

Five chapters on wisdom, responsibility and Iran's future

Training Thousands of Churchills

Psychology, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
on the path to a peaceful transition
under the rule of law

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English translation | October 2026
From the revised Persian edition dated 7 October 2026

Thought and Responsibility for Iran's Future

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Psychology, Philosophy, Politics and Economics



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About This Edition

This edition was prepared from the five chapters of Training Thousands of Churchills. The work's original structure has been preserved, while its language, links, headings, numbering and page layout have been made consistent. The book's design, from its cover and title page to the contents and chapter openings, was coordinated with two of the author's companion books.

The scholarly revision focuses on clarifying the distinction between the author's political views and research findings. Parliamentary monarchy and the national role of Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi are the author's political preferences. The explanation of parliamentary government, the relationship between the ethics of conviction and responsibility, and the use of psychological concepts have been presented with greater precision. Absolute assertions and sweeping generalisations have been replaced with more considered statements that can be examined.

This book is a collection of analytical reflections and normative proposals; it is neither original empirical research nor a systematic review of the literature. Sources have been selected for their relevance to the claims in the text. Findings concerning children or work teams are not extended to political debate without acknowledging the limits of that transfer, and no claim is made that the effectiveness of this educational model has been empirically demonstrated.

Numbered citations appear beside the relevant passages, and full source details are provided at the end of the book. Each reference retains the same number throughout. The contents, citations and source links are clickable in the digital edition. Older sources are used for concepts and historical experience; this work is not a current statistical report on conditions in Iran.

About the author: Peyman Bakhshayesh, MD, PhD, MBA, is a trauma and orthopaedic surgeon and the author of works on civic responsibility, political dialogue and Iran's future. He supports constitutional monarchy and secular democracy. The positions and proposals in this book are the author's views.

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CHAPTER 1

Preface

For Iran's Future, from Aspiration to Responsibility

1. Iran's Future and the Question of Human Capacity

For Iran to move calmly, responsibly and as peacefully as possible from the Islamic Republic towards a secular, democratic order governed by law, it needs more than a name, a slogan or a moment of public mobilisation. This path requires citizens who can think under difficult conditions, cooperate, accept responsibility and connect political demands with their practical consequences. By 'training thousands of Churchills', I mean developing this human capacity among women and men, the young and the experienced, inside and outside the country, who regard Iran's future as a shared responsibility.

I support the national role of Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi in facilitating the transition, and parliamentary monarchy as my preferred political choice. That preference must accompany the Iranian people's right to determine freely the form of their political system. Support for a transitional leader does not replace public consent, legal limits on power or the possibility of political competition. A government that draws its legitimacy from the people must remain accountable to them after it is established.

This book concerns intellectual and civic preparation for such a future. It does not offer a definite prediction about the timing or outcome of political change. A transition may encounter obstacles, setbacks and unforeseen circumstances. Even so, we can work today to improve the quality of dialogue, decision-making, civic organisation and institutional reconstruction. Hope becomes a public resource when it is accompanied by knowledge, planning, trust and responsibility.

2. Churchill as a Metaphor for Political Character

In this book, 'Churchill' is a metaphor for perseverance in crisis, realism, the ability to speak to society and cooperation across party boundaries. The formation of Britain's coalition government in May 1940 is a historical example of bringing different forces together in an emergency; in his speech to the House of Commons, Churchill emphasised the participation of both government and opposition parties. This example illustrates the importance of cooperation in a crisis, rather than suggesting that all his policies and views provide a flawless model for Iran. [1]

A historical metaphor must have limits. Iran today is not Britain during the Second World War, and a country's problems cannot be solved by mechanically transferring another country's experience. Civic education is not intended to produce thousands of

people with identical personalities. What is worth drawing from this example is a set of abilities that can be practised: listening, weighing evidence, setting priorities, managing disagreement, admitting error and serving the public good.

'Thousands of Churchills' is therefore not an invitation to hero worship. A figure may inspire people, but governing a country depends on a network of people, rules and trustworthy institutions. A national leader, an executive manager, a member of parliament, a teacher, a doctor, a worker, an entrepreneur and a civic activist have different responsibilities. Political maturity means understanding these different roles and accepting that no individual can take the place of society as a whole.

3. Iranian History and the Need for Critical Learning

Iran's modern history has involved tensions between state-building, political participation, independence, modernisation and foreign intervention. During Reza Shah's reign, the expansion of the administrative apparatus and the concentration of authority coincided with restrictions on political competition. An assessment of that period must consider both the achievements of modernisation and the costs of concentrating power. In 1941, the occupation of Iran by British and Soviet forces and Reza Shah's abdication again revealed the influence of the international environment on the country's fate. [2]

During Mohammad Reza Shah's reign, too, the development of infrastructure, education and the economy was not separate from political conflict and the question of public participation. The lesson of these experiences should not be reduced to unconditional praise or wholesale rejection of an era. A useful question for the future is how the state's capacity can be combined with citizens' rights to oversight and participation, and how public order can be maintained without marginalising law and freedom.

