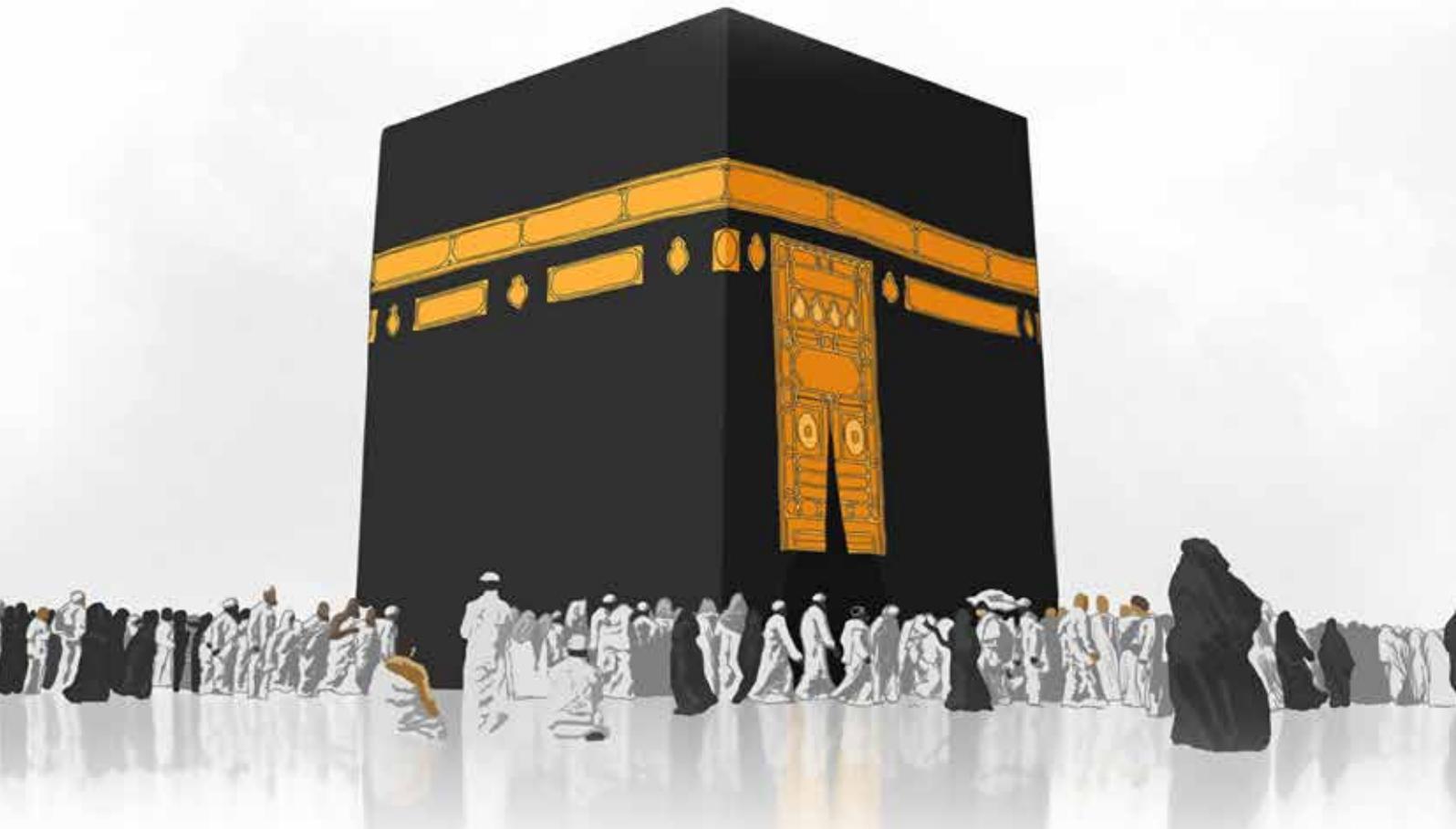


ECHO

of Islam

How the Zionists Take Undue Advantage of the Name of Prophet Ibrahim ^(AS) in International and Interreligious Relations



Hajj, Its Rituals and Discourse Scientific and Cultural Achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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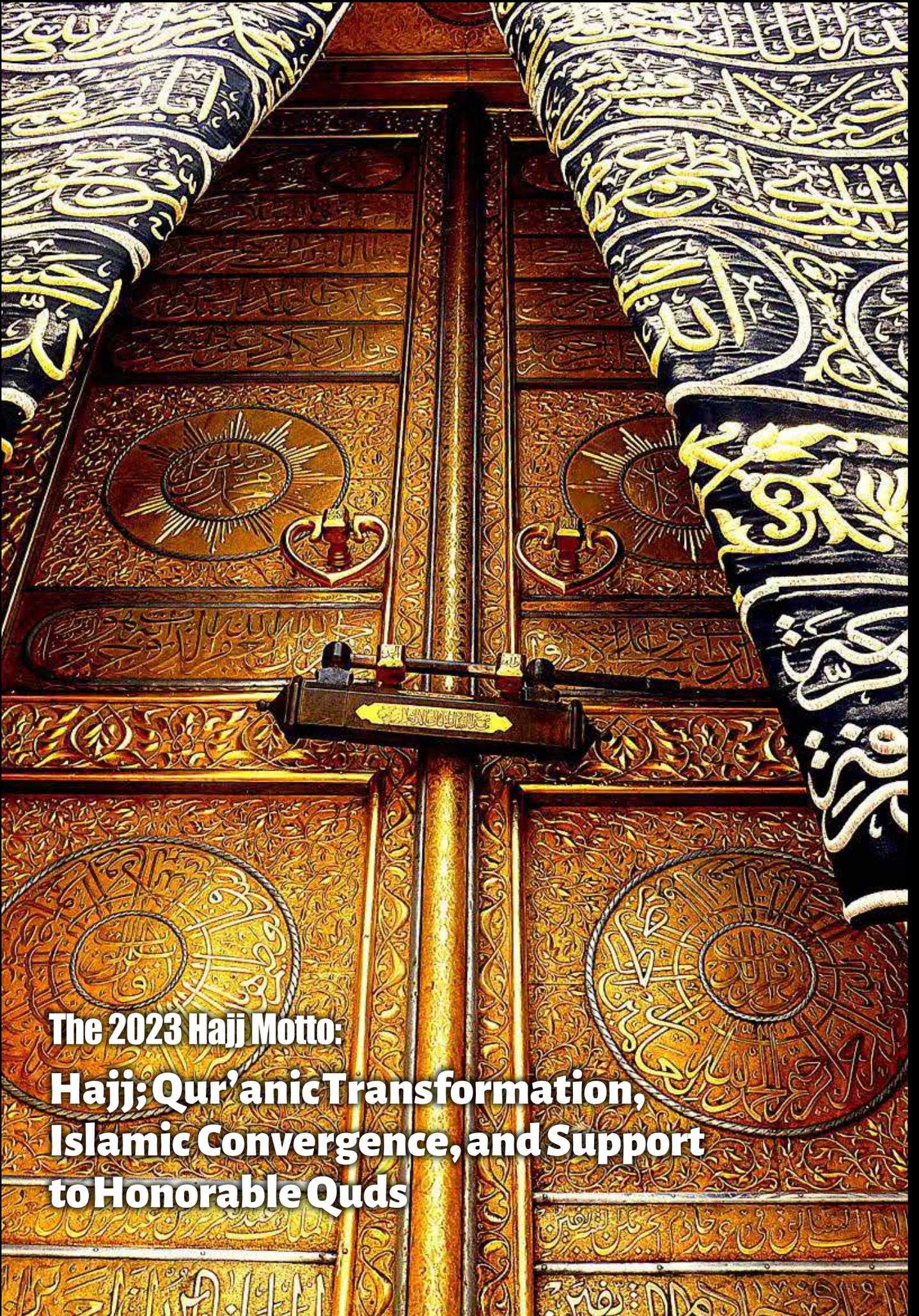
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**The 2023 Hajj Motto:
Hajj; Qur'anic Transformation,
Islamic Convergence, and Support
to Honorable Quds**



In Collaboration with
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Editorial

Abrahamic Hajj the Progressive Doctrine of the Islamic Revolution

Hojjat al-Islam Mohammad Asadi Movahed, Islamic Research Scholar and Managing Director of Al-Hoda International Cultural, Artistic and Publishing Institute

Based on the teachings and thoughts of the Great Founder of the Islamic Revolution, the Late Imam Khomeini (RA), which are in turn based on Islamic and Quranic teachings, Hajj is an event that should strengthen unity and the spirit of anti-imperialist arrogance among Muslims. Finding solutions to the problems of Muslims should take place in this great event. Hajj is the venue in which the atrocities of arrogant powers should be exposed, and it is a center for declaring repudiation against the imperialists.

