

Unity as Viewed by Imam Khomeini (ra)

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According to Imam Khomeini (ra), unity (*Wahdah*) is a blessing for which we should be grateful. His Holiness would repeatedly call upon the people to be thankful to Allah for the blessing of unity through such statements: “This very our sitting and talking together brotherly and with trust towards each other is a blessing (*N'imah*) given us by Allah and we should preserve this blessing.” “Brothers (in-faith) should be united with good-will and brotherly feelings and thanks to Allah (here), they already are so. This is the greatest blessing and we should protect this blessing. As long as we protect and preserve this Divine blessing, we will be safe and guarded against all Satans.”

In fact, the expression ‘blessing’ (*N'imah*) applied to the subject of the unity of Muslims is a Qur'anic interpretation inferred by Imam Khomeini (ra) from verse 103 of chapter 3 of the Holy Qur'an: “*Cling firmly together by means of God's rope, and do not separate. Remember God's favour towards you when you were enemies; He united your hearts so you became brothers because of His favour. You were on the brink of a fiery pit, and He saved you from it! Thus God explains His signs to you, so that you may be guided.*” Al-i 'Imran, 103

Also, according to Imam Khomeini (ra), a nation's becoming united and achieving unity of word is an extraordinary phenomenon and His Holiness would regard the unity of the hearts of the people from all walks of life to be just a Divine miracle: “This unity of word has been the work of Allah. I believe it is not possible for any other than Allah to unite the hearts and words of a whole nation with a population of

millions in such an astounding way - that we observe a very young child says what an old man says and men, women, young people, old people all express the same slogans and follow the same path. Nothing but Divine will, can be behind this unity and I became hopeful about the victory of this movement from the very beginning, because of sensing such a reality.”

Some readers might comment that ‘well, everything is in the hand of Allah and so is the unity of the people and thus the unity of the Iranian nation in their Revolution was not an extraordinary phenomenon.’ In reply, it should be said that true, everything is in Allah’s powerful hand, but what Imam Khomeini (ra) particularly meant by these words is that such unity of the people was due to Allah’s special will and favour, as was the case with the miracles worked by Allah’s Messengers (AS); they worked miracles by Allah’s special will and that unity of the people in Iran also happened by Allah’s special will. In an expression, Imam Khomeini (ra) remarked thus: “This unity of word we today observe in all classes of Iranian nation is a miracle. No human being can create such a unity. It was a miracle and a Divine will. It was Divine inspiration not a human work.” No doubt, these expressions made by Imam Khomeini (ra) regarding the miracle of the unity of the Iranian people are no exaggerations and are rather quite in conformity with the Holy Qur’an. *“He has united their hearts: even though you spent everything on earth, you could never unite their hearts; but God has united them. He is Powerful, Wise.”* The Holy Qur’an; al-Anfal, 63.

Likewise, Imam Khomeini (ra) regarded the unity of the Muslims as a religious obligation, and not just a desirable trend and so His Holiness as a religious authority has clarified the duty of the followers of the Islamic faith with Islamic expressions *Wajib*(obligatory) and *Taklif* (responsibility): “ It is *Wajib*(obligatory - incumbent) upon all Muslims

to be united.” , “ According to the command of Islam, Muslims should be one united hand.” , “There should be unity among all. This is a Divinely- ordained, religious responsibility for us and for the whole nation.”