In my view, defending Iran's territorial integrity and national cohesion must be compatible with equality among citizens, respect for cultural diversity and acceptance of political disagreement. Not every dissenter or local demand can be treated as a threat to the country. Judgements about individuals and groups should rest on conduct, programmes and specific evidence. Sweeping labels applied to all left-wing, republican or religious currents weaken the possibility of national cooperation.

4. From Political Passion to the Capacity to Build

Anger at repression and injustice is understandable, but it does not by itself provide a programme for governing the country. Building the future requires knowledge of civic rights, budgets, economics, management, foreign relations and decision-making processes. It also depends on the ability to cooperate with people who disagree with us about details or even the preferred form of government, but agree on freedom, equality before the law and the people's right to choose.

In this book I use 'political maturity' to mean abilities that can be practised, rather than a judgement about people's human worth. Someone may possess extensive knowledge but show little organisational experience in dialogue; another may be a careful listener and a trustworthy colleague. The purpose of education is to create opportunities for development, rather than a class of people who consider themselves inherently superior to others.

The book's five chapters approach this question through psychology, philosophy, politics and economics. Psychology addresses emotion regulation and cooperation; philosophy examines the relationship between freedom, responsibility and power; politics turns to accountable institutions and parliamentary monarchy; economics connects economic freedom with law, competition and social protection. These chapters form parts of one shared question: how can we learn both to want a better Iran and to build it?

Iran is greater than any individual, party or faction. For me, upholding this principle also means responsibility towards people's lives and rights. The country cannot be separated from its citizens. A future in which order, freedom and prosperity support one another is built through responsible people and institutions that can be reformed.

Long live Iran; long live the Shah.

CHAPTER 2

The Psychology of Training Thousands of Churchills

Emotion Regulation, Resilience and the Capacity to Cooperate

5. Why Does a Political Question Also Have a Psychological Dimension?

In any crisis, the quality of people's responses affects the quality of public cooperation. A group may share aspirations for the country's future, yet encounter difficulty in practice because of haste, mistrust, sensitivity to criticism or an inability to manage disagreement. In such circumstances, the problem is not simply a difference between political programmes; the way people handle pressure and uncertainty, and relate to one another, also matters.

Psychology is nevertheless not the sole explanation for the success or failure of political movements. Repression, financial resources, institutional opportunities, international relations and organisational structure also matter. Attributing every failure to individuals being 'immature' is an incomplete and sometimes blaming analysis. This chapter focuses on abilities that can be practised alongside improvements in collective processes, rather than clinical diagnosis of members of a political movement.

6. Emotion Regulation and the Space between Feeling and Decision

One foundation of a responsible character is the ability to create a space between receiving news and choosing a response. A person may become angry about injustice, but before reposting, making an accusation or taking action, can assess the accuracy of the news, the circumstances and the consequences of their own conduct. Within the research framework of emotion regulation, people can influence when, how and to what extent they experience and express their emotions. Emotion regulation is not the same as emotional numbness or the permanent suppression of feelings. [3]

This distinction has practical importance for civic activity. Iran's suffering must be heard, and protesting against injustice is a right of its citizens. What needs practice is converting emotion into a considered decision: is this report trustworthy? Does my statement help clarify the issue? Does an immediate response remove the opportunity to correct an error? These questions do not eliminate emotion; they give it direction and responsibility.

Emotional discipline also requires recognising one's own limits. Someone who is tired, under pressure or caught up in personal tension may need time away from a discussion. In a responsible group, pausing and requesting clarification should not be treated as signs of disloyalty. Political courage is compatible with self-care and avoiding harmful reactions.

7. Tolerating Ambiguity and Avoiding Simple Dichotomies

Political transition involves incomplete information and difficult decisions. Not every delay is a failure; not every disagreement is a betrayal; and agreeing with a proposal does not necessarily mean agreeing with all the views of the person who made it. Someone who sees only a division between friend and enemy loses sight of part of reality and limits opportunities for cooperation.

Tolerating ambiguity does not mean abandoning principles. We can insist on territorial integrity, freedom, secularism and the people's vote while considering the means, timing and consequences of pursuing them. In collective decision-making, expressing a degree of confidence is more useful than displaying certainty. 'This is what I think, given the information currently available' keeps the possibility of revision open; 'anyone who disagrees is a traitor' closes it.

