Biography - 6 /Feb/ 2010

Biography

Childhood

Ayatullah Haajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei is the son of the late Ayatullah Sayyid Jawad Husaini Khamenei. He was born in Mashhad on the 17th of July 1939, which coincides with the 28th of Safar 1358 Hijri Qamari (lunar year). He was the second son of his parents, born into the house of Sayyid Jawad who lived a very simple life, like many of the scholars of his time, and it was from him that the family learned to live in a humble manner.
Remembering his life in his father's home Ayatullah Khamenei says:
"My father was a well known religious scholar who was very pious and a bit of a recluse. We had a difficult life. I remember that sometimes at night we didn't have anything in the house for dinner. Nevertheless my mother would try to scrape something up and that dinner would be bread- and-raisins."
"My father's house - the one that I was born in and lived until about the age of four or five - was about a sixty to seventy square meter home located in the poor area of Mashhad. The house only had one room and a gloomy basement. Whenever a guest came to see my father - his idea was that a religious scholar's home is a place where people come to seek help - we had to go to the basement until they left. Some years later a group of people who were very inclined to and friendly with my father bought a small empty lot beside our house so that he could build onto the house, and so we ended up with a three room house."
The Leader of the Islamic Revolution grew up poor but religious, and as his father was a pious and sincere religious scholar he was trained accordingly. At the age of four, along with his older brother Sayyid Muhammad, he was sent to an old fashioned school (Maktab) to learn the alphabets and Qur'an. Hence the two brothers were enrolled into a newly established Islamic school named Dar al- Ta`leem Diyanat, where the completed their primary studies.
During his time in high school he studied the book Jam e` al- Muqaddamaat, whereupon he began his studies in Arabic grammar. Later, after high school, he transferred to seminary studies and was taught Arabic grammar and other primary seminary studies by his father and other religious scholars of the time. Reflecting upon his reason for taking this path - the path of a religious scholar, Ayatullah Khamenei said:
"The factor which inspired me to choose the enlightened path of a religious scholar was my father; my mother also encouraged me (to choose this path), as she was very fond of the idea."
Ayatullah Khamenei studied books such as Jame` al-Muqaddamaat, Suyuti, and Mughni in the Sulayman Khan Madrasah [religious school] and the Nawwab Madrasah in addition to his father's supervision. He also studied the book Mu`alim while attending those schools. Later he studied Sharai` al-Islam and Sharh Lum`ah with his father, and a part of the second book with the late Aqah Mirza Mudarris Yazdi. He studied Rasa'el and Makasib with the late hajj Sheikh Hashim Qazwini and the remaining intermediate level studies jurisprudence and its principles (fiqh and usul) with his father. In this manner he finished the intermediate level of studies in an unprecedented of and zealous fashion within five and a half years. Moreover, his father the late Sayyid Jawad played an important role in the progress of his son.
In the fields of Logic and philosophy, The Grand Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatullah Khamenei, begin his studies of the Manzumah of Sabziwari under the late Ayatullah Mirza Jawad Aqah Tehrani and later he completed that book under the late Sheikh Ridha Aysi.

At the age of eighteen, Ayatullah Khamenei began studying the highest level - Darsi Kharij - of jurisprudence and its principles under the late grand Marja` Ayatullah al-Uzma Milani in Mashhad. In 1957 with the intention of visiting the majestic holy places he left for Najaf. Upon observing the situation in Najaf and attending the lessons Darsi kharij of the late Sayyid Muhsin Hakim, Sayyid Mahmud Shahrudi, Mirza Baqir Zanjani, Sayyid Yahya Yazdi, and Mirza Hasan Bujnurdi he decided to remain in the Islamic seminary of Najaf; however, his father did not accept this decision and thus after a short period he returned to Iran.

From 1958 until 1964 Ayatullah Khamenei continued his higher level studies in jurisprudence, and philosophy in the Islamic seminary of Qom. There he sat at the feet of grand teachers such as the late Ayatullah al-Uzma Burujerdi, Imam Khomeini, Sheikh Murtadha Hae'ri Yazdi, and `Allama Tabataba'i. In 1343, through a series of letters from his father, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution became aware that his father had become blind in one eye because of a cataract; this gave him a dilemma as to whether to stay on in Qom and continue his studies or to return to Mashhad and take care of his father. He, later came to the decision for Allah's sake, to leave Qom and return to Mashhad to care for his father, in remembrance of this event he says:
"When I returned to Mashhad Allah blessed me as I took care of my affairs. If I have been successful in life, I believe that it all stems from this good deed that I did for my father; indeed, for both my father and mother."
Ayatullah Khamenei selected the better of the two choices, although some of his teachers and friends expressed remorse as to his leaving the Islamic seminary of Qom; they predicted that he would have had a bright future had he stayed. Nevertheless, the future clearly showed that he made the right choice, as his destiny had something better in store for him - more than what his teachers did and friends could imagine. Could anyone have imagined that a young capable scholar at the age of 25 years old would leave Qom for the pleasure of Allah to care for his father and mother, and 25 years later would hold the grand office of Wali Amru'l- Muslimin [The Guardian of Muslim Affairs].
While in Mashhad he did not leave his studies all together. Rather, he continued his lessons in jurisprudence and its principles under grand teachers such as Ayatullah Milani until 1968 - only interrupting his lessons on holidays, to do political activity, while in jail or to travel. From the time he had returned to Mashhad in 1964, while caring for his parents he would also teach jurisprudence and its principles and other religious subjects to young seminary and university students.

