of religion cannot be imagined.

The above argument provides a valid starting point and a correct formulation of (if not the actual solution) the problem of the combination of religion and democracy. Unlike the writings of some Islamic thinkers, this argument attempts to place the entire weight of the conceptual building of democracy on weak foundations related to intra-religious, such as religious teachings on deliberation [*shura*], consensus [*ijma'*], and the oath of allegiance to the rulers. [allegiance]. Instead, the discourse on religious governance should begin with discussing human rights, justice, and the limitation of power (all extra religious matters) (Mulyadi, 2019).

The idea that religion and democracy are mutually exclusive is rooted in another illusion as well: the belief that all democracies are subject to referendums and debates and that nothing has a solid and a priori "base." This is fake. Is it not true that democracy is desired to achieve justice, human rights, and limited power? Is it not true that democracy is built on a certain vision of humanity and history, outlined by social and political philosophy and science? Take the voting principle. Did it arrive at through voting? Can one start without prejudice and still achieve all the wondrous and precious blessings of justice, rights, and

wisdom? Of course not. Society must freely and deliberately achieve a novel understanding of humanity and respect and desire certain noble and lofty goals (values). So we must find the right and effective system to realize the goals/methods (Soroush, 2002).

The proposition that "democracy means a certain use means achieving a non-specific goal" is a fundamentally true statement that lends itself to misunderstanding. Far from denying a priori democratic principles, it is intended to respond to those who believe it means justifying endings. Thus, it misguidedly characterizes totalitarian systems that supposedly hand out justice and human rights as a democracy. They remind: "Method" is the essence in democracy. It is not clear, from the start, who is right and who deserves certain privileges and powers.

A "convict" is a person who is recognized as such through a legal process and a "ruler" is a person who is elected as such by the people's vote. In other words, the convict is not defined as the person who is "truly" guilty, and there is no ruler of the person who is, in fact, the most qualified. Reality, here, follows the method of discovering reality. This method is fundamental and universal in the sense that no one can follow a personal method. Democracy can be said to have determined methods towards undetermined ends. Uncertainty, however, refers to cases that are not the basic principles and criteria of democracy, which, like the fundamental tenets of law, are determined, respected, and cannot be interfered.

This applies to religious communities as well. Not everything is left to contest human opinion. People with independent will and discernment, and with complete freedom and conscience, extrapolate certain ethical and pragmatic principles from their religion (such as giving up alcohol and gambling in Islamic societies). Although the origin of these principles is believed to be heavenly, they happen to be willed and desired by humans. So that heaven and earth are reconciled, and the severity of the paradox of religiosity and rationality is reduced. It must be emphasized, though, that any assumption of a revoked a priori right for rulers to precede law or presumption of rulers' legitimacy role over such systems is contrary to democracy. At a misleading level can build otherwise. It bears repeating, then, postulating "specific results" against democracy. Rulers must be "appointed" through rational methods. That is why appointing a religious judge to this office, without regard to the will and the people and without using democratic methods, is incompatible with democracy.

Democracy is not only the right but the obligation of religious people to choose their own rulers through fair methods and to limit the power of their leaders so that their deviation from policy and deliberation is minimized and their violations are democratically restituted or retributed. The primary right of the people to govern, to rationally manage society in such a way as to reduce errors of deliberation and policy-making, shall not be revoked under any circumstances. No error can be repeated or justified on a priori grounds or divine right.

The government of the people is fit for the people, not for Gods, and Democracy is through the will of the people. This will, in religious societies, is nurtured and inspired by religion and religious Intellect, but religious edification and inspiration do not diminish the democratic nature of religious government in the least. Because a priori democratic principles are morally endemic, democracy cannot prosper without a commitment to moral precepts. Respect for the will of the majority and the rights of others, justice, sympathy and trust are among the essential principles of democracy. The reduction of these bonds will jeopardize the life of democracy in any society. The revolts of the vulnerable prosperity of some contemporary capitalist societies have threatened their morality and therefore their democracy. That's why the symphony-synthetic sound started to call for a return to virtue in such societies, for no civilization has survived without them.

It is that the great debt of religious democracy is revealed. Religion, as a bulwark of morality, can serve as the best guarantor of democracy. A religious society that is sensitive to moral corruption and honesty is better equipped to witness and judge than its leaders and critics are more wary of their abuse of power. Democracy is based on checks and balances and, as such, is designed to be responsive to electrical hazards. However, this balance depends on leaders' moral (and not just legal) obligations to fight corruption. No legal system can appoint another legal system to the police, which would result in unlimited setbacks. Only morality can solve this dilemma. Those in positions of power need internal guardians. The Mu'tazilites survived and thrived in the midst of a rich philosophical tradition. The Mu'tazilite doctrine of the creation of Al-Qur'an (the Qur'an is a creature) hardly needs to be fussed over among Shi'a theologians. Today you see Sunni reformers approaching the Shia position and starting to adopt the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an. Iranian scholars, however, are reluctant to use philosophical sources from the Shi'a tradition to open new horizons for religious understanding. They rely heavily on conservative understandings of religion and fear losing everything if they open up discussions on issues such as the nature of prophethood."

