

AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI AS AN EXAMPLAR OF DEEP ISLAMIC HUMILITY

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It was a grand and solemn occasion at the Jamaran Mosque in the north of Tehran on the 19th July 1983. Some 60 to 70 elected members of the Majlise Khobragan, the Council of Experts, had assembled there to pay a courtesy call upon and receive guidance and blessings from the Ayatollah Khomeini. Under the Constitution of Iran. These exalted and pious members of Ulema were entrusted with the authority of electing the top leadership — the *Vilayatul Faqih*, when it became vacant in future. They therefore hold a delicate position of responsibility which can cast much influence over the destiny, not only of their country but also of Islam, in general.

As usual, for convenience, when facing visitors, the Ayatollah was seated on a raised balcony whilst his visitors sat down on the carpeted floor of the mosque. In his most inspiring speech, he apologized to them for the raised position in which he was sitting in front of them, a gesture of his sincere humility. He then commenced his address with these words:

"I have no worry in regard to the revolution because

having found its genuine path the revolution is advancing the way it should with no dependance on a particular person"

This was another gesture of his utmost humility. He wanted it to be known that the survival of the Islamic Revolution of Iran neither depended upon his leadership nor upon anyone else. But expressing his anxiety about the future of the country and Islam should the Ulema deviate, he added:

"No factor whatsoever can ever pose a danger to the country from abroad as long as it remains, on its true path but it could come only if the Ulema, who having led the revolution thus far, God forbid, indulge in worldly affairs leaving their station and spiritual purification behind them"

How important is the role of the Ulema and how much paramount is their responsibility in safeguarding the Revolution can be sensed from the above words which portray the Ayatollah's innermost concern of probable harm should

the Ulema deviate from their spiritual path and allow themselves to be misled by worldly considerations.

The Ayatollah further predicted what could happen should the Ulema deviate from their spiritual path and indulge in trivial matters:

"It may be that people listening to Islamic preachers act according to the Islamic teachings and reach heaven while the preachers heedless of their own admonishments find themselves in hell in the world hereafter. One must always guard against the insinuations of Satan who moves close to one seeking to distract him from the right path, which might not at first seem important step by step, by involving him in trivial matters".

How important it is for the Ulema the preachers themselves — to act and practice what they preach and to guard themselves from Satanic insinuations is the essence of the above words. The Ulema by virtue of their spiritual status and the Islamic knowledge that they have acquired bear heavier responsibility. They need to be extra careful not to indulge in such actions or behaviour which are likely to cause rifts and disunity or misguide people from the right path.

Ayatollah Khomeini has persistently been preaching the need of inculcating self-humility and self-purification whilst himself practising what he preaches. He has become a model of an ideal spiritual leader who can truly guide the destiny of the Islamic Ummah.
