



*Supreme Leader of World's Shias*

*Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hosseyni Khamenei*



## Biography

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hoseyni Khāmene'i (born 15 July 1939) , also known as Ali Khamenei is an Iranian politician and cleric. He has been Supreme Leader of Iran since 1989.

## Born

17 uly 1939 Mashhad, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran Islamic Republic

## Political party

Party (1979 – 1977) Combatant Clergy Association (1977 – present)

## Religion

Twelver Shi'a Islam

Born to an Iranian Azeri father and a Yazdi mother in Mashhad, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei began religious studies before completing elementary education.

The son of a cleric, he is second eldest of eight children, and two of his brothers are also clerics. He attended religious studies classes at the rudimentary and advanced levels in the hawza of Mashhad, under his mentors such as Haj Sheikh Hashem Qazvini, and Ayatollah Milani, and then went to Najaf in 1957.

The young Sayyed Ali was only eighteen years old when he started his studies at the highest level. He decided to make a pilgrimage to the holy shrines in Iraq, and so he left Iran for Najaf in 1957.

He was fascinated by the theological and academic instructions of such eminent scholars such as Ayatollah Hakim and Ayatollah Shahrudi. He attended their lessons and was willing to stay there and continue his studies in order to profit from these excellent teachers.

However his father made it known that he preferred his son continue his advanced studies in the holy city of Qum. Thus, respecting his father's wish, he returned to Iran in 1958. Diligently and enthusiastically he followed his advanced studies in Qum from 1958 to 1964 and benefited from the teachings of great scholars and grand ayatollahs such as Ayat. Borujerdi, Imam Khomeini, Ayat. Haeri Yazdi and Allamah Tabatabai.

He received the bad news that his father had lost his sight in one eye and was not able to read properly. This prompted him to return to Mashhad and while being at the service of his father, seek further knowledge from him, from Ayatollah Milani and other important scholars residing in Mashhad.

The young Sayyed Ali, who had now become a mujtahid by having completed his advanced level studies, began to teach various religious subjects to younger seminary and university students. Recalling this important point of departure in his life, the Leader says, "If there have been any successes in my life, they all go back to God's blessings favored upon me because of my dutiful caring for parents." After a short stay he left Najaf to Mashhad, and in 1958 he settled in Qom.

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei attended the classes of Ayatollahs Husain Borujerdi and Ruhollah Khomeini. Later, he was involved in the Islamic activities of 1963 which led to his arrest in the city of Birjand, in Southern Khorasan Province. Shortly thereafter, he was released and resumed teaching in Mashhad's religious schools and mosques, teaching the Nahj al-Balagh.

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

"In the areas of political and revolutionary ideas and Islamic jurisprudence, I am certainly a disciple of Imam Khomeini" says Ayatollah Grand Ayatollah Khamenei . He adds: "Yet the very first sparks of consciousness concerning Islamic, revolutionary ideas and the duty to fight the Shah's despotism and his British supporters, was kindled in my soul at the age of 13 when the brave cleric, Nawwab Safavi, later martyred by the Shah's regime, came to our school in Mashhad in 1952 and delivered a fiery speech against the Shah's anti-Islamic and devious policies." It was in Qum in 1962, that Sayyed Ali joined the ranks of the revolutionary followers of Imam Khomeini who opposed the pro-American, anti-Islamic policies of the Shah's regime.

Dedicated and fearless, he followed this path for the next 16 years which ultimately led to the downfall of the Shah's brutal regime: persecution, torture, imprisonment and exile could not make him waver for a moment.

In May of 1963 (corresponding to the holy month of Muharram), Imam Khomeini honored the young, brave cleric Sayyed Ali, with the mission of taking a secret message to Ayatollah Milani and other clergymen in Mashhad, on the ways and tactics of exposing the true nature of the Shah's regime.

He fulfilled this mission properly and traveled to the city of Birjand for further propagation of Imam Khomeini's views. Here he was arrested for the first time and spent one night in jail.

