

9

Al-Imam al-Khomeini

محمد الحامدي
امريكا

Great men are mysterious. And maybe for that reason history is slow in acknowledging their contributions to its flow. Great men are also so unostentatious that the writers of conventional and power-perspective history try their best to think that there is something "complex" or "complicated" about such characters that these historians still have not figured out, and so they have to wait and see what made such men great. There is also a truthfulness about great men that renders them off-limits to historians who are convinced that "greatness" cannot come from persons who are truthful, genuine, earnest, and free-spoken. For these reasons and many more the establishmentarian historians have failed to give any convincing explanation to the Prophet Muhammad (P) in Arabia with that initials and successful burst of Islamic activity over 1400 years ago. And in a similar fashion they have failed to give an honest explanation to the contemporary burst of Islam out of Persia due to the leadership of Imam Khomeini in our own generation.

This paper is too confined to sweep into its paragraphs the features that have made the Islamic Revolution in Iran with the leadership of Imam Khomeini and the concept of *wilayat al-faqih* the front-line affair that not only concerns the Islamic ummah but also the world at large. But we will boldly by-pass the slack historians and venture into those areas that distinguish Imam Khomeini from secular politicians and from status quo clergymen. In the process we hope to point to facts that antagonized both these sectors of society; which, to the credit of the late Imam, stand out as monuments to the Islamic revolution that he inaugurated as well as signposts to the emerging future in which the world will begin to identify more-and-more the polarization between the *mustad'afeen* (the dispossessed) and the *mustakbireen* (the vainglorious,) along with the gradual chasm between those who acknowledge God as Sovereign and Superior (Muslims) and those who deny God as Sovereign and Superior (kafers.)

Imam Khomeini and Ideology

When the Islamic Revolution led by Imam Khomeini succeeded in toppling a bastion of Western concentration of interests in a Pahlavi Iran word began to circulate all around the world that "Ayatullah" Khomeini may have an ideology

but he does not have a program for action! (If he did have a program of action would he be as imprudent as to divulge it to these very quarters who are accusing him and the Islamic revolutionary cadre of being without a program?) The fact of the matter which still even after twenty years is so hard to confess to by the stalwarts of the Euro-American and Zionist interests is that for the first time in contemporary history a persona such as Imam Khomeini was able to present fresh and inspiring ideas about Islam to the populace who in turn were as receptive as to take the theoretical and ideological ideas and make of them practical and political decisions and policies. This was unheard of hitherto throughout the vast Islamic domain from the Islamic Pacific to the Islamic Atlantic.

Spokespersons and politicians were scrambling to compare this new consciousness among the Muslims with the experiences of communists parties in the Soviet Union and elsewhere! When in reality the comparison cannot stand on its feet because Islam dwells deep down inside the hearts of the Muslims as well as in their masjids, their cultures, and their future expectations. The humble but frank character of Imam Khomeini made its way to the Friday *khutbas* all around the world. There were supporters of the Imam's line and there were opponents of the Imam's line; whatever the case was the *khatibs* all around the world could no

longer ignore the ideas and speeches of the Imam that were resonating with the masses in the world, and not only the Muslim masses.

For the first time in many, many generations the minbar in the masjid became the weekly rallying point of Muslims who were tuned into the fact that an Islamic revolution had become a fact of life and that revolution had become the target of an imposed war by the Ba'thi Iraqi government (supported we must remind you by all the other regional and international forces), along with a high volume campaign of slander and defamation of the leaders of this Islamic revolution, in the forefront of which is the impeccable character of Imam Khomeini himself.

A network of *Jumu'ah* prayer leaders was consolidating around the world to act as the internal line of defense for the Islamic Revolution led by Imam Khomeini. Needless to say to some, but worthy of reminding others, that the Saudi crowd around the world were busy at that time maligning the integrity and the sacrifices that were sustained by the sons of the revolution at the war-front. While secular Iraq was trying to kill the bodies of the Islamic revolution by its expensive tanks and planes the spurious Saudis were trying to poison the minds of the Islamic

revolution by their free literature and sponsored seminars.

Imam Khomeini drew fire from two hostile and envious quarters: imperialist and Zionist politicians who saw in the uncompromising character of the Imam a man of principle and determination who was not willing to surrender to their threats and schemes, and he also drew fire from “Islamic” and “religious” figures who saw in him a “maverick” who had crossed the line that separates politics from religion and either expressed himself in political terms which they themselves were incapable of comprehending or who was misunderstood by some of them whose political knowledge was insufficient to decipher the brave new words of the Imam as he was ahead of events and ahead of them!