Political campaign

Ayatullah Khamenei in his own words is one of the students of Imam Khomeini in the areas of jurisprudence and its principles, and in revolutionary and political ideas. However, the first spark of his political activism and hatred for oppression was inspired by the great revolutionist and Martyr Sayyid Mujtaba Nawwab Safawi. It was in the year 1952 that Nawwab Safawi and some of his supporters went to Mashhad to the Sulayman Khan Madrasah. There he delivered a dynamic lecture on reviving Islam and its Divine Rule and he warned the Iranian people of the deceitful lies of the Shah and the English government. At the time, Ayatullah Khamenei was one of the young students of the Sulayman Khan Madrasah who attended the fiery speech of Nawwab Safawi and he was very much influenced by the great revolutionist. Ayatullah Khamenei remembers that moment, saying:

"It was at that very moment, because of Nawwab Safawi that the consciousness of Islamic Revolutionary activism sparked inside me. I have no doubt that it Nawwab Safawi who first kindled the fire (of revolutionary Islam) in my heart."

In 1962 while Ayatullah Khamenei was still in Qom he joined the revolutionary Movement of Imam Khomeini, which opposed the pro-American, anti-Islamic politics of Muhammad Reza Shah. Despite all the ups and downs, persecutions, exiles, and imprisonment Ayatullah Khamenei fearlessly continued on this path for sixteen years.

In Moharram 1383 Hijri Qamari [May 1963], for the first time, Ayatullah Khamenei was sent on a mission by Imam Khomeini. This mission was to communicate the Imam's message to Ayatullah Milani and other clergymen in Khorasan. This message was to set the tone for the propagation and exposure of the pro-American policies of Muhammad Reza Shah in the month of Moharram.

Khamenei fulfilled this mission and also acted upon its demands, as he was sent to Birjand for propagation in Muharram. As a result of his propagation on the ninth of Moharram (June, 2, 1963) he was arrested. He spent one night in jail and freed only under the condition that he would never return to the pulpit (minbar) to speak again. From that moment on he knew that he would be under police surveillance. Upon the development of the bloody

incident of ‘The Fifteenth of Khordad’, Ayatullah Khamenei was taken into custody in Birjand , and then transferred to a prison in Mashhad where he spent ten days under severe torture before being released.

In January 1964 - i.e. Ramadhan 1383 according to a well-organized plan, Ayatullah Khamenei and some of his friends left for Kerman. After two or three days of preaching and visiting religious scholars and students in Kerman they departed for Zahedan. Their preaching and their emphatic way of exposing the Shah’s hypocritical referendum was well accepted among the masses, especially on the 6th of January when it was election time. On the fifteenth of Ramadhan, the birthday of Imam al-Hasan (peace be upon him), his diligent preaching and public disclosure of the satanic, American politics of the Pahlavi Dynasty reached its peak. As a result of this, Savak [The Shah’s intelligence Agency] came and arrested him in the night - that night they took him by airplane to Tehran. The grand leader spent about two months in solitary confinement bearing various types of tortures.

The lessons he held on exegesis of the Qur’an, prophetic, and Islamic ideology in Mashhad and Tehran were warmly welcomed by revolutionary - minded youth. Because of this Savak began to keep a close surveillance on Ayatullah Khamenei. In the year 1967 Ayatullah Khamenei was forced to live underground, but exactly one-year later he was captured by Savak and imprisoned. In the year 1371 he was again arrested by Savak for the very same activities for - holding classes and conducting enlightening, intellectual discussions.

Ayatullah Khamenei writes about his fifth apprehension by Savak, saying:

"From the year 1348 [1970] the situation was ripening for an armed revolution in Iran. The sensitivity and severity of the former regime against me had increased. Because of the circumstances they were no longer able to ignore people such as myself. In 1350 [1972] I was again taken to prison, for the fifth time. The harsh attitude of Savak indicated that the System (regime) was very afraid of an armed revolution being accompanied with a sound Islamic ideology. They could no longer believe that my intellectual activism and propagation in Mashhad and Tehran had nothing to do with the developing situation. After being released, the attendance at my open classes on the exegesis of the Qur’an and private classes on ideology and other subjects increased."

years 1972 and 1975 Ayatullah Khamenei’s lessons on the exegesis of the Qur'an and Islamic ideology were now being held in three Masajids - karaamat, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Mirza Ja`far - in the holy city of Mashhad. Thousands of people attended these lessons, especially conscious - minded youth and politically - active students.