The following the authorities ordered him not to speak at the pulpit again. From that moment he knew that he would be under police surveillance all the time. Of course he did not submit to police threats, and as a result of his activities relating to the bloody June 1963 Uprising (15th of Khordad ), he was again arrested and transferred to Mashhad to spend ten days in prison under severe conditions.

In January 1964 (Ramadhan 1383), according to a well-organized plan, Ayatollah Khamenei and a few close friends traveled to Kirman and Zahedan in southern Iran, to expose the phony referendum the Shah was holding for his so-called reforms. There in the course of many public speeches, he exposed the satanic American policies of the Pahlavi regime.

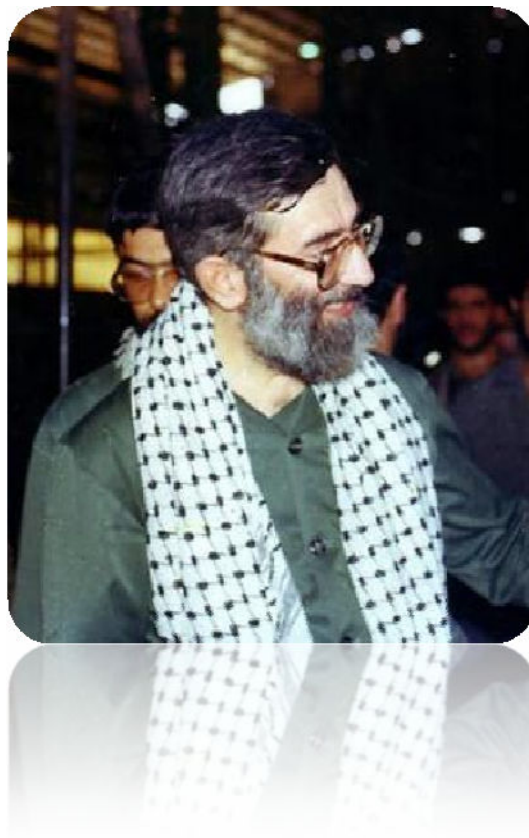
This time, the Shah's feared intelligence agency, SAVAK, stepped in and arrested him one late evening. He was taken to Tehran by an airplane to spend two months in solitary confinement during which time he was tortured.

Once freed, he started holding lessons on the exegeses of the Holy Quran, the Prophetic Traditions and Islamic ideology in Mashhad and Tehran. These lessons were most appreciated by the revolutionary Iranian youth. As he was sure now that SAVAK was watching him closely, he was forced to go underground in 1967.

However, he was arrested again for holding such classes and Islamic discussions. Ayatollah Khamenei has himself explained the reasons for such measures by SAVAK: "From 1970 onwards, grounds for an armed movement were being laid out. Accordingly the regime's sensitivity and severity of action against me increased. They could not believe that the armed actions were not connected with a sound, Islamic ideology.

They thought that there must be links between these revolutionaries and people like me because of my intellectual and diligent activities.

Despite all this, after I was released, more and more people attended my classes on the Holy Quran and many were present at our clandestine gatherings".



## LAST ARREST AND EXILE

Throughout the years 1972-1975, Ayatollah Khamenei was holding classes on the Holy Quran and Islamic ideology in three different mosques in Mashhad.

These classes together with his lectures on Imam Ali's (as) Nahjul Balagha attracted thousands of conscious, politically-minded youth and students. The lectures were circulated among the people in hand-written or typed forms, in most towns and cities. His students traveled to distant cities to spread his lessons and ideas.

All this frightened the Shah's SAVAK agents and so, in the winter of 1975, they broke into his home in Mashhad and arrested him for the 6th time and confiscated all his books and notes. Now he was detained in Tehran's notorious "Police-SAVAK Joint Prison" for many months.

