

Khomeini's Strong Influence Over Iran

A poll taken by Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in London, England, showed that Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini was 1979's most hated man. In 1980 Hitler once again reached that dubious distinction.

What are Khomeini's plans for Iran? More than a decade ago he explained his beliefs and outlined his strategy in his book *Islamic Government*. He never kept his intention a secret.

Is Khomeini a mad fundamentalist Muslim? No! He is true to the teaching of his religious tradition, the Shi'ite branch of Islam. The Shi'ites have always been a minority, nevertheless an important minority. The name Shiite comes from shi'a which is an Arabic word for party. The Islamic party the Shi'ites belong to and has its origin in Ali, who was married to Muhammad's daughter Fatima.

The Shi'ites believe that in every age there was an infallible Iman, a descendent of Ali. The Imans have the secret knowledge that makes possible a true interpretation of the Koran. They are the source of all truth, and the only beings with the right to men's obedience. These men are given miraculous guidance by God and because of this guidance they cannot err. Khomeini explains the place of the Iman in Shi'itism as: "The Koranic verse, 'O you believers, obey God, obey the prophet and obey those in charge among you' requires us to obey those in charge. The people in charge after the prophet are the Imans who have been entrusted with implementing these laws and rules. The just jurists (jurists) have been required to carry out these tasks after the Imans."

This faith in Imans has led to a strong authoritarianism. As someone once remarked: "If we wish to state concisely the difference between Sunni and Shi'a Islam we should say that the former is a Church founded on the consent of the community, the latter is an authoritarian Church."

Power

In the Shi'ite world the ayatollahs have a vital position. Of the 1,200 ayatollahs, there are six who hold the title of Grand Ayatollah. These titles are not conferred by a religious body, but by the acclamation of the people.

What does the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini expect of a ruler in his revolutionary Iran? He must have a thorough knowledge of Islamic law and of justice, besides possessing "general qualifications, such as intelligence, maturity, and a good sense of management." Furthermore, he must rule by what is right, whether it be for or against him. "We want a ruler who disowns his son if he steals, who whips and stones his relative if he commits adultery, and who punishes those who smuggle a small quantity of heroin."

Islam, whether the Sunni or the Shi'ite branch, has no room for secularism. Strict observance of Islamic laws must be maintained. Khomeini blames colonialist and "their lackeys" for isolating religion from the affairs of life and society. He warns: "Do not allow the Westerners and their followers to dominate you. Familiarize the people with the truth of Islam so that the young generation may not think that the men of religion in the mosques of Qum and al-Najaf believe in the separation of church from state."

Law is sacred. The power of legislation is confined to God and nobody may rule if he has not been given power by God. No new laws are needed. Khomeini writes: "You need no new legislation. You must implement what has already been legislated for you. This saves you a lot of time and effort and spares you the need of borrowing laws from the east or the west. Everything is, God be thanked, ready to be used." The canonical law in the Islamic system regulates every detail of life.

Islam "has laws and regulations to raise perfect and virtuous human beings." Punishment for breaking the laws must be harsh and swift. Khomeini urges that homosexuals, prostitutes, adulterers and petty criminals be publicly tried, flogged and in some cases executed.

Courage to fight

The sermons delivered on Friday in the mosque may not be limited to the promises of heaven and threat of hell. They must influence and inspire people to fight with utter courage and valor and even make people "proceed to battlefronts from the yards of mosques without any fear of poverty, sickness, death or loss because people feared God alone and nobody else." Before the fighting against the Shah had started, Khomeini wrote from exile to his followers: "Put on white robes so the blood from your wounds will show better."

Khomeini's royal neighbours are strongly opposed to his particular brand of Islam. No wonder! He believes that no Islamic nation may be ruled by a royal dynasty. Monarchic rule is in conflict with the Koran and the Islamic political system. Only God is Sultan. "You know," comments Khomeini, "that most of the corrupt aspects of our society are due to the corruption of the ruling dynasty and the royal family."

In Khomeini's Iran there is no room for basic human rights. Islam is dictatorial by its very nature. All must live under the canopy of Islamic law. The government of Islam gives and guarantees freedom of religion to Muslims only. "There is no place for opinions and whims in the government of Islam," writes Khomeini. "The prophet, the Imams and the people obey God's will and Shar!'a."

Khomeini is bitterly anti-Christian and anti-Jewish. He thinks that the mission centres in Iran were established to deceive people. "Isn't it a duty to destroy these centres?" Khomeini asks. He even charges that Christians and Jews are killing Muslims in the name of religion.

Khomeini is paranoid about Israel. He writes: "Considering that Israel is in a state of war with the Moslems, then whoever helps and supports it is in turn in a state of war with Moslems. The Israeli influence in our country has reached an unbearable extent and the Israelis use our lands for their bases and as their markets, and this is something that will gradually lead to 'the decline of the muslim markets."

And again, "Our responsibility today, and at a time when all the forces of colonialism and its agents, the treasonous rulers, Zionism and atheistic materialism are collaborating to distort Islam, is heavier than ever before. Here we see the Jews tampering with the Koran and distorting its phrases in new editions which they have published in the occupied territories and other part. We must expose this treachery and must shout at the top of our voices so that we may make the people realize that the Jews and their foreign masters seek to snare Islam and pave the way for Jews to dominate the entire world."

Khomeini's hatred for Christianity and the war with Iraq make the spread of the Gospel in Iran extremely difficult. Friendship evangelism is still one of the most effective methods of reaching neighbours with the claims of Christ. Two Christian radio stations broadcast to Iran: Far East Broadcasting Associates (FEBA) in the Seychelles and Trans-World Radio in Cyprus. The FEBA broadcasts in Persian. The small Christian remnant in Iran and their dangerous oppressive existence under the tyranny of Khomeini's forces, call for their prayerful support and encouragement.

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March, 1981