The Islamic Revolution presented a genuine and progressive model of pure Muhammadan Islam to the world, which petrified arrogant powers and this made them line up against Iran. One of the signs of this progressive doctrine is using the capacity of Hajj to solve the crises and challenges faced by the Islamic world, including Palestine. Keeping in view the fact that the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has, in recent years, provided suitable facilities and platforms for the presence of pilgrims during the Hajj season, the possibility of utilizing the capacity of this great Islamic event for promoting unity among Muslims and discussing the problems of the Islamic world has increased considerably.

Palestine is the most important issue of the Islamic

world and one of the main pillars of unity and synergy among Muslims, and by referring to history, one can find why the world of arrogance is afraid of the great Hajj congregation. One of the historical examples of the political function of Hajj is Indonesia's independence. After World War II, Indonesians who resided in Arabia began a move to awaken the Muslim countrymen during Hajj, and this move of theirs caused an uprising in the Indonesian society until the Netherlands was eventually forced to accept the independence of Indonesia in 1946. Exposing the crimes of the child-killing regime of Israel during the Hajj congregation is another example that not resulted in gaining the support of Muslims, but has also inspired the chivalrous people of the world to support the Palestinian cause, and the outcome of this jihad of clarification has been so great that in response to the victory of the under-20 football team of this usurping regime, different nationalities have, in the last few days, been demanding the freedom of Palestine and have the publication of the image of the Palestinian flag into a global movement.

By reviewing these and numerous similar historical cases, it can be easily understood why the arrogant powers always blow the trumpet of separation of religion from politics, which is also, unfortunately,

repeated by some people either out of ignorance or being in alignment with the enemies of Islam.

Thus, one of the outcomes of the Abrahamic Hajj should be the clarification of the stances of Muslim countries for each other and then for other countries of the world. In fact, if the Islamic world cannot use the capacity of Hajj to reach a single discourse to examine the issues faced by Muslims and the Muslim World, it is a proof that this unique capacity has been neglected. If we claim that the doctrine of Hajj is a progressive one, it means that in addition to the main issues and challenges faced by Muslims, there are some pivotal issues that should also be raised and discussed in the unique congregation of Hajj. From among other examples of pivotal cases, mention may be made of certain socio-political events in Iran. Due to the fact that Iran has become an influential country in international equations and in the West Asian region, all the political, social, and economic movements and events of Iran are monitored by other countries, especially the enemies of this noble Revolution, and billions of dollars are sent to feed the anti-revolutionary media to bombard the minds of the Iranian people with lies, disturb their thoughts and spread despair in the country. An example of such moves has been the false claim of oppression against Iranian women, which has become a propaganda platform for the long-standing enemies of Iran and Islam.

Considering that Hajj season is in the offing and it is crucial to have a correct image of the socio-political trends in Iran, and by keeping in view the conspiracy of the enemies in spreading all kinds of lies, it is necessary to note a few points:

1. The critical responsibility of intellectuals in using the capacity of Hajj to explain and illustrate the achievements of women after the Islamic Revolution;

2. The necessity of statistical comparison with regard to women's level of educational qualifications before and after the Islamic Revolution and the number of elite well-known Iranian women scientists in different scientific fields;

3. Presenting real statistics of women demanding the implementation of hijab laws, and stressing that the group of women who have made the fake news spreading media their platform do not represent all Iranian women and are in a tiny minority in comparison to the population of women supporting hijab.

Another issue that has become one of the enemy's tactics against Iran is the false hue and cry of the biggest oppressors of human history in the form of spreading fake news and lies about the situation of the Iranian Sunni brothers. Keeping in view the fact the signs of prosperity in societies include life expectancy, population growth, and a high rate of fertility, a glance at the population and housing statistics of Iran clearly reveals that the Sunni population in Iran has been increasing in the post-Islamic Revolution era, and the Islamic Republic of Iran has increased the number of Sunni government employees, such that many of them have been able to migrate to more prosperous provinces. This minority also has an active role in sports fields. For instance, there are several sports people at the national level who, contrary to the false news of being discriminated against have been fully supported by the sports authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in domestic and foreign sports fields. In conclusion, there are some points that should be clarified during the Hajj season:

1. Iran is the vanguard of Islamic peace and unity, and the efforts of its leader, scholars, and elites towards the promotion of proximity of Islamic schools of thought require calls for the jihad of clarification;

2. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been a supporter of the oppressed people and has had an extraterritorial approach in this regard, and incidentally, most of the oppressed people who have been supported by Iran have been Sunnis;

3. The emphasis of the Islamic Republic of Iran is on strengthening the countries of the region and the withdrawal of foreigners from West Asia and it is in alignment with this approach that it has sent all kinds of aid to the countries of the region; regardless of certain religious points of view.

The mentioned cases as well as the active economic, cultural, and political interaction of Iran with other countries, especially the Muslims of the world, and also the active and extensive role of Iran in the stability, peace, and tranquility of West Asia, clarify its approach towards strengthening ethnic groups, tribes, and minorities. Iran has always strengthened different clans and ethnic groups and tried to protect them and even supported different languages and dialects in such a way that Kurds, Lors, Gilaks, Baloch people, and Turkmens have become world famous.

Wise Sayings of Imam Khomeini^(RA) on Hajj



One vital philosophy of Hajj is the fostering of understanding and fraternity among Muslims.

All Muslims should make efforts to revive the spirit of the Hajj and the Holy Qur'an and to return these two to the scenes of their lives.

In the absence of bara'ah (repudiation of disbelievers) and in the absence of unity Hajj is no Hajj at all!

Let us break up the idols in the Holy Mecca, and at the 'Aqabat. Pelt stones at the devils at the head of which is the Great Satan (America) and dive them away, and thus, perform the Hajj of Khalilullah (Prophet Abraham), Habihullah (Prophet Muhammad), and Waliyyullah (Imam Mahdi).

O speakers and writers! Inform your brothers-in-faith at the great gatherings in Arafat, Mash'ar, Mina, Mecca, and Medina, of the socio-political problems of your own regions and ask one another for assistance.

Go to Mina and observe there the divine ideal which is sacrificing one's dearest things in the path of the Absolute Beloved. Know that as long as you do not forego these dear objects, foremost among them is the love of oneself and love of this world in the wake of it. you shall not reach the Absolute Beloved.

During the Hajj ritual that you perform at Safa and Marwah, search, sincerely and heartily, and find the beloved because by finding him all

worldly kneaded yarns of attachment will be torn away; all doubts and suspicious as well as all beastly fears and hopes shall fade away.

During your circumambulation of God's sanctuary and when you recite "Labbayk, Labbayk" (I hear and obey) to the divine call, negate and rule out associates for Almighty God in all stages, and from the self or ego, which is the greatest source of polytheism and say 'No' to all the taghuts (fake deities) and their offspring.

When touching the Hajar al-Aswad (the Black Stone) make a covenant with God to be inimical to His and His Messenger's enemies as well as the enemies of the pious and noble people, and never to be obedient servants to them (the enemies of God) no matter who they are or where they live. Let your covenant with God also call for the eradication of fear and submissiveness from your hearts, for the enemies of God and at the head of which is the Great Satan (America).

Go to Mash'ar al-Haram and 'Arafat with gnostic awareness and at each station enhance the heart's assurance of the divine promises and sovereignty of the oppressed, and contemplate on the signs of God in silence.

Take note that Hajj pilgrimage is not a business trip; it is not a trip in pursuance of the world; it is the journey towards closeness to God.

Excerpts from Grand Ayatollah Khamenei's Messages on Different Hajj Occasions

Greetings be upon the pilgrims of the House of God, the guests of the Friend's House, and those responding to His invitation. And special greetings be upon the hearts which have become revitalized through the remembrance of Allah, and which have opened to His magnanimous grace and mercy. (November 2007)

As a symbol of Islamic unity and honour and the emblem of mono-

theism and spirituality, the sacred Ka'bah, during the Hajj season, is host to ardent and hopeful hearts, who come hurrying from all over the world to the birthplace of Islam in response to the call of the Glorified Lord. At this time, the Islamic Ummah can have a bird's eye view of its own great extent and diversity, seen through the eyes of its envoys who gather here from all over the world,

and be witness to the profound faith that rules over the hearts of the followers of the True Religion, and appreciate its great and peerless heritage. (October 2010)

On this valuable occasion, in addition to spiritual purification and restoration- which is the highest and most fundamental gain of this comprehensive and unique divine command- attention should be paid to

the issues of the world of Islam as a central duty and ritual of the hajj participants- with a commanding and expansive view towards the priorities and most important issues related to the Islamic Ummah. Today in particular, unity among Muslims and untying the knots of separation among some parts of the Islamic Ummah is a priority and important matter. Hajj is the manifestation of unity and harmony and the focal point of brotherhood and mutual help. During hajj, all have to learn the lessons of focusing on commonalities and rejecting differences. (September 2014)