His lectures on the Nahjul Balaqa offered another type of experience in a different way. These lectures were transcribed and published in a circular named ‘Poly copy’ under the title ‘The Glorious Nahjul al-Balaqah’. The young revolutionary minded students who were taught the reality and true meaning of struggle by Ayatullah Khamenei were very diligent in spreading this ideology to the masses in nearby cities. This action cause Savak to break into his home in Mashhad in the winter of 1975 arresting him and confiscating many of his notes and other writings. This was the sixth and most difficult imprisonment in Ayatullah Khamenei’s life. He was detained in the central prison of Iran until the fall of 1976 under the most stringent conditions. Ayatullah Khamenei describes the severity of the condition of that prison saying, "such conditions only made sense to those people."

After being released from prison Ayatullah Khamenei returned to Mashhad where he continued his political / revolutionary activities although he was not able to reestablish his classes as they were before.

The illegitimate Pahlavi regime in the latter part of the year 1976 apprehended Ayatullah Khamenei and sentenced him to exile in Iranshahr for a period of three years. By mid 1979, during the climax of civil unrest in Iran, he returned to Mashhad where he confronted the bloodthirsty Pahlavi regime. Fifteen years later after bearing all the harsh and bitter moments of the Islamic revolution, Ayatullah Khamenei witnessed the fall of tyrannical Pahlavi regime and the establishment of the Islamic Republic.

On the brink of victory for the Islamic revolution - before the advent of Imam Khomeini's return to Iran from Paris - an Islamic Revolutionary Council was formed by the Imam. This counsel consisted of important personalities such as Shaheed Muttahari, Shaheed Beheshti, and Hashemi Rafsanjani. Ayatullah Khamenei's upon Imam Khomeini' decree became a member of this counsel. Thereupon, after receiving this message through Shaheed Muttahari, Ayatullah Khamenei left Mashhad and went to Tehran

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution Ayatullah Khamenei continued to be very active in working for Islam and fulfilling the goals of the Islamic revolution. The tasks that he performed in those times and until now are unparalleled and without an equal, however though in this brief biography we can only mention the most important of these tasks. A chronological list of Ayatullah Khamenei's services to the Islamic Republic of Iran after the victory of the Islamic revolution is as follows:
February 1979 - One of the founders of the Islamic Republic party along with like-minded scholar such as Shaheed Beheshti, Shaheed Bahunar, Musawi Ardebili, and Hashemi Rafsanjani.
1980 - Secretary of Defense.
1980 - Supervisor of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards.
1980 - Leader of the Friday Congregational Prayer.
1980 - The Tehran Representative in the Consultative Assembly.
1981 - Imam Khomeini's Representative in the High Security Council.
1981 - Actively presents at the war front during the imposed war between Iran and Iraq.
1982 - Assassination attempt by the hypocrites on his life in the Abuthar masjid in Tehran.
1982 - Elected President of the Islamic Republic of Iran after martyrdom of Shaheed Muahmmad Ali Raja'i. This was his first term in office; all together he served two terms in office, which lasted until 1990.
1982 - chairman of the High Council of Revolution Culture Affairs.
1988 - President of the Expedience Council.
1990 - Chairman of the Constitution Revisal Comity.
1990 - Ayatullah Khamenei became the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran by choice of the Council of Experts, after the demise of Imam Khomeini.

Written work

Here, we will mention briefly some of the written works composed by Ayatullah Khamenei.
His Writings and Research Work:
1- A Complete Overview of Islamic Thought in the Qur'an.
2- The Profundity of Prayer.
3- A Discourse on Patience.
4- The Four Major Book Concerning the Biographic of Traditionalist.
5- Wilaayat - Guardianship
6- A Glimpse at the History and Previous State of the Islamic Seminary of Mashhad.
7- A Biography of the Shi'ite Imams (Peace be upon them).
8- Imam Saadiq (Peace be upon him).
7- Unity and Political Parties.
8- Art in the Viewpoint of Ayatullah Khamenei.
9- Understanding Islam Correctly.
10- The Discourse of Wilaayat.
Translations (from Arabic to Persian):
1- The Peace treaty of Imam Hasan (Peace be upon him).
2- The Future from an Islamic perspective.
3- Muslims in the Liberation of India.
4- Petition Against the Western Civilization.

Leadership

Having suffered from an almost long illness, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who revived Islam in the materialist and dark world of twentieth century, the late Imam Khomeini (q.) traveled to Allah the Almighty with a confident heart and a peaceful mind. The people felt so deep sorrow and grief as if they could not believe what had happened. After expecting such an event for years, the arrogant malicious enemy thought naively that it approached its goal. However, two important factors contributed to bring about defeat, despair, and humiliation for the enemy; yet happiness and promise for the believers and the oppressed:

Participation of ten million mourners in the most splendid funeral procession changed the will of millions of the people for maintaining the achievements of the Islamic Revolution and expression of their loyalty and love for, and their obedience to, the leader of revolution into a powerful storm which swept away the enemy's hope, similar to Tabas storm which smashed aircrafts of the raiders.

