

English

Message No. 67 – SHAMA

An Indictment Against the Shiite Clerical Authority (Marja'iyya)

For a long time, the Shiite marja'iyya played the role of a pillar for the people against oppressors, standing as “the Sheikh” who challenged “the Shah.” At times, this role was embodied simultaneously as resistance to domestic despotism and foreign colonialism. The homes of leading clerics even became sanctuaries for activists against the Shah’s tyranny. For example, the fatwa of Mirza Hasan Shirazi cornered both Naser al-Din Shah and Britain; and Aqa Najafi placed Zill al-Sultan in a bind. Likewise, in 1979, activists took refuge in the home of Sayyid Kazem Shariatmadari from the Shah’s repressors—though it did not remain safe from the attacks of the “atash-be-ekhtiyar” loyalists of His Majesty; for the first time in history, the sanctity of a marja' al-taqlid’s home was violated. Under the Islamic government, the sanctity of many maraji' and their institutions was also violated.

Fulfilling that historic role required the clergy and its institutions to remain independent from the state. It was precisely this independence that allowed the maraji' to hold such authority. In the Islamic Republic, this independence was destroyed: clerics whose budgets had once been financed through religious dues (sahm-e Imam) and the support of merchants and ordinary people became dependent on state funding. Their lifelines were tied to government rents; multiple budget lines in the state budget were allocated to their institutions. Some of them entered commerce directly—from cigarette imports to monopolies over sugar, and the ownership of stone mines—examples of such involvement. On the other hand, by occupying state positions they gained “golden signatures,” and the door to “deal-making, bribery, and corrupt exchange” was opened.

Unlike Khomeini—who had followed a natural path to religious authority and had obtained political legitimacy as the leader of the revolution—in Khamenei’s case the matter was completely reversed: he not only lacked political legitimacy, but his occupation of the position of leadership directly violated the legal and religious conditions; and his religious rank was also produced fraudulently, without going through the natural process. Therefore, he was forced to pay off others in order to secure their support. Thus, a “mafia-like” system formed around Ali Khamenei, impregnating the clergy and the marja'iyya with “granted rents,” dragging them into “corruption and decay.” The people’s affection and respect for them turned into “hatred and rage,” examples of which you witnessed in the burning of many so-called seminaries during the recent national uprising.

Now the people ask:

1. Was not the violation of the “authenticity of leadership,” which since the Saqifah Council has grieved Shiism as a historical deviation, repeated in the Assembly of Experts on 1368/3/14 (1989/06/04)? Why did the Shiite marja'iyya not only fail to condemn it, but through silence—and even support—became a partner in Khamenei’s crimes and wrongdoing?
2. Is not the preservation of life and lineage your duty? And does your silence in the face of repeated massacres of the people by Ali Khamenei—whose latest instance so far has been the widespread killing of thousands of innocent compatriots—given the shared criterion of

the phrase “May God curse a community that heard of it and accepted it,” not constitute complicity in crime and mass killing?

3. We warn those who still retain a small measure of respect and credibility among the people: why do they not abandon half-measures and excessive caution? Do they not know that the Prophet’s assessment of Ali’s single strike—“Ali’s strike on the day of Khaybar (or the Trench) is better than the worship of both worlds”—is precisely because it was a decisive and timely act that clarifies the fate of a society, deserving such praise—not a cautious behavior that neither burns the skewer nor the kebab? Do you not know that if the fire of public anger is ignited, it burns dry and wet together and will not distinguish between a thief like Kazem Sediqi and a criminal like Mohseni Eje’i on the one hand, and Ayatollah Dr. Mostafa Mohaqqueq Damad on the other? Must we teach you “Fear a trial that will not strike only the wrongdoers among you”?
4. People ask the most senior jurist and highest Shiite authority, Grand Ayatollah Sistani: when you warn people not to pray behind state-paid imams, why do you not explicitly declare the illegitimacy of the state and prohibit cooperation with it, refuse the payment of taxes, and declare the prohibition of seeking redress through its judiciary—matters that logically follow from your own ruling?
5. We consider the Shiite marja’iyya criminal for multiple reasons, including its participation and complicity—through silence—in Khamenei’s crimes and massacres of the people. We take our complaint to God, and we present our indictment to the court of the great people of Iran.

Proud be the people of Iran

Long live Iran

National Council of Iran’s Revolution

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