This had been his most trying imprisonment, and Ayatollah Khamenei has this to say about the barbarous treatment of the detainees: "These conditions may be understood only by those who suffered them..." In the autumn of 1975, he was freed and sent back to Mashhad and he was now completely banned from delivering lectures or holding classes. His clandestine activities, however, prompted SAVAK to apprehend him in the winter of 1976 and sentence him to exile for three years.

This difficult period came to an end in the latter part of 1978 due to the prevailing political conditions, and Ayatollah Khamenei returned to Mashhad a few months before the triumph of the Islamic revolution.

He diligently continued his political-religious activities in this momentous period of civil unrest and mass demonstrations throughout Iran. Thus, after nearly 15 years of bearing all sorts of torture and maltreatment at the hands of the agents of the Shah's bloodthirsty regime, he could now witness the fall of the tyrannical Pahlavi regime and the rise of an Islamic Republic in Iran.

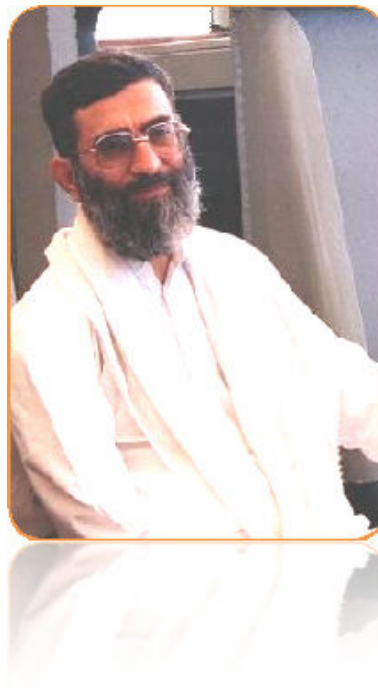




## THE VICTORY OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

Shortly before the triumph of the Islamic Revolution (February 11, 1979) and before Imam Khomeini's victorious return to Iran from Paris, an Islamic Revolutionary Council was formed at the behest of the Imam.

Ayatollah Khamenei was appointed as a member of this Council together with other important Islamic notables such as Shahid Ayatollahs Motahhari and Beheshti. He, therefore, left Mashhad for Tehran to take up his new responsibilities.



## NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

The following is a list of the services he has rendered to the Islamic Republic since that time: 1980- Founding member of the Islamic Republic Party, together with such religious scholars and Mujahids as Shahid Beheshti, Rafsanjani, Shahid Bahonar, and Musavi-Ardebili.

- Deputy-Minister of Defence
- Supervisor of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards
- Imam of Tehran's Friday Congregational Prayers, per Imam Khomeini's decree.
- Elected Tehran MP in the Majlis (Consultative Assembly) 1981- Imam Khomeini's Representative at the High Council of Defence
- Active presence at the fronts of the Iraqi-imposed war. 1982- Elected President of the Islamic Republic of Iran following the martyrdom of President Mohammad Ali Rajai (Ayatollah Khamenei was himself the target of an assassination attempt at Abu Dhar mosque in Tehran after which he was hospitalized for a few months).

- Appointed Chairman of the Revolution's Cultural Council. 1986- President of the Expediency Council
- Re-elected President of the Islamic Republic for a second 4-year term 1989- Elected as the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Assembly of Experts after the demise of Imam Khomeini. 1990- Chairman of the Committee for Revision of the Constitution.