As we know, to defend Islam and the lands of Muslims is *Wajib* upon all Muslims and since without unity, the Muslims cannot defend Islam, Imam Khomeini (ra) regarded the unity of the Muslims to be as a necessary condition for the other *Wajib*, namely defense of Islam and the Muslims. This expression by Imam Khomeini (ra) is also very instructive: “To defend Islam and Islamic Republic is *Wajib* upon all of us and the fulfillment of this very significant religious duty depends upon unity.” and “According to commands of Islam, Muslims should be as one united hand in order to be able to cut off the hands of the aliens and colonialists from interference in their countries.” In the above statement, Imam Khomeini (ra) clearly declares the unity of Muslims as a required condition for cutting off the hands of the aliens from their lands. These wise words are obviously quite in conformity with Qur’anic teachings, as for example we read in verse 140 of Chapter 4 of the Holy Qur’an : *“In the Book, He has revealed to you that whenever you hear God’s signs disbelieved in and ridiculed, you should not sit with them until they change to some other topic. You would be just like them then! God will gather all the hypocrites and disbelievers into Hell;”*

From this verse of the Holy Qur’an, we can easily infer that to submit to foreign domination is haram (forbidden) for Muslims and to cut off their hands from any interference in the affairs of the Muslim nations is obligatory for the Muslims and so unity is also obligatory for the Muslims, since unless united, Muslims would not succeed in fulfilling their duty of standing up against and cutting off foreign domination and interference. Hence, Imam Khomeini (ra) the leader of the Islamic

Revolution always insisted that Muslims should avoid dispersion and should turn to unity among themselves.

As a matter of fact, Imam Khomeini (ra) believed that the society can attain security and progress just through faith in God and unity among the people and His Holiness would invariably attach great significance to the factor of unity in the realization of Islamic goals, so much so that according to him, even commitment to Islam, if devoid of unity would be useless: “The basis of the progress of you dear nation is commitment to Islam and unity of the word. Without unity in the affairs, commitment to Islam will be of no benefit to you. And without commitment to Islam, unity will do harm instead of good.”

Thus, in the viewpoint of Imam Khomeini (ra), simultaneous existence of the two factors of faith in Allah and unity are essential for the prosperity of the society and these two factors, when combined will form the basis of all faithful and significant victories and social developments, and that neither of the two can have any substitute. This point has been repeatedly expressed by Imam Khomeini (ra) on various occasions and in various phrases, His Holiness would indeed mention unity sometimes as connected to Islam, sometimes to *Iman* (true faith) and sometimes to the Islamic phrases ‘*Allahu Akbar*’ ‘Allah is the Greatest’: “The secret behind your victory is firm, unwavering faith and next the unity of the word. Do preserve these two.”, “We will be victorious if we guard our unity and our being Islamic.”, “Try not to lose the benefit of Allah’s help, since ‘Allah’s hand is with *Jama’ah* (united community)’. If *Jama’ah* are united and have Islamic ideas and ideals, they will have the helping hand of Allah with them.”, “Our victory was due to unity of word and reliance on Islam. The slogan of ‘*Allahu Akbar*’ made us victorious. And now too all our weapon is that very

‘*Allahu Akbar*’. Also, it was the unity of the word that led us to victory and now too our weapon is that very unity of word.”

It is to be noted here that these wise viewpoints are based upon the Qur’anic teachings including the verse of the Holy Qur’an in which Allah has commanded all to “*Cling firmly together by means of God’s rope, and do not separate.....*” Al-i ‘Imran, 103

In this verse, Allah’s word as the axis the Muslim Ummah’s unity have been pointed out together. In this regard, let’s read another instructive statement of Imam Khomeini (ra): “The secret behind your victory was your unity and your united struggle for Islam, namely your acting upon that verse of the Holy Qur’an.

“Cling firmly together by means of God’s rope, and do not separate. Remember God’s favour towards you when you were enemies; He united your hearts so you became brothers because of His favour. You were on the brink of a fiery pit, and He saved you from it! Thus God explains His signs to you, so that you may be guided.” Al-i ‘Imran, 103

This verse commands us to turn to Allah unitedly and avoid division; to be united and conscious of Allah. Accordingly, Imam Khomeini (ra) believed that the Muslims society’s unity should be promoted to the level of brotherhood. The expression ‘brotherhood’ is in fact a Qur’anic expression, as in the Holy Qur’an, Allah - the Almighty has regarded the faithful as brothers: “*Believers merely form a brotherhood, so reconcile your brethren and heed God so that you may find mercy.*” Al-Hujurat, 10

