

In the Name Of Allah the most Beneficent the most Merciful

Muslim Unity and Imam Khomeini (RA)

By : Rida Bokhari

Ayatollah Khomeini (R.A) was one of the world's most influential, important and religious figures ever. He became the renowned, supreme Islamic leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. He was born on the 24th of September, 1902, his name Ruhollah Mousavi means "inspired of God", born into a family of Shi'ite religious scholars in the small Iranian village of Khomein hence his surname Khomeini taken by his hometown. In 1903, just five months after his birth, his father, Sayyid Moustafa Hindi was murdered; Khomeini was raised by his mother and an aunt Sahebeh, both of whom died of cholera in 1918. He was a sayyid, who claims to be the descendents of Prophet Mohammad (SAWW), through the seventh Imam, Imam Musa Kazim (A.S), (Unknown).

At the age of six, Ayatollah Khomeini (R.A) began to study the Quran, Islam's holy book. He received his early education at home and his local school, under the supervision of Mullah Abdul-Qassem and Sheikh Jaffar. His guardianship was of his elder brother, Ayatollah Pasandideh, until he was eighteen years of age. Arrangements were made for him to study at the Islamic seminary in Esfahan, but he was attracted instead to the seminary in Arak, which was renowned for its scholastic brilliance under the leadership of Ayatollah Sheikh Abdol-Karim Haeri-Yazdi (who was a pupil himself of the greatest scholars of Najaf and Karbala in Iraq).

Imam Khomeini (R.A) studied from various institutes; in 1921 he commenced his studies in Arak. The following year he accepted an invitation to study in the holy city of Qom before he was exiled to Najaf, Iraq. After graduation, Ayatollah Khomeini (R.A) taught Islamic jurisprudence (Sharia law), Islamic philosophy and mysticism (Irfan) for many years and wrote numerous books on each subject. During his scholarly life he remained politically inactive, the nature of his studies, research etc reveals that he was keen on clerics being politically active.

Imam Khomeini (R.A) was a blessing for the people of Iran; he told the world how an Islamic revolutionised country should be. One of his main concerns was

to maintain the unity between Muslims. The Islamic Revolution of Iran led by Imam Khomeini (R.A) challenged the acceptance of principles, indices, yardsticks, criteria, values in the culture of the west, and instead put forward the elevated values originating from the Mohammedan school of thought. In the era of enslavement of a number of deprived nations, this Revolution not only provided the motivation for the most popular liberating and justice seeking uprising; rather, by releasing the powerful forces from within the Iranian society. Khomeini used various terminologies regarding the west, on the 3rd of June 1963; he made a historic speech against the dependence of the Shah's regime on foreign powers, and its support of Israel. He was immediately arrested, but his imprisonment inspired major public demonstrations of support in Iran, that were eventually crushed by government troops in tanks. Then in November 1964, he was arrested for a second time and sent into exile, first to Turkey and then to Iraq, where for fifteen years Khomeini wrote and lectured against the regime in his homeland. Khomeini continued his outspoken denunciations, developing a strong religious and political following abroad, until forced to leave Iraq in 1978 by Saddam Hussein, he then moved to France.

After the Iranian government had been overthrown by an Islamic revolution in 1979, and the Shah sent into exile, Khomeini returned to Iran, declared an Islamic republic, and began to exercise ultimate authority in the nation. He was enthusiastically greeted by the people. In response to the exiled Shah's admission to the United States in September 1979, a large crowd seized the US embassy in Tehran, taking 52 American citizens hostage. In time, Ayatollah Khomeini's inspiration would lead to coups, terrorist bombings, hijackings and assaults against a demonised West. For some faithful Muslims, his rise became the inspiration for political rebirth, (Unknown).

In today's modern society, bloodshed of Shiites and other Muslims around the world has become so common in most countries for example Iraq, Syria, Pakistan etc. Muslims around the world are being destabilised by the 'west' (western forces). "Those who try to create disunity between our Sunni brothers and our brothers of the Shia, are the groups who plot for the enemies of Islam. They want to help the enemies of Islam to overcome the Muslims. They are the followers of America, and some are the followers of the USSR. The Muslims, wherever they may be must be aware that disunion between a country in the farthest end of the world and another one on the other end of the world, does not mean a local dispute", these words of Khomeini stressed the importance of unity between the Muslim, he was concerned that political forces would

endanger the unity between the Muslim Ummah. He encouraged brotherhood between Shi'ites and Sunnis from the beginning, "Those who want to cause disunion are neither of the Sunnis nor of the Shias. They are the directors of the Super Powers and they are serving them", "Sunni and Shia brothers should avoid all disputes", "If there happens a dispute between the Iranian nation and the other nations, or between the Sunni brothers and the Shia brothers, it will be to the disadvantage of all of us, of all Muslims" (Unknown, Imam Khomeini on Islamic Unity, 1998). All these quotes of Imam Khomeini (R.A) indicated the necessity of brotherhood between all Muslims around the world. For Khomeini sectarian issues were of much importance because he believed that if the Islamic Ummah were to remain united then there would be no power or force in the world to break them down, "A group of the Muslims are Shia, a group of the Muslims are Sunni, a group are Hanafi, a group are Hanbali, a group are Akhbari. Basically it was erroneous from the beginning to suggest such ideas. In a society where all want to serve Islam and to be for Islam, such matters should not be suggested. We all are brothers and are together. It is merely that your ulama issued a set of fatwas and you followed them in imitation, and so you became Hanafi. Another group became Shafi'i and followed him. Another group followed the fatwa's of the Imam Sadiq and became Shia. These should not be causes of difference. We should not have any difference or contradiction. We all are brothers. The Shia and Sunni brothers should avoid all differences. Today, our differences will be in the interest of those who believe neither in Shiaism nor in the Hanafi or in the other sects. They want neither this nor that to be. Their way is to cause differences between us. We must realize that we are all Muslims, followers of the Qur'an and of tawhid, and that we must toil for the Qur'an and to serve tawhid" (Unknown, Imam Khomeini on Islamic Unity, 1998). In the previous quote he urged that there is not a huge difference between the different sects in Islam so that the people of the Islamic Ummah would consider and respect other schools of thought. This would therefore not cause disorientation in the Islamic world, but of course the west is a cunning beast and is not easy to stop its demonising acts.

Imam Khomeini was a prime example of what every Muslim should be in this modern society. He taught a great deal about Islam but most important he remained truthful to the people of Islam, to our Prophet Mohammed (SAWW) and his holy household. I am grateful to Labaik Ya Zahra who brought me back on the right path to practice Islam more in this modern society, this is a platform for all women of all ages who can voice their vision and thoughts for the sake of righteousness in Islam. Labaik Ya Zahra is a notion for humanity, spreading justice throughout the UK, it has a lot of popularity within the Shia community. I hope people carry on supporting this organisation just as much as I do. I am

grateful to all religious scholars around the world who guide us and dedicate their lives for Islam. Similarly to what Khomeini began, Labaik Ya Zahra has the same mission to educate, change and reform this unconscious society to be awakened. Insha'Allah the rise of Imam Mahdi (ajf) will commence very soon, I pray the safety of all the lovers, believers and the followers of our Prophet Mohammed (SAWW) and his Ahlulbayt (A.S) and also that our Muslim Ummah reunites to stand side by side one another with our Imam Mahdi (ajf) to face the enemies of Islam.