A Call to Divine Unity: Letter of Imam Khomeini to President Mikhail Gorbachev

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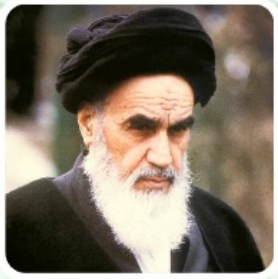

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Al-Islam.org

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Publisher(s):

The Institute for the Compilation and Publication of the Works of Imam Khomeini [2]

This text outlines the impact the letter of Imam Khomeini addressed to Mikhail Gorbachev had at the time of the sending. How it was hidden, then secretly copied and spread and how the ideas outlined in the letter came true years after.

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Person Tags:

Mikhail Gorbachev [6]
Sayyid Ruhullah Musawi Khomeini [1]

Foreword

"*If you hope, at this juncture, to cut the economic Gordian knots of socialism and communism by appealing to the center of Western capitalism, you will, far from remedying any ill of your society, commit a mistake which those to come will have to erase.*"

Imam Khomeini

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A survey of the events of Imam Khomeini's life will reveal the undeniable fact that the Imam had a prophet-like character surpassing that of any celebrated figure in contemporary history. His character, however, can only be known through a thorough study of the Islamic Revolution which he founded, and led to victory.

Among his prophetic acts was the letter the Imam wrote toward the end of his blessed life to President Mikhail Gorbachev, the then and the last Chairman of the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The letter was written at a time when the eight-year war imposed on Iran had just ended and the Western media and political analysts interpreted Iran's acceptance of the UN Resolution 598 as a consequence of a shake in Iran's convictions. The enemies of Islam cherished the hope that the Islamic Revolution would be restricted to Iran and cease to have an impact beyond the borders of the country.

Under these circumstances the news of a message sent by Imam Khomeini to the leader of the Soviet Union aroused the attention of all nations, particularly political leaders and analysts. The delegation, led by a high-ranking clergyman, Ayatullah Jawad Amuli, one of the Imam's disciples, accompanied by the Deputy Foreign Minister and a lady representative of the parliament, arrived in Moscow on January 7th, 1989 and met with Mr. Gorbachev in the Kremlin Palace at 11 a.m. the following day. The meeting lasted for about 2 hours.

The composition of the delegation and the nature of the message once more attracted the attention of the world toward the Islamic Revolution and its great leader. The Soviet authorities and Mr. Gorbachev had expected the message to be anything but a call to divine unity and pure Muhammadan Islam. Following the tradition of the great prophets, the Imam started his invitation at a center of power with the conviction that his call would extend throughout the world. The Soviet authorities' response to the call was political but the message, having been widely broadcast by the mass media and interpreted by news agencies, produced the desired effect.

Inside the Soviet Union, the letter was kept hidden from the people, and even banned in Muslim republics. Although, it was met with a hearty welcome by the Soviet youth and gave a boost to the already burning zest of Soviet Muslims for Islam. The letter was copied in thousands and distributed secretly throughout the country.

Today, a few years after this divine message was issued, the Imam's prophecy of the collapse of communism and the inevitable changes inside the Soviet Union has been fulfilled. The path which the Imam showed to Mr. Gorbachev involved a solution of problems resulting from Marxist ideology as well as an integration of political power and the preservation of the dignity of the Soviet people. The Imam warned the Soviet authorities not to be lured by the illusory haven of the Western world and not to fall into the trap set by the Arch-Satan. Are we not witnessing today the materialization of these two warnings?

The Imam's historic letter was an attempt at exporting the Islamic Revolution, not an attempt to interfere in the affairs of other nations. Rather, merely to provide an answer to the question of the souls' thirst for divine teachings—souls forced to live for seventy years under teachings incompatible with their nature. Let us hope for a day when the propaganda spell of the Western world will shatter and the Westerners, too, will find a chance to grasp the spirit of the Imam's divine message.

International Affairs Department
The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works
First Printing, Winter 1993

The Letter

Letter of Imam Khomeini,

The Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution and Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran,

To President Mikhail Gorbachev, Leader of the Soviet Union

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Your Excellency Mr. Gorbachev1, Chairman of the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

With due wishes for the happiness and prosperity of Your Excellency and the people of the Soviet Union.

Since your assumption of office there has been the impression that Your Excellency, in analyzing world political events, particularly those pertaining to the Soviet Union, have found yourself in a new era of reassessment, change, and confrontation; and your boldness and initiative in dealing with the realities of the world is quite likely to bring about changes that would result in upsetting the equations of power dominating the world. I have therefore found it necessary to bring certain matters to your attention.