The heads of Islamic countries and political, religious, and cultural personalities in the world of Islam have heavy responsibilities on their shoulders: the responsibility of creating unity and preventing everyone from tribal and denominational conflicts, the responsibility of informing nations of the enemy's methods and the treachery of arrogance and Zionism, the responsibility of equipping everyone for the purpose of confronting the enemy in the various arenas of hard and soft wars. (August 2017)

No doubt, one of the best instances for "to see their benefits" {Quran: 22:27} is this annual meeting of all the communities of the Islamic Ummah around God's house. This is the key to the Islamic Union, and the symbol of Islam's formation of the Ummah, which is to be under the protection of God's house. God's house belongs to all: "The Sacred Mosque -- which We have made for those who dwell nearby and foreigners alike," {Quran: 22: 25} (August 2018)

The Hajj presents a miniature scale of a set of fundamental pillars of the Islamic society by placing the elixir



of Dhikr and servitude, which is the main element for the cultivation, progress, and growth of individuals and the society - next to congregation and unity, which are the symbols of the unified Ummah; the movement around a unique center, and on the path towards a common goal, which are the keys to the endeavor and livelihood of the Ummah based on monotheism; and through harmony among every Hajj pilgrim, where there is no distinction, which is the sign of removing discrimination and providing everyone with the same opportunity. Every one of the rituals of Hajj including Ihram, Tawaf, Sa'i, wuquf, ramy, movement and re-

pose, is a symbolic reminder of a part of the picture presented by Islam of its ideal society. (August 2019)

Hajj is a unique obligation. Among Islamic obligations, it is the flower with a hundred petals. With it, all important individual, social, worldly, heavenly, historic and global aspects of religion are studied and reviewed. There is spirituality in it, but without any seclusion, isolation and reclusiveness. It involves congregation but without any conflict, slander, or evil intentions. On the one hand, it involves psychological ecstasy resulting from supplication, transcendence and divine dhikr and, on the other hand, it involves social contacts and



social bonds. (July 2020)

The straight path shown to us by the Hajj rituals, by “Sa’i,” “Tawaf,” “Arafah,” “Jamarat” and the glory and unity in Hajj, is to rely on God, to pay attention to the never-fading power of God, to have national self-confidence, to believe in struggle and endeavor for religion, to show firm determination when moving forward and to have abundant hope for victory. (July 2021)

The horizon of opportunities in Hajj pilgrimage is wider than and beyond other religious rituals. What makes Hajj distinct from other religious duties and plans lies in its bringing a “multifaceted transformation. With

all its requirements, Hajj can turn an ordinary Muslim into an undefeatable and non-threatenable or non-enticeable Muslim: the correct (performance of) Hajj can lead to internal transformation in every Muslim and create a spirit of monotheism, connection with God, trust in Him and rejection of all the idols within and outside one’s being, or the degrading lusts and powers holding humans captive, and can develop a feeling of powerfulness, self-confidence, salvation, and sacrifice in Muslims. This is the transformation that creates a human being who does not even think of being oppressed and cannot be threatened nor enticed. (July 2021)

The unity of the Muslim nation is one of the two basic foundations of the Hajj Pilgrimage. When combined with spirituality and the remembrance of God (dhikr), which comprises the other basic foundation of this religious duty that is so full of secrets, they can lead the Islamic nation to the heights of honor and bliss. They can enable the nation to become an example of [the verse], “All might belong to Allah and His Messenger and the believers.” [Qur’an 63:8] Hajj is a combination of these two political and spiritual elements. And the sacred religion of Islam is a glorious, majestic fusion of the political and spiritual spheres. (July 2022)

How the Zionists Take Undue Advantage of the Name of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) in International and Interreligious Relations

By: Hojjat al-Islam Abdul Fattah Navvab,
Representative of the Supreme Leader in
Hajj and Pilgrimage Affair



Religious Zionism is a false mystical about Palestine being the land of Jewish people. Derived from Jewish beliefs, Zionism believes that Jews are God's chosen people. Among the reasons that Jews have always considered themselves privileged and relied on, is their so-called lineage. They consider themselves to be the descendants of Jacob, the son of Isaac, and by this means, they trace their lineage to Ibrahim (AS), an Ulu l-'Azm (lit. those of the Perseverance and Strong Will) messenger of God Almighty and boast about it and consider other ethnic groups to be lower than them and, therefore, have no respect for them.

However, in His Holy Qur'an God Almighty condemns this racist attitude and considers the criterion of closeness and superiority not in lineage but in divine obedience. In the words of the Holy Qur'an: "مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ" (Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. Rather, he was a Hanif (upright) Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists.) "إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ" (Indeed the nearest of all people to Abraham are those who follow him and this prophet and those who have faith, and Allah is the guardian of the faithful.)

Jews and Christians used to get into arguments and always tried to enumerate their imaginary honors and privileges. Both groups attributed themselves to God's prophets and Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and boasted about it. The Holy Qur'an has condemned them in this regard and forbade them from vain arguments (See Surah Aal-e Imran, Verses 65 and 66; Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 140).

From what has been depicted in the Holy Qur'an the following points can be perceived with regard to the arguments between Jews and Christians:

1. Most of their talks were not face-to-face and direct, rather their talks were of propagandist essence in which they negated and regarded each other's claims as baseless.
2. These talks and claims were mostly without any solid reasons and were just meant to boast to the other side.
3. Seeking superiority and pride about the heritage of the past, being wealthy, and an unparalleled closeness to God had been the main axes of their talks, some of which are mentioned below:

The exclusivity of heaven

Both Jews and Christians have claimed to have exclusive rights over heaven. “And they say, ‘No one will enter paradise except one who is a Jew or Christian.’ Those are their (false) hopes! Say, ‘Produce your evidence, should you be truthful.’” (Surah Al-Baqarah, 111).

Guidance is Exclusive to Jews/Christians

Another strange claim of these two was that they only considered themselves guided, and they believed that felicity and guidance depend on following their faith. “They say, ‘Be either Jews or Christians, that you may be (rightly) guided.’” (Ibid., Verse 135)

Children and Friends of God

Jews and Christians took pride in being children and friends of God (Surah Al-Ma'idah, 18)

Historical Claims of Zionism on Palestine

Having these views, the leaders of the Zionist movement tried to justify their invasion of other people's lands by taking undue advantage of some statements in the Torah and to align the people of other countries and governments with the crimes they commit.

Among these claims, mention can be made of the Promised Land, the validity of which can be evaluated by a critical examination of the reasons and documents produced by Zionists.

A: Divine Promise

In the Zionist Congress held in Switzerland in 1897, the historical right of the Jewish nation to Palestine and the fulfillment of God's promise for the return of the Jews to the promised land were emphasized. In 1882, in a celebration held in the former Soviet Union, Jews from all over the world were encouraged to unite for the fulfillment of the divine promise and return to their fatherland and strive to achieve the goal of fulfilling the divine promise in Jerusalem (Palestine). In proving that based on the divine promise the land of Palestine belongs to the Jewish people, they refer to several Torah verses addressed to Abraham and Jacob.

The Zionist Slogan of ‘Nile to the Euphrates’

The establishment of the great state of Israel from the Nile River to the Euphrates River is one of the most important goals and ideals of Zionists, and they believe that Jews from all over the world should be brought to Palestine in order to actualize this ideal and the Jews who immigrate to Israel will be guaranteed salvation.

To prove their claim, the Zionists resort to “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites. And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims. And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. (Genesis 15: 18 to 21) and consider this to be the divine promise of Nile to Euphrates, although, there are many flaws in this Zionists' claim and the adaptation of these verses to their ideal.

In his book “Jewish History, Jewish Religion (1994)” the anti-Zionism Israel Shahak has written: The most idealistic narrative about the borders of Israel includes all of the Sinai desert, a part of northern Egypt up to the vicinity of Cairo, all of Jordan and a large part of Saudi Arabia, all of Kuwait and a part of the south of the Euphrates in Iraq, all of Lebanon and all of Syria plus a major part of Türkiye upwards (up to Lake Van), and Cyprus.

In order to disprove the exclusive right of the Jews to the land of Palestine, certain points are briefly discussed hereunder:

1) Surely the Jews are not the only descendants of Prophet Abraham with regard to what has been quoted in the Bible.

2) It is clearly mentioned in the Torah that Prophet Ishmael (AS) is also a descendant of Abraham. Since the Arabs living in Palestine are descendants of Ishmael, therefore, referring to the mentioned verses as the exclusive right of the Jews on the land of Palestine is not valid.

3) Authentic historical documents prove that the above promises were announced at the time of Ismail's sacrifice, and this was at the time when Isaac (the ancestor of the Jews) was not yet born, and

therefore, the claim made by Zionists over Palestine cannot be true.

4) Another fundamental point is that, first of all, the Jews present and living in the land of Palestine differ from those supposedly followers of Prophet Moses who came to Palestine from other places at the instigation of the Europeans and cannot definitely be the descendants of Abraham. This means that the above-mentioned Jews are definitely not of Abraham's lineage.

