

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei: the Principles Governing the Work of Imam Khomeini

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei

The most important work that our exalted Imam did in the world of Islam was that he revived the political and social dimensions of Islam. He held up the banner of the justice-seeking aspect of Islam. The Imam rediscovered Islam's hatred of discrimination, class differences and arrogance.

The principles governing Imam Khomeini's work were rooted in Islam and people. Our exalted Imam's reliance on people stemmed from Islam. It is Islam that stresses the rights of nations and the importance of people's votes and the effects of their jihad and presence on the scene. So the exalted Imam considered the pivot of his work to be Islam and people. The greatness of Islam is tantamount to the greatness of its people; the invincibility of Islam is linked to the strength of its people. The Imam's work was based on these two factors.

The most important work that our exalted Imam did in the world of Islam was that he revived the political and social dimensions of Islam. From the day that colonialism set foot in Muslim countries, all efforts of colonialists and hegemonists were directed at removing the political and social dimensions of Islam and the justice-seeking aspect of Islam. In order to increase their domination over Muslim lands and resources, the hegemonists had to separate the political dimension of Islam from Islam. So they reinterpreted Islam as a religion surrendering to events, giving in to occupiers and submitting to powerful tyrants.

Imam Khomeini revived the forgotten truth about Islam. He held up the banner of the justice-seeking aspect of Islam. The Imam rediscovered Islam's hatred of discrimination, class differences and arrogance. Throughout his life, the Imam relied on the weak, the oppressed and the deprived. On many occasions, in the early stages of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and for 10 years afterwards as the leader of the Islamic Republic, he told us and all officials that we must look after the deprived. He said that we are indebted to the weak.

Whenever we heeded this advice from the Imam, whether in our planning or law-making or in execution of affairs or appointment or dismissal of officials, we were victorious. Islam is in favor of people's prosperity; Islam is against corruption, oppression and

discrimination. Islam is for the welfare and the spirituality of people. The Imam said all this on many occasions from the beginning of his struggle to the end of his life. Our Imam showed this to the world of Islam: that Islamic jurisprudence – that is the regulations for managing human beings' affairs, along with philosophy of Islam, profound and reasoned thinking based on insight and knowledge of Islam, asceticism and separation, and controlling physical appetites – can bring about great miracles. The Imam demonstrated that political Islam is same as spiritual Islam.

During the era of colonialism, the enemies of Islam, and all those who oppose the awakening of Muslims, publicized the idea that spiritual Islam and ethical Islam are separate from political Islam. Today they are still doing the same thing. Today the propaganda machinery of our enemies, the anti-Islamic front, are trying to portray political Islam, justice-seeking Islam and social Islam as something crude and vulgar. Our enemies want to direct the people to a quietist version of Islam, to a kind of Islam that bows in submission and refrains from challenging tyrants and bullies. The Imam rejected this erroneous thinking. He propounded the pure Muhammadi Islam that is against the ossified, superstitious and eclectic partial versions of Islam, and also the kind of Islam that has lost its confidence and vitality in the face of foreign ideologies. Even now the anti-Islam front is focusing on this point, i.e. the separation of politics and action from ethics and spirituality. They mean that if someone wants to be a Muslim, then he must sit quietly in a corner. He must not interfere with the actions of occupiers, enemies and aggressors.

The Imam propounded the opposite of this in the world of Islam, and today the world is benefiting from this great idea. Wherever you go, you will see a dynamic Islam among experts, young people, academics, scientists, ulama and forward-looking Muslims. It is a kind Islam that can protect Muslim countries against aggressors, bullies and occupiers. It does not allow enemies to dominate Muslim peoples. This is the original Muhammadi Islam.

As for the people, the most important thing the Imam did was that he completely rejected the meaning of democracy promoted by Western proponents of democracy and their agents, and the way they want to demonstrate it. They are trying to convince us that "democracy" is completely incompatible with religious devotion. The Imam rejected this and propounded a "religious democracy" in the world, i.e. the Islamic State. He did not just say it, nor just analyse it; he showed it in practice. Today the Islamic Republic system and its principles and essence are predicated upon religion, as a practical and ethical "democracy". Unfortunately, "democracy" in this form that exists in Iran cannot yet be found in any other Muslim country.

[This is an abridged extract from the speech given by Ayatollah SeyedAli Khamenei at Imam Khomeini's mausoleum on June 4, 2003.]

