

IN THE NAME OF GOD THE BENEFICIENT THE MERCIFUL.

## SUNNI-SHIA UNITY

Shaykh .Ahmad Deedat

The Following speech By Shaykh Ahmad Deedat, who is a world renowned Sunni scholar from South Africa, was made following his trip to the Islamic Republic of Iran on 3 March, 1982.

### INTRODUCTION

In the Holy Quran, Allah (SWT) says "It is he who has sent his apostle with guidance and the religion of truth so that he may make it prevail over all religions even though those who worship false Gods may detest it" (Quran 9:33). Even though the United States, Russia and all the superpowers may detest it. Allah's promise is not conditional on the strength of the superpowers.

In its widest sense the Islamic movement spans the entire ummah, in its narrowest it represents that part of the ummah which is most advanced in its struggle towards establishing Islam as a total way of life.

A few years ago one could not recognize a single leading edge in the Islamic movement. This was the bleak outlook which faced the ummah as history moved into the final decade of the 14th century Hijra. But the world was unaware of the Islamic movement in Iran. Iran under the ex-shah was beyond the pale of Islam. Iran was a blind spot.

We were Sunni and our age old ignorance was deep and total, and thus when the Islamic revolution in Iran began to make headlines in early 1978.

The bulk of Muslims, who called themselves Sunni, were caught unaware.

The Shah's propaganda had then blamed the Islamic masters. The western media, and the Muslim media manipulated by the west, and the alienated regimes of Muslim countries had then dismissed the events in Iran as insignificant. All of us were slow in recognizing the new reality in Iran.

There has been a systematic attempt at smearing Islamic Iran. And the western media deliberately promoted false accounts of the events of the Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini who was indeed the founder of the revolution, and the leader of the Islamic republic of Iran.

This campaign against Iran is nothing new.

Right from the beginning vested interests have carried on an unending campaign against the Islamic revolution in Iran. this evening our guest speaker, Mr. Ahmad Deedat who is a distinguished scholar of Islam, who hardly needs any introduction to the public and who has just returned from his trip to Iran, will present to us his first hand account on Iran. I now call upon Mr. Ahmad Deedat to speak to you. (Applause).

### **Shaykh Ahmad Deedat**

I seek refuge in the accursed Satan, In the name of God the Beneficent the Merciful.

The Holy Quran says:

"And if you turn away (from Islam and the obedience of Allah), He will substitute you for some other people, and they will not be like you." Quran 47:38

Mr. chairman and brothers: While we are looking skeptically of the miracle of a nation reborn. Allah's inexorable decree is finding its fulfillment in the rise and fall of nations which is mentioned in the verse I have just read to you from Surah Muhammad. In the last section of the last verse Allah (swt) reminds us, and warns us that if ye turn back from your duties and responsibilities if you do not fulfill your obligations then he will replace you with another nation.

Our urdu speaking brethren use these words so beautifully when they describe some mishap that occurs in the community in talking about that other nation that can replace them.

It is actually Quranic. And this really has been happening throughout history again and again. Allah (swt) first chose the Jews, the Bani Israel as he tells it in the holy Quran: "O children of Israel! call to mind My favor which I bestowed on you and that I preferred you to all other nations."(Quran 2:47). That favor was that they should become the torchbearers of the knowledge of God to the world. This was the honor, this was the privilege that was at first given to the Jews But because they did not fulfil their end of the obligation, a Jew amongst the Jews Hadhrat Isa (A.S.) as recorded in the Christian gospels told them "That the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."(The Bible, Matthew 21:43). And that nation, we will happily own up is the Islamic ummah. It was taken away from the Jews and given to the Muslims. The Muslims then, among them who were the Arabs at first, were given by Allah (SWT) the privilege that they became the torchbearers of light and learning to the world, but when they relaxed and failed to bring forth the fruits, Allah (swt) replaced them with another nation. In history, we remember the Turks and

Mongols destroyed the Muslim empire and when they accepted Islam they became the torchbearers of light and learning to the world.

