

Imam Khomeini; Eminent and Great Leader of All Times

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Very few reformers in the history of mankind have been capable of achieving the fruits of their struggle in their lifetime



The well-known name of His Eminence Imam Khomeini (RA), the most influential figure of the 20th century reminds us of his unprecedented knowledge and thoughts on mysticism, philosophy, jurisprudential sciences, governance, and politics as an exemplary Imam. The events and happenings of the contemporary world show that even after more than three decades since the demise of Imam Khomeini (RA), there is a significant change in the world political landscape influenced by Imam's ideology.

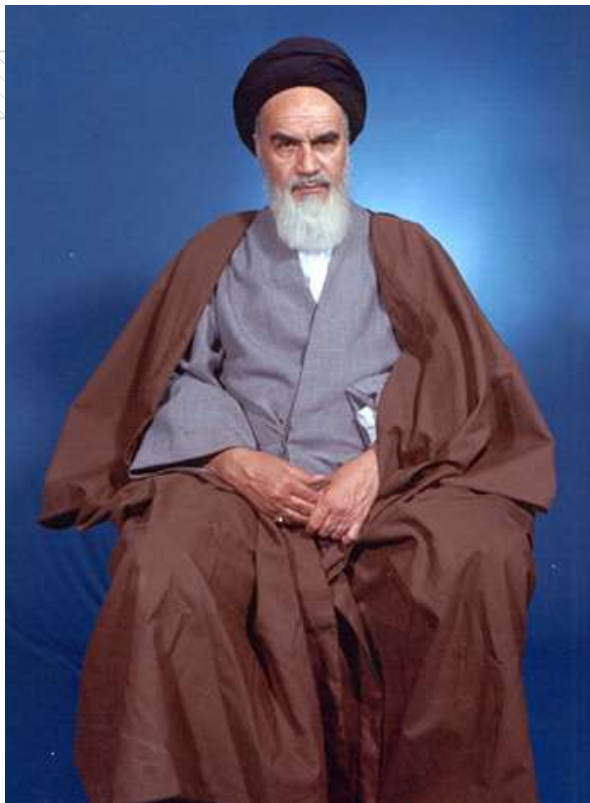
The resistance movements are still being inspired by his academic discourse, challenging imperialism across the world.

Three revolutions shook the world in the 20th century. Both the Russian and the Chinese experience had a wide appeal for two reasons: they came in the wake of an oppressive capitalist system, which had squeezed the blood of the down-trodden sections of society; and, the change was based on an ideology that was new, and rather novel, for those who had been afflicted by the exploitative bourgeoisie and the tyrannical church.

The Iranian revolution was, however, unique, for it neither derailed the human soul from the root of its faith nor bereaved it of the fruits of social uplift; a thing considered, particularly in conservative societies, as repugnant to the spirit of religion.

The greatness of Imam Khomeini lies, not in his being a religious cleric but in his universal approach to life in all its aspects and manifestations.

The Imam infused the spirit of Islam in the Iranian youth but did not leave them to be swayed by the specific interpretation of faith,



common to the contemporary half-educated clerics. He gave them a vision that could see worldly affairs and the religious faith as two aspects of the same unit of life.

The 17th century Industrial Revolution in the West had shaped the direction of Western socio-political thoughts as well as the future practical experience pursued by the comparatively secular Far Eastern societies, but thinkers in the Islamic world still wandered in the deserts of bewilderment.

Not that Islam had lost its vigour to lead man through the ages, but lack of *ijtihad* had rendered it a mere collection of rituals to ward off evil spirits and attain paradise. What was missing was the realization that Islam is a complete code of individual and collective life and it offers the best solution to the minutest problems of all societies at all times.

The onslaught of Western thought had already shaken the hearts of Muslim scholars like Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Syed Qutub, Moulana Maudoodi and they confined themselves to recollecting Islamic thoughts and reorganizing the political forces of the Muslims. Only Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Imam Khomeini could crown their efforts by practically shaping human societies according to their ideals; the misfortune of the Pakistani nation being that their benefactor could not live long to guide them into their new life.