Even if your new approach and decisions are merely used as a means to overcome the party crisis, and to solve some of the problems confronting your people, your courage in reappraising a school of thought that has for decades enchained the revolutionary youth of the world behind its iron curtain is indeed worthy of praise. If, however, you are considering taking a further step forward, the first thing that will ensure your success is that you re-evaluate your predecessors' policy of obliterating God and religion from society2, a policy that has no doubt given the heaviest blow to the Soviet people. Rest assured that this is the only way whereby world problems can be dealt with realistically.

Viewing Islam as a remnant of the pre-socialist stage, Marxists took two major approaches to confront it: to wipe out Islam as an alien element from the scene of public life by openly challenging it, and to assimilate Islam into Russian society by Russianizing Muslims. Stalin, the most notorious of all communist leaders, persecuted Muslims on a large scale by banishing certain Muslim peoples collectively to Siberia and Asia Minor. The astonishing number of Russian anti- religious publications distributed in Islamic countries is part of the Soviet government's universal struggle against Islam. The occupation of Afghanistan was the Soviet Union's last attempt to penetrate the Islamic world.

Of course it is possible that as a result of wrong economic policies of former communist authorities, the Western world, an illusory heaven, will appear to be fascinating; but the truth lies elsewhere. If you hope, at this juncture, to cut the economic Gordian knots of socialism and communism by appealing to the center of Western capitalism, you will, far from remedying any ill of your society, commit a mistake which

those to come will have to erase. For, if Marxism has come to a deadlock in its social and economic policies, capitalism has also bogged down, in this as well as in other respects though in a different form.

Mr. Gorbachev,

Reality must be faced. The main problem confronting your country is not one of private ownership, freedom and economy; your problem is the absence of true faith in God, the very problem that has dragged, or will drag, the West to vulgarism and an impasse. Your main problem is the prolonged and futile war you have waged against God, the source of existence and creation.

Mr. Gorbachev,

It is clear to everybody that from now on communism will only have to be found in the museums of world political history, for Marxism cannot meet any of the real needs of mankind. Marxism is a materialistic ideology and materialism cannot bring humanity out of the crisis caused by a lack of belief in spirituality—the prime affliction of the human society in the East and the West alike.

Mr. Gorbachev,

You may have not in theory turned your back on certain aspects of Marxism—and may continue to profess your heartfelt loyalty to it in interviews—but you know that, in practice, the reality is not so. The leader of China[3] struck the first blow to communism and you have
struck the second and, apparently, final blow. Today we have no such thing as communism in the world.

I earnestly call on you, however, not to get trapped, while tearing down the walls of Marxist illusions, in the prison of the West and the Great Satan.[4] I hope you will attain the honor of removing the decayed layers of 70-year communist aberration from the face of history and of your country. Today those allies of yours that are genuinely concerned about their homelands and people are no longer willing to sacrifice their subterranean and surface resources to keep alive the myth of the success of communism—an ideology whose din of collapse has already reached the ears of their children.

Mr. Gorbachev,

When after 70 years the call, "Allah is Great" and the testimony to the prophethood of the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad (peace be upon him and his posterity) were heard from the minarets of the mosques in some of your Republics, all the followers of the pure Muhammadan Islam were moved to tears out of ecstasy.

Therefore, I have found it necessary to remind you to reflect once again on the materialistic and theistic worldviews. Materialists consider sense to be the sole criterion of knowledge and are of the opinion that whatever cannot be known through the senses falls outside the realm of knowledge. They identify existence with matter and consider as nonexistent anything that has no material body. Inevitably, they regard the world of the unseen—God Almighty, Divine Revelation, Prophethood, and the

Resurrection—as mere fiction.

On the other hand, theists consider both sense and reason to be the criteria of knowledge, and maintain that whatever can be known through reason lies within the realm of knowledge, although it is not perceptible. To theists, therefore, existence is inclusive of both the unseen and the manifest. For a thing to exist it is not necessary to have a material body. In the same way that a material thing depends on an incorporeal thing,[5] sensory perception is dependent on rational perception.[6]

The Holy Qur'an reprobates the fundamentals of materialistic thought and, addressing those who say:

"We shall never believe in thee until we see God manifestly,"[7]

proclaims:

"Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends all vision; and He is the Knower of subtleties, the Aware."[8]

I should not like to present here Qur'anic arguments concerning Divine Revelation, Prophethood and the Resurrection which from your point of view are debatable. In fact, I do not wish to entangle you in the twists and turns of philosophical arguments, particularly those of Islamic philosophy. I will content myself by presenting one or two simple, intuitive examples of which even politicians can avail themselves.