Beside this amazing participation of sorrowful mourners, an extraordinary session of the Assembly of Experts and its rapid decisive decision-making as well as its correct and suitable vote provided the Islamic Revolution with a trustworthy, pious, brave and intelligent leader highly skilful in management. In fact, the revolution and the nation were not left without leader - as a source of hope - even for a day and the prevailing bless of Allah made that surprising unprecedented participation fruitful.

The late Imam Khomeini (q.) had stipulated in his divine political will that either his son, Hajj Ahmad or the president should recite it. Upon Hajj Ahmad's rejection, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei recited it in the Assembly of Experts for millions of agonized astonished Iranians as well as millions of foreigners receiving the program through satellite. During the recitation, he was choked with tears several times. Yet having controlled his feeling, he let the public know the last everlasting recommendations of Imam Khomeini (q.). The loyal, devoted, conscious, and revolutionary people of Iran offered an unprecedented and the most excellent funeral to Imam Khomeini (q.) who saved them from the dark age of devils. Besides mourning day and night, crying and hitting their heads and chests around the newly built shrine of their great master, guide, and leader; they spared no effort to swear loyalty and allegiance to their new leader and to support deserving decision taken by the Assembly of Experts. By meeting their new leader, they prevented foreign enemy and its domestic mercenaries from any conspiracy and evil thought. The participation of people in their great leader's farewell crystallized the most beautiful insights and mottoes. It also manifested, through poems and images of cameras, the homage of a nation to its great marji', who lived a pious life and obeyed Allah in freeing this nation and the oppressed of the world as a whole from obedience and servitude for arrogant tyrants. His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei literarily describes heart-rending event of that day and the people's participation as follows:

"That day became a big day of mourning for the world of Islam. The heart-rending effect of this grief did not remain exclusive to the Iranian nation. All over the world, wherever there was an enlightened heart or a conscious soul, it was overtaken by this tragic event. Every Muslim aware of revolution and its issues was mourner. There were no place on the Earth but in which some people were overwhelmed by sorrow for this important happening and lamented this irreparable loss. The whole Iran became a house of mourning. In every city and village in it, sorrowful crying echoed in each and every house and was heard in all streets, squares, and quarters. No one could bear it in silence. Individuals ranging from the braves at battlefields, the parents who had no sign of sorrow or helplessness on their face after martyrdom of their youth, great men in fields of science, mysticism and politics to all citizens of this great nation, all cried, moaned and groaned, or impatiently hit their heads and chests.

The catastrophe of missing Imam was so much great as he was. Other than Allah and His lovers, who can perceive this glory? In a place where great hearts cannot stand, in a scene that millions of people lose their patience and great personalities wander, which tongue or pen can depict the situation?

As an impatient drop in that turbulent ocean, how can I describe it? The universe missed its unique item and the Earth contained an exclusive jewel. A great pioneer of Islam who spent his honorable life in exalting Islam bade farewell to the world."

A few months to the end of his second term of presidency, His Eminence was preparing himself to abandon this responsibility:

"Before the demise of Hazrat Imam, the term of presidency was getting over. I was getting prepared to leave. Frequently, some people referred to me suggesting some jobs. Irresponsible men thought those jobs would fit me! However, I answered, 'if Imam makes it wajib for me to do a certain job, I will do it as Imam's order is an obligation. Otherwise, I will ask Imam not to oblige me so that I can engage myself in cultural works. I will pursue this kind of jobs.' "

However, Allah, the Wise, had destined for this nation and His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei something else. With the demise of Hazrat Imam (q.), this destiny was materialized. The leader had not accepted a post unless it was a divine duty. He did the same in regard with the office of leadership (i.e. he did not think about it, let alone take a single step for it).

He says,"I did not expect, even for a second in my life, what happened in the process of being elected as new leader in which this responsibility was put on my shoulder as a humble and weak servant of Allah. If someone thinks that it occurred to me even for a second at the time of struggle, later during the revolution, or during my term of presidency that this responsibility would be delegated to me, he is wrong. I always considered my level too low to accept not only this highly significant and crucial post but also much lower posts like presidency and other posts, which I held during the revolution.

Once I told Imam (q.) that sometimes my name is cited among some gentlemen while I am like common people. I did not say it as a matter of courtesy. Now, I maintain the same thing. Therefore, this even was not imaginable at all.

Of course, we had very sensitive hours, the most serious hours of our lives. Allah knows what we experienced that night and the Saturday morning. To fulfill their duty, brothers were strenuously thinking and working to tidy the affairs up. Frequently, they talked about me as a member of leadership council although I rejected it in my mind. However, it was possible that they would delegate it to me.