For the first time now, due to the courageous thoughts of the Imam, “religion” was no longer static. And politics was no longer elitist. Key words in the Quran came to life. *Mu’minoona, Kafiroon, Bani Israel, Taghut, Yahud, Nasara, Thalimoon, Munafiqoon, Deen, Ahl- al-Bayt...* among the many other words in the Quran were to gain in the contemporary Muslim mind a working terminology that revitalizes

the meanings of the Quran and Sunnah in such a way that no Muslim once he understands such concepts in such light is able to remain idle or pacifist.

Zionism, Imperialism, and Hegemonistic Powers Are Not Excluded...

One of the most daring feats by any contemporary leading Muslim scholar is to bring “the high and the mighty” secular or religious governments of the day into the recognition zone of the average man in the street. Before Imam Khomeini there were very few Muslim scholars who were able to fit “Israel,” the “United States,” the “Soviet Union,” and “Saudi Arabia” into Quranic concepts of injustice, oppression, and overlordship (*thulm, taghut, and shirk.*) Sayyid Qutb, Abu al-A‘la al-Mawdudi, and Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani, among others are notable in many ways in this regard. But Imam Khomeini was singly able to exercise the collective Muslim mind not by theory alone but also by practice on the vices of the “superpowers” and their functionaries around the world, particularly those who were slaving to offer their services to imperialist interests such as the

governments of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the Persian Gulf statelets, etc...

It may be worth remarking here that since the Imam's living days there hasn't been outside of Islamic Iran any politician or scholar who has been able to match the consistency, the outspokenness, and the equal treatment of assailing "superpowers" and their client regimes the same way Imam Khomeini was able to do.

During the hey-day of warfare against Imam Khomeini's leadership it became obvious to foe and friend that the government of the United States was acting in the best tradition of an arrogant and hegemonistic superpower. Beginning with the affront to the Muslim people of Iran and the Muslim people everywhere, the United States government decided to offer respite and or refuge to the toppled Shah of Iran. The US government was trying to open up doors for this pariah: once in Africa (Morocco), then in Latin America (Panama), then in the United States itself (Texas), then once again in Africa (Egypt) where he finally went to meet his Maker. The US then turns to other means of antagonizing a Muslim population in its revolutionary mode by giving the green light to the Ba'thist regime in Iraq to launch a war of aggression against the newly established Islamic

Republic in neighboring Iran. In addition to that the US strung together a motley of Middle Eastern states to finance and otherwise offer any type of support to Iraq that is possible: logistics, military personnel, political co-ordination, propaganda, arms technology, weapons of mass destruction, infusion of man-power, etc... With all this and much more the United States had actually an "Iran factor" in its Middle Eastern and foreign policy concerns. The fact of the matter had become crystal clear: the US was in an indirect war with the Islamic Republic of Iran. A war that in its initial stages was camouflaged to the unsuspecting but not to the Imam. A war that began with verbal tirades from Washington and winded up with virulent torpedoes in the Persian Gulf by Washington. A war in which the US sought to preserve the Shah's airliner from one corner of the earth to the other but could not tolerate a civilian Iranian airliner flying across the Persian Gulf from Islamic Iran to Dubai. A war in which the United States was attempting to define who a good Muslim is but a war that wanted to make it impossible for an Islamic Imam to define who a good Muslim is! A war in which the United States was indirectly and directly at war with the Muslims in Iran, coupled with a war in which the Soviet Union was directly and indirectly at war with the closest thing to Iran (Afghanistan.) A war that all victims put together would top two million Muslims. A war drudged up and dragged on by the high ranking officials of the

United States government. A war that still continues – minus its military expression – in every other way. To the United States, Iran is till a pariah state. The US still considers Iran a supporter of “terrorism.” The US is working overtime trying to stifle and strangle every attempt by the Islamic leadership in Iran to acquire advanced industrial, technological, and military know-how. The US State Department still lists Iran along with Cuba, Syria, North Korea, Sudan, and Iraq as states inimical with US interests. The US still has not released the money that has been frozen since the days of the Islamic Revolution in American banks... The US is even willing to reprimand China for its relationship (that at times “trickles” military technology to Iran, such as helping out with developing missiles with a range of 18-25 miles) with Iran. For the first time “guilt by association” has entered the political and diplomatic lexicon due to the over-riding hostility that US government officials harbor towards the Islamic Republic of Iran!

