

## Imam Khomeini Conference

In the name of Allah the compassionate the merciful

A servant of God, a doer of good, a spiritual being and a Gnostic, a theologian, a philosopher, a guardian.

The conference entitled "Imam Khomeini – Father of the Revolution", commemorated Imam Khomeini and his legacy for the Muslim Nation (Ummah).

A variety of speakers elaborated on the subject from various angles; to cover the past, the present, the prospects and the coda; its uniqueness, characteristics, perceptions and the spirit, not forgetting the role of women as well as its global theme.

Imam Khomeini's Conference was a joint event by AIM (AhluBayt Islamic Mission) and the Islamic Centre of England, on Saturday 5th June 2010, at the Islamic Centre of England. It started by recitation of a few verses from the holy Quran, by Brother Mohammed Bagher; and chaired by Brother Nabil Awan who gave an introduction to Imam and the conference. Sadly Imam Asi could not be with us in the conference, because of an Exclusion Order on him by the British Foreign Office. He was send back at the airport and not let in to the UK.

Imam Asi was meant to speak on: the present Role of the Islamic Republic in the world order and the prospects, the Revolution and the Ummah as well as its global theme.

He sends this message:

I was looking forward to "freedom of ideas" but it looks like the old empire does not have the health of mind which it once did. The Muslim thinkers have come of age. Colonialist Britain and imperialist America are protecting their expiring Zionist lovechild. These powers of yesterday are showing signs of impotence and senility when they no longer permit people of ideas to express themselves to the public, and rely on Zionist sources or Zionist organizations to evaluate who a person is. In my case, the British authorities referred to the Anti-Defamation League of B`nai Brith and the Investigative Project who take my words out of context and try their best to smear "yours truly" with their malice and hate. But worry not, there is the Almighty who sees and registers their lies and every move. Is it any wonder that colonialists and imperialists are taking a beating from "nature" and from "man"? ... And you "ain't seen nothing" yet ...

The opening speech was by HIWM Moezi director of the Islamic Centre of England. HIWM Moezi pointed that Imam Khomeini was the only religious scholar, after the prophet and the infallible Imams, who succeeded to establish an Islamic government [his Utopia], out of many scholars during the late 20th century; at a time when nearly half of the world was following the Marxist ideology. The Liberalists were not opposing religion directly;

but the philosophers were busy to reject religion and in particular the prophet of Islam. Even in the Muslim countries the young were drawn to Marxist ideology. In 1979, towards the last decade of the 20th century, Imam Khomeini succeeded in bringing victory to the revolution and gather around the masses, young and old, educated and illiterate. A kingdom of 2500 years old was overthrown, which was supported by the powers round the globe. All over the world it was faced with oppositions that could not tolerate a religious system of governance. Soon a constitution headed by jurisprudence governance was established and voted for by the masses. Now thirty years is passed. The key to its success was the strong faith with no hesitation. He never affiliated the revolution to his self, and never considered himself above the people. Never relied on non-divine powers and from the start he disassociated himself from the Marxists and liberalists. He also disassociated himself from the hypocrites. He trusted in God and relied on the power of sincere people. The nation of Iran has always been under sanctions and false propaganda but they continued their path towards the truth. And it is Allah's promise that the Earth will fall to the hands of the righteous people, lead by the twelfth Imam, Mahdi (atfs).