Obviously, in this context Soroush seems to want to convey the message that religious doctrines (Islam) cannot be treated exclusively, only limited to a certain space and time. If this is done, it will only dwarf Islam itself as a religion that is far from its mission, namely as a mercy to the universe (rahmatan lilalamin). On the other hand, Islam must continue to be interpreted as contextually as possible so that the messages of "heaven" can be grounded. Likewise, democracy also needs to be understood contextually. In relation to this, one's view should not be trapped by overly simplistic conclusions or prejudice that democracy is contrary to Islam, or that democracy is a secular Western monopoly right. This is where the importance, according to Soroush, combines religion with democratic values.

The importance of merging religion and democracy, according to Soroush, is actually motivated by looking at the historical fact that in the political culture of a liberal secular society, the government and its people act as if there is no God, running completely ignoring His existence and non-existence, never considering His blessings and prohibitions in their policies and behavior. On the other hand, the past forms of religious government (during the time of Catholic popes and Muslim caliphs) were considered to be only concerned with the mandate of God, not humans. They saw people's satisfaction as a natural by-product and dependent on God's satisfaction. From this the question arises, how should an Islamic government in the current context be formed? Is it possible that the freedom of modern democratic government can be enjoyed without ignoring the existence of God?

Soroush's view distinguishes between democracy and Western liberalism. In the Western world, it can be seen that injustice, colonialism, and arrogance towards other countries go hand in hand with the pursuit of freedom (liberalism). For the West, to be separated from metaphysics means to be separated from all its needs, such as the church and the clergy, God's law, ethics, religious condemnation, religious government, and good submission. In short, every religious institution that oversees worldly affairs in any form is abandoned, so that liberal freedom is freedom from the shackles of religion and metaphysics.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Abdolkarim Soroush with his secularism, tries to explain a form of government that is not emotionally the power that can best and most properly manage the people, but a rational form of government following the mentality and demands of modern humans. His effort was a strenuous effort to posit secularism and offer a new alternative that is not inferior to other models. According to the author, secularism is another way to give people their individual freedom, because it will not be achieved if it is not recognized by society.

As Sadri said, Soroush's political theory started from the anthropological philosophy of Human Nature. Soroush seemed more religious after every time he would conclude he always returned to religion. So what is produced next is his blend of human history from a free and rational will which he then mixes and sometimes even clashes with religion. Thus, his conclusion regarding secular government is that there is still a lack of secularism that can be combined with religion, and the alternative is religious democracy. However, knowledge of Soroush's secularism is beneficial in understanding the essence of a government, at least the discourse on secularism in its buildings is original and impressive. He was adjusting to the historical process and the influence of Abdolkarim Soroush's secularist mentality, which is more at the human level. This level of humanity, which he took from his Human Nature, philosophy of anthropology, is the basis of Soroush's political theory.

Democracy has proven to be a method that can limit the power of leaders, and rationalize their considerations and policies. Therefore, they are less prone to error and corruption, more open to advise, moderate, prioritize deliberation, and therefore violence and revolution are unnecessary. Therefore, separation of powers, compulsory education for the general public, freedom and autonomy of the press, freedom of expression, deliberations at various levels of decision-making, political parties, elections, and parliaments are methods to achieve democratic governance.

The principle of democracy everywhere is moral, so democracy cannot succeed without a commitment to moral precepts. For example, respecting the will of the majority and the rights of others, justice, sympathy, and trust are among the most important democratic principles. Then, democracy's great debt to religion is revealed. As a bulwark of morality, religion can act as the best guarantor of democracy. A religious society that is sensitive to moral decay and honesty is better prepared to witness and judge its leaders, and is critical and alert to abuses of power. Democracy is based on control, balance, and responsiveness to the dangers of power. However, this balance hinges on the moral obligation of leaders to fight corruption.

Modernism for Soroush represents rational success in defeating religious dictatorships, meaning that since the 16th century, religion and ratio have complemented and benefited each other. This era shows postmodernism's arrival, which combines the conflict between religion and reason. The separation of

religion from the ratio is finally assimilated by religion from politics. Another reason can also be seen from the way philosophy and theology approach religious issues. According to Soroush, philosophers and theologians use two ways, namely narrative and rational. A narrative is an approach that sees the similarity of words in religious texts and religious carriers, while rational is reason that has nothing to do with texts or treatise bearers.

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