Then I sought refuge to Allah. The next day, before the Assembly of Experts started its work, I cried and supplicated to Allah earnestly, 'My Lord, you plan and predestinate the affairs. As a member of leadership council, I may become responsible. I implore you, in case this post is going to be a little bit harmful for my religion and for me in the Day of Judgment, to prevent its realization.' Really, from the bottom of my heart, I wanted not to take this responsibility.

Finally, after some debates and talks in the Assembly of Experts, they voted for me. There I tried, debated, and reasoned to prevent the vote but they voted.

Even now, I consider myself as a common religious student without any outstanding feature or special advantage, not only for this great office of significant responsibility – as I said sincerely – but also for much less important ones like presidency, etc delegated to me during that ten years. However, now that they voted for me to bear its burden and responsibility, I accept it vigorously similar to what Allah advised His prophets, "Take it rigorously". To discharge it vigorously to the extent I can – as divine duty corresponds to one's ability – I entreat Allah's help so that I would maintain the great status of this office. This is my duty and I hope – if Allah wants – to be exposed to His blessing and mercy and to be one of those for whom Wali – 'asr (May Allah make his reappearance sooner) and pious believers pray."

The late Imam Khomeini(q.), enjoying divine insight, considered Hazrat Ayatollah Khamenei thoroughly competent for leadership as far as capabilities and piety are concerned. Several times, the late Imam Khomeini (q.) mentioned this fact explicitly or implicitly.
His son, the late Hujjat al-Islam, Hajj Sayyid Ahmad said:

"When Ayatollah Khamenei was visiting North Korea, the late Imam watched the T.V. reports including a large number of people who gathered to welcome him, as well as his marvelous speeches and debates. Then he said that Ayatollah Khamenei really deserves to be a leader."

Addressing Ayatollah Khamenei, after he was elected as leader, Hajj Sayyid Ahmad said, “The late Imam Khomeini, several times, referred to you as a proved mujtahid and the best one for leadership.”

Hujjat al-Islam Hashemi Rafsanjani quotes another event: "In a meeting in which the late Imam, the heads of executive, judiciary and legislative branches, the prime minister (Mr. Mousavi), and Hajj Sayyid Ahmad were present; we told Imam that if it happens, we will face problem of lacking leader in case of observing the constitution. His Eminence answered, “You will face no problem as you have someone to become leader.” I asked, “Whom do you mean?” In presence of Ayatollah Khamenei, he answered, “Ayatollah Khamenei”".

Mrs. Zahra Mustafavi, the beloved daughter of Imam Khomeini (q.) says: "Long time before dismissal of the successor of leadership, I, personally asked about leadership and the late Imam answered Ayatollah Khamenei. I asked whether being a marji‘ and the most knowledgeable are the requirements. The late Imam answered, no. I asked about his level of knowledge. The Imam explicitly said, “He enjoys that level of ijtihad required to be a wali al-faqih.”"

In the extraordinary session of the Assembly of Experts held after the demise of Imam Khomeini (R.), they discussed board of leadership upon which both His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei and Hujjat al-Islam wal Muslimin Mr. Hashemi Rafsanjani had agreed. However, Allah destined something else and the Assembly did not accept the reasoning of Ayatollah Khamenei and declared him as the leader of Muslims despite of his insistence on not accepting it. He says: “After the demise of Imam Khomeini (R.), I participated in the first day of the Assembly of Experts as the other members did. Finally, they talked about me, debating whom to be elected as leader. They agreed on electing me to this significant post. I did my best to prevent it, I strongly objected to it, not that I wanted to do so as courtesy. Allah knows what I crossed my mind at that time.
Istood up and said, “Gentlemen, wait a minute.” All – in both audio and video forms – were recorded and are available now. I started reasoning not to be elected as leader. Despite all my insistence, they did not accept. The mujtahids and great scholars who were there answered our reasoning. I was decided not to accept it. However, I found out later that there is no other choice. Because according to reliable individuals it was only me to accept this responsibility. Otherwise, it would have been left unaccomplished. If there had been or I had known another person upon whom others would have agreed - to discharge this duty; certainly I would have rejected the office of leadership. Then I said, “O; my Lord on you I trust and up to now He helped.”"

The Assembly of Experts elected Ayatollah Khamenei quickly and in a suitable and careful manner and trusting on Allah, the sublime, His Eminence accepted it. While enemy had devised ominous intrigues for post-Imam era manifested in continuous propaganda of foreign radios and press during the days Imam was ill.

Referring to the role of people’s piety and intelligence and Allah’s miracles in neutralizing these conspiracies, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei explains the enemy’s intrigues after the demise of Imam Khomeini (q.). He says:

"upon the demise of Imam Khomeini (q.), the broad spectrum of the enemies of Islam – in the forefront of combating against the Islamic Republic – did not hide their hope that in the absence of its founder and developer, the Islamic Republic would lose its power for defense and growth, feel weak and hopeless like an orphan child,

collapse totally, or would have no other choice than seeking shelter from others!