As Iqbal beautifully describes this situation: "O' you Muslims, you will not perish if Iran or the Arabs perish, that the spirit of the wine is not dependent on the nature of it's container." The container is our nations, our boundaries and the spirit of Islam is not dependent on our geographical boundaries or national limitations. So this is what Allah (swt) does again and again, he chose the Jews then he chose the Arabs then when they became lax he chose the Turks and when they became lax another people and so on and this is a continuous process. If you don't do the job, Allah(swt) will chose another people who will. In the world today there are a thousand million Muslim, that is, one billion we boast! And 90 percent of this one billion happens to be the Sunni branch. We have stopped delivering the goods so Allah(swt) chooses a nation that we have all been looking down upon.

The Iranians! The Shias! History has been very unkind to our brethren in Iran that the shah happened to be the ruler, and his name happened to be Muhammad. Imagine, that this mans name happened to be Muhammad and he really wasn't a believer. It's hard for us to imagine today, but once you go to that country and you go into the details and find out what was going on.

That this Iranian the shah it seems to be,that he was a foreigner. If Hitler conquered this land and oppressed them, then we could understand. If the Russians conquered the people, we can understand. But here is a man who is an Iranian, speaking Persian, whose name was Muhammad, and look at what he was stooping to. For sixteen years he had forbidden Jummah prayers. Sixteen years. We had been equating Iran with the shah and the shah with Iran.

To us they were synonymous terms. But when you go into details we learn that the shah and the Iranian people were both apart. They were in reality foreigners to one another.

Now about this visit of mine to Iran and my impression.

Let me begin with the place where I had the first fragrance of this Iranian brotherhood of ours and it happened to be in Rome. First I smelled it, and then some of my companions had smelled it in the Rome airport. We were waiting to get on the plane, and we had some problems with visas and one of our men was given the responsibility of overcoming these problems. So he goes to the Iran air office and he tells our problem to a young lady wearing full Islamic attire with her body well covered. It was Beautiful, Just beautiful to look at. And I mean that when you look at these people in this attire you see that they are beautiful people. So there was a lady in Rome and you brothers should have seen the way she

handled these problems. And someone came to me and told me, man if you want to see a real Iranian Muslim girl you should come over and I went and some others went and we saw. And that was the first whiff we had of the Iranian ummah in Rome.

When we landed in Iran, we were taken to a five star hotel which was there before the revolution known as the Hilton hotel but is now known as Hotel Istiqlal. And we were taken around. to places of interest and I will relate to you some of the things we saw and I will try to describe the feelings one has. If I remember correctly, the first thing we visited was the Behesht Zahra cemetery. Behesht means paradise in Persian and Zahra is the title of Fatima Al-Zahra (AS) who was the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (saw). And Zahra means the radiant one. So it was called Radiant paradise. And before arriving in Iran, I had read about the Behesht Zahra cemetery. And I remember when Imam Khomeini had arrived in Tehran he made a trip to the cemetery. And I'm thinking why does one go to the cemetery? To make du'a? Yes. For the departed souls? Yes. And when you think of cemeteries here in South Africa you think of Brookstreet and Riverside. You cant imagine that this cemetery is square kilometers by square kilometers. You Just cant imagine. It is a big open ground where about a million or two million people can be accommodated.

And people gathered here because it is the easiest place where people can release their emotional and spiritual baggage because there you have the martyrs. Their were 70,000 or so people who were martyred in this revolution and 100,000 maimed. Unarmed people with only the slogan "Allahu Akbar" as their weapons had toppled the mightiest military force in the middle east. So we went to this cemetery There were about a million people there. There were men and women and children and we were greatly inspired by the enthusiasm and the feeling of our brothers and sisters there. It was mid winter there, and the men and women and children were sitting on the cold ground for hours on end. In mid-winter on the ground with no carpets or chairs!

A nation that could endure that discipline for hours on end , you can only imagine what destiny Allah(swt) has planned for them. A day or 2 later on my program I read Behesht Zahra cemetery, again. The first time we went for a lecture, but we had seen the graves people reciting poems of sorrow and reciting dua' and I thought this second visit would be redundant. Why should one go a second time? I've seen what a cemetery is.