Is it in the least surprising that Imam Khomeini stamped the US with the epitaph of *shaytani buzurg* or *al-Shaytan al-akbar*; i.e., the capacious adversary of God or simply the great Satan. The dubious credentials of this demonic force in world affairs are all the obvious when they are cast on the Imam’s Islamic Republic and

Revolution in Iran. The *shaytani* mouthpieces have not tired ever since Imam Khomeini set a triumphant foot on his homeland from trying to convince the world, and the Muslims in particular, that the “mullahs” Iran desires good economic relations with the West and that the revolutionary fervor inside Iran is waning. Eventually, we are lead to believe, Iran will find the course of moderation in its actions with the imperialist plutocrats and Zionist mattoids. We are expected to fall for the “standard bearers of pragmatism” in the Zionist and Imperialist camp and believe that Imam Khomeini (RA) and his revolutionary line of action are responsible for Iran being short on cash and Iran facing growing internal political dissension. This *shaytani* mind-set molded by the US government and its Zionist master never fails to remind the uninitiated that Khomeini’s Iran is meddling with the “Middle East peace process” if not trying to wreck it altogether, Iran we are told over and over is a threat to the stability of Muslim states in the region. From time to time they throw in the issue of their patsy Salman Rushdie and tell us that the Imam’s fatwa is another piece of proof that the Imam Khomeini is intolerant and vengeful!

It took a person with the stature of Imam Khomeini to turn the flood-lights of the Quran and Sunnah on this vocal and silent, hot and cold, psychological and

military warfare that has been in progress since the inception of the Islamic character of the people in Iran.

Exporting the Revolution

During the imposed crisis on Iran through militaries and media an issue that had the Imam's enemies' unsettled was "exporting the Islamic Revolution." The very word "exporting" implies that there is something foreign to Iran in the larger world around. The Muslim context around Iran is not foreign to it in the Islamic reference of things. Therefore, supplementing the Islamic Revolution in Iran with other Islamic revolutions or reinstatements does not amount to "exporting" the revolution. The other *shaytani* subliminal message behind the words "exporting the revolution" is that the revolution itself is some type of commodity that is traded or transferred from one proprietor to another! The Zionist underlings in the political establishments of America and Europe fail to realize that they are deadlocking themselves into a tight corner by refusing to acknowledge the facts of how Islam operates. By saying that Iranians will turn to nationalism or secularism

when Islam is “dead-ended” in Iran, the imperial Zionists bluff only themselves not to realize that if the revolutionary torch that was lit by the late Imam Khomeini is not carried by Iranian Muslims it will be carried by Chechen, Arab, African, Kashmiri, and Filipino Muslims among others who have seen the light.

How many times has the Israeli centered politicians in the US, Europe, and the Hebrew state tried to assure everyone that there is a serious crisis inside the Iranian clergy and the policy makers. First, they tried to play up the issue of Imam Khomeini and Ayatullah Shari‘atmadari; and when that did not work they tried to pit Ayatullah Taleqani against Imam Khomeini; and when that did not work they tried to play up the issue of Ayatullah Muntazeri, and Ayatullah Taheri, and Ayatullah Shirazi, and Ayatullah Kho’i, and Ayatullah Fadlullah, etc...

Then the US and Israel and other governments in their orbit turned their attention in their never ending attempt to disqualify the Imam’s leadership and Imamate by suggesting that there is a rupture between the government-appointed and the traditional clergy. When all this babble failed to bring about the desired result the Israeli prompted officialites (in the US and elsewhere) began to lace the Imam’s

country with threats and dangers. The Islamic Republic of Iran in the line of the Imam is surrounded by man-made conflicts and instabilities: Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, the Persian Gulf, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, the runaway conditions of the previous Soviet Republics in Central Asia, drug trafficking through Baluchistan, even Indo-Pakistani tensions have the potential of affecting the Imam's Islamic base in Iran. Add to all this deliberate policies by the Zionist led West to have the largest concentration of refugees in the world in the first Islamic state in the world. Coincidence? Only to the naive. Transborder population transfers are another measured policy by the United States and company of trying to demoralize the revolutionary march of the Islamic state. At one time there were over 2.5 million refugees from Afghanistan and 1.5 million refugees at least from Iraq; not to mention Kurds from Turkey and Baluchis from Pakistan...