Developing judgement also requires study and comparison of sources. News, analysis, rumour and proposals need to be distinguished. A short video of an event may not show its whole context. Civic responsibility requires us to gather enough information before judging individuals, and to take seriously the possibility that we may be mistaken.

8. Self-Esteem and National Belonging without Immunity from Criticism

Self-esteem enables a person to speak for their beliefs without treating every disagreement as a personal humiliation. Belonging to a group or nation can also be a source of solidarity. A problem arises when an exaggerated image of the group becomes immune to examination and criticism, and every question is interpreted as an attack on collective dignity.

Research on 'collective narcissism' distinguishes this kind of defensive sensitivity from a positive attitude towards one's group and reports an association with hostility between groups in the samples studied. This concept should not become a tool for diagnosing a nation, a party or a political opponent. Its use in this book is to draw attention to the risks of demanding collective immunity from criticism and creating enemies. [4]

A responsible person can take pride in Iran while questioning historical mistakes or present decisions. They can support Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi while continuing to

expect accountability and the opportunity for criticism. Self-confidence goes together with humility before evidence; the ability to speak is complemented by other people's right to be heard.

9. Resilience in the Face of Setbacks and Exhaustion

Along political and civic paths, temporary setbacks can wear down motivation and trust. Resilience here does not mean ignoring suffering or insisting on a failed method; it means being able to return to considered action, maintain supportive relationships and revise a plan after difficulties. Individuals and groups must be able to learn from failure, rather than denying its reality in order to preserve their self-image.

The resilience literature highlights the importance of ordinary processes of support and adaptation. Developmental research, particularly concerning children in difficult circumstances, shows that resilience is not simply an exceptional heroic quality. Directly extending these findings to political activism requires caution. Even so, attention to social support, learning and maintaining the capacities needed for everyday life can guide the creation of a supportive environment. [5]

From this book's perspective, a responsible group does not place the entire burden on a few people, make failure an excuse to humiliate members, or confuse perseverance with exhaustion. A sustainable programme and a clear division of work, together with acceptance of the need for rest, form part of collective discipline. The continuity of an activity should not be judged by the extent of individuals' conspicuous self-sacrifice.

10. Discipline and Responsibility in Speech

Language can build trust or destroy it. Humiliation, unsupported accusations and spreading rumours may generate excitement in the short term, but reduce the quality of cooperation. Anyone who hopes to play a part in Iran's future must distinguish today between criticising an argument and attacking a person's character. Frankness is not the same as disrespect.

Discipline in speech does not mean compulsory silence. Warnings about corruption, violence or a costly decision are necessary, but should be supported by evidence and expressed proportionately. When a mistake occurs in something said, correcting it openly is more responsible than justifying it or deleting it secretly. Public credibility is not gained by appearing faultless; it is also built through dealing honestly with error.

Dialogue becomes an opportunity for learning when members can ask questions and acknowledge their mistakes without fear of humiliation. Edmondson's study of work teams shows a relationship between psychological safety and learning behaviour. This finding concerns organisational teams and does not guarantee political success, but it offers a useful model for a setting in which criticism and learning are possible. [6]

11. Cooperating despite Disagreement

No broad national project moves forward solely through people who think alike on every issue. Cooperation requires identifying the shared issue and its boundaries. People can cooperate in defending freedom of expression, equality before the law or free elections without erasing philosophical, economic or party differences. A limited, clear agreement is often more trustworthy than a claim of complete unity.

The capacity to cooperate means being able to state an opposing view accurately, fulfil an accepted task and accept the outcome of a fair process, even when one's own proposal is not selected. In return, the group must recognise the right to record dissent and review a decision. An independent character and collective cooperation can strengthen one another.

12. Responsible Patriotism and Active Citizenship

For me, responsible patriotism connects love of Iran with practical service: study, education, production, relief work, civic activity, maintaining public credibility and defending citizens' rights. This patriotism does not require hatred of an ethnic group, a religion or a political movement. National strength is valuable when it also strengthens people's security and dignity.

An active citizen is more than a consumer of news and a spectator of leaders' behaviour. They consider their own duties and accept a contribution proportionate to their abilities. Doctors, teachers, workers, researchers, journalists, entrepreneurs and students can extend a culture of responsibility in their own fields. No profession creates political virtue by itself; the criterion is the quality of conduct and service.

The goal of 'thousands of Churchills' in this chapter is to build a network of trustworthy people. In such a network, the ability to listen, regulate emotions, cooperate and admit mistakes matters as much as the ability to speak. Freedom is strengthened by responsible people, but these people also need institutions that protect their rights and provide opportunities for learning and participation.