Narrow-mindedly, the enemies – whose reckonings are one hundred percent materialistic as they are deprived of understanding spiritual relations and the blessings of belief and piety – cannot conceive that the divine miracle in the advent of the fifteenth century A.D., i.e. the governance of religion and morals and resurgence of Islamic values, is that heightened peak to which the defiled hands of those given to debauchery and whims does not reach and which the diplomacy of gold and might fails to entrap."

The presence of ten million people in the funeral of their guide and master and the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the timely, appropriate election of Ayatollah Khamenei as the Leader displayed the divine miracle and the enemy failed again. Although enemies had been happy hoping that His Eminence would not be able to run the system out of too many hardships, plots, and domestic/foreign malevolence, and that sooner or later the system would not be ruled by a just, intelligent, efficient, and prudent mujtahid. Thereby their long-lasting carving would be satisfied! However, as time passed it became clear that the Assembly of Experts, guided by Allah and the advice of Imam Khomeini (q.), really has elected the best and the most competent personality by whom the way of Imam continued and was guarantied. His messages and speeches made enemy hopeless yet strengthened esperance of the great Iranian nation. The expressing outcry of this nation against U.S.A., The criminal, is a well indication that the Imam's way continues.

Marji'yah is one of the outstanding phases in the life of His Eminence, the supreme Leader. After demise of some Grand Ayatollahs i.e. Golpayegani, Mar'ashi Najafi, and Araki, nearly there was no first-level marji', coeval with the late Imam, and recognized and accepted by common people. Therefore, the Muslim in Iran had a new generation of marji's in front of them. The enemy started again to make trouble after the demise of Ayatollah Araki, suggesting that hawzah had engaged in struggle of power. Being ignorant about the office of marji'yah, about scholars and marji's in hawzah of Qom, and about the great people of Iran as well; wrong analyses lead the enemies to heavy failure in their policies as usual. The supreme Leader played his role excellently by disclosing the intrigue of enemy and making Iranian nation aware of the situation. At first, enemy propagated that people no longer like clerics. His Eminence says:

"They were pretending that Iranian nation dislikes clerics, is no longer interested in them, and that only one day in the past, i.e. the early days of revolution or before revolution people were respecting clerics highly; now they attach no importance to clerics. They wanted to make people believe it… On the day in which Imam (q.) passed away, Tehran went upset. Iran went upset. Anywhere, any city, you may have gone – we had the news – people had gathered in jami` masjids, in main centers, in holy places; while Imam's body was in Tehran. That day, really, Tehran experienced an exceptional day, Tehran's people witnessed the event, and others watched it on the television. However, I tell you that camera could not display its very nature. It was so splendid. I saw youngsters – whose age was one-fifth/one quarter in proportion to that of Imam – crying like heavy rains in the spring. Why were you crying? What was the reason? He was an old man aged 103 whom you never saw. Moreover, until three or four years ago, you did not know him. Only scholars, personalities, and hawzahs knew him. It is merely three, four years that you know him. Then, why are you crying so much? Why are women hitting their chests, crying and weeping? Great men are shedding tears. Among that huge crowd, they want to touch the corpse, to put their hand on the coffin. Why? What is it for? It is because Iranian people believe in – as before – marji'yah as a great splendid position, because Iranian people, from the bottom of their hearts, love clerics, but not bogus ones, real clerics, men of religion. Not a bogus cleric that enemy wants to introduce to the people as a cleric. No, people hate him. However, they like a real cleric. Because they believe that by means of Islam, one can achieve both this world and the hereafter. Islam helped them a lot. Islam provided them with freedom and dignity. Islam freed them from tyrants and corrupt administration. Not to mention that 2500 years, so-called years of kings in Iran – about which there is no substantiate proof, during one / two last centuries, people suffered a lot under heavy rule of Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties. Iran lost its historical dignity and glory. It fell behind science, civilization, politics, and economy. It lost its vital resources. The people blamed kingdom for these things. Who saved them? Who informed them? That great

cleric, the clerics as pioneers. Therefore, people like the real scholars of religion. Whenever there was a real voice of freedom, its leader was clerics. This is the history, a history, not written by clerics. Rather the enemies of clerics wrote it, but they admitted to this truth. The people witnessed it. Thereby this propaganda produced no result."

Another propaganda the enemy made during those days was that marji'yah generation came to an end and no longer is there anybody competent to be a marji'! But Jami`at Mudarisin Hawzah `Ilmiyyah in Qom issued the list of scholars qualified enough to be marji's and nullified this propaganda.

