

Unity from Imam Khomeini's Point of View

Promoting the idea of "unity of the world of Islam" was one of the longtime and primary concerns of Imam Khomeini (s), which he did not neglect for a single moment throughout the period of his social-political activities both before and after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. The Imam's sincere faith in the idea of unity not only transformed him into one of the most outstanding intellectuals of the world of Islam; rather, it secured his lofty position among the diverse Islamic sects and orders. In promoting the idea of unity, the Imam never resorted to generalization and superficiality. He presented detailed explanations with regard to examination of the various dimensions of unity in both the theoretical and practical sections.

Unity as a Necessity

Imam Khomeini (s) was quite familiar with the consequences of disunity. He knew that disunity among the Islamic nation 'Ummah' in its various political, economic, social, cultural and military aspects had left behind profoundly negative effects such that it was extremely difficult to remove them and needed time. The only solution to prevent the harms and damages arising from this disunity was unity and fraternity that must be realized around Islam and its life-giving teachings. By recounting the importance of unity, the Imam intended to guide the Islamic nation 'Ummah' on the straight path and course of divinity.

The foremost requisite of unity from the Imam's point of view was to rise up for the cause of God and reformation of human society which itself required spreading justice in the world. The next requisite was to

thwart the conspiracies and hegemony of global arrogance. By establishing unity and solidarity among Muslims, he intended to assist all Islamic nations to gain independence and freedom. This was because according to him in order to achieve freedom and independence the Muslims must obtain the key to victory, which is unity itself, and not allow global arrogance to interfere in the laws of Islamic countries.

Imam Khomeini (s) considered unity essential for establishing peace and had stated: "The Islamic Republic wishes to live with all its neighbors and others in peace and security."¹ In another instance too, he stated: "I hope that global peace is founded on the basis of independence of nations, non-interference in affairs of one another and observance of the principle of territorial integrity of countries."²

Imam Khomeini (s) believed that, Islamic state is a free and independent state, and that observes one principle in its relations with the East and the West. That is if they have cordial relations with the Islamic state, the Islamic state shall have cordial relations with them as well. However, at the same time we shall not allow anyone to interfere in the destinies of our country. Therefore, "...we have cordial relations with all strata of mankind and with all the oppressed peoples of the world provided there is mutual relations and mutual respect."³

The requirements and possibilities of unity

Imam Khomeini's idea of unity requires tools and contraptions that make its realization possible. Justice is the most essential tool for attainment of unity because justice is a requisite of monotheism and for establishing Islamic unity, Islamic justice must spread as a main basis of unity. This is because with the presence of injustice in society, unity shall never be realized. The Imam had stated that, "the prophets from the first prophet Adam to the Last of the Prophets arrived in order to hoist the banner of monotheism and justice among nations."⁴ "Independence and

¹ *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, vol. 17, p. 396

² *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, vol. 12, p. 153

³ *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, vol. 6, p. 220

⁴ *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, vol. 17, p. 98

freedom are among the other requisites of unity and one can even say that practical independence of Islamic states is the most important of them...we can stand up to the entire world and say that we are neither on the side of those on whom God has inflicted his wrath upon nor of those who are astray; neither on the side of the east nor on the west; we can be in this manner and be on the straight path when all of us are together; when all of us become a single hand.”⁵

We know that inherently, human beings have been created different and have varied beliefs and tastes. Accordingly, Muslims possess different beliefs and opinions as well. This difference in belief has caused a lot of tensions and conflicts among them. However, from Imam Khomeini’s point of view, difference of opinion must not become an obstacle to unity and there can be unity in spite of holding dissimilar beliefs. “Why should dissimilar beliefs become a cause of external difference?” Therefore, all human beings and following them all Muslims must disregard their personal, sectarian and racial beliefs and tastes and ... by emphasizing shared human and Islamic principles centering around monotheism, prepare the ground for the comprehensive sovereignty of Islam.

For realization of his ideal of unity, Imam Khomeini (s) sought to make use of the available possibilities and even made available new ones. One of these possibilities was the question of Palestine and its occupation by the expansionist Israeli regime. Opposition to Israel which by its invasion of the Nile territory had perpetrated the biggest crime of those days by killing the Muslims residing in the territories and displacing and rendering them homeless. Thus the Imam proclaimed the last Friday of the blessed month of Ramadan as “World Quds Day” so that in a single day all Muslims would take part in rallies and protest against Israel.