In numerous speeches and addresses, Imam Khomeini (ra) pointed to this verse of the Holy Qur’an, basing his illuminating arguments and admonitions upon that verse and presenting numerous teachings and guidelines relating to very significant aspects of the contents of the

Divine verse. All such teachings indicate the deep insight and vast Islamic knowledge of Imam Khomeini (ra): 1- Evidently Imam Khomeini (ra) first and foremost believed that the above-mentioned verse of the Holy Qur'an is meant for *Mu'aminoon* (the believers - the faithful) to regard each other as brothers and to fulfil their duties towards each other with this very outlook. He has stated: "Islam has emphasized *Okhovat* (brotherhood among believers), in various expressions. From the Qur'anic verse, "Truly the faithful are brothers..." it can be understood that there should be perfect brotherhood among the faithful and all their affairs should be regarded and fulfilled within the framework of that brotherhood." This brotherhood, according to Imam Khomeini (ra) embraces the faithful all over the world as he has emphasized: "According to the Holy Qur'an's decree, the faithful all over the world are brothers and brothers are equals and should share each other's grief and joys. In Islam, it is this very brotherhood from which all good and blessings originate. In fact Islam and the Holy Qur'an have concluded the contract of brotherhood among us. According to the Holy Qur'an, *Mu'aminoon* whether Arab, Persian, Turk or of other ethnicities everywhere are each other's brothers. This is the decree of the Holy Qur'an. If all the faithful in all Muslim countries act upon this very Qur'anic command and regard each other as brothers as Allah has wished them to, they will no longer suffer any defeat."

Due to the misguiding propaganda, before the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, some educated people believed in the separation of religion from politics and wrongly thought that Islam has no political rules. Accordingly they would consider the religion to be a collection of moral principles to be interpreted just within the framework of the people's individual relationship to God. Yet Imam Khomeini (ra) and his like-minded religious authorities thought differently; they believed Islam to be a political religion and unlike those who argued that there is

nothing as politics in Islam, Imam Khomeini (ra) and other truly knowledgeable men of God argued that in Islam, political matters are thoroughly intertwined with moral ones and that there might be many issues which seem just related to morality or rituals, but which through careful study, turn out to have political goals behind. In reality, through his knowledge and insight, Imam Khomeini (ra) drew many political rules from religious, moral teachings and presented a phenomenon named ‘the Islamic Revolution’ through the same. He clarified his outlook for the people most admirably, thus giving rise to a great political-social development on the world level and in the mentality of the world peoples.

It would be no exaggeration to say that we can hardly find a man of religious knowledge as successful as Imam Khomeini (ra) in negating the misleading idea of the separation of religion from politics and proving on the world level the truth that there should be no separation between religion and politics in Islam. Included among his lofty works in this regard has been his introducing the Hajj rituals (which were previously mostly regarded as just related to acts of ritual worship) into the realm of politics and declaring the chief goals behind Hajj to be political. As a matter of fact, Imam Khomeini (ra)'s belief in the inseparability of religion from politics was to such an extent that His Holiness in an unusual measure, wrote his last-will entitled “religious-political Will” addressed to and for the benefit of not only the present generation but also to and for the generations to come and in fact to the whole world of humanity.

In this connection let’s read and ponder upon more words of guidance presented by Imam Khomeini (ra): “Islam’s moral decrees are also political. That is every Qur’anic decree on the brotherhood of the believers is at once a moral decree, a social decree and a political decree.

