

In The Name of Allah, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

MY REFLECTIONS ON IMAM KHOMEINI

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*A symbol of faith, love, power and grace
The mark of commitment was etched in his face
He preached sacrifice was necessary in order to achieve
Do men think that they will be left alone after saying, "We believe?"*

These are the words that come to mind when I reflect over one of the most beloved (and deservedly so) teachers of my life, the late Imam Ayatollah Ruhullah Al-Musavi Al-Khomeini.

My encounter and subsequent embrace of the teachings of Imam Khomeini marks a major milestone in my life. As someone who strives to be a committed Muslim, I seriously take to heart the Messenger of Allah's (saw) admonishment to the sons and daughters of his ummah, that they should be *seekers of knowledge from the cradle to the grave*. As such, I have been blessed to have had many wonderful teachers in my life; a diverse assembly of men and women of different creeds, places and times. Imam Khomeini is one of the most important personages in this noble assembly.

It was Imam Khomeini, following in the footsteps of our noble and beloved Prophet Mohammed ibn Abd'ullah (saw), who inspired the sons and daughters of a valiant nation with the determined cry: *"Neither East nor West, Only Islam!"* Who stated, with confidence rooted in his absolute faith in Allah's Word: *"We have often declared in our foreign and international policy statements that it is our aim to expand the influence of Islam in the world, and reduce the domination of the world-mongers... We are trying to desiccate the corrupt roots of zionism, capitalism and communism in the world."*

Thus stated - and under tremendous external aggression - Imam Khomeini and those who followed him demonstrated to the world that an *independent nation* could exist in a world of *imposed bi-polarity*.

It was Imam Khomeini who instilled me with pride and a quest for truly understanding the fullest dimensions of the *Deen* of Islam when Hakal said: "The weapon of religion can play the role of the artillery; it demolishes the strongholds of the old system, but the success of the revolution in the war needs the infantry to occupy ports, and the revolution's infantry consists of the thinkers, technicians, scientists, experts, etc. My fear is that the revolution might succeed in demolishing the old regime, but the building of a new system in its place is a different matter." And the Imam responded: *"Islam does not lack among its sons, thinkers, technicians, scientists and experts."*

It was Imam Khomeini who set me on a quest to understand the fifth and most misunderstood pillar of our *Deen* (Hajj), when he observed (in the aftermath of the sacrilege in the Haramain on the 6 of Zul-Hijjah 1407): *"The greatest trouble with Muslim societies is that they have not yet understood the true philosophy of many of the divine*

teachings and decrees; that is one reason why the hajj, with all its mystery and greatness, has remained a dull, spiritless and fruitless worship rite...

"Hajj is intended to bring the faithful worshipper in closer proximity with the Owner of the House. Hajj does not encompass only words, phrases and dull movements because these in itself do not lead one to the Lord. Hajj is the center of divine teachings wherein one should explore the policies of Islam and the gist of Islamic teachings... But like the Holy Quran, hajj has been drawn into isolation and seclusion. To the extent that the divine book of life, perfection and beauty lies hidden behind our self-made veils."

But it was still another observation made by this great Imam (on hajj) that shocked my senses and forced me to re-assess much that I had been led to believe up to that point in my life: *"Surely hajj which is performed without redemption of sins, devoid of motion and enthusiasm, without uprising and unity, and without seeking absolvment of paganism and atheism, is not a sound hajj."* And further, *"Since Muslims of the world have under pressure, imprisonment and execution, lost the ability to voice the worries and woes that their rulers have inflicted on them, therefore, they must be able to express their pains and miseries freely in the safety of God's sanctuary, so that other Muslims may try to find ways to ameliorate their pains."*

Such words led me to the discovery of the first 29 ayahs of surah Tauba, and upon its discovery, it was as if I had read this divine and magnificent call to action in the Book of Allah for the first time! That in essence, I was just discovering an unknown part of myself.

It was Imam Khomeini, and the *Revolution* that he helped to inspire, which enabled me to see for the first time that it was possible for Islam and its adherents to be the exemplar for mankind. In limited but revealing travels to different parts of the world, I came into contact with people (Muslim and non-Muslim; Iranian and non-Iranian) who spoke of being inspired by the "Revolution in Iran."