It is self-evident that matter, whatever its nature, has no awareness of self. Consider a stone statue: each side is ignorant of the other side. Whereas human beings and animals clearly observe and are aware of their surroundings. They know where they are and are aware of what goes on around them. There must be, then, an element in men and animals that transcends matter and is separate from it, living beyond the life of matter.

Intrinsically, man seeks to attain absolute perfection. He strives, as you well know, for absolute power over the world; he is not attached to any power that is defective. If he has the entire world at his command, he naturally feels inclined to have command of another world once he is informed of its existence. No matter how learned a person may be if he learns of some other branch of knowledge, he naturally feels inclined to attain mastery of that branch of knowledge as well.

Therefore, there must be some Absolute Power and Absolute Knowledge to which man is attached. It is God we all seek although we may not be aware of it. Man strives to attain Absolute Truth, so that he may be annihilated in God. Basically, the desire for eternal life that is inherent in every individual is proof of the existence of an Eternal World to which destruction cannot find its way.

Should Your Excellency desire further information on these matters, you may command those scholars of yours who are well-versed in this field to study, in addition to the works of Western philosophers, the writings of Peripatetic philosophers[9], al-Farabi[10] and Avicenna,[11]

peace be upon them. It will then become clear that the law of causation on which all knowledge depends is a rational, not sensible law. Likewise, perception of general laws and concepts on which all reasoning rests is reached not by means of sensory experience but through rational argument.[12] Your scholars may further refer to the Ishraqi[13] theosophy of Suhrawardi,[14] and explain to you that the flesh, as well as any other material thing, is in need of Pure Light which has no material entity, that man's witnessing of his own truth does not take place by means of any sense organ.[15] You may also have the scholars familiarize themselves with Transcendental philosophy[16] of Mulla Sadra [17](may Allah be pleased with him and resurrect him with the prophets and the pious), so that it may become clear that the nature of knowledge is different from the nature of matter and that intellect, far removed from matter, cannot be restricted by the laws governing matter.

I won't tire you further by mentioning the works of mystics, in particular Muhyi'd-Din ibn al-'Arabi.[18] If you wish to make yourself acquainted with the doctrines of this celebrated mystic, send a number of your brilliant scholars, who are well-versed in this field, to Qum[19] so that, by reliance on God, they may, after a couple of years, glimpse the depth of the delicate stages of gnosis,[20] which will be impossible for them to acquire without making such a journey.

Mr. Gorbachev,

After mentioning these problems and preliminary points, let me call on you to study Islam earnestly, not because Islam and the Muslims may need you but because Islam has exalted universal values which can bring comfort and salvation to all nations and remove the basic problems of mankind. A true understanding of Islam may forever release you from the problem of Afghanistan[21] and other similar involvements. We treat Muslims of the world as Muslims of our own country and will ever share in their destiny.

By granting certain liberties to some of your Republics in matters pertaining to religious practices, you have shown that you no longer consider religion as the "opium of the people."[22] Indeed, how can Islam be the opium of the people—the religion that has made Iranians as firm as a mountain against superpowers? Is the religion that seeks the administration of justice in the world and man's freedom from material and spiritual shackles, the opium of the people? Only that religion is the opium of the people that causes the material and spiritual resources of Islamic and non-Islamic countries to pass into the clutches of super and lesser powers and that preaches that religion is separate from politics. This, however, cannot be called a true religion; it is what our people call "an American religion."

In conclusion, I declare outright that the Islamic Republic of Iran as the greatest and most powerful base of the Islamic world can easily fill the vacuum of religious faith in your society. In any case, our country, as in the past, honors good neighborhood and bilateral relations.

Peace be upon those who follow the guidance.[23]

Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khomeini

67/10/11 AHS

[January 1, 1989]

1. Born on March 21, 1931, in Stavropol territory in the Southwestern Russian SFSR, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev joined the Komsomol (Young Communist League) in 1946 and proved a promising komsomol member. He became a member of the Communist Party in 1952 and was named a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSLL) in 1971. He became a candidate member of the Politburo in 1979 and a full member in 1980. He owed much of his steady rise in the party to the patronage of Mikhail Suslov, the leading party ideologue.