That is a moral decree which contains social decrees as well as political aspects. The political aspects of that decree can clearly be observed in the fact that when the Iranian nation united and observed Islamic brotherhood among themselves they succeeded in repelling the world domineering powers, because those powers and their agents found themselves incapable of resistance against the united ranks of brothers. Imam Khomeini (ra) likewise, basing his argument on the Qur'anic decree regarding brotherhood among believers, regarded brotherhood to be a required condition of *Iman* (true faith). The faithful are brothers as taught by this verse of the Holy Qur'an (49: 10), and it can be inferred from this verse that if two people do not act upon their brotherhood-in-faith and do not treat each other as brothers, they are not truly faithful. A truly faithful person should desire good for his brothers, those who are dishonest and/or malevolent towards their brothers are not properly guided and their hearts have not received the good effects of faith. Elsewhere in his remarks, Imam Khomeini (ra) pointed out certain connections between the Qur'anic verse regarding the believers and brotherhood (49: 10) and another verse of the Holy Qur'an: “..... *Like brothers they will face one another on couches.*” Al-Hijr, 47

And he stated that this verse is about the inmates of paradise and that considering the two verses, we can conclude that those who in this world do not act upon the Qur'anic decree (49: 10) regarding brotherhood, may be deprived of that blessing in the hereafter: “*Believers merely form a brotherhood, so reconcile your brethren and heed God so that you may find mercy.*” Also, warning all against disputes and hostilities among themselves, Imam Khomeini (ra) stressed: “One of the punishments inflicted upon the inmates of hell is their hostile treatment towards each other in hell, whereas one of the blessings enjoyed by the inmates of paradise is their enjoying each other's brotherly love and companionship there.”

According to Imam Khomeini (ra) in the Hereafter, we will receive the reward or punishment for what we do in this world and in fact our actions will be returned to us there. In this regard too, His Holiness has based his views upon Divinely-revealed words, including the following verses; al-Zalzalah, 7-8: “ *... and whoever has done an atom’s weight of good will see it; while whoever has done an atom’s weight of evil will see it.* ” and advised all to avoid harsh, unfair treatment towards each other and behave like brothers in order to become deserving of heavenly rewards. Also, referring to another verse of the Holy Qur’an (8: 46) in connection with the issue of unity, Imam Khomeini (ra) stressed that according to this Divine command, Muslims are not allowed to dispute among themselves, because dispute will cause weakness and degradation among them. “Obey God and His messenger and do not argue with one another, so that you will falter and lose your courage. Show patience; God stands beside the patient.” The Holy Qur’an; al-Anfal, 46.

In an address, Imam Khomeini (ra) pointing out the same matter, expressed regret that the instructions and teachings giving by the Holy Qur’an have not been taken into consideration and acted upon adequately: “The Holy Qur’an has been disregarded, the decrees of the Holy Qur’an have been disregarded, because Muslims though performing rituals like obligatory prayers, they pay no attention to most of Islam’s political decrees.... If they act upon these verses of the Holy Qur’an which advise them to unitedly hold on to Allah’s words and avoid division among themselves and other progressive political decrees of Islam including the decree on avoiding disputes (8:46), they (the world Muslims) will gain prosperity and progress the world over.” Imam Khomeini (ra), being a true believer in the Holy Qur’an, would repeatedly urge all to heed and put the Qur’anic decrees into effect in every aspect of their lives in order to achieve prosperity and salvation.

In another speech, Imam Khomeini (ra) has expressed his displeasure at the various kinds of disputes including political ones among Muslims and stressed that as clearly stated by the Holy Qur'an, such disputes and dispersions lead to the Muslims' getting weak, degraded and unable to defend themselves against their enemies. Read these words of Imam Khomeini (ra) to get better informed about the issue of the unity of Muslims: "The Holy Qur'an has warned us that disputing among ourselves will result in our weakness and inability, (in our becoming *Fashal*, to use the Qur'anic word). Already you can observe the negative effects of such weakness in Arab countries. Really, can there be a worse weakness than the weakness suffered by those vast Muslim countries, having much political and military power, and yet being weak in the face of Israel which is an enemy who has attacked Islam and the Muslim lands? Israel is increasing its aggressive assaults every day and is also not contented with occupying just one country. The worst weakness is a government's or a nation's inability to do what it should do - to protect itself against aggressors.