## WORKS AUTHORED AND TRANSLATIONS

### Works Authored

1. Islamic Thought in the Quran (An Outline)
2. The Profundity of Prayer
3. A Discourse on Patience
4. On the Four Principal Books of Traditions Concerning the Biography of Narrators.
5. Guardianship (Wilayah).
6. A General Report of the Islamic Seminary of Mashhad
7. Imam Al-Saadiq (AS)
8. Unity and Political Parties
9. Personal Views on the Arts
10. Understanding Religion Properly
11. Struggles of Shia Imams (as)
12. The Essence of God's Unity
13. The Necessity of Returning to the Quran
14. Imam Al-Sajjad (as)
15. Imam Reza (as) and His Appointment as Crown Prince.
16. The Cultural Invasion (Collection of Speeches)
17. Collections of Speeches and Messages ( 9 Volumes )

### **Translations (from Arabic into Farsi)**

1. Peace Treaty of Imam Hassan (AS), by Raazi Aal-Yasseen
2. The Future in Islamic Lands, by Sayyed Qutb
3. Muslims in the Liberation Movement of India, by Abdulmunaim Nassri
4. An Indictment against the Western Civilization, by Sayyed Gutb

### **Literary scholarship**

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei is a fluent speaker of both Persian and Arabic. He has translated several books into Persian from Arabic, including the works of the famous Egyptian Islamist theoretician Sayyid Qutb.

He also has a lesser degree of understanding of the Azeri language[14] and English. In Persian, he likes poetry. In his analysis of the Persian poetry of Allameh Muhammad Iqbal, he states that "Iqbal was not acquainted with Persian idiom, as he spoke Urdu at home and talked to his friends in Urdu or English.

He did not know the rules of Persian prose writing. Nevertheless, he admires Iqbal. Like many other politically active clerics at the time, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei was far more involved with politics than religious scholarship.

#### **Political life and presidency**

Mohammad-Ali Rajai visiting Grand Ayatollah Khamenei in hospital after an assassination attempt by the MKO (Supported from America) on June 27, 1981 Grand Ayatollah Khamenei was a key figure in the Islamic revolution in Iran and a close confidant of Ayatollah Khomeini.

In his presidential inaugural address Grand Ayatollah Khamenei vowed to eliminate `deviation, liberalism, and American-influenced leftists. Vigorous opposition to the regime, including nonviolent and violent protest, assassinations, guerrilla activity and insurrections, was answered by state repression and terror in the early 1980s, both before and during Grand Ayatollah Khamenei's presidency.

Thousands of rank-and-file members of insurgent groups were killed, often by revolutionary courts. By 1982, the government announced that the courts would be reined in, although various political groups were repressed by the government in the first half of the decade. Grand Ayatollah Khamenei helped guide the country during the Iraq-Iran War in the 1980s, and developed close ties with the now powerful Revolutionary Guards. As president, he had a reputation of being deeply interested in the military, budget and administrative details.

### **Supreme Leader (Velāyat-e faqih)**

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei standing beside the tomb of General Ali Sayyad Shirazi, Chief of the Armed Forces of Iran during the Iran-Iraq war.





Seyyed Ali Khamene'i was preceded by Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of Islamic Revolution in Iran. When Khomeini died, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei was elected as the new Supreme Leader by the Assembly of Experts on June 4, 1989. The concept of an Islamic jurist as "guardian" or ruler of the land was developed by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in a lecture/series book. In this kind of theocratic leadership, no political decision is lawful until it is approved by the supreme leader (Vali e Faqih).

Even the taking of office by the democratically elected president is subject to the approval of the Supreme Leader.

[In Fact before appearing sahib az zaman Vali e Faqih Impose to Hearts.](#)

## Political Attitude

In his speeches Grand Ayatollah Khamenei consistently dwells on familiar themes of the 1979 revolution: the importance of justice, independence, self-sufficiency, and Islam; the need for resolute opposition to Israel and United States.



## Domestic policy

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei has been supportive of scientific progress in Iran. He was among the first Islamic clerics to allow stem cell research and therapeutic cloning. In 2004, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei said that the country's progress is dependent on investment in the field of science and technology. He also said that attaching a high status to scholars and scientists in society would help talents to flourish and science and technology to become domesticated, thus ensuring the country's progress and development.