But all my companions were going and I thought if everyone else was going, it wouldn't be good for me to stay in the hotel relaxing when all my companions are going in these buses to a cemetery. But I went and I became very happy. And the second time I went it was a Thursday afternoon and Thursdays in Iran is like

Saturdays for us. And tens of thousands of people were in the cemetery. This was a custom. It was like Eid. Tens of thousands are there, for what else, but to charge their spiritual batteries. It was a constant reminder to not forget. "My son gave his life for Islam" or "my father gave his life for Islam" that they gave their life for Islam. With that kind of system, Every Thursday is a spiritual injection and reminder that they are willing to give their life for Islam.

There was a town hall that accommodated 16,000 people, compared to the biggest town hall in South Africa which is the Good Hope Center in Capetown for 8,000. This was built by the shah to boast his own "Aryan myth". He was boasting not only that he was the shahanshah or king of kings, but also that he was the aryamehr, light of the Aryans. What is this Aryan sickness? Remember Hitler bragging about being Aryan because the Germans are Aryans. And the Hindus boasting we are Aryans. If my people, the Gujarati people, weren't Muslims we'd be boasting about being Aryans as well.

The ex shah claimed to be the light of Aryans and he built this monument as a tribute. He built another monument spending millions to commemorate his ancestor Cyrus the great, a pagan, a mushrik and squandering the wealth of this nation for this project. In 1984 he was supposed to have the world Olympics in Tehran to boost his ego even further.

In this town hall we saw athletics, gymnastics, acrobatics. Unfortunately we Muslims here in South Africa are like jellyfish, that is we have made ourselves into jellyfish. Our young men do not participate in that kind of activity. Who here does athletics, gymnastics, acrobatics we do not do that here.

It's not for us. Who does jogging, You know the young people here, when I meet them I shake hands with them and they are like jellyfish. Almost every young man you meet in Iran appears to be an athlete. They are doing sports on a world standard and it makes one feel so happy because there they are not projecting Iran. They are not talking about Iran "we are Iranians, we are Aryans" instead they are talking about Islam, about Islam, about Islam. There was not one semi-naked girl, not a single girl who was half naked there. If the shah had his way, if he was alive and organized it, there would have been semi-naked girls for everyone to stare at and feast upon.

In Iran everything is Islamic to strengthen the morality of the people, boosting the men and women by the thousands. We were thrilled, we were thrilled to see our children, we felt as if these were our children, our own brothers and sisters, we were really thrilled. We saw these as things that our children can do. Then we went through a military parade with different groups of Iranian men and there was no shortage of man power. You know, some people want to go and help our

Iranian brethren. Alhamdulillah there is no shortage of man power they only want the tools, and the weapons. If the Iranians had the military weapons that the Israelis had, the whole of the middle-east would be free from every kind foreign intervention in no time.

This is a nation that can do it. The spirit is there, the spirit of Jihad is there in each and every man and woman in the nation. It seems that the whole nation is involved in promoting Islam. We are talking about 20 million people that they can put into the field. If they had the weapons and the materials, every man woman and child would can go and do jihad.

Then we visited the Iraqi prisoners of war. As you know when this war started Iraq attacked Iran. The whole country was in turmoil. Iraq felt that the Jews did it to the Arabs in 6 days, then they will do it to the Iranians in 3 days and the whole world thought that in one weeks time, Iran would crumble to pieces. And do you know how long it has been now? It's been a year and a half, and even more. And in the beginning there were twenty to one odds against them in men and materials and the Iranians turned the tables and brought the odds to 3 to one still against them. And they were able to push them back. They recaptured all their land and a hill that was named Allahu Akbar. Before I went to Iran Dr . Kalim Siddiqui from the UK jokingly remarked that "you guys have half a chance of becoming martyrs (shahid)..". It was a joke and it nearly became true. While we were coming out of a city on the war front there was a field of tanks. And our young men came out of the buses and started to climb onto the tanks taking pictures to show people back home.

Then one of the tanks in the courtyard came out for a training demonstration on how it works and suddenly we hear gunfire and in the distance we saw smoke coming from a few places and some of our young men got scared and started hiding behind bushes., and it turns out that we were under attack from the Iraqis. And there were bombs exploding all around us and Allah (swt) saved us. And remember Khaled had said that was half a chance that we would become martyrs, well it almost became a full chance. (laughter).