During Yuri Andropov's tenure (1982–84) as the Secretary–General of the Communist Party, Gorbachev became one of the Politburo's most highly active and prominent members. After Andropov died and Konstantin Chernenko became Secretary–General in 1984, Gorbachev became a likely successor to the latter. Chernenko died on March 10, 1985, and on the next day the Politburo elected Gorbachev, the youngest member of the Politburo, as Secretary–General of the CPSU.

Upon his succession, Gorbachev quickly set about implementing policies heralded by Andropov, and having retired an older generation of dogmatist or incompetent high officials, he liberalized and democratized the party and the USSR. He sharply criticized Brezhnev's policies that had brought the Soviet economy to stagnation and revealed Stalin's tyrannical excesses in an unprecedented manner. Gorbachev's tenure as chief political leader of the Soviet Union, characterized by glasnost and perestroika, marks a new era in the history of Marxism, and the changes Gorbachev brought about. It is the most significant event in the Western world in the latter half of the 20th century.

In a speech he delivered on March 25th, 1991, Gorbachev summed up the wrong policies of the former communist authorities in one sentence, "In the past we were negligent of one thing—the intrinsic tendency of people toward religion."

2. Ever since the emergence of communist governments, the struggle to uproot religious faith has been at the top of the agenda of communist leaders. This endless struggle has taken different forms depending on the circumstances of religious societies. After the victory of the Russian Revolution, the struggle found an ideological basis.

Marxism, in Lenin's words, "considered all religions and religious institutions as instruments in the hands of the bourgeoisie to exploit the non– propertied proletariat." As early as 1919, the Russian authorities set up a complex machinery for anti–religious education and set about implementing administrative policies such as closing the mosques and churches.

3. Mao Zedong's policies in early years were based in many respects on, as Mao later said, "copying from the Soviets." But soon Mao took steps that were to lead to the breakdown of the political and ideological alliance with Moscow. The source of difference was what Mao called Sinification of Marxism—its adaptation not only to Chinese conditions but to the mentality and cultural traditions of the Chinese people. This manifested itself in the Rectification Campaign of 1952–53.

This program aimed to giving a basic grounding in Marxist theory and Leninist principles of party organization to new members. But a second and equally important aspect of the movement was the elimination of what Mao called "foreign dogmatism"—in other words, blind imitation of Soviet experience and obedience to Soviet directives. After Stalin's death in 1953, the ideological split with the Soviet Union became public and irreparable. In the ideological dispute that followed, Mao accused the Soviets of revisionism; the Soviets, in turned, called Mao a revisionist, a chauvinist.

Mao's inflexible approach of his version of Marxism, on the one hand, and his obstinate stance against imperialism, on the other hand, isolated him from his Soviet alliances as well as the Western world. It was against this background that he proclaimed the policy of "letting a hundred flowers bloom"—that is, the freedom to express many diverse ideas—designed to prevent the development in China of a regressive political climate analogous to that in the Soviet Union under Stalin and to foster an enthusiasm for economic development in the country. Other movements such as the Great Leap Forward, and the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution that represented attempts by Mao to achieve these goals resulted in deep changes and revisions in Marxist ideology.

4. A term applied by Imam Khomeini to the American Government to show its arrogant and diabolical character. The term was first used by the Imam during a lecture he delivered a day after the storming of the American Embassy in Tehran.
5. Human knowledge is dependent on both experience and reason. Experience provides the "manifold" or material of knowledge; reason provides the necessary, infallible principles by which to abstract the general and to order the manifold of experience. In other words, human knowledge begins with sensory experience, which is an awareness of the concrete particular. Sense experience, however, gives the particular and never the general. Knowledge of the general is possible only on the possession of rational powers. Sense and reason, then, are two faculties which, while quite different, can supply objectively valid judgments of things only in conjunction with each other.
6. To have sense and sense organs is prerequisite for perception and the acquisition of knowledge about the external world. Sense organs receive impressions of perceptible objects and transmit them as raw materials to the mind. In addition, sense organs can report to the mind the precedence of the impressions, but it is not in the capacity of sense to comprehend the relations or establish connections among the sensory impressions.

For instance, through the action of sense organs we do feel the curative effect of medicine after we take it, and, this experience repeated, we deduced that "medicine is the cause of cure." The implicit syllogism underlying this conclusion consists of the premise that "medicine precedes cure cannot be accidental." In other words, in argumentative syllogisms, if, for instance, the minor premise is reached through sense organs, the major premise must be general, rational law so that a conclusion may be drawn. Thus, to deduce a conclusion from sense impressions depends on the reasoning power of the intellect, without which man's knowledge must be a pile of unrelated sense impressions.