In 2007, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei requested that government officials speed up Iran's move towards economic privatization. Its last move towards such a goal was in 2004, when Article 44 of the constitution was overturned. Article 44 had decreed that Iran's core infrastructure should remain state-run. Grand Ayatollah Khamenei also suggested that ownership rights should be protected in courts set up by the Justice Ministry; the hope was that this new protection would give a measure of security to and encourage private investment. Additionally, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei has stated that he believes in the importance of nuclear technology for civilian purposes because "oil and gas reserves cannot last forever".

## Human Rights

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei has called human rights a fundamental principle underlying Islamic teachings, which precedes western concern for human rights by many centuries. Human Rights in Islam include the rights to live, to be free, and to benefit from justice and to welfare. He has attacked Western powers who have criticized the rights record of the Islamic Republic for hypocrisy by economically oppressing people in Third World. Grand Ayatollah Khamenei unites and supporting despots and dictators. Grand Ayatollah Khamenei's foreign policy is said to steer a course that avoids either confrontation or accommodation with the West.



## Opposition to the United States

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei has been described as consistent in his opposition to the United States, and the Western World in general, which is a theme of his speeches no matter whether the topic is foreign policy, agriculture or education. He has declared that it is "clear that conflict and confrontation between" Islamic Republic of Iran and the U.S. "is something natural and unavoidable" since the United States "is trying to establish a global dictatorship and further its own interests by dominating other nations and trampling on their rights."

However, while "cutting ties with America is among our basic policies," and "any relations would provide the possibility to the Americans to infiltrate Iran and would pave the way for their intelligence and spy agents," Grand Ayatollah Khamenei holds the door open to relations with the U.S. at some future date, saying "we have never said that the relations will remain severed forever.

Undoubtedly, the day the relations with America prove beneficial for the Iranian nation I will be the first one to approve of that." However, in a speech to Iranian students on October 29, 2008, which was quoted on Iranian TV, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei stated that "the Iranian people's hatred for America is profound.

The reason for this [hatred] is the various plots that the U.S. government has concocted against Iran and the Iranian people in the past 50 years. The Americans have not only refused to apologize for their actions, but have continued with their arrogant actions." On June 4, 2006, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei said that Iran would disrupt energy shipments from the Persian Gulf region (about 20% of the world's daily supply of oil passes from the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz very close to Iran's coast) should the country come under attack from the US, insisting that Tehran will not give up its right to produce nuclear fuel.

On September 14, 2007, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (on 1st Friday prayer of Ramadan) predicted that George Bush and American officials will one day be tried in an international criminal court to be held "accountable" for the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. He has also blamed the United States for "blind terrorism" after its invasion of Iraq. He asserts that the United States is the main cause of insecurity in Iraq.

### **Condemnation of September 11, 2001 attacks**

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei condemned the act and the attackers and called for a condemnation of terrorist activities all over the world, but warned strongly against a military assault on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. He is quoted as saying, "Mass killings of human beings are catastrophic acts which are condemned wherever they may happen and whoever the perpetrators and the victims may be."

### **Israel-Palestinian conflict**

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei remains a steadfast opponent of the State of Israel, Zionism, and the colonization of Palestine. In 2001 Grand Ayatollah Khamenei famously remarked that "this cancerous tumor of a state [Israel] should be removed from the region" and that "no one will allow a bunch of thugs, lechers and outcasts from London, America and Moscow to rule over the Palestinians."

On the same occasion he proposed that "Palestinian refugees should return and Muslims, Christians and Jews could choose a government for themselves, excluding immigrant Jews. Grand Ayatollah Khamenei says that cancer TUMOR should be "wiped off the map". In a sermon for Friday prayers in Tehran on 19 September 2008,

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei stated that "it is incorrect, irrational, pointless and nonsense to say that we are friends of Israeli people."

### **Fatwa against nuclear weapons**

Ayatollah Ali Grand Ayatollah Khamenei has issued a fatwa saying the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons was forbidden under Islam. The fatwa was cited in an official statement by the Iranian government.