We visited those wounded in the war and no one was complaining about what had happened to them. One man had his leg amputated, and there were no tears, I never saw a single tear from anyone, and they were asking if it was possible to go back to the front. Their regrets were not about their injuries but why they can't go back to the front to fight and become shahid, this is the ambition of each and every Muslim there. When we visited the prisoners of war the Iranians had captured 7000 prisoners of war and they looked healthy, well clothed, well fed. One of my friends was interested in finding out what the Iraqi prisoners felt about their condition first hand. And anyone he asked said that they were being looked after

very well. Then I had an idea. Some were here for over a year and others for a few months and I was wondering how many people had committed suicide. And I asked each group of the prisoners of war and asked each group how many people committed suicide. They said not one. I then asked the next group and so on. Not one single person committed suicide amongst the 7800 prisoners of war.

And if we look at our so called civilized western country of South Africa, 46 people committed suicide in our prisons this year alone and they are well fed well clothed have their own cells and 46 committed suicide so far. And if people are not well treated some are going to want to find an easy way out but there was not one single person who committed suicide amongst the 7800 prisoners of war.

We went to visit the Imam, Ayatollah Ruhollah Musawi Khomeini. There were about forty of us who waited for the Imam and the Imam came in and was about ten meters away from where I was, and I saw the Imam. He delivered the Lecture to us for about half an hour, and it was nothing but the Quran, the man is like a computerized Quran. And the electric effect he had on everybody, his charisma, was amazing . You just look at the man and tears come down your cheek. You just look at him and you get tears. I never saw a more handsome old man in my life, no picture, no video, no TV could do justice to this man, the handsomest old man I ever saw in my life was this man. There is something unique to his name, too. First he is called Imam Khomeini.

The word Imam is to us a every cheap word. Wherever we go somewhere we ask who is the Imam of the Masjid here. To the Shia there is only one Imam in the world and he is the Twelfth Imam , they believe in the concept of Imamate and that the Imam is the spiritual leader of the ummah. And the first Imam according to the school of Imamate is Hazrat Ali(RA). Then comes Imam Hassan who is the second Imam, Imam Hussein the third Imam all the way until the twelve Imam, Imam Mohammad who disappeared at the age of 5 and they are expecting his return. They use the term "occultation" something like a spiritual hibernation like the Ashab Al-cahf. And that he is expected to come back and he is the only one in the world who can be called Imam.

Most of their scholars are called mullah, and Ayatollah means Allamah And Ayatollah Khomeini is called Imam out of respect but they are waiting for the real Imam to come. Ruhollah is the name his father gave him and do you know what it means? Ruhollah means the 'word of God' and this is the title of Hazrat Isa(as) in the Quran. Then he is Ayatollah which is another title of Hazrat Isa(as) in the Quran. Al-Musawi is from the family Musa and from the city of Khomein which is where his last name Khomeini comes from. ...(break in audio at 41: 05 seconds). But they are waiting for the Mahdi, and not Khomeini. They want to clean the stables and make preparations for the Mahdi to come. In the Sunni world we are

also waiting for the Mahdi to come but we want him to clean the stables for us, make us masters of the world and to make us sit on the thrones.

The Sunni world is just passively waiting. Until then we can carry on with all our petty little squabbles, whatever we are carrying on now. And it is only the Imam Mahdi which can clean the world for us.

This is the Sunni line of thinking. Khomeini on the other hand tells his followers that we must help prepare the way so that when he does come everything is already set up for him to act on. While we, the Sunni world are waiting for Imam Mahdi to pull the chestnut out of the fire for us, the Shias are preparing the world for his arrival.

You know there were many people with us from all over the world. And I found types and types and types of sick people, a mental sickness that is. I came across an alim from Pakistan Mauna Sahib and he thought that there was something wrong with our Shia brothers. You see in Iran when someone is lecturing and the name Khomeini is mentioned people stop and everyone says durood on the Prophet(S) three times. But when the name Mohammad is mentioned they send durood once. And this alim from Pakistan says " look at these people just look at them. What kind of Muslims are these people. When the name Mohammad is mentioned they send durood on the Prophet(s) once but when the name Khomeini is mentioned they send Durood on KHOMEINI three times."

I said

" What do they say , what do they say in this so called 'durood on Khomeini'. "

He said: Peace be upon Mohammad and the family of Mohammad.