7. A reference to the Qur'an:

"And when you said: O Moses, we will not believe in thee till we see Allah manifestly, so the punishment overtook you while you looked on." [Al-Baqarah, 2:55]

8. A reference to the Qur'an, [Al-Ana'm 6:103]. The physical vision of man, working as it does only within narrow limits and being able only to see bodies, cannot comprehend the Infinite One. He sees everyone and everything but cannot be seen.
9. A school of philosophy founded by Aristotle and expanded by his disciples. It is so called because Aristotle taught philosophy while moving about. According to the Peripatetic philosophy man can reach the truth through meditation and reasoning provided he directs his thoughts correctly. Most Muslim philosophers including Farabi and Avicenna were followers of this school.
10. One of Islam's leading philosophers, al-Farabi was born at Farab, situated on the Jaxartes (Syr Darya), the modern Otrar. Coming to Baghdad, he studied under the Christian doctor Johanna, son of Hilan. Another of his teachers was Abu Bishr Matta, known as a translator of Greek works. He next proceeded to Aleppo, to the court of Sayf ad-Dawlah, son of Hamdan, and led a somewhat retired life under his protection, assuming the garb of a Sufi. When this prince captured Damascus, he took the philosopher with him, and there Farabi died in 339 AH/950.

Farabi's literary production was considerable, but a great number of his works was lost very early. They were chiefly commentaries or explanations of the Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle. He wrote An Introduction to Logic, A Concise Logic, a series of commentaries on the Isagoge of Porphyry, the Categories, the Hermenia, the First and Second Analytics, the Topics, Sophistic, Rhetoric, and Poetics. The whole formed an Organon divided into nine parts. In the sphere of Moral Philosophy he wrote a commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics; in that of political philosophy, he made a summary of Plato's Laws, and composed a short treatise on the Ideal City.

To psychology and metaphysics he contributed numerous works, with such titles as Intelligence and the Intelligible, The Soul, The Faculties of the Soul, The One and Unity, Substance, Time, The Void, and Space and Measure. He also commented on Alexander of Aphrodisias' book, de Anima. Believing that Greek philosophy was a unity, he labored to reconcile Plato and Aristotle, and with this idea wrote treatises on The Aims of Plato and Aristotle and The Agreement between Plato and Aristotle. He also discussed certain interpretations of Aristotle proposed by Galen and John Philoponus, and composed An Intervention between Aristotle and Galen.

In the sphere of science, Farabi wrote commentaries on Aristotle's Physics, Meteorology, The Heavens, and The Universe, besides commenting on the Almagest of Ptolemy. To him also is due an essay explaining some difficult propositions from the Elements of Euclid. The occult sciences interested him, and he left writings on alchemy, geomancy, genii, and dreams.

This great philosopher was also a talented musician, a somewhat exceptional combination. In this sphere he was at the same time composer, virtuoso, and theorist.

11. Abu 'Ali al-Husayn ibn 'Abdullah ibn Sina, or Avicenna, entitled al-Shaykh al- Ra'is, or Hujjat al-Haqq by his compatriots, simply Shaykh by his disciples, and the Prince of Physicians in the occidental world, was born near Bukhara in the year 370 AH/980. When Ibn Sina was five years old he and his family moved to the city of Bukhara, where the young boy had a greater opportunity to study. At the age of ten he already knew grammar, literature, and theology as well as the whole of the Qur'an.

When the famous mathematician, Abu 'Abdullah al-Natili, came to Bukhara, he was invited to stay at the house of Ibn Sina in order to teach him mathematics. Under his tutelage Ibn Sina mastered the Almagest, the Elements of Euclid and some logic, all of which he soon knew better than his teacher. Having mastered mathematics, he then turned his attention to physics, metaphysics, and medicine. By the time he was sixteen Ibn Sina had mastered all the sciences of his day and was well known as a physician. In another two years, thanks to the commentary of al-Farabi, he was also to complete his understanding of Aristotle's metaphysics which at first had presented considerable difficulty for him.

Despite the loss in part or in toto of several of his major works, such as the twenty-volume Kitab al-Insaf on the arbitration of Eastern and Western philosophy and the Lisan al-'Arab in ten volumes, over two-hundred and fifty books, treatises, and letters of Ibn Sina have survived. They range from the voluminous Kitab ash- Shifa and Al-Qanun fi't- Tibb to treatises of only a few pages like Risalat al-Fi'l wal-Infi'al and Risalah fi's-Sirr al-Qadar.