The Imam's Miracle

One of the major – and in my humble opinion – and most significant accomplishments of the late Imam Khomeini (RA) is his practical redefinition of Shi'i and Sunni Muslims. The accretion of almost 1400 years of mostly static traditions and complacent customs has given in a very concrete and matter-of-fact way a cultural and an inherent definition of who is Shi'i and who is Sunni. In the overwhelming majority of cases any Muslim will tell you that a Shi'i Muslim is defined by the way he interprets the initial stages of Islamic history and the way he performs his rituals. Similarly, in the overwhelming majority of cases any Muslim will tell you that a Sunni Muslim is defined by the way he interprets the initial stages of Islamic history and the way he also performs his rituals. Never will we encounter in light of the fact that "religion" or in this case Islam may atrophy in the minds of its adherents to such a degree that no one is able to define a Muslim vis-a-vis his position on tyranny, injustice, and illegal authority.

In light of this we would have to understand that ever since Islam became a political authority during the time of Allah's Prophet (P) in Medina there have always been two forces opposing this Islamic government: an internal force and an external force. And since it is the Muslims' collective responsibility to oppose these enemies the Muslims also have been ever since that time in a mode

of confrontation with the internal enemy of Islamic authority and governance and the external enemy of Islamic authority and governance. If we look at Islamic history in such a light we begin to realize that those who are called Shi'is are the Muslims who were opposed to the internal forces who were trying to undercut or undermine the standards of governance that were bequeathed to the Muslims by their beloved Prophet (P). On the other side of this equation, there were external enemies that were amassed against the Islamic state and authority and these external enemies had to be driven back. The Muslims who considered this a priority were to become known as Sunnis. Both Sunnis and Shi'is were acting from their own conscience as they took up arms or as they in any other way tried their best to preserve the Islamic state that belongs to all the ummah. But this definition of a Shi'i or Sunni is not to be found in textbooks, madrasahs, or any where else. The accumulation of almost 1400 years of defining Muslims by rituals is still prominent in the Muslim public mind.

Along comes Imam Khomeini (RA) and he picks up where any sincere and honorable leader would: he reactivates a down-to-earth Islamic state and government. And once again, like the first time around in Medina, this new

Islamic state has internal and external enemies. The internal enemies are found within the ummah in Cairo, Baghdad, Amman, Riyadh, Algiers, Tunis, etc... and who is it that confronts these internal enemies? It is the conventional Sunnis (Egyptians, Algerians, Arabians, etc...) who are in light of their position vis-a-vis Islamic governance the "Shi'is of today. In a corresponding sense, the Islamic government in Iran is after having anchored an Islamic authority, this government has become the target of hostility primarily from outside forces (external forces) such as the United States, Israel, etc... and who is now giving priority to repelling the plots and intrusions of these outside forces? It is the conventional Shi'is who are in light of their position vis-a-vis Islamic governance the "Sunnis" of today. If today's Muslims are unable of reaching this new understanding that has been made possible by the Imam's momentum then they should at least identify Israel as the "intersection state" where the internal and external enemies of Islam have found common purpose and cause. Any political organization or government that is incapable of making decisions independent of the Israeli American occupation of Palestine is in one sense or another part of the historical and/or contemporary build-up of hostilities as represented by Zionist Israel.

True to the historicism of Islam and true to the ideology of Islam Imam Khomeini

and Imam Khomeini alone in the past century was able to mobilize the Muslim masses unto its eventual destiny of confronting Zionist Israel. Israel has become the litmus test of the Islamic movement and revolution. Any Islamic political authority or association that fails to identify Israel as the first and foremost antagonist of the ummah fails to live up to its Islamic duties. And the only Imam in recent time that has not failed to identify Israel as the first and foremost antagonist of the ummah is Imam Khomeini. The qualitative difference between Imam Khomeini and all other Islamic ideologues and scholars is the fact that Imam Khomeini succeeded in showing and proving to all and sundry the mutual exclusiveness and common repulsion between Islamic state and governance and Israeli state and governance.

Peace is his alive. Peace is his as he passed on. And peace is his on Resurrection Day.

Mohammad al-'Asi

Washington, D.C.

21 Jumada I, 1420 2 September 1999