Jewish Beliefs in the Service of Zionist Policies

The most fundamental pivots of Judaism, cited by the Zionist movement, are:

1- The claim of being "God's chosen nation"

This theory has created such a false image of the Jewish people as if they are distinct and different from the rest of the people (God's creation) and consider themselves to be the masters of the world and the rest of the people are just cattle who must serve the Jewish people.

What proves Zionist chauvinist tendency is the words of a famous Jewish thinker who, in his studies conducted about Israel's identity in the 21st century has said: We Jews have two names: one is Israel and the other is Jew (Yahud), which has been derived from "Judah" (Yahuda) the common relationship between these two names is the relationship with God. While other ethnic groups live without having any connection to God, we Jews - whose other name is Israel - live and struggle for the cause of God and, therefore, it is very difficult for a person to become Jewish; more so if he/she is from another nation.

Analyzing these words, we can arrive at the following conclusions:

- The racist nature of the Zionists is rooted in the belief of being "God's chosen nation".
- There is this false Zionist belief that the future of humanity depends on the Jewish people and on what the Jews do for others.
- The Zionists abuse certain names, terms, and religious concepts such as Israel and Judah for promoting their political objectives as if some kind of divine relationship lies in them.



tionship lies in them.

- The idea of the superiority of Jews over other nations, which is (wrongfully) derived from the theory of the Talmud and the Torah, makes the Jewish people have the right to take ownership of the entire material world.

In his book entitled "Zionism is the enemy of Israel" Nathan Winston says: If we completely remove the concepts of "God's chosen nation" or "promised land" from the dictionary of Judaism, Zionism will surely crumble down.

The characteristics of God's true chosen nation from the perspective of the Holy Quran and common sense are as follows:

- 1) This nation must accept and believe in the divine way and method, of course, in the same way that the divine prophets and messengers (AS) received from God and communicated to the people.
- 2) This nation should act in this perfect way and invite others to it in different ways.
- 3) This nation must constantly follow the divine way and method in the stage of faith and belief, as well as in the field of implementation and action.

Now, if we look at the history of Judaism from this



point of view, it will be noticed that the Jews were always in opposition to divine prophets. The famous historian "H.J. Wells" describes the Jews in this way: "The life of the Hebrews (Jews) was always like someone who insisted on staying in the middle of a crowded and busy road and is constantly struck and crushed by buses and trucks.

Someone may ask what is the meaning of this verse of the Qur'an which says:

﴿.....﴾
 ﴿.....﴾"

(Certainly We chose them knowingly above all the nations, and We gave them some signs in which there was a manifest test.)

Islamic exegetes say that the phrase "We chose them" means the Children of Israel were given the responsibility of spreading God's divine teachings among other communities while God was witness to their actions. Moreover, the term above all nations means that the believers among the Children of Israel were more faithful than their contemporary people and not all people at all times. God Almighty chose the Children of Israel for spreading the teachings of the Torah but they lacked competence and that is the

reason that God has said in the Holy Qur'an that ﴿.....﴾....."(those who were charged with the Torah, then failed to carry it).

2- The Claim about the Promised Land

The ideal of the Promised Land, which has been derived from the distorted texts of the Old Testament (Torah), is a Zionist ideology founded on a false and baseless hypothesis.

It has been narrated in Genesis (Old Testament, 15: 18 to 20) "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. The Zionists claim that this was addressed by God Almighty to Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and, therefore, the (promised) land of Palestine was given to the Jews of that time who are descendants of Ibrahim (AS). In response to this claim, it must be noted that even if, supposedly, such a covenant had taken place and God Almighty had given the so-called promised Land to Prophet Ibrahim and his descendants, Ibrahim's (AS) descendants were not exclusively the Children of Israel and rather the Arabs (Children of Prophet Ismail), too, including Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are Ibrahim's (AS) descendants.



Hajj, Its Rituals and Discourse

Dr. Mohammad Madi Imanipour

President of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization

The arrival of the blessed and spiritual days of Hajj has brought the pilgrims of God's house from all over the world to the land of revelation. Hajj comprises some religious rituals that some Pre-Islamic divine prophets, too, had performed. Even the polytheists of Mecca used to perform Hajj and circumambulation of the Ka'ba before the advent of Islam and had their own traditions, some of which were not approved by Islam. Some Muslim thinkers have tried to explain the philosophy of the Hajj pilgrimage by referring to Qur'anic verses and hadiths. Undoubtedly, "conceiving the truth of monotheism and negation of polytheism" is one of the most important reasons for making the Abrahamic Hajj obligatory. However, in addition to its religious aspect, Hajj was also of special political importance for the newly established Islamic government during the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The role of Mecca and Medina in spreading the important news of the situation of Muslims, at the beginning of the advent of Islam, had turned Hajj into a political event.

In describing this dimension of Hajj, we come across such key-

words as "the need to know about the affairs of Muslims", "recognition and retribution of the enemy", and "the need to clarify the facts of Islamic societies". To put it in a brief phrase, we can refer to it as the "Hajj of Clarification".

In this approach, Hajj has a capacity that is beyond mere religious rituals. As regards what is the reality of "Hajj of Clarification", what it means, and what are its manifestations, there are some points that we need to pay attention to:

In verses 27 and 28 of Surah Al-Hajj, God Almighty tells His Messenger: "And proclaim the Hajj to all the people...that they may witness the (worldly and other-worldly) benefits for them." The term "benefits", which has been mentioned in a plural form has a comprehensive meaning and includes all worldly and other-worldly benefits. According to these verses, Hajj is a congregation and a place where Muslims can examine and observe their material and spiritual benefits.

In one of his statements about the philosophy of Hajj, the late Imam Khomeini (RA) had said: "The political aspect of this gathering is that, first of all, (the pil-

grims to God's house) should get to know about each other's situations, come to an understanding, be brothers with each other, fraternize with each other, and discuss the problems of their countries and find solutions for them. If we had performed Hajj in the way that the spirit of Hajj requires, the Muslim world would not be facing the numerous problems it is facing now." (Sahifeh-ye Imam, Vol. 13, pp. 324-325)

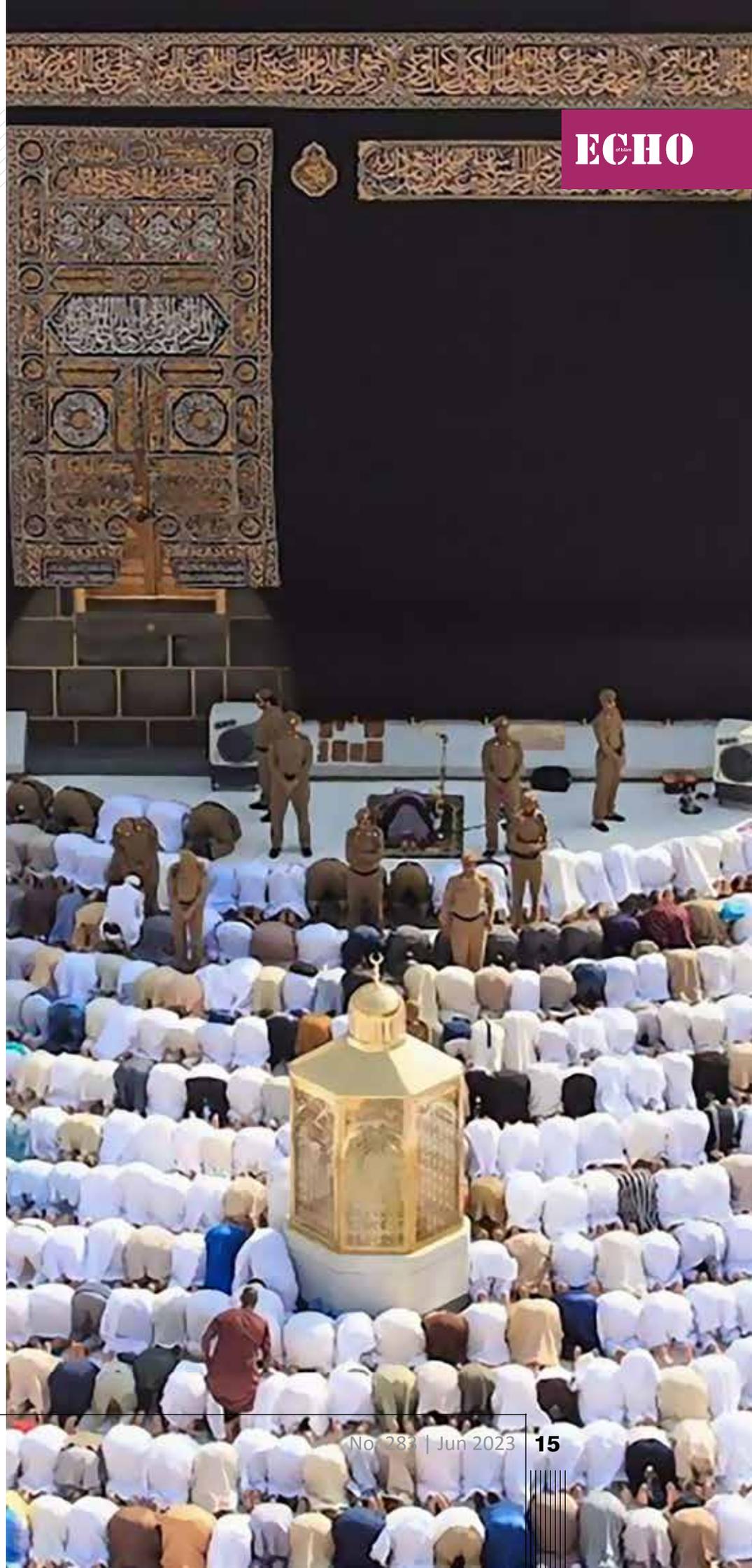
The second point is related to the duties of the Iranian pilgrims in clarifying the facts of the Islamic Republic system and displaying the characteristics of the Iranians of the Islamic Revolution Standard.