His books can be roughly divided into four separate groups: the philosophical, religious, cosmological and physical, and finally the symbolical and metaphysical narratives.

Kitab ash-Shifa, a vast philosophical and scientific encyclopedia, is probably the largest work of its kind ever written by one man. Al-Qanun fi't- Tibb is the most famous single book in the history of medicine in both the East and West. In the West, this book became the only medical authority for several centuries and Ibn Sina enjoyed an undisputed place of honor. In the East his dominating influence in medicine, philosophy and theology has lasted over the ages and is still alive within the circles of Islamic thought.

12. See footnote 5
13. One of the most valuable schools of Islamic philosophy, the philosophy of Illumination combines Neoplatonic and Islamic ideas. According to this philosophy, the source of all things is Absolute Light. That which is visible requires no definition, and nothing is more visible than light, whose every nature consists in manifestation.

We may distinguish two illuminations, i.e. modes of being of the Primal Light: 1) pure, abstract, formless; 2) accidental derivative, possessing form. Pure light is self-conscious substance (spirit of soul), knowing itself through itself 'for whatever knows itself must be pure light'. Accidental light is related to pure light as effect to cause and only exists as attribute in association with the illuminated object.

Accidental light is of two kinds: a) dark substance; b) dark forms, i.e. quantities, and the combination of these two make up a material body. Since darkness is nothing but the absence of light, and light is identical with reality, the substance and forms of the universe consist of illumination diffused from Primal Light in infinite gradation of intensity. It follows that everything partakes of reality in proportion to the radiance which it receives and toward which it ever moves 'with lover's passion, in order to drink more and more of the original fountain of Light.'

This perpetual flow and ebb of desire produces the revolutions of the heavenly spheres, the processes of nature, and all human activities. While the entire universe is eternal as emanating from Eternal Light, but contingent if regarded as the

object of irradiation, some illuminations are simple, others compound and therefore inferior. The intelligences, the celestial spheres, the souls of the heavens, time, motion, and the archetypes of the elements belong to a higher world, which may be called eternal in contrast with all below it, though in the relation existing between them not posteriority but parallelism is implied.

14. A figure of the Illuminationist School of Islamic Philosophy, Sihab ad-Din Yahya Suhrawardi, was born in Suhraward, near Zanjan, Iran in 1155. After studying in Isfahan, a leading center of Islamic scholarship, Suhrawardi traveled through Iran, Anatolia and Syria. Influence by mystical teachings, he spent much time in meditation and seclusion, and in Halab (modern Aleppo) he favorably impressed its ruler, Malik az-Zahir. His teachings, however, aroused the opposition of established and learned religious men [‘ulama], who persuaded Malik to have him put to death. The appellation al-Maqtul [the killed one] meant that he was not to be considered a shahid [martyr].

Suhrawardi wrote voluminously. The more than 50 works that were attributed to him were classified into two categories: doctrinal and philosophical accounts containing commentaries on the works of Aristotle and Plato, as well as his contribution to the Illuminationist School; and shorter treatises, generally written in Persian and of an esoteric nature, meant to illustrate the paths and journeys of a mystic before he could achieve ma‘rifah (gnosis of knowledge). For a brief account of his doctrines see footnote 13.

15. Man’s knowledge is of two kinds: acquired and intuitive. As for the former, this kind of knowledge is “acquired” through an intermediary, a conception of the thing, concrete or abstract, that is formed in the mind and is gained either through rational argument or sensory impressions.

Intuitive knowledge is the immediate apprehension or cognition of things without the help of an intermediary. It is evident that man’s knowledge of his self, of his attributes and moods, is of the second kind and that man’s apprehension of concrete particulars is dependent on the knowledge of his self.

16. A school of philosophy founded by Mulla Sadra (see footnote 17). After centuries of philosophical development in Islam, Mulla Sadra brought complete order and harmony to philosophical problems for the first time. He organized and systematized them like mathematical problems and at the same time wed philosophy and gnosis, thereby bringing about several important developments.

He gave to philosophy new ways to discussing and solving hundreds of problems that could not be solved through Peripatetic philosophy. He made possible the analysis and solution of a series of mystical questions which, to that day, had been considered as belonging to a domain above that of reason and beyond comprehension through rational thought.