"They propagated that in Iranian society there is nobody qualified as marji'. However, the people saw a list of qualified marji's. this list was issued by experts in the field, those who can distinguish the marji's, those who are running the hawzahs. The hawzahs depend on them, so they can say about it. Of course, they decided on 5-6 marji's and introduced them. They find it appropriate to declare only 5-6 persons. You cannot list one hundred people. However, I tell you that if someone wants to count those qualified as marji's in hawzah of Qom, it comes to more than one hundred. Among them, six people were mentioned. Two more names were declared by the society of struggling clerics. It is not only them. At least, they are one hundred. It is said that old roots i.e. generation of great scholars ended. How can you know who are great scholars of hawzahs? The politicians in USA and Britain, as well as world news agencies cannot understand and analyze the clearest issues of our nation. Otherwise, they would have not failed so much. They are not able to analyze yet they express their opinion regarding hawzah affairs, which are among the most complicate ones. Those in hawzah know who is competent and who is not. How do you want to know whether the generation of great scholars came to an end? After the demise of Imam Khomeini, four the most eminent marji' passed away. Of course, more than four. However, I name only the most famous ones, i.e. the late Grand Ayatollah Araki, Golpayegani, Khoie, Mar'ashi. Except for the late Araki who aged 103, the rest lived around ninety years. It means that in the year 1340 A.H. that the Grand Ayatollah Boroujerdi passed away, these four ninety-aged scholars only were around sixty years old. Now they aged 90, but thirty-three year ago they ranged from fifty seven to sixty three year old. Always, it is like that. At the time the late ayatollahs Khoie, Golpayegani, and Mar`ashi were introduced to the people were younger than or almost the same old as those who are introduced as marji'. Then why do you say that the generation of hawzah scholars came to an end? What do you know about the hawzah scholars? Who are they? What is their generation? Then, why do you express improper opinion?"

Another issue for which arrogant powers made large propaganda investment was to introduce some persons to the Iranian people as qualified and competent! They tried to provide certain individual with proper public opinion! Those individuals were weak in their belief regarding the Islamic Revolution and Imam Khomeini's way or had no interest in them. The tyrant Pahlavi regime did the same thing after the demise of Grand Ayatollah Boroujerdi for two purposes. First, to transfer marji'yah from Qom to Najaf. Second, to shift it inside Iran towards certain individual who held optimistic views concerning Shah's Regime! At the same time, foreigners did not ignore suggesting that there is struggle of power. Rather, they work hard in this field.

Another issue was that they started naming some individuals as marji'. This person is the most outstanding. They started giving religious decrees for Muslims. Regarding marji'yah, people are more strict than regarding anything else. It is a just attitude. I tell you to be very strict as to who is marji'. Be careful not to allow your sentiments to overcome. Be exact in pursuing the very Shar'i method, two just witnesses. One is not sufficient. Not any two just witnesses. They should also be expert in the field. They should witness that it is permissible to follow a certain individual in taqlid, that he is qualified as marji' so that you can do his taqlid.

Then they expect Iranian nation, which so strict in taqlid matters, to give ears to the impious and sinful directors of BBC or a Zionist radio. They say a certain gentleman is the best so that people do his taqlid. What a false imagination! If they had little chance to be followed, Now that their names are announced by those radios, that little chance fade away. A number of our people, rather, most believers of our country do just opposite to what foreign radios say. It is because they heard too many lies and saw too many malevolence and deceit from these radios. If they say "follow this person", the people do not follow him. If they emphasize on not to follow a particular person,

they follow him. It is our people's habit, which is a proper one. Imam (r.) said the prosperity is in opposing these foreign radios and enemy's propaganda. Any direction they go, you should know it is false and the opposite direction is true. As to marji'yah, our people nullified hostile propaganda of enemy by taking this attitude.

I really thank the people. Of course, I cannot fully appreciate them. The nation thoroughly fulfilled its duty regarding demise of Grand Ayatollah Araki by taking proper attitude, participating in the funeral procession, saying prayers on him and by participating in ceremonies held in his memorial. Scholars in Qom and Tehran issued the list of scholars whom people may follow. We should really appreciate their effort in accomplishing their duty. Of course, one cannot say those not included in the list enjoy a lower position, I cannot say so. Now, if you go to Qom, you can find at least one hundred scholars whose names could be included in the list. They are not in hurry. The truth is just contrary to what enemy said that there is a struggle of power in Iran concerning marji'yah. An infidel takes everyone else for an infidel. To gain a small post in Europe or USA – where secular civilization is dominant, to be a mayor or a governor of this city or that state, or in order to become a member of parliament; they do not hesitate to give up all holy matters. They are like this.

I regret that you dear people do not have opportunity to see some writings and information we deal with in order to know how low they are in the quest for power. The very world personalities spruce, dandy, and with feigned smile before TV cameras would commit all possible crimes to get this post. Most of them are like that. I read a book – a well-documented and substantiated one – on something happened in USA. The book discloses some strange and shocking truth how certain groups fought against each other to take over a post. They think that here the same thing goes on for marji'yah. No, you are wrong. There is no struggle of power. There is no dispute. As to marji'yah, there are many competent scholars like the late grand Ayatollah Araki (a.) who did not raise his name for thirty years. After thirty or forty years, it occurred to others to go to him and ask him to accept marji'yah. They got his positive answer for marji'yah and publishing his risalah only after much insistence. Now also there are some individuals in Qom among those competent for marji'yah that if one thousand people go to them to bring them to the scene, they will reject. Alhamdo lillah, at this very moment, there are some mujtahids who do not raise themselves although they consider themselves as more knowledgeable than others. Most of them – of course I do not say all of them – consider themselves like that. Nevertheless, they do not say anything about it.