Iranians who attend the Hajj pilgrimage should be earnest representatives of the Iranian nation. From this point of view, Hajj is an opportunity to express the truths of Islamic Iran and the achievements of the Islamic Revolution. In this regard, Imam Khomeini (RA) had said: "You are the bearer of the message of a nation that, with its Revolution, saved a country that was sinking into atheism, corruption, and indecency - promoted by the Eastern and, more so, Western cultures - and re-

placed the existing evil tyrannical rule by the Islamic government. You are the representatives of the people whose Islamic revolution, with its short life and the excruciating troubles resulting from its confrontation with two superpowers of East and West, and the vandalism of terrorists affiliated with these two oppressing fronts have, only and only with the blessing of Islam, been able to shake the Islamic countries and the oppressed people of the world and attract them to Islam.”

The last point is related to the “Unity of the Word” and the opportunity that Hajj provides to demonstrate the brotherhood and unity of the Islamic Ummah; disrupting the evil plots of the enemies of Islam. In this regard, too, Imam Khomeini has said: “O Muslims of the world and followers of the school of monotheism! The secret behind all the problems of Islamic countries is the lack of unity and harmony, and the cause of victory would be the ‘unity of the word’ and promotion of harmony.”

It is expected that Iranian and non-Iranian pilgrims would, by taking into consideration the conditions of time and place, convey to the world the strength and solidarity of the “Islamic Ummah” from the land of revelation. And, by demonstrating the true “Islamic way of life”, present a worthy image of the Islamic society. Undoubtedly, such a message is like water that is poured on the fire of “Islamophobia” at regional and global levels, and will through light on the merciful essence of dear Islam.





Quds and Palestine from the Viewpoint of Imam Khomeini^(RA) and Grand Ayatollah Khamenei

How many a small party has overcome a larger party by Allah's will! And Allah is with the patient (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah: 249)

By: Mohammad Shafieinia, Faculty Member of the Office of Representative of the Supreme Leader in Hajj and Pilgrimage Affair

Introduction

The aim of the conference on honoring Quds and the resistant and proud people of Palestine, which is held annually during

the Hajj season at the Office of Representative of the Supreme Leader in Hajj and Pilgrimage Affair, and God's help is sought for the victory and salvation of Quds

from the vicious clutches of the child-killing Zionist regime, is to announce to the world that Palestine is alive and, God willing, will definitely return to its

true owners, and the age of arrogance and a unipolar world is coming to an end.

Revival of the Abrahamic Hajj and paying attention to the true philosophy of Hajj, which is called "قيامًا للناس" (sustentation for mankind) in the Holy Qur'an and the emphasis on the retribution of infidels, which is an inseparable part of the spirit and rites of Hajj, is an example of the capabilities of the Islamic world in conveying the cry of the oppressed people and exposing the crimes of the claimants of human rights, especially the crime-prone America and the occupying Israeli regime.

Undoubtedly, the World Hajj Congress is a complete manifestation and expression of the religious conduct and unity of Muslims in all fields. No rites and worship can mobilize the concentrated forces of the Islamic Ummah in the path of reviving Islamic values and fighting against the plagues and enemies like Hajj. On the other hand, it can definitely be said that the true heralds of Islamic unity and solidarity are those sincere believers who, in addition to performing acts of worship, have struggled and made sacrifices for the glory of Islam.

This year's Hajj has features that double its importance and sensitivity; The widespread presence of pilgrims in the House of God in Makkah and Madinah and the continuous victories of the resistance movement against the US and usurping Israel and the defeat of the oppressive pressures of arrogant

powers on the Islamic Republic of Iran and their continued failures in bringing the nations of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen to their knees, and, on the other hand, the renewal of political relations between Muslim governments and its positive effects in creating hope in the region and the unity and solidarity in the greater Islamic Ummah promise a better future and the development of more cooperation between Muslim nations.

This conference will focus on the issue of Quds and Palestine and the resistance movement from the perspective of the late Imam Khomeini (RA) and Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Quds and Palestine from the Viewpoint of Imam Khomeini (RA)

Imam Khomeini's first official stand on the Palestine issue was parallel to the beginning of

▶ **The victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran led to the intensification of the anti-Zionist struggles of the Muslims and changed the course of the struggle of the Palestinians.**

his political campaign against the Pahlavi regime when it refused to stand by Islamic and Arab countries with regard to the oil embargo on Israel. Imam Khomeini exposed the secret relations between Shah's regime and Israel and Israel's danger to the Islamic world when Shah's regime was in full power.

The victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran led to the intensification of the anti-Zionist struggles of the Muslims and changed the course of the struggle of the Palestinians. Exposing Shah's secret and open relations with Israel and opposing the Shah's regime's aid to the common enemy of Muslims was one of the motives of Imam Khomeini's uprising. In his own words:

"One of the reasons that has made us confront Shah is his help to Israel. I have always said in my notes and sayings that Shah has cooperated with Israel since the beginning of its existence, and when the war between Israel and Muslims reached its peak, Shah continued to usurp Muslim oil and give it to Israel." (Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol. 5. P. 187)

One of Imam's strongest political statements against the Shah and Israel was his famous speech at the Great Mosque of Qom after his release from prison. In this speech, he warned the Shah against forming military and economic relations with Israel and stressed its harmfulness, and shouted:

"O people of the world, know that our nation is against the agreement (with) Israel... Our religion requires us not to agree

with the enemy of Islam, our Qur'an requires us to make a pact with the enemy of Islam against Muslims."

In this way, the late Imam declared Israel's danger to Muslims in the form of a Shariah ruling and advised preachers to convey the danger of Israel and its agents to people everywhere. He also announced that silence on this matter helps the tyrannical system and the enemies of Islam.

After being exiled and the Six-Day War, the Imam issued a notice and, while reminding the Islamic countries to root out the germ of corruption in the heart of the Islamic world, declared it haram to have any kind of political and commercial relationship and cooperation with Israel. He considered it to be against Islam and also considered the consumption of Israeli goods as haram for Muslims.

During the 1970s and before the Islamic Revolution, the Imam kept this issue in mind in various declarations, by making Jihad and sacrifice obligatory on all Muslims, for the liberation of Palestine and support for the Palestinian militant groups. Especially with the Ramadan War of 1973, the leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran issued a message to the Islamic governments and nations, warning them against selling oil to Israel and asking them to put aside differences and stage an all-round Jihad against this regime.

Simultaneously, and in a passionate message addressed to the Iranian nation while pointing



to Shah's 2500-year celebrations when Muslim nations and the Palestinians were engaged in a war with Israel, Imam Khomeini strongly criticized Shah's support for Israel and providing it with Iranian oil. He obliged the great people of Iran to prevent and fight against the interests of America and Israel in Iran. And like in the past, he asked scholars and preachers to tell the people about Israel's crimes in mosques and religious circles.

In a letter addressed to the Islamic countries and nations on 7/11/1973 and on the occasion of the Ramadan War, Imam Khomeini wrote:

"Governments of Islamic coun-

tries who are rich in oil should use their oil and other resources as a measure against Israel and the colonialists, and refrain from selling oil to those governments that help Israel".(Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol. 3, P. 2)

On 9/10/1978, the Imam called Israel a cancerous tumor and considered it necessary for every Muslim to prepare against Israel. In November of the same year in an interview with the Associated Press, the Imam considered the Camp David agreement a conspiracy against the Palestinians and Arabs and a basis for legitimizing Israel's aggression. In another interview with the same news agency, he



condemned Anwar Sadat's stand with regard to Israel.

Imam Khomeini considered the rule of a small number of Zionists over more than one billion Muslims in the world as a disgrace and said:

“Why should the countries that have everything and have all kinds of resources be submissive to Israel? One billion Muslim population with all the resources they have at their disposal are sitting and watching Israel commit those crimes in Lebanon and Palestine”. (Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol. 10, P. 418)

Emphasizing the unity of Muslims against Israel, the late Imam said:

“If the Muslims were united and each of them would pour a bucket of water on Israel the flood would destroy this criminal regime. (Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol. 9, P. 274)

Declaring the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan as “World Quds Day” is an example of this conscious approach of Imam Khomeini.