I said " Who is Mohammad? Khomeini? Who named Khomeini as Mohammad. Their durood is on Prophet Mohammad(s) and you say it is on Khomeini."

You know it's a sickness. There are many learned men but their minds are so prejudiced. They are just looking for faults. [1]

Another example is that the Shia brothers when they make salat, they have a piece of clay (turbah) that they do sajjdah on. And he says "see what they are doing here. This is shirk. They are worshipping a piece of clay. " I said why don't you ask them why they place their foreheads on a piece of clay and learn the logic behind this. You see, the first time I experienced this was in Washington D.C., the Iranian students there had invited me to give a lecture there at the university where they were studying in America. At that time, it was time for Isha and we made

salat. And everyone was given a piece of clay. I at the time thought it was so funny, so I put it aside and I made my salat with the Iranian students. And after salat I wanted to know about this and I asked them. Why do you carry this clay tablet everywhere you go in your pocket.

They said "we are supposed to do sujud on Allah's earth with our foreheads touching the earth. We say "subhanna rabia Allah" three times with our foreheads touching the earth." So the Shia want to actually touch the earth with their foreheads and not a manmade carpet. They want to be true to the expression of praying with the forehead actually touching Allah's earth. You see they don't worship the clay tablet as many wrongly think. And this is always something that we Sunnis are always making fun of and mock the Shia, but on my way out from Tehran across the plane in the aisle were two Shias and when prayer time came one of them took his clay tablet out of his pocket and, Allahu Akbar, performed salat right there on the plane in his seat, and when he finished he gave this to his neighbor and he performed salat.

And this may seem like a joke to us. Isn't it? And there were dozens of Sunnis on the plane and out of those dozens of Sunnis only one young man did the salat, and I tell you that young man wasn't me. But we are laughing at the other Guy. He is sitting there and doing something better than we are and we make fun of them and sit in judgement. He may not as polished and refined as we are in South Africa. You know we Muslims in South Africa are very polished and refined in our salat.

The Arabs are no match for us, the Iranians are no match for us, the Americans bilalans, the Negroes they are no match to us. With the Arabs you are bowing down in ruku and the guy next to you pushes you aside to make space.(laughter) Who knows brothers, maybe it is valid, we don't know. You know, between the four Sunni mazhabs the Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki and Shafei there are over two hundred differences in salat alone. Did you know that? Two hundred. But we take it for granted.

The Shafei says amin loudly and we say it silently, they say bismillah loudly we say it silently and there is there is no problem. As a child my father would repeat the famous formula that he in turn learned from his father. : "all the mazhabs are equally valid and the truth for them is in the hadith and the Quran." And so we accept it. When it comes to the Shafei, Hanbali, Hanafi and Maliki we are tolerant but when it comes to the Shia you see he is not in the formula that we are taught as a child, so what ever little idiosyncrasies there exists between us and them we cant tolerate and reject we say that he is out because we are programmed to believe in only the four. But we accept the idiosyncrasies between the four.

I say why cant you accept the Shia brothers as a fifth madhab. And the astonishing thing is that he is telling you that he wants to be one with you. He is not talking about being Shia. He is shouting "there is no Sunni nor Shia there is one thing, Islam." But we say to them "no you are different you are Shia." This attitude is a sickness of the devil. He wants to divide us. Can you imagine we Sunnis are 90% of the Muslim world and the ten percent who are Shias want to be partners and brothers with you in faith and the 90% are terrified.

I cant understand why should you the 90% be so terrified. They should be the ones terrified. And if you just knew the feelings that they have for you. During Jumma prayers in Iran, there are a million people. And you should see the way they look at you when you pass by, they recognize that you are a foreigner and not one of them and tears start rolling down their cheeks. This is the feeling that they have for you, but you say no, you want to keep them out, afraid that they will absolve you. You can only be absolved if there is something better than what you have. I don't know, maybe some of you think I am a Shia, but I'm still with you all here. What is all this Shia-Sunni tensions? It is all politics.