Sister Shirin Tejani followed the opening. She spoke of her personal perception and experiences, which were close to her heart. Imam Khomeini is alive, what makes him alive? Out in the world, people who have not met him, in fact have heard propaganda against him. What make him so special are the faith and his sincerity. What Imam Khomeini brought to the people of Iran and the people of the world was something unique. He spoke the language of the people. He felt the emotions of the people. I was very fortunate to have the opportunity of seeing him, in 1981, as a group of visiting young students, organized by the Muslim Institute. The people of Iran were so committed to their leader, which had brought for them the values they believed in. He spread the words of Islam. Just by a glimpse to his life we can see the vision he had. On 4th of November 1964, Imam was deported from Iran to Turkey. In Turkey he was not even allowed to wear his scholarly attire. He did not stop, in that time he wrote the book of Tahrir ul-Wasilah, which draws the jurisprudence ruling for a Muslim state and the people's responsibilities in regards to the state and the dominance of non-Muslim countries over the Muslim state. He teaches us how to support the revolution, even as a lay person. On October 23rd 1977, the death of his son was announced, it was unexpected and mysterious. In calmness he described this as a hidden favour of God and advises the Iranian nation to show courage and hope. Imam Khomeini came with a message which ordinary people could understand. Everybody knew that Marxism and Capitalism were not the answer. This is the man they were waiting for. He had conquered himself. I met Imam in 1981. He lived in a small house contrary to any state leader. Everyone was moved with his presence; whoever had met him felt the same experience. I advise you to read the experience of Robin Woodsworth, which is available on the internet. Imam Khomeini still lives in the heart of the people.

Dr Fatima Husain spoke on Women and the Revolution. Imam brought women into the mainstream. Women made the revolution a success. His ideology was that of independence of thought, economy and politics. Imam Khomeini was born on 20th of Jamaadi ul-Akhir, which is 24th of Sept. 1902. This is the birth anniversary of Hazrat Fatimah (sa), we are celebrating as well as commemorating these occasions today. In the month of Muharram, imam sends the message to the men [in Iran], to live like Imam Husayn (as) and encouraged the women to emulate the examples of Hazrat Zainab (sa), in being strong and publicly participating in demonstrations. If anyone knows of the history of Karbala, knows the role that bibi Zainab played to propagate the message of Imam Husayn (as). The message of Imam Khomeini was to stand firm in the face of great oppression. The Iranian women have always been proactive, they took up that cause and they participated in their thousands; having dressed their children, prepared for battle, echoing the scenes of Karbala, Ashura had suddenly came to life. Sadly the imposed war by the ba'hist regime, backed by America, followed one year later. It was through the heroic sacrifices of the women for their sons, husbands and brothers that the Iranian nation could achieve victory. Without the full support of the women at this crucial time, when the infant Islamic Republic was attacked, the revolution certainly could not have succeeded. Women at the corner stone of the family and the Islamic society kept the torch of the movement alight. They were actively participating in rebuilding of cultural, social and economical plans. They took part in referendums; in fact it was proved that there were equal participations in all aspects of the revolution, beside the men. The issue of women's rights and roles before and after the revolution is a very big topic. During my research I have found very interesting facts about Imam Khomeini's views, he was such a pragmatist and was for the women's rights. Some of his quotes and views of what should happen in the future was pushed down by some traditional religious scholars and some of the views never got through. In the Iranian constitution it gives to both women and men equal protection of the law, even non-Muslims say that these laws are progressive laws; and we owe that to the imam. In conclusion I give you extracts from a Western non-Muslim academic prospective, William O. Beeman, who has written a book entitled "Iranian Women's Situation has improved under the Islamic Republic". "I travelled to Iran recently for the first time in many years. The most surprising development for me was to see clearly that, contrary to American belief, women in the Islamic Republic are better off today than they were under the Pahlavi regime". "Women have always had a strong role in Iranian life. Their prominent and often decisive participation in public political movements has been especially noteworthy. Brave and often ruthlessly pragmatic, women are more than willing to take to the streets in a good public cause". "The Islamic Republic has made a special point of emphasizing women's equality in education, employment, and politics as a matter of national pride". "The universal modest dress code may have helped women from conservative families". "Before the revolution, religious parents would not let their girls even go to school for fear they would be dishonoured, said Parvaneh Rashidi, a Tehran schoolteacher. Now they have no trouble letting their daughters go anywhere." "Judging

from the large number of women one sees today on the streets, in retail management, in offices and on the University campuses, Ms. Rashidi appears to be more than correct in her assessment”.