By following the methods he had developed, Mulla Sadra succeeded in proving “transubstantial motion.” Earlier Muslim philosophers, following Aristotle, believe that motion is possible only in accidents of things, not in their substance. Mulla Sadra asserted on the contrary, that whenever something partakes of motion, its substance undergoes motion and not just its accidents. Mulla Sadra also discovered the intimate relation of time to the three spatial dimensions in a manner that is similar to the meaning given in modern physics to the “fourth dimension” and which resemble the general principles of the theory of relativity. It should be noted here that Mulla Sadra based his philosophical arguments on pure reasoning, without appealing to intuition and illumination, but he found reason in need of illumination and intuition.

17. Mulla Sadra (d. 1050 AH/1640), also called Sadr ad-Din Shirazi and Sadr al- Muta’alihin, was a philosopher who led the Iranian cultural renaissance in the 17th century. The foremost representative of Ishraqi [Illuminationist] School of philosopher-mystics, he is commonly regarded by Iranians as the greatest philosopher of Iran. A scion of a notable Shirazi family, Mulla Sadra completed his education in Isfahan, then the leading cultural and intellectual center of Iran. After his studies with scholars there, he produced several works, the most famous of which was his Asfar (Journeys). Asfar contains the bulk of his philosophy, which was influenced by a personal mysticism bordering on asceticism that he experienced during a 15-year retreat at Kahak, a village near Qum in Iran.

Toward the end of his life, Mulla Sadra returned to Shiraz to teach. His teachings, however, were considered heretical by

the orthodox Shi'ite theologians, who persecuted him, though his powerful family connections permitted him to continue to write. He died on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

18. Muhyi'd-Din ibn al-'Arabi, the celebrated Muslim mystic whose influence came to permeate the intellectual and spiritual life of virtually the entire Muslim world, was born at Murcia in Southern Spain in 1165. Much of his youth was spent in Seville, where he devoted himself to literary, theological and mystical studies. After visiting Granada and other Spanish towns, as well as Tunis, Fez, and Morocco, he set out in 1202 for the East by way of Egypt, whence he made the pilgrimage to Mecca. He did not return to Spain. Many of the remaining years of his life were passed in the neighborhood of Mecca, but he also traveled extensively to Babylonia, Asia Minor, and Syria, everywhere gaining disciples and spreading his doctrines through dialogues with scientists and scholars.

Whether we regard the extent of his theological writings or their influence on the subsequent development of Islamic mysticism, Ibn al-'Arabi can justly claim the supreme position among Sufi authors which posterity has accorded him, and which is attested by the title, Ash-Shaykh al-Akbar, conferred on him by the almost unanimous voice of those who are best qualified to judge. The list of his works drawn up by himself contains 289 titles, and some of them are of enormous length. The most famous and important is the Futuhat al-Makkiyah. In this, as in many of his works, Ibn al-'Arabi professes to communicate mysteries revealed to him in ecstatic vision by prophets, angels, and even God Himself.

19. Since the third century AH, Qum—the burial place of Fatimah Ma'sumah (peace be upon her), the sister of Imam Ridha', the eight Imam from the Prophet's Progeny— has been a center of learning and pilgrimage. In the mid-14th century, the great scholar and faqih, Ayatullah Ha'iri settled in Qum and reorganized the religious teaching institution. Following Ayatullah Ha'iri, scholars from other cities came to Qum and it was not long before Qum was elevated to the status of the center of religious learning in Iran.

At present thousands of students from Islamic and non- Islamic countries are studying in Qum. The students, having completed introductory courses, embark, depending on their interests, on a wide range of Islamic sciences, including jurisprudence, exegesis, usul [the principles of religion or dogmatic theology], philosophy, mysticism, history, and hadith.

20. A stage of gnosis, or maqam is a spiritual stage that periodically marks the long path followed by Muslim mystics (Sufis) leading to the vision of, and union with, God. The Sufi progresses by means of his own mujahadah (strife or self-abnegation) and through the help and guidance of the masters (shaykhs). In each maqam the Sufi strives to purify himself from all worldly inclination and to prepare himself to attain an ever-higher spiritual level.

The order and number of the maqams are not uniform among all Sufis. The majority, however, agree on seven major maqams: 1) the maqam of tawba (repentance), which does not mean remembrance of sins and atonement for them but rather forgetting them along with everything that distracts from the love of God; 2) the maqam of wara (fear of the Lord), which is not fear of hellfire but rather the dread of being separated eternally from God; 3) the maqam of zuhd (renunciation, or detachment), which means that the person is devoid of possessions and his heart is without acquisitiveness; 4) the maqam of faqr (poverty), in which he asserts his independence of worldly possessions; 5) the maqam of sabr (patience), the art of steadfastness; 6) the maqam of tawakkul (trust or surrender), in which the Sufi knows that he cannot be discouraged by hardships and pain, for he is in total submission to God's will and finds joy even in his sorrow; 7) the maqam of ridha' (satisfaction), a state of quiet contentment and joy that comes from the anticipation of the long-sought union.