CHAPTER 3

The Philosophy of Thousands of Churchills

Freedom, Practical Wisdom and the Ethics of Responsibility

13. What Is the Philosophy behind This Education?

The philosophy of thousands of Churchills rests on the idea that Iran's future must be built through society's participation and through institutions capable of reforming themselves. Hope in a national figure can provide a force for mobilisation, but does not replace citizens' preparation or the rules by which the country is governed. Society must also prepare for the order that follows change: for decision-making, tolerating disagreement, protecting rights and accepting public responsibility.

This philosophy is neither a complete party programme nor an empirical theory of all political behaviour. It is a normative framework for connecting patriotism with wisdom, freedom with responsibility and power with accountability. Its value must be assessed through the quality of its reasoning and its consequences that can be examined. The name of a historical figure is not sufficient on its own to establish the validity of this framework.

The person envisaged here is not someone who is always calm or always agrees with the leader. They may protest, criticise and remain determined, but seek to explain their reasons, assess evidence and consider the consequences of action. Political maturity is not a fixed, permanent status; it is an ongoing practice of thinking and acting better.

14. Rationality, Emotion and Recognising Reality

Rationality should not be regarded as the enemy of emotion. Feelings of belonging, hope, suffering and empathy can motivate service. The point is that public decisions should not depend solely on the intensity of feeling. We must ask ourselves: what information do we have? Which assumptions remain untested? Who benefits from a decision, and who bears its costs? If our expectations are not fulfilled, how will we correct our course?

A reactive person takes their agenda solely from external provocation; a considered person seeks to maintain their purpose and priorities. Nevertheless, no one is entirely free from bias and error. Confidence in individual judgement must therefore be accompanied by collective criticism, recorded decisions and reconsideration. Intellectual discipline reaches maturity when it also allows disagreement with itself.

Realism does not mean surrender to the status quo. We can strive for substantial change while recognising limits of resources, time and the political environment. An ideal provides direction; knowledge of reality makes it possible to choose a route. Without a connection between the two, we arrive either at wishful thinking or at passivity.

15. The Ethics of Responsibility and Fidelity to Principles

In Max Weber's discussion of politics, the 'ethic of conviction' and the 'ethic of responsibility' raise two important questions: fidelity to principles and attention to the foreseeable consequences of action. At the end of his discussion, Weber also regards the two as complementary. The ethic of responsibility should therefore not be reduced simply to succeeding or permitting any means of achieving a goal; equally, having good intentions does not remove the need to assess the outcome. [7]

For me, this distinction has particular importance in political activity. Defending freedom and human dignity must be accompanied by questions about the effects of speech and conduct. If an action risks people's lives or deprives them of their rights, an attractive slogan is not enough. Responsibility involves attention to those who may bear the cost of our decisions, especially when we ourselves live far from the place of danger.

Responsibility should not, however, become a means of silencing protest. Defending a principle sometimes entails costs and uncertainty. Ethical judgement must examine the relationship between the goal, the means, the available choices and the consequences. The responsible approach is to make these considerations explicit and require decision-makers to account for their choices, rather than justifying every cost through the vague phrase 'the national interest'.

16. Mature Patriotism and the Public Good

Mature patriotism means turning love of Iran into a commitment to shared life. Preserving territorial integrity, the language and historical heritage matters to me, but these values must connect with security, freedom and the opportunity for a decent life for citizens. The country is not simply a territory and a symbol; it is also the people who live in it and the future they build for their children.

The public good is not always the immediate demand of a group or faction. A faction's short-term interest may harm public trust or other people's right to participate. In such circumstances, civic responsibility reminds us that power today is not permission to seize ownership of the future. No political current should regard itself as the exclusive owner of what Iran means.

Patriotism is also expressed through work, education, law, investment, environmental protection and social reconciliation. Everyday service may receive less

attention than a speech, but it matters to people's quality of life. Civic education must recognise this form of responsibility rather than measuring people's value only through their media presence or the intensity of their slogans.

17. Power, Service and Limits

Power is compatible with this philosophy when it is exercised within the law and in public service. Anyone accepting responsibility must know the limits of their authority, how their work is supervised and under what conditions they can be replaced. Legitimacy does not depend solely on popularity or good intentions; it depends on rules that preserve the possibility of questioning and correction.

From this perspective, developing powerful individuals without teaching them to accept limits is insufficient. The important test comes when someone gains influence yet continues to accept dissent, institutional independence and scrutiny of their decisions. The greater the power, the greater the need for accountability. National loyalty is incompatible with turning individuals into holders of unlimited authority.

This principle applies to a transitional leader, monarch, government, parliament, economic manager and civic activist alike, although oversight differs according to the role. Respect for a national office must not lead to the suspension of criticism or ambiguity about responsibilities. Symbolic roles, executive roles and legal authority must be clear and understandable.