“I ask all the Muslims of the world and the Islamic states to join together to shorten the hand of this usurper and his supporters, and I invite all the Muslims of the world to commemorate the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, which is one of the days of Qadr, and can be decisive about the fate of Palestine, as Quds Day and declare the international solidarity of Muslims in supporting the legal rights of Muslims.”

In another fatwa, the Imam said: It is absolutely appropriate and even obligatory that a sufficient amount of Islamic funds such as zakat and the Imam's share be allocated to these Mujahidin in the path of God. To the Mujahidin who are fighting and making sacrifices in order to destroy the anti-human infidel Zionism. (Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol. 1, P. 172)

Quds and Palestine from the Viewpoint of Grand Ayatollah Khamenei

Defending Palestine and other oppressed nations by America and usurper Israel within the framework of Imam Khomeini's policies, especially in the West Asian region under the direct

guidance of the Supreme Leader and the powerful presence of the Martyr Qasem Soleimani, the commander of the field succeeded to turn the axis of resistance with the presence of jihadist groups into important and influential actors in the region to such an extent that today, everyone acknowledges that it is not possible to ignore the Resistance Movement.

After the Islamic Revolution, resistance, as one of the elements of national and religious identity found a prominent role in the political discourse of the Islamic Republic. Within the framework of this discourse, an attempt was made to pursue resistance outside the borders of the country; both as a liberating element against the domination of arrogant powers and as a tool for deterring enemies and playing a role in establishing order in the region. The result of pursuing this approach in the past four decades has led to the formation of a group of government and non-government activists, referred to as the “Axis of Resistance”, which is now considered one of the poles of power in West Asia.

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, considers the Islamic Republic of Iran to be the axis and promoter of this resistance and believes that this is the reason for America's enmity with Iran. What follows are excerpts from his statements about the issue of Palestine:

- The Islamic Republic challenged the oppressive world



Abrahamic Hajj and the Material and Spiritual Heritage of the Islamic Civilization

By: Special Correspondent

Hajj is one of the major acts of divine worship, the commandment for the observation of which was conveyed to believers through Prophet Ibrahim (AS).

The Holy Qur'an says: "And (told Ibrahim to) proclaim the Hajj to all the people: they will come to you on foot and on lean camels, coming from distant places" (Su-

rah Al-Hajj, Verse 27). Hajj is one of God's eternal treasures, the center of Islamic teachings, and an exceptional duty comprising a set of Islamic values that cannot

be found in any other religious obligations. A civilizational approach to Hajj can project a new face and manifestation of it in the eyes of Muslims and increase its role and influence on the Islamic Ummah.

Various definitions have been given for “civilization”. Some people consider civilization to be the outcome of the set of achievements of a nation resulting in growth, development, and prosperity, and is crystallized in various fields of individual and social life and in global interactions. On the other hand, some other people have defined civilization as a set of material and spiritual achievements of humans in a certain region, country, or era, or an advanced and organized intellectual and cultural state that results in progress and the emergence of social and political institutions in society.

What can be perceived from these definitions is that civilization consists of two types of elements. In other words, when we talk of civilization we can either speak of its material achievements or discuss its spiritual achievement. This is also applicable to Islamic civilization. Among Islamic teachings, Hajj has had an undeniable role in this regard. Thus, the role of Hajj in Islamic civilization can be examined in two areas:

1. Hajj and the material heritage of Islamic civilization

The material heritage of Hajj for Islamic civilization can be seen in different areas and we are going to throw light on two of the most important ones.

A- Sacred and holy places relat-

ed to Hajj. A glance at the sacred places related to Hajj and the land of divine revelation can give a good perspective of Islamic civilization. Despite the extensive acts of destructions that have taken place in both Mecca and Medina, there are still certain buildings and places where one can see the color of Islamic civilization in the structure of these place and this is in spite of the fact that efforts have been made to use such Islamic arts as calligraphy, etc.

B- The fields of knowledge related to the land of Revelation and the growth and spread of some sciences in the Islamic world have a close connection with Masjid al-Haram and the Land of Revelation. The knowledge of architecture and arts such as calligraphy is related to the construction of Masjid al-Haram and other mosques and holy places in Mecca and Medina. The science of geography has greatly contributed to catering to the needs of Hajj pilgrims to know the geographical loca-

tion of the Land of Revelation and its natural atmosphere. We also know that the Ka’ba is the Qibla of Muslims. The need for identifying the direction of Qibla from different places has led Muslims to the development and expansion of the science of astronomy.

2. Hajj and the spiritual heritage of Islamic civilization

Hajj is a great act of worship and, therefore, its spiritual aspect and its spiritual effects on individuals and Islamic society are very extensive. The role and influence of Hajj in the spiritual heritage of Islamic civilization can be listed as follows:

A- Expansion of religious teachings at the level of Islamic societies

The promotion of religious teachings is considered very vital for societies. Hajj also has a special role in spreading the teachings of Islam in an Islamic society. During the time of Hajj, there is a good opportunity for Islamic teachings to be presented widely so that these teachings can further be spread through pilgrims in their Islamic communities.

While explaining the philosophy of Hajj Imam Reza (AS) pointed out that “during the Hajj pilgrimage, people get religiously trained and the pilgrims take the news and teachings of the Household of the Prophet (PBUH) to their people in different parts of the world.

B- Strengthening Muslim social connections

Hajj is one of the clear manifestations of interaction between people in Islam. Hajj makes it possible for Muslims to get to know

▶ Hajj also has a special role in spreading the teachings of Islam in an Islamic society. During the time of Hajj, there is a good opportunity for Islamic teachings to be presented widely so that these teachings can further be spread through pilgrims in their Islamic communities.



each other and to strengthen the bond of their friendship and brotherhood. Imam Ja'far Sadiq (AS) has been quoted saying that "God Almighty ordained the Hajj congregation so that Muslims from East and West of the world would get to know each other and be aware of each other's situation (See Sheikh Saduq, Vol. 2, P. 405).

C- Unity and solidarity of Muslims at the global level

Hajj calls on the people of the society to form social cohesion, more than any other act of worship. The foundation of social bonds in Hajj is faith and belief. It is in the light of faith that the Islamic Ummah can be freed from any form of conflict and division. This is because a society that relies on heartfelt compassion will go beyond personal and group desires and ideals. It is, thus, possible to claim that social cohesion, in its various aspects, can be observed during

the Hajj pilgrimage. All pilgrims have a single goal and ideal and the direction of their movement is also based on a single principle. All pilgrims, black and white, small, and big, learned and uneducated, rich and poor, etc., wear the same type of clothing, move around the same axis, face the same Qibla, and perform "Sa'y and Wuquf" in the same place; all of which created and strengthen the sense of unity and cohesion among Muslims.

D- Strengthening shared values

Hajj strengthens spiritual values for humans. In fact, Hajj is a character-building university where social values such as brotherhood, equality, security, order, simplicity, understanding, interaction, chastity, freedom, and dozens of other social values are practiced. Teachings that, on the one hand, give a person understanding and insight, and character and ensure eternal salvation and, on the oth-

er hand, prepares him for being an asset (and not a liability) to his society.

E- Increasing the awareness of Muslims

Hajj is the arena of public awareness about the sufferings and capabilities of Muslims and provides the basis for the collective participation of people in solving problems. Hajj is a source of public awareness about the conspiracies plotted and rumors made by the enemies of Islam and causes the disappearance of spatial, linguistic, and conceptual distances. Awareness about belonging to one religion and faith, together with shared beliefs and values, and history, will change the historical, social, and political situation of Islamic societies. And finally, by benefitting from the capacities of Hajj, Muslims can achieve the status they truly deserve in this world.



Insulting Islamic Sanctities in the Name of Freedom of Expression

Some European countries have been allowing extremist groups to spread hatred against Islamic values and sanctities in the name of freedom of expression. As a matter of fact, these countries are institutionalizing anti-Islamism and Islamophobia in their societies in spite of their beautiful human rights slogans; knowing very well that such acts have nothing to do with the freedom of expres-

sion and opinion. This also reflects upon the double standards adopted by these countries with regard to freedom of expression, otherwise, why would they subject those scholars who have proved the holocaust to be a myth to imprisonment?

On 21 February 2022, in Sweden, in the new wave of anti-Islamism, the Holy Quran was burned in front of the Turkish

embassy in Stockholm. This action was authorized by the Swedish government and police and they justified it under the guise of "freedom of expression". This is despite the fact that - even according to its very principle - freedom of expression does not mean insulting and offending other faiths and beliefs, and such actions are tantamount to denying freedom. On the other hand, insulting the Holy Quran in



front of the Turkish embassy, as an Islamic country, can be considered a political act.