The leadership capabilities of Imam Khomeini would look more distinct when viewed against the background

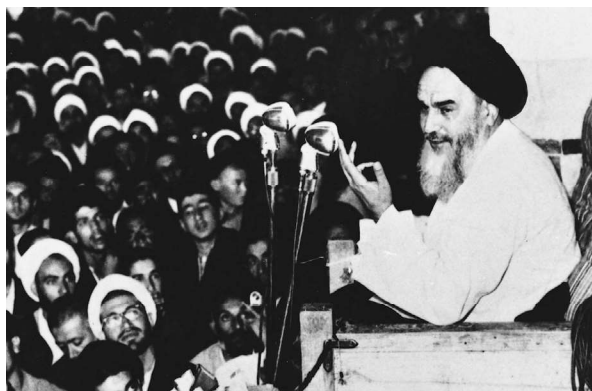
of life in Iran before the Islamic Revolution. Backed by the country's rich influential class and the mighty world powers, on the one hand, and the most Westernized Iranian class, on the other, Reza Shah, was inculcating the thought that Islam was unable to meet the modern-day challenges of the Iranian society. As a result, Western culture and values dominated Iran to the extent that terms like Islamic culture, Islamic values, and Muslim nationalism were considered to be outmoded terms.

The pre-Islamic Revolution Iran was virtually the most Westernized country of the Muslim world. It was not called the Switzerland of the East just for its natural beauty. It was rather due to the fact that Western values were being popularized among the Iranian people to be followed blindly.

In such an environment, those defending and promoting religious ideologies were being looked at with contempt and treated awfully and this had created an inferiority complex among the youth, struggling for the supremacy of Islamic values.

Inspired by true Islam and Islamic teachings, the late Imam Khomeini had to fight against all these odds with an ideology that, according to most of his countrymen, Islamic teachings were out of fashion and were in no position to meet the modern-day challenges.

Imam Khomeini brought these dejected youths out of the slums of inferiority complex and infused a spirit of self-respect and self-esteem in them; teaching them



that not the teddy pro-Westerners but those proud of Islamic culture were the ones who could boast of being followed by others. He also created self-confidence among the Iranian youth, giving them the power to change the destiny of their nation.

Prior to the Islamic Revolution, the Iranian youth considered the Westerners as a superior being, capable to show marvels in all fields of science and arts and worthy to be followed but they became convinced of their ability to shape the future of their nation and excel in all areas of science and technology.

It was this spiritual change that made the Iranian youth fight against the cruel forces of the Shah, making them an iron wall against the oppressive and tyrannical might of the state. This spiritual potentiality convinced the Iranian youth that they can trample down all the hurdles in the way of their revolution.

Modern-day Iran is rightly the manifestation of the religio-political wisdom of Imam Khomeini. The state and the society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, today, give the look of a compact whole; a society of unity in the diversities of religion and a champion in the comity of Muslim

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nations that possesses all the capabilities to attain material and scientific development. Despite the hurdles and the hardships created by the antagonistic Western powers and in spite of an eight-year-long imposed war by Iraqi Saddam Hussain, today the Iranian society stands out, in many aspects, in the societies of the East.

Culturally, the revolutionary Iranian nation is exemplary. With 83 percent of its population educated, Iran today represents a society of high morale and energy in the region. From political administration and statehood, the socio-economic management, from agriculture to industry, from defense to defense production, and from education to science and technology; post-Revolution Iran is considered to be a success.

Another distinction of the Iranian revolution is that, contrary to other Eastern and Muslim communities, the Islamic Republic has fully engaged its women folk in the socio-economic and political life, making them a useful and essential component of the society. Today, women can be seen working in all sectors and fields of Iranian national life. Without this factor, the dream of creating an advanced and stable society could have not been realized. Such a big social upheaval would have never been possible in a male-dominated Eastern society.

The Iranian nation is certainly very fortunate that they not only found a legendary leader like Imam Khomeini leading them through all stages of moral and material promotion. Very few reformers in the history of mankind have been capable of achieving the fruits of their struggle during their lifetime.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, better known as Imam Khomeini, engineered Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, which led to the overthrow of the US-backed Shah of Iran. Imam Khomeini passed away on June 4, 1989, at the age of 87. Every year, the anniversary of Imam Khomeini's demise is marked with a ceremony at his mausoleum in the presence of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

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