The annual Hajj pilgrimage ritual was yet another of the possibilities that the Imam made use of in order to realize unity of the Islamic ‘Ummah’. He revived the ‘disavowal of the polytheists’ ritual that was on the verge of being forgotten so that with their participation in the ‘Disavowal of polytheists’ rally, all Hajj pilgrims manifested a small

⁵ *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, vol. 19, p. 327

aspect of the Islamic ‘Ummah’s’ unity, became aware of their pains and sufferings and found remedies for redressing these pains. Moreover, their attention would be drawn to the fact that the Blessed city of Mecca and the radiant city of Medina are the true reflections of the great events of the movements launched by the prophets of Islam and the prophetic mission of the Honorable Prophet of Islam (SA).

Objectives of Unity

On the ideal of unity, the objectives of Imam Khomeini (s) can be divided into several criteria as follows:

- *Internal Objectives:* Independence and freedom; elimination of alien influence; glory and honor; promoting the objectives of Islam; comprehensive realization of Islam in Iran among them establishing a genuine democratic state not of the decadent western and eastern types; perpetuation of the Islamic Revolution; attainment of social justice and expansion of individual and social justice.
- *External Objectives:* Creation of knowledge for mankind; establishing peace and security in the world; implementing true democracy and freedom; carrying out a profound general revolution all over the world vis-à-vis the inhuman global plunderers; regaining spiritual independence and doing away with sense of humiliation vis-à-vis the unjust and tyrannical regimes; achieving the right to self-determination by nations and awareness of governments; establishing the rule of Islam all over the world; creation of an invincible Muslim ‘Ummah’ nation; realization of Islamic identity and emancipation from educational deficiency.
- *The long-term objective* of the Imam was that with the establishment of peace and security in the world; installation of true freedom and spreading justice, the required bedrock shall be made available so that humankind attains a new understanding. Thus with the establishment of Islamic rule all over the world, an invincible Muslim ‘Ummah’ nation with unshakeable foundations shall establish a joint army in order to defend the honor of Islam and the Islamic nation and that never allows the colonialists to plunder their resources at will.

Each of these objectives is divided into political, economic, social, cultural and military categories respectively.

- *Political Objectives*: Independence and freedom of Muslims of all the world's nations; establishing peace and security in the world; implementing genuine democracy and freedom; realization of individual and social justice; gaining the right to self-determination...
- *Economic Objectives*: Achieving independence and self-sufficiency; spreading economic justice; implementing international Islamic objectives in the world and thwarting colonialism and exploitation; taking control of economic destinies of self.
- *Societal Objectives*: Realization of social justice; prohibition of corruption and immorality and various types of deviant behavior; establishing peace and security; shaking off negligence and...
- *Cultural Objectives*: Preserving glory and honor; perpetuation of the Islamic Revolution; prevention of corruption and immorality; destruction of the center of injustice and corruption; regaining spiritual independence and getting rid of sense of humiliation vis-à-vis the enemies; creation of Islamic identity and release from intellectual poverty in Islamic societies...

However, establishing a joint Islamic army for defending the essence of Islam and closing down the military bases of the east and the west in Islamic countries are among the political-military objectives of the Imam's call to unity.

Conclusion

The Imam's ideal of unity arose from the sense of necessity to combat a disunity that has produced humiliating results among the Islamic nation. Perhaps it may not be possible to make up for them because aliens have with their authority over Muslims have devastated Islamic societies under their colonial rule. It is for this reason that Muslims have lost their personality and human dignity and have remained backward in all respects. They have lost their independence, freedom and glory and have become dependent on the east and the west. It is in consideration of these shameful circumstances that the Imam senses an

intense need for unity and arises to reform human society so that by bringing about Islamic solidarity and beyond that among the downtrodden people of the world, he prevents the superpowers from interfering in the destinies of Islamic countries and guides them to ultimate victory.

The Imam considered independence, freedom and justice to be the requisites and foundations of unity. He made use of opportunities such as the question of Palestine, the Hajj pilgrimage rituals and 'Disavowal of Polytheists' rally to establish unity. With the objective of defending the essence of Islam, enjoining good and forbidding evil, human development, independence and freedom, dignity for all human beings and Muslims, promotion of Divine justice and Islam in the world and averting difference and disunity, he presented his unifying theory. Imam Khomeini (s) regarded the scope and extent of unity to be extremely vast and embracing such that it encompassed all human beings, Muslims of the world, all Islamic sects and even other Divine religions. He pursued various objectives in the political, economic, social, cultural and military fields on the two domestic and foreign levels which can be divided into short-term, medium-term and long-term programs.

In conclusion, the Imam's idea of unity was extremely fruitful for the Muslims and shall be so in the future as well. Included among them was the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Islamic and other liberation movements of oppressed nations, global arrogance's fear of Muslims, sovereignty and superiority of the Muslims. Therefore, Imam Khomeini's ideal of unity is the cause and the secret of Islamic survival.