18. Dialogue, Pluralism and the Boundaries of Disagreement

Iran is a plural society, and its future will not be free of ethnic, linguistic, religious, generational, class and political differences. The art of dialogue is not to eliminate these differences; it is to find rules that allow shared life and decision-making to continue despite disagreement. Political opposition must be distinguished from threats, violence and the violation of other people's rights.

Cooperation is not the same as naivety. We can remain alert to dangerous behaviour without treating every critic as an enemy. We can agree with someone on one issue and disagree on another. These distinctions allow us to preserve our principles while avoiding intellectual and tribal isolation.

Dialogue requires practical rules: a clear subject, an appropriate opportunity to speak, requests for reasons, records of agreement and the possibility of expressing dissent. These rules do not replace substance; they create the conditions for assessing it. A group that asks its members only to declare loyalty loses its capacity for independent thought.

19. Developing People and Institutions Together

In this book, personal development means cultivating habits that can be used in public life: regular study, attention to evidence, recognition of limits, fulfilment of commitments and acceptance of responsibility for one's words. These habits can improve the quality of participation, but we should not assume that everyone must first become perfect and democratic institutions can then be built. The two processes shape one another.

Good institutions limit human error and make learning possible; responsible people also help institutions function and improve. The World Development Report on governance shows that rules, the distribution of power, cooperation and the opportunity to participate affect policy implementation. The quality of government therefore cannot be attributed solely to individual virtue or solely to the text of the law. [8]

For Iran's future, this connection is vital. We need civic education alongside free elections, an independent judiciary, media open to criticism and organisations that account for their actions. A responsible character must operate in an environment that encourages responsibility, rather than in a structure that rewards concealment and unquestioning obedience.

20. Threats to This Philosophy and Its Relationship with the Future

Populism, hero worship, promises of an immediate solution, hatred and the exclusion of others are incompatible with this philosophy. Any current, including the one I support, may fall into these patterns. The standards of criticism must be the same for insiders and outsiders.

Parliamentary monarchy and a democratic republic both need accountability and a culture of participation. My preference is parliamentary monarchy, but I do not make freedom and the people's right to choose conditional on my preferred outcome. To move beyond a cycle of exclusion, we must accept the possibility of both victory and defeat in legitimate competition.

The philosophy of thousands of Churchills is an invitation to maturity: to hold an ideal, assess reality, limit power and accept responsibility. Its aim is a generation that does not become absorbed in unlimited authority when it wins, or forget citizens' rights in a crisis; a generation that builds the future through wisdom, cooperation and institutions capable of reform.

CHAPTER 4

The Politics of Thousands of Churchills

Parliamentary Monarchy and the Architecture of Accountability

21. Parliamentary Monarchy as a Political Choice

Iran's future needs a system that limits power, makes governing the country possible and preserves the right to change the government. I regard parliamentary monarchy as a suitable way to combine national continuity with an elected government. This is my political and normative preference, rather than a claim that this form of government necessarily succeeds more than every other form in every country and under every set of circumstances.

In this model, the monarch can symbolise national unity and historical continuity, while the country's executive administration is entrusted to a government accountable to parliament. The British example distinguishes between the position of head of state and executive decision-making. The details of powers and rules in each country arise from its constitution and historical arrangements. Iran's future institutional design must rest on the needs and choices of the Iranian people. [9]

If the crown is to stand above factions, it must not become an instrument of permanent victory for one party. Governments must be replaceable, and citizens must have the right to debate the performance of government and even constitutional arrangements. The value of symbolic continuity becomes clear when it is accompanied by freedom of competition and executive accountability.

22. The Monarch's Position and Clear Limits on Authority

In this book's proposal, the monarch is not responsible for the day-to-day administration of ministries, setting economic policy or party competition. The monarch is a symbolic office-holder who must act within the constitution and clear rules. Every official duty, from appointing a prime minister to giving assent to legislation, requires specific arrangements that prevent ceremonial or exceptional powers from turning into personal rule.

A unifying role depends on public acceptance and appropriate conduct. It cannot be guaranteed simply by hereditary status. Party neutrality, financial transparency and respect for elected institutions are among my proposed requirements for maintaining trust in this position. Symbolic standing must not create uncertainty about the limits of responsibility.

To prevent crises, it must be clear in advance which authority will decide a dispute between government and parliament, and according to which rules. The constitution should not leave every difficult question to individuals' goodwill. Clear rules protect both the national office and people's rights against misuse of the crown's reserve powers.

23. Parliament, Government and Executive Responsibility

Parliament must be chosen through free and competitive elections and carry out legislation, scrutiny of the budget and oversight of government. In a parliamentary system, the government usually depends on parliament's support or confidence, while the prime minister and cabinet are responsible for implementing policy. An elected representative should not merely speak for their faction; they must also be able to question decisions about cost, feasibility and consequences.