This outrageous act, which was done by “Rasmus Paludan”, the anti-Islamic leader of the extremist far-right Danish political party, “Stram Kurs”, was obnoxiously justified by the spokesperson of the Swedish police - under the pretext of supporting freedom of expression - by stating that “the Swedish constitution strongly supports freedom of expression and it should be known that the value of freedom of expression is very important.

The Cases of Insulting Islam in the West

This is not the first time that Islam and its sanctities are subjected

to sacrilege in Western countries, especially Sweden. One of the first and most famous actions of such sacrileges was the publication of the book “Satanic Verses” in 1988. The book was written by Salman Rushdie, an English-Indian author, which provoked strong protests from Muslims around the world and he was declared an apostate by Imam Khomeini (RA).

The Dutch journalist and filmmaker, “Theo Van Gogh”, repeatedly insulted Islam and Muslims in his writings, and in 2004, he insulted the concepts of Islam and Muslims in his short drama film, “Submission”, which provoked a worldwide protest by Muslims.

In 2005, the Danish “Kurt Westergaard” published a sacrilegious sketch about the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) in the newspaper “Jyllands-Posten”. This offensive work of Westergaard was widely published in the media with the support of the Danish government, which resulted in strong protests by Muslims around the world. In this year, there were also reports of insults to the Holy Quran by American interrogators in Guantanamo Bay. This desecration was confirmed by the inspectors of the International Committee of the Red Cross and was responded to by massive demonstrations of Muslims the world over.

In 2006, a short film called “Fitna” (Sedition) was released by Geert Wilders, a member of the Dutch Parliament and the head of the right-wing “Party for Freedom”. Wilders, who is a supporter of the Zionist regime, insulted the Holy Quran in this film in which Muslims were asked to tear up the verses of

the Quran and throw them away.

On September 11, 2010, “Terry Jones”, an American anti-Islamic right-wing activist and the pastor of Dove World Outreach Center, a small nondenominational Christian church, planned to burn about 3,000 copies of the Quran but failed to do so due to a large wave of protests. In the same year, a number of other American anti-Islamists tried to burn the Quran. In 2011, Jones set fire to a copy of the Holy Quran in a Florida church and published images of it. This action can be considered as one of the first acts of this kind in the present era, which provoked a strong reaction from Muslims and even non-Muslims in the world. In 2012, Jones was also involved in the production of a film insulting the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH).

In 2015, the French magazine “Charlie Hebdo” insulted the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) by publishing a cartoon. This action created a worldwide protest by Muslims and some people attacked Charlie Hebdo’s office who were arrested and put on trial by the French government. In the same year, a group of French attacked a prayer hall in the Ajaccio neighborhood and after destroying the prayer hall, set fire to the Qurans there.

In 2019, a group of Norwegians threw two copies of the Quran into the trash bin. Lars Torsen, the leader of the Norwegian extremist and anti-Islam group, burned a copy of the Quran. In another demonstration in 2020, this extremist group trampled a number of pages of the Holy Quran.

Apart from the recent incident, Rasmus Paludan had burned the

Holy Quran several other times. He committed this sacrilegious act in 2019 in Denmark and in 2020 in Malmö, Sweden. In 2022, he also burned a copy of the Quran in front of a mosque in Sweden, and in the same year, he once again burned the Quran in Linköping, Sweden, under the protection of Swedish police.

In August 2022, some Germans desecrated the Holy Quran and insulted Islamic sanctities in front of the Islamic Center of Hamburg on the day of Tasu'a. And after insulting the Quran in Sweden, Edwin Wagensveld, the leader of the far-right Pegida extremist group, insulted the Quran on 21 February 2022, in the Netherlands.

While European countries justify insulting Islam under the pretext of "freedom of expression", in these countries no one is allowed to insult their political personalities even in the slightest. For instance, following the protests that took place in the streets of France due to the laws related to Covid-19, a French national who had compared "Macron" to "Hitler" on a placard - without uttering a bad word - was, as reported in the EURO NEWS, fined 10 thousand Euros.

The Causes of Anti-Islamic Moves in the West

In addition to political issues, anti-Islamic actions and insults to the Holy Quran are of ideological aspects. According to the "Pew Research Center" of Washington, which provides statistical reports on faiths of the world, the population of Muslims in Europe is increasing every year.

According to this American center, the Muslim population of Europe had increased from 29.6 million people in 1990 to 44.1 million people in 2010. In 2011, "Pew" had also predicted that the number of Muslims in Europe will reach 51.6 million people in 2020, and this number will reach 58.2 million people in 2023.

According to these statistics, while Muslims constituted about 4% of the population of Europe in 1990, this number will reach 8% in 2030, i.e. it will be doubled. This American center also points out that while the Muslim population in Europe has always been smaller than in other regions, such as America and Russia, the Muslim population tends to increase in a region of the world that has less Islamic tendencies.

According to the "Find Easy" website, the population of Muslims in Europe reached about 5.5 million people in 2022, which shows that Pew's prediction was close to reality.

According to a report by "Pew Research Center" in 2016, 8.1% of Sweden's population was Muslims, which is a significant number, considering the average of the European region, and ranks first among the European countries.

"Pew" has also predicted that the Muslim population of Swedish origin will reach 11.2% in 2050, and by taking into consideration Muslim immigrants, it will reach 30.6%, which would be first and second in the European region in both cases. The Pew Research Center has also considered the growth of the Muslim population of Sweden to more than double

between 2010 and 2030.

According to these statistics and predictions close to reality, the Muslim population in Europe is growing rapidly, and among European countries, Sweden and France are at the top. Based on this fact, it can be said that the increase in anti-Islamic measures with the support of European governments and insulting the Islamic sanctities are planned and enacted with the aim of countering the rapid spread of Islam.

Of course, experience has shown that these measures not only fail to decrease the inclination toward Islam but also make people more inclined to this religion than before. In a report entitled "Increasing the purchase of the Quran in France", the French magazine "Figaro" has announced that following the number of sacrilegious measures against Islam and its sanctities, the sale of the Quran translated into French has increased significantly on the Amazon website in the last decade. The Muslims of the world, thus, expect the Swedish government to prevent the repetition of such anti-Islamism acts and not let those hurting the feelings of Muslims go unpunished. All Muslims in the world will be more united and they will adhere to the Holy Quran by following the teachings of Islam. Almighty Allah has assured that Quran is the book, which will remain strong and everlasting and the efforts of the enemies of the word of Allah will fail. In the words of the Holy Quran: "They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light though the faithless should be averse." (61: 8)

An Analysis of the Events that Took Place in the Islamic Republic of Iran

(September 2022 to March 2023); with Special Reference to the Nature of Demands made

By: Dr. Mohammad Hadi Fallahzadeh

Following the death of a woman in the police office, certain events took place in the Islamic Republic of Iran to which some political and social activists reacted with certain slogans and sometimes with radical and disruptive behavior towards the values and beliefs of the Iranian people and the ruling system. On the other hand, some statesmen and their affiliated media, as well as certain groups and people who have somehow defined themselves within the framework of opposition to the Islamic Republic system - besides resorting to encouraging maximum violence - expressed certain views and the type of changes they are looking forward to in Iran that should be analyzed.

From an international point of view, the Iranian year 1401 (21 March 2022 - 20 March 2023) had certain characteristics including: the Islamic Republic of Iran becoming the most important subject of America's enmity; open struggle against the Islamic Republic of Iran on the part of America; cooperation of convergence of some Arab countries with Israel and America's stand against Iran; the use of all capacities by the Western bloc to put pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran in all dimensions; the comprehensive pressures of America on the world not to cooperate with Iran; ignoring certain fundamental rights, standards, and foundations that the West itself has been the herald of and that the United Nations emphasizes, including blocking humanitarian aids for flood-stricken people, imposing sanctions on Iran's Red Crescent Society, etc. To these should be added, organizing and providing political, financial, etc. support to the opposition groups, which proved the unconditional obedience of the opponents of the Islamic Republic abroad and the unquestioning implementation of the orders of the American organizations against the Iranian nation. Another feature of this year was America's military threat against Iran by repeatedly stating that all options are on the table, depicting the belligerent spirit of the West, especially the United States (Jimmy Carter, the former president of the United States, has stated that in the 242-year history of the United States, this country has only 16 years was in peace).

The United States' Goal with Regard to Iran

Keeping in view the above discussions, the goals that the United States pursues are as follows:

1. Increasing pressures on the Islamic Republic of Iran and paralyzing the development, executive trend as well as livelihood of the society in order to create dissatisfaction and incite people to begin protesting;
2. Restraining the Islamic Republic of Iran in its policies and approaches, especially its political, strategic, and scientific policies;
3. Reducing the influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region;
4. Expansion of popular dissatisfaction and reduction of social supports;



5. Create internal explosion (considering some of the pressures caused by sanctions) and causing social instability, etc.;
6. Promoting cohesion between the lower classes and the disaffected elites as a complementary model;
7. Forming multiple fronts against Iran and reducing its power and dynamic energy;
8. Creating extensive financial difficulties with the aim of stopping progressive projects, policies, and strategic measures.