They are not ready to come to the scene. After the demise of grand Ayatollah Boroujerdi, the very Honorable Imam who attracted the world and could contain all human beings did not publish risalah, sat in his house and refused to publish the book. I, personally, was among those who requested so. He did not answer. He said there are some others to accomplish the job. At last, a number of people left him with no other choice. They knew his fatwa. They wrote risalah according to his fatwa and published it. There are many similar examples. This very moment, there are some individuals in hawzah, who were qualified marji' some twenty, thirty year ago. However, they neither raise their names nor let others to do so. Then, what kind of struggle of power is it? At most, a person who is likely to be marji' may publish risalah and puts it in his house. When people come to him, he may give them the book. This is the maximum thing a mujtahid may do. Radios are full of propaganda on struggle of power. Which struggle of power?"

Jami`at Mudarisin Hawzah `Ilmiyyah in Qom published a list of eminent qualified maraji`s. Being announced shortly after the demise of Ayatollah al-uzma Araki, the list brought comfort to the Iranians. The name of the Supreme Leader was in the list as well. As the people in Iran can refer to the outstanding marji's in the hawzah of Qom and due to his familiarity with the Islamic and international affair, the Supreme Leader accepted the proposal of being a marji' for the Muslims in the Islamic countries. His Eminence says:

"Dear brothers, concerning the question of marji'yat, it is not like that. Someone will accomplish the duty. It is not something dependent on a single individual. The gentlemen published a list in which my name was included. However, if I had been consulted (about it), I would have objected. I had not been informed about their decision. It was not until after its being published that I knew about it. If I had known earlier, I would not have agreed. I even informed the people in the IRIB TV (of my opinion) and said to them 'If it does not displease the eminent

gentlemen, do not mention my name when you read their list.' After a while, they replied that it was not possible for them to make any change. At the end of a meeting of several hours, they decided that they could do nothing, and so the original form of the announcement was read as it was.

Oh, my dear people and respected gentlemen, who sent me messages or letters from various places, I have to tell you that I am burdened with a very heavy responsibility at the present time. The weight of being the Leader of the Islamic Republic system along with the great world responsibilities is as heavy as the weighty loads of several marji's. You should know that if the loads of several marji's are put together, possibly, it will become as heavy as that. Perhaps, it will, though I do not imagine it will. The present situation is not that urgent. However, if - Allah forbids - the situation becomes so critical that no way remains but acceptance, then I will. Despite my weak shoulders and my neediness, if I feel that I have to, I will not hesitate - through Allah's kindness - to place ten loads like that on my shoulders; but at present, it is not as critical as that. Thanks to Allah, there exist so many mujtahids. Now, I am talking about Qom. However, in cities other than Qom, there are some qualified mutjtahids as well. What makes it necessary for them to add to the heavy responsibilities delegated to me by Allah? It is not necessary. Therefore, those who insist that I publish risalah should pay attention. This is why I refuse to accept the responsibility of being a marji'. Thanks to Allah, there are others. Then, it is not needed.

Of course, outside Iran, it is different. I accept its burden. What is the reason? It is because, if I do not burden myself with it, it will be lost. The day, on which I feel they – the mujtahids who are available in Qom, Al hamdu lillah, and are sufficient in taking the responsibility – can afford its burden outside Iran as well, I also go away. Today, I accept the request of Shi'as outside Iran, as there is no alternative. It is like other cases of necessity. However, regarding inside Iran, there is no need. The Holy Imam of `asr protects and witnesses hawzahs, supports great scholars and guides marji's and people here. I ask Allah to make this phase as a blessed one for the Iranian nation as well."

The collection of the Supreme Leader's verdicts, consisting of acts of worship and transactions, has been published in Arabic and in some other languages. It is intended for the people living abroad. A very large number of faithful Muslims all over the world have received the collection of verdicts warmly.

The Leader's refusal of the responsibility of becoming marji' for the people in the Islamic Republic of Iran, does not mean that the people inside the country are not allowed to follow him as a marji'. Consequently, multitudes of letters containing questions about religious issues come from inside the country and from abroad. Besides, a very large number of the noble people in Iran have selected the Supreme Leader as their marji'. There was a pressing in addition to the constant pleading by many great figures. Therefore, the Supreme Leader agreed that the Persian version of the aforementioned collection of verdicts to be published.

We hope that the faithful inside the country and abroad who are anxious for the risalah al-'amaliyyah, which is being written by the Supreme Leader, will benefit from the risalah when it comes out.