It was the inspired words of Imam Khomeini which enabled me to see for the first time that it was possible for Muslims in significant numbers to be liberated from the poisons of nationalism, secularism, and sectarianism. The Imam declared in word and deed: *"We are not fighting anyone for the sake of a town or country. We are determined to hoist the banner of 'La Illaha Illallah' atop the highest peaks of honor and glory."* And further, *"Our war is a war of ideology. It recognizes no borders, no geography. For our war of ideology we must embark on a grand mobilization of the soldiers of Islam in the world... Really, if the universal mobilization of Muslims was realized, would anyone dare behave in such an abominable manner with the Prophet's spiritual children?"*

While it is possible for me to continue on and on in describing the Imam's impact on me (and my personal development), I will resist the temptation and draw this commentary to a close. I believe that part of Allah's blessings upon His true servants, is the gift of possessing multi-dimensions of *sight*. What do I mean by this? Simply stated, those of us who live long enough (in a state of awareness) come to a realization that life is cyclical - names and faces may change, but patterns of human behavior remain the same. I truly believe that persons like Imam Khomeini grasp this reality on a deeper level than most of us.

In reading his concluding remarks in perhaps his last major address to the Iranian nation, I was struck by the Allah-inspired farsightedness that he displayed in his words of

caution to his beloved nation: *"Whether I be among you or not, my advice and injunction to you is not to let the revolution fall into unworthy, non-intimate hands. Do not let the forerunners of blood and martyrdom be neglected and forgotten in the ups and downs of life. I most emphatically recommend to the dear Iranian nation to be careful and alert.*

"I recommend to you, the dear youths of our country, the divine assets and buds of the world of Islam, to value the sweet moments of your lives and to prepare yourselves for a great scholarly and practical challenge to reach the supreme Islamic revolutionary objectives. I recommend the responsible authorities to do everything possible to provide the means by which our youths may attain higher ethical, ideological, scientific and artistic levels of achievement, and keep their spirit of independence and self-sufficiency active and alive.

"Let no teachers and professors who have been abroad, and have had association with the so-called civilized world, admonish or humiliate our youth who have just been freed from bondage and exploitation. The instructors should not make idols of the talents and progress of the outside world and inject our youths with the spirit of following imitation and destitution."

Sage advice indeed, that all Muslims the world over could greatly benefit from! It is, however, these final thoughts of the Imam that we are revisiting in this paper - against the back drop of present day realities in the Islamic Republic of Iran - which in my humble opinion, exposes the utter falseness of the media generated image surrounding the Imam in many parts of the West (and the Revolution he helped to inspire): *"The ulema and the spiritual leaders are, God -willing, well aware of all aspects of their responsibilities. Yet I wish to emphasize that many young thinkers in our free Islamic society wish to express their views and thoughts on various Islamic issues. Hear them well. If they tend to go astray, show them the right Islamic path with kindness and in a friendly spirit.*

"They (the questioning youth) believe that in many instances the positions of Islam are as they think. Rather than showing them anger and pushing them aside, deal with them as a kind father. Even if they do not accept (your views), do not be disappointed lest they fall into the traps of liberals, nationalists, leftists or the hypocrites."

And finally: *"...I believe the greater part of the achievements of the ulema and their influence in Islamic societies lay in their practical value and in their virtue... Individuals from political organizations, societies or associations, in full Islamic guise, may seek to damage the credibility and prestige of the clergy, and, in addition to securing their own interests, may even try to incite the clergy against one another. That which the clergy should never deviate from is the support and protection of the deprived people, of the bare-footed and others."*

In my conclusion, in a book entitled, In Pursuit of Allah's Pleasure - the english translation of a book titled: Al-Meethaaq Al-Aml Al-Islami (*The Charter For Islamic Work*) - written by three imprisoned scholars (Dr. Naajeh Ibrahim, Asim Abdul-Majid and Esaam-ud-Deen Darbaalah) and released from behind the bars of Liman Turrah Prison, in Egypt, in February 1984; the authors wrote (pg. 53): *"It is the understanding of our pious predecessors that we must follow, because they possessed means of Ijtihad and enjoyed the mental faculties. At the turn of every century Allah sends in their like, those who can revive the religion for this Ummah. They are the Prophet's heirs, and Muslims all over*

the world admit their true knowledge, virtue, sound understanding and guidance. Their fear of Allah prevented them from withholding the Truth in return for worldly profits or compromises with their rulers."

I cannot think of a better way to end this paper; for these words perfectly sum up the feeling I have for our late Imam, Ruhullah Musavi Khomeini - *rahim'ul Allah* The *Mujedid* of my lifetime.

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