An accountable government is one whose programme, responsibilities and performance can be examined. A minister must explain decisions, the administrative apparatus must provide reliable information, and legal mechanisms must make it possible to reform or change the government. A responsible politician does not always attribute failure to an enemy or a previous government, but also clarifies their own share of authority and responsibility.

For the generation of 'thousands of Churchills', politics is not simply speaking and declaring a position. Knowing the legislative process, reading a budget, examining reports and chairing a meeting are also parts of political capacity. Without skills and sufficient time for oversight, an elected institution may become a spectator of executive decisions. Political education must take this less visible work seriously.

24. The Separation and Balance of Powers in a Parliamentary System

We must distinguish between separating functions and completely separating institutions. In a parliamentary system, government and parliament are not entirely separate; the government enjoys parliamentary support, and its members may also be members of parliament. The House of Commons report describes this connection alongside the need for checks and balances. Describing parliamentary monarchy as the 'complete separation of the three branches of power' is therefore inaccurate. [10]

What matters for Iran's future is preventing the unchecked concentration of power: real parliamentary oversight of government, judicial independence, the possibility of legal review of executive decisions and independent audit institutions. No majority should be able to extinguish others' right to future participation simply by relying on electoral victory.

An independent judiciary does not mean judges are immune from responsibility. Appointment procedures, safeguards for independence, investigation of misconduct and people's access to courts must be clear. Justice creates trust when people can defend their rights without political or economic privilege.

25. The Rule of Law and Equality among Citizens

The rule of law requires public power to act within published rules that can be supervised. In the model I favour, no office-holder, institution, military force, party or economic enterprise should be exempt from legal responsibility. The law must also be compatible with fundamental rights and allow avenues for objection and reform. The existence of a legal text alone does not establish its justice.

The right to participate and vote is recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Freedom of expression, equality, fair trial and participation must be considered together in a future political system. These rights do not depend on a faction obtaining its preferred result; critical citizens must also enjoy them. [11]

Defending territorial integrity is compatible with respect for cultural diversity and local participation. Concentration or the delegation of administrative responsibilities can be discussed without treating every proposal as a security threat. The identification of crime or threats must rely on evidence and legal processes, rather than media labels.

26. The Role of the People and Civil Society

People are not citizens only on election day. Scrutiny of budgets, activity in professional associations, the media, education and local participation are also parts of democratic life. Civil society can clarify problems, provide information and connect people's needs with public decisions.

Within this framework, a responsible political organisation must itself be accountable. Its members should understand how office-holders are selected, how funds are raised and how decisions are made. We cannot demand transparency for the country while avoiding clear limits of authority or recorded decisions within our own organisation. Today's working methods are part of tomorrow's capacity to govern.

Political differences must become competition between programmes. Left-wing, right-wing, republican and monarchist currents can operate freely within a framework of equal rights and competition. Violence, discrimination and violations of rights must be examined on the basis of specific conduct; belonging to an intellectual family is not in itself a reason for exclusion from public life.

27. Transitional Leadership and the Limits of the Interim Period

My support for Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi's role in the transition accompanies the expectation that the interim period should lead to an elected government and a legitimate constitution. Every arrangement for managing a transition needs limits on authority, oversight, a timetable open to review and opportunities for democratic forces to participate. An emergency should not become a permanent and unlimited condition.

One important principle is to preserve public services and citizens' security while opening the political space. Rebuilding trust and examining violations of rights must proceed through clear rules and fair processes. Collective revenge and attributing individual responsibility to every member of a group are incompatible with a future governed by law.

For me, parliamentary monarchy is a choice for the future: a future in which executive power is replaceable, the national office is limited by law and citizens possess rights. 'Thousands of Churchills' must be able to defend these rules even when applying them benefits a political rival. This test reveals the difference between loyalty expressed in slogans and democratic commitment.

CHAPTER 5

The Economics of Thousands of Churchills

Economic Freedom, Justice and Effective Government

28. Why Is the Economy Part of National Stability?

For Iran's future to flourish, the way the economy is managed must also change. Job security, the ability to plan, confidence in contracts and access to public services are important parts of citizens' lives. A political system that does not address these needs faces an erosion of trust. The relationship between the economy and political stability is nevertheless neither simple nor a matter of a single cause; institutional quality, politics and the distribution of opportunities also matter.

Economic stability should not be seen solely in a few figures or in the income growth of a limited group. For a citizen, the question is whether they can see a comprehensible prospect for life, whether the law is applied fairly and whether opportunities for advancement depend on political connections. A government has a responsibility to speak transparently about the costs and outcomes of its policies.