These antagonisms we have are all politics now. If a Sunni brother somewhere does something wrong you say oh the individual is not being very Islamic, he is a kaffir, But if a Shia does something wrong you want to condemn the whole Shia community, the whole nation of millions, and say they are all rubbish just because one Shias actions are not very Islamic. At the same time where we look the other way if one of your relatives does something serious because he is your father or your uncle. One group of Sunnis says to another "you are not a Muslim" another group of Sunnis says "you are not a Muslim you are a kaffir" look that's among us, and we fight among ourselves. And some of us do funny things.

I met one brother who told me when you go to Newcastle go visit Mr. So and so and inshallah everything will be taken care of for you. So I went to the man and exactly as I was told he took me home for lunch and when I'm sitting at the table I see on the wall 'burat' you know what burat is? A donkey like animal with the face of a woman its supposed to provide electrical force. I told him this is not right. Allah(swt) created electrical force, you can not create it with a statue of a donkey with a woman's face. Oh and he was so upset. But he's a Sunni, he was a brother and is still my brother. This Sunni-Shia tensions is the work of the devil to divide us.

Let me say something about Iran. What I found was that everything is islamically oriented. The whole nation is geared towards Islam. And they are talking about nothing but the Quran. I have never had a single experience with an Iranian when the man contradicted me when I'm talking about the Quran. Whereas our Arab brethren again and again you quote them the Quran and they try to contradict you

with the Quran. They are Arabs, they are supposed to know the Quran better than us, but the Iranians seem to be on the wavelength of the Quran. Everything he is doing everything he is thinking about is the Quran. You remember Tabas[2] when the American people wanted to free the hostages.

The mightiest most technologically advanced nation on earth, a nation that can land a man on the moon and bring him back, a nation which tells you which part of the moon they will land and bring them back, they send Mars and Jupiter probes. A nation that warned Pakistan about the tidal wave tragedy and they didn't heed the warning. They warned the Israelis in 1973 that the Arabs were on the move, they didn't heed the warning. That nation couldn't land in Iran. Imagine they went there with their helicopters and crashed them selves and got themselves killed. Imagine. A nation that lands on the moon and comes back cant land in Iran. And the Iranian people were not in any position to do anything to them. The Americans could have gone and done what they wanted to do. I went and saw the American embassy and you think that its just a big building, but man its acres and acres right in the center of Tehran.

They could have easily gone in and gotten these people out, even if they lost a few men. They could have achieved their goals. It was very well planned. But you know what happened? Fiasco, retreat failure, the Imam Khomeini is told what has happened. He doesn't say Subhananla, he doesn't say Alhamdulillah, you know what he said. He quotes the Quran: "Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?" 105:1 These are the words that came out of him. I tell you he is a Quranic computer.

You know what they call those huge helicopters? Jumbo helicopters, and those big planes are called jumbo planes. You know what jumbo means in Swahili, Elephant. It's a Swahili word. That's where they got the name. So these elephant sized helicopters go and the Imam says: "Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant? Did He not cause their war to end in confusion," Quran 105:1-2

But we are so skeptical, the Muslim world has become so skeptical we don't believe in the Quran anymore. You don't really believe in the Quran, for most people it is all for entertainment, for the good spiritual feelings that you get when reciting the Holy Quran. But the directives that Allah (swt) gives, nobody seems to care. May Allah (swt) make these brothers of ours, the torchbearers and light of learning today to the Muslim world. And here is a nation geared to do the Job. When you look at them the earnestness that is in them, a nation that is not afraid, when you look at them with the enthusiasm they have. They are not afraid to say "marg bar amrika" death to America.

Then say "marg bar shuravi" death to USSR. Imagine that! (Laughter from the audience). And death to Israel." Can you imagine a nation doing that and not in the least afraid. This is not the Islamic spirit that is in us here, but the Iranians are all heart and mind. They don't say "this is an Iranian revolution "or "we are Iranians". They are talking about Islam, an Islamic Revolution. This is not an Iranian revolution but that this is an Islamic revolution. It's a revolution for Islam and little wonder why the nations of the world cant stomach it because it is Islam that they cant stomach. So my dear brothers and sisters I have taken so much of your valuable time already. And with these words I take leave of you to sit down and to take your Questions.

[1] " O ye who believe! if any from among you turn back from his Faith, soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him,- lowly with the believers, mighty against the rejecters, fighting in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault. That is the grace of Allah, which He will bestow on whom He pleaseth. And Allah encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things." Quran 5:54