The next speaker was Mr Mohammed Al-Hilli: They asked “how would you describe him?” A person stood up and uttered he was an awesome leader. Indeed he was but he was more, another said he was a great reformer. But there is more, the third said: he was a fantastic theologian; he was a great philosopher, an amazing Aarif [Gnostic]. Yet there was more, to me he was Ruhullah [Spirit of God]. This name encompasses and encapsulates this great personality in history entirely. Imam Ruhullah Mosawi Al-Khomeini, in the world of Islam occupies a prominent position. This influence was not restricted to the borders of Iran. Look round the world and you see his influence every where. What makes individuals so great? He was in a state of tabattol, disconnected from self and others but connected to the sublime (Allah). The remembrance of Allah (swt) was not only on his tongue, it was manifested in his actions. He placed Allah (swt) before everything. In his book of Aadaab us-Salaah he mentions about the aspects of love for Allah, the absolute perfect being. Look to Allah for true love. The book of Forty Hadith has to be read by everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim; this love for Allah made him so humble towards human beings. He rose up and lived up to his name. It is the four important characteristics of, upholding the salaah [daily prayers]; charity to the community, joining the good and forbidding the evil, who so ever qualifies, Allah would give them victory.

Sheikh Hamid Waqar was the last speaker, elaborating on characteristics of the leadership and its legal and constitutional limits. Imam Khomeini had multidimensional and well roundedness characteristics, he was able to look at every issue that arose from many dimensions, and therefore, he was successful. He had an open heart and mind. Imam Khomeini was at the top of Irfaan [Gnostics/Mysticism], both on a theoretical and practical level, in the contemporary era and through out the history. Another aspect was tafseer [interpretation]; this is an aspect which is rarely talked about. He was a very strong commentator of the Qur’an. Imam Khomeini applied Irfaanic perceptions to the social issues. One other aspect of Imam Khomeini was Jurisprudence; arguably he was the most knowledgeable in his time. He trained such students to be the present religious authorities. He paid attention to contemporary issues, i.e. Governance of Jurist, and the Islamic political system, which shapes the modern world of Shi’a Islam. He cared about the society, giving importance to society not only the individual. To carry forward this dimension he had two characteristics, bravery and wisdom. He revived the theory of Wilayat al-Faqih [Governance of Jurist] and established an Islamic government in Iran, which was to everyone’s amazement. For over 1200 years or even more the Shi’as have never had such government. Allah established the Islamic government through Imam Khomeini.

To elaborate on the characteristics of Wilayat al-Faqih, we have to see what Imam Khomeini himself describes of Wilayat al-Faqih. Out of many

characteristics I am going to mention two, knowledge of the law and justice. Meaning he has to be a Mojtahid [Islamic Scholar], but does not need to be the most knowledgeable alive. Justice is on a social level as well as individual level. Regarding the individual level, one should not oppress himself and commit a sin. But is it possible not to be a ma'soum [infallible] and yet not commit a sin? Yes. Imam Khomeini was such and Ayatollah Khamenei is such right now. There is a whole body in the Iranian constitution that watches over the leader and if he commits one sin the whole power will be taken away from him and someone else will be put in. Another aspect is the authority that the Wali al-Faqih [jurist guardian] has, in accordance to Imam Khomeini. This is the most debated issue. Imam Khomeini has stated that the same authority that the prophet had, the Wali al-Faqih has in taking care of the affairs of the government and the country. Just as such it is obligatory to obey the prophet it is obligatory to follow the Wali al-Faqih in those matters; in governance of the country and of the Islamic world. The other aspect is the life style that the Wali al-Faqih has. He would live as any normal citizen; he would not live as kings or presidents. Imam Khomeini had a simple life style and was living in a simple rented house. Before Imam Khomeini passed away he thought Seyed Khamenei was the best person to follow. I would just like to compare Ayatollah Khamenei's life style with Imam Khomeini's. Seyed Khamenei also has a simple house in a very normal area of Tehran. One example which recently happened is that Seyed Khamenei's wife got sick and she was not sent to the expensive hospitals in Tehran, she was sent to a state hospital which ordinary people could go and afford; and also incognito so that she would not get special care and attention. He would not take advantage of the position that he has. I will end the talk by one quote from Ayatollah Khamenei, he says "Imam Khomeini's path is my path, Imam Khomeini's goals are my goals; Imam Khomeini's advice is the light which guides me".