This chapter does not aim to offer a complete economic programme for Iran. It provides a framework for educating a generation that understands the economy through data, budgets, production, productivity and institutions. Without reliable information and examination of the options, definitive judgements about the appropriate policy at each stage are not possible. What can be practised today is discipline in questioning and avoiding unsupported promises.

29. A Free Economy within a Democratic Framework

In this book, a 'liberal-democratic economy' names a combination of economic freedom with the rule of law, competition, accountability and social protection. It does not denote a single, uncontested prescription in economics. Private property and entrepreneurship are respected within this framework, but both the market and the state must be subject to law. Freedom of contract does not permit monopoly, corruption or the violation of workers' rights.

The state must safeguard the rules of competition, infrastructure, public services and citizens' rights. In some fields regulation is needed, and in others public funding or direct delivery of services is necessary. The appropriate size of the state cannot be determined without examining society's duties, capacities and needs. A 'small' state is

not in itself a sign of effectiveness, just as a large administrative apparatus does not guarantee the quality of services.

The OECD's recommendations and instruments on competitive neutrality emphasise fair conditions for enterprises, irrespective of their ownership or legal form. This principle shifts attention from slogans about ownership to the actual rules of competition: have privileges, subsidies or regulations been designed so as to restrict competition without good reason? [12]

From this perspective, a healthy market needs legal adjudication, transparent information and the possibility for new firms to enter. The state must not use its power to grant privileges to political associates. A defence of economic freedom is complete when it is accompanied by a defence of competition, the right to challenge decisions and financial accountability.

30. Why Does This Debate Matter for Iran?

Discussion of Iran's economic future must address economic rents, monopoly, the role of state-owned and quasi-state enterprises, links with the world and legal security. These problems cannot be solved through the wholesale rejection of the state or the wholesale veneration of the market. The more precise questions are which structures encourage production and innovation, and which replace competition with political privilege.

I favour an open, competitive economy governed by law for Iran: an economy that gives investors security, workers legal protection and citizens opportunities to develop. This preference must accompany practical programmes, data and assessment of consequences. Natural resources or human capacity do not create lasting prosperity by themselves; how they are used and managed also matters.

Every reform proposal must answer several questions: what problem does it solve? Who bears its costs? How will it be implemented? What information will be used to examine its results? Without these answers, even an attractive political label may turn into the distribution of economic rents or the creation of new costs.

31. Parliamentary Monarchy and Economic Predictability

In the institutional design I favour, parliamentary monarchy can combine continuity in a national symbol with the ability to change the government. Investment and growth, however, do not arise solely from the title of a government. Respect for contracts, regulatory quality, judicial independence, governmental accountability and trustworthy, stable rules can also be achieved in democratic republics.

The relationship between the crown and the economy must therefore be defined precisely. In this book's proposed model, the monarch is not an economic manager, the holder of a commercial privilege or the maker of day-to-day budget decisions.

Economic policy belongs to the elected government and is subject to parliamentary oversight. Transparency of assets and the prevention of conflicts of interest matter for every influential office-holder and institution.

Predictability does not mean prohibiting reform. A country must be able to change its laws and policies, but such changes should proceed through clear processes, information and assessment of consequences. Trust grows when citizens and economic actors know how decisions are made and what avenues exist for challenge or review.

32. Barriers to Competition and the Risk of Privatisation through Patronage

The barriers to a competitive economy must be identified through conduct and structures: monopoly, collusion, corruption, special privileges, opaque contracts and obstacles to a competitor's entry. Attributing these barriers to all members of left-wing or right-wing currents weakens the analysis. People can disagree about taxation, ownership and social protection while remaining committed to fair competition and the rule of law.

Privatisation without transparency, reliable valuation and supervision may simply transfer ownership to a new network of associates. In that situation, the label 'private' does not by itself solve the problem of economic rents. The criterion must be whether productivity, competition, the quality of service and accountability have improved.

The generation of thousands of Churchills must be able to defend economic reform while also asking difficult questions about its instruments. Transparent tendering, declaration of conflicts of interest, equal access to information and the possibility of legal challenge are important means of oversight. Supporting an entrepreneur does not mean concentrating wealth with no accountability.

33. Sound Money and an Independent, Accountable Central Bank

High and unpredictable inflation makes planning difficult for households and businesses. Attention to price stability, fiscal discipline and the quality of the banking system must form part of any programme for reconstruction. Central bank independence, where it has a clear mandate and institutional safeguards, can reduce short-term political pressure on monetary policy, but it is not a remedy for every source of inflation.