21. Following a bloody Marxist coup in Afghanistan in 1978, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on December 27, 1979 to prop up a friendly regime. Within months, 100,000 Soviet troops had dug in for a long war of attrition against Muslim fighters in the mountains. Opposition to the Soviet spread rapidly. Men were drafted only to desert at the earliest opportunity, and the Afghan military dropped from its 1978 strength of 105,000 to about 20,000-30,000 by 1987. As the result of this bitter war, a great number of cities and towns were devastated and the Soviet and Muslim fighters suffered considerable casualties. The continuation of resistance resulted in a series of short-lived, Soviet-backed government, bringing more and more discredit upon the Soviet Union.

22. A reference to Lenin's notorious statement: "Religion is the opium of the people."
23. A reference to the Qur'an [At-Taha, 20:47]. The verse contains a clear warning to Pharaoh of his end in case of rejection. Moses and Aaron were directed to convey this message.

The full verse is this: "So you go to him and say: Surely we are two messengers of thy Lord: So send forth the Children of Israel with us: and torment them not. Indeed we have brought to thee a message from thy Lord, and peace be upon those who follow the guidance."

The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works

The splendor of the Islamic Revolution and the role of Imam Khomeini's personality, views, thoughts, and literary works in the occurrence and perpetuity of the Revolution; the need of the future generation for the works of the founder of the Islamic Republic and standard-bearer of the global Islamic movement; the publication and propagation of the authentic and complete works and thoughts of His Eminence; and the prevention of historical distortion of the Islamic Revolution were among the factors which prompted Hujjat al-Islam wal-Muslimin Haj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeini to inquire through an elaborate letter about His Eminence's view on the manner of studying, compiling and publishing his own works and related documents, and to determine the authority in supervising and ascertaining the authenticity or otherwise of whatever is to be published in the name of Imam Khomeini both in Iran and abroad.

In his reply in the form of a written decree dated September 8th, 1988 [Shahrivar 17, 1367 AHS], His Eminence assigned the responsibility of compilation and collection of all materials relevant to him to his own son, Haj Sayyid Ahmad. In consonance with this decree, the Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works was established and has commenced its activities. The heart-rending event of the demise of the Imam of the Muslims and the burgeoning need of the Islamic society to obtain His Eminence's guidelines and literary works have compelled this Institute to expand its realm of activities qualitatively and quantitatively.

Along this line, the law on the preservation of Imam Khomeini's works was enacted by the Islamic Consultative Assembly (the Iranian Parliament) on November 5th, 1989 [Aban 14, 1368 AHS] and approved by the Council of Guardians as binding and ready for execution. In this manner, pursuant to its momentous religious and legal mission, this Institute has embarked on planning and modifying its organizational structure within the framework of the following objectives:

1. Collection of all related documents and literary works of Imam Khomeini as well as all works relevant to his personality, life, struggles, and thoughts written by writers or made by artists both in Iran and

abroad;

2. Permanent preservation of the aforementioned documents and works through the most appropriate means;

3. Study and research on the literary works for the elucidation of the history of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini biography, and compilation, translation and preparation of the literary works' compendium for publication;

4. Publication of the literary works' compendium through various means both in Iran and abroad, and propagation and dissemination of the Imam's thoughts and ideals;

5. Perpetual supervision of everything written or made by artists in the name of Imam Khomeini; prevention of distortion of the Imam's speeches, writings, and events related to the Imam; giving replies to the inquirers and researchers on the literary works as the official center for the collection and preservation of the documents and works of the Imam.

In order to attain the above-cited objectives, the main programs and activities of this Institute can be divided into the following five areas:

a. Collection of the documents and works, which include (i) collection of documents and works of Imam Khomeini; (ii) collection of all works related to the Imam's biography, struggles and thoughts written or made both in Iran and abroad;

b. Permanent preservation of the documents and works;

c. Study and research, translation, compilation, and preparation of the works for publication;

d. Publication of the works and continuous revival and propagation of the thoughts and school of thought of Imam Khomeini;

e. Supervision: Consonant with the decree of the Imam and enactment of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the Institute is the sole official source of whatever is to be published in the name of Imam Khomeini.

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