In its analyses, the International Monetary Fund emphasises the relationship between central bank independence, the anchoring of inflation expectations and improved inflation outcomes, while also regarding political support, prudent fiscal policy, transparency and accountability as important. The practical interpretation for

Iran is that independence must be accompanied by clear limits on authority and responsibility, rather than a central bank that is immune from public questioning. [13]

Debate about money and budgets requires reliable data. Money creation, debt, the budget deficit, the exchange rate and banks' balance sheets cannot be examined separately from one another. Responsible decisions make short-term and long-term costs explicit and avoid promises of instant control over complex problems.

34. Transparent Budgets and Legal Security

A budget must show where public resources come from and how they are spent. Every institution that uses public resources must account for them according to specific rules. Transparency means more than publishing a lengthy table; information must be understandable, comparable and open to scrutiny. Publishing figures alone is insufficient without auditing and the ability to trace them.

Legal security for investment also requires respect for contracts, fair adjudication and protection from arbitrary confiscation or the withdrawal of privileges at discretion. This security is not exclusively an investor's right. Workers, consumers and citizens must also be able to enforce their rights and contracts. A legal order is trustworthy when it applies in the same way to powerful and less powerful people.

In this book's proposals, economic institutions must be able to explain their performance against published criteria. Reducing an agency's costs is not a success in itself if it leads to a severe decline in the quality of services. Evaluation must consider costs and outcomes together, and avoid manipulating figures to establish the validity of a decision made in advance.

35. Reforming Energy, Industry and Trade with Attention to People

Reforming subsidies, reconstructing industry and expanding trade may create opportunities while also imposing costs on households and businesses. The sequence of implementation, communication and administrative capacity matters. The appropriate pace of reform cannot be prescribed universally without examining conditions, but those likely to be harmed most must be identified before a decision is implemented.

IMF studies of energy subsidy reform examine its budgetary, distributional and environmental effects and emphasise the design of reforms and compensation for their impact on vulnerable groups. In this book's proposed interpretation, support must be accessible and practical; a promise of compensation does not replace mechanisms that have been prepared to provide it. [14]

Free trade and links with the global economy also require attention to productive capacity, regulation, infrastructure and mechanisms for resolving disputes. The

generation of thousands of Churchills does not confuse independence with economic isolation, nor does it regard every form of economic self-sufficiency as desirable. The goal is to increase opportunities and national capacity within a framework of national interests and citizens' rights.

36. Education, Skills and Social Justice

The economy of the future needs quality education, skills and opportunities for continuous learning. Schools and universities must strengthen independent thought while also opening routes into professional and economic activity. Technical education, research and entrepreneurship should not be set against one another; each builds part of the country's capacity.

Social justice cannot be reduced to formal equality of opportunity. Children who are deprived of adequate education, nutrition or health do not start from the same point. In the framework I favour, economic growth must be accompanied by access to basic services, protection against severe hardship and reduced discrimination. Debate about the instruments of this support is part of legitimate competition over policy.

Social protection must preserve dignity and be as predictable as possible. Its criterion is not the recipient's political loyalty. Helping a vulnerable person must not become an instrument for securing obedience. At the same time, support programmes require clear funding and evaluation if they are to remain sustainable and reach their goals.

37. The National Economy and Foreign Policy

Trade, transport, banking, insurance and technology transfer are affected by the environment of foreign relations. For me, Iran's preferred foreign policy must be non-ideological, oriented towards peace and based on national interests. Engagement with the world does not mean abandoning independence; independence must not be confused with severing relations or disregarding mutual interests.

Economic strength is reinforced by reliability. A country that offers contracts, clear rules and sustained cooperation creates more scope for planning. Yet foreign partners' interests do not always coincide with Iran's interests. Negotiation and diversification of relationships must take account of these differences. Realism recognises both opportunities and limits.

38. Thinking Like Churchill about Economics

Thinking like Churchill about economics means accepting the difficult work of examining reality: reading figures, recognising assumptions, explaining costs and accepting a conclusion that does not match our initial preference. A decision's popularity or difficulty does not establish that it is correct. Every policy must withstand scrutiny of its reasons and consequences.

Iran's future needs managers, legislators, journalists, teachers, entrepreneurs and citizens who connect public wealth with production, trust and service. Identifying problems, comparing solutions and overseeing implementation are their duties. The economy is a field for learning and reform, rather than simply for declaring loyalty to a school of thought or slogan.

For me, the economics of thousands of Churchills means freedom within the law, competition with fairness, and growth with responsibility. My preferred parliamentary monarchy must be assessed by these same criteria. The name of the system does not replace the quality of government; that quality is incomplete without a decent life and the people's right to participate.

My answer to the question at the beginning of this book is to educate responsible citizens alongside building accountable institutions: a path towards a free, prosperous and stable Iran, sustained by wisdom, discipline, cooperation and respect for human dignity.

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