Measures Adopted by the United States to Achieve These Goals

In order to achieve these goals, the United States has taken into account and followed a wide range of measures, which are mentioned below:

9. Combination of methods (economic pressure, psychological operations, social unrest, diplomatic and international pressure);

10. Maximal sanctions;

11. Efforts to close Iran's communication bases;

12. Threatening countries, governments, companies, economic actors, financial institutions, banks, transportation, technology, and industrial systems for not cooperating with Iran;

13. Mobilizing the entire media empire for creating a false atmosphere and increasing pressure;

Persian language satellite channels are active in line with these objectives.

The main targets of these networks include the moral system of the Iranian society, especially among the youth, the belief system of the Iranian people, the lifestyle of the Iranian people, and the historical and value-oriented solidarity of the Iranian society; and it must be emphasized that the whole identity of the Iranian society and the Islamic Revolution, is based on these four elements.



14. Using terrorist groups; religious, ethnic, and so-called nationalist;

15. Putting pressure on movements and governments aligned with Iran at regional and extra-regional levels;

16. Creating various problems to disrupt Iran's initiative and effectiveness.

Being aware of the fact that Iran's power relies on its people, beliefs, cohesion, national and religious identity, and intelligent leadership; managing minds, thoughts, and tendencies, and managing opposing actors have always been on the United States agenda, and it pursues these objectives through the following means.

1. Changing Media Targets

Hundreds of ethnic, sectarian, and anti-religious

Typology of these Networks

In order to achieve the aforementioned goals these networks operate in different ways and can be categorized on the basis of the way they function.

1) The networks that directly attack the above-mentioned four elements, especially in spreading ethnic issues;

2) The networks that seek to change these foundations and influence the subconscious of the audience;

3) The networks that pursue these goals in the form of a general package.

Virtual Space and Cultural Trends

More than 25 guided trends, including feminism, Salafism, Wahhabism, postmodernism, secularists,



and religious and non-religious intellectuals are active in the virtual space and more than three thousand new religious, non-religious, and eclectic, etc. movements have made the Iranian society the target of soft war with a variety of methods and with the aim of changing its value and behavioral patterns.

Despite several military threats, America has not attacked the Islamic Republic of Iran militarily due to Iran's power and ability, but it is trying to lead the Iranian society towards internal divisions by creating cultural and identity gaps. Because the Western agents established the basis of the velvet revolutions in Lebanon, Tunisia,

Iraq, and Afghanistan by deepening social divisions and attracting internal elements to foreigners, they are also trying to implement this experience in Iran.

Therefore, it can be said that in order to align the Iranian society with the Western colonial culture and finally opposing the Islamic Republic, they have put two programs in the focus of their strategy.

A. Changing the religious lifestyle through

- Transformation of Iran's Islamic norms (covering, appearance, behavior, etc.);
- Ritualization and promotion of Western occasions (Valentine, Halloween, etc.);

- Promoting deconstructive fashions and norms in social networks;
- Promoting the career of modeling and internet marriages;
- Popularizing unwarranted people and celebrities with the aim of setting role models for the young generation;
- Breaking the sanctity of marriage and promoting celibacy and cohabitation;
- Targeting cultural-religious symbols (family, hijab, chastity, religious rules, and regulations);
- Breaking taboos and spreading promiscuity in society (degradation, publication of personal images, etc.);

- Increasing and normalizing divorce by promoting such imported ceremonies as divorce celebrations;

- Aggravation of intergenerational gap and reducing the influence of parents and family institutions on their children;

- Promoting such values as pleasure and freedom;

- Publicizing the private sphere (creating a space for publishing family photos, and immoral and unusual communications);

- Doing away with the fence of privity and normalizing unlawful relationships between men and women to weaken the institution of the family.

B. Weakening Religious Institutions

- Reducing communication between religious institutions and guardians with the people, especially the youth, and creating a gap between the two;

- Islamophobia;

- Attacking the clergy, attacking and destroying religious centers and institutions;

- Trying to reduce the motivation of some guardians of religion to confront the attack against religion;

- Engaging a group of clerics in scientific and research topics and neglecting the duty of confrontation.

What has been said can easily be verified from the slogans, actions, statements, and the media affiliated with some Iranian diaspora groups affiliated with Western agents and centers, etc.

Islamic Republic of Iran's Points

of Strength

- Learned and powerful leadership that disrupts the policies of the West;

- The power of the Islamic Republic inside and at the regional level;

- The commitment of the majority of Iranians to Islamic-Iranian foundations and values (preserving identity);

- Iran's scientific power and strength (ranking 17th in the world);

- The predominance of religious culture among the general public;

- The spread of the culture of resistance in many sections of the Iranian society tolerating hardships;

- Stability, security, and peace in the country despite the large-scale actions of the West to provoke the people;

- The strength of the country to protect its independence against widespread threats and Western pressures;

- The power of adaptation in the face of crippling sanctions.

Expectations from the Islamic World

- Recognizing the opposing currents in Islamic countries;

- Recognizing the opponents of the Islamic Republic and their demands;

- Non-compliance with these opponents and condemning anti-Islamic moves and insulting the Islamic sanctities;

- Strengthening the approach of social and political cohesion and unity in stance and in action;

- Avoiding slander and statements and actions that reduce the social capital of Muslims and strengthen the anti-religious trends;

- Paying special attention to the young generation and trying to make them aware of the colonialists' conspiracy against the Islamic Ummah and Islamic countries;

- Defining new communication mechanisms to strengthen communication with different social groups in Iran;

- Avoiding falling into the soft traps of the enemies of the religion and the Islamic Republic;

- Paying attention to the plans of the enemies and avoiding the actions that will cause the enemies of Islam to be pleased.

Of course, it should not be overlooked that creating hope for the future (by keeping in view the Islamic teachings) and the ability of Islamic civilization to overcome Western civilization and the convergence of the Islamic world in confronting Western teachings is a very important point that the Islamic world should pay special attention to and focus on.

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Iran's Islamic Revolution, A Model of Religious Democracy and the Rival Models

Mansoor Mirahmadi

Explaining the relationship between Iran's Islamic Revolution and the model of religious democracy, on the one hand, calls for elucidating the foundations of the religious thought of Iran's Islamic Revolution and, on the other hand, requires clarifying the relationship between this approach and the formation of the model of religious democracy in Iran in the post-Islamic Revolution era. Elaborating on this issue can throw light on the differences between this model with the rival models at the two levels of the Islamic world and the international system.





1. Islamic Revolution and the approach to religious modernity

The Islamic Revolution of Iran (1979) was the outcome of a particular approach to religion, which in comparison to the two traditional and modern types of religion, can be interpreted as religious modernity. Based on this approach, a direct reference to the religious texts and the application of the logical mind makes it possible to form a reasonable understanding of religious teachings that will make the real world adapt to the fixed religious laws. In this approach, religious tradition is a reconstruction in the context of the new world and the two sides of personal and social life are regulated by up to dated religious laws. In this approach, the religious tradition is reconstructed in the context of the new world, and the two spheres of individual and social life are regulated on the basis of revisited religious laws. Moreover, in this approach, Islam defines what is obligatory to observe in one's personal and socio-political life and has entrusted it to Muslims to define executive structures by keeping in mind time and space. Thus, the approach of religious modernity, which is the dominant approach in the Islamic Revolution thought, is significantly different from the two traditional and modernistic approaches. This approach is different from the traditional approach because in the latter religious understanding is not obtained through dynamic ijtiḥād and, as a result, the reconstruction of the past structures is not based on the requirements of the time. It is also different from the modernist approach because religious understanding is obtained by using the extra-textual methodology and epistemological measures and goes

beyond dynamic ijtiḥād and results on ijtiḥād in principles.

2. Religious modernity and religious democracy

As the theoretical support for the Islamic Revolution of Iran, religious modernity brought about many fundamental changes in the lives of Iranians in the post-Islamic Revolution era, the most important of which in the political arena was the transition from monarchy to (religious) democracy. The Islamic revolution of Iran is considered an important milestone in the political life of Iran because it was able to expel the political and social relations from the monarchy rules for the first time and made people's vote the determinant of these relations. This governmental model is democratic because people's vote is the foundation of this political system and the basic decisions of the political system, and it is religious because it recognizes religious values and laws in the socio-political life of the country. In the religious democracy of the Islamic Iran people's participation in socio-political life is officially recognized as their right and people have the right to participate within the framework of religious principles, values, and laws.

3. Religious democracy and rival models

In general, rival models of religious democracy can be identified both in the Islamic world and the international system.

In the Islamic world, two prevalent models compete with religious democracy: the ideological/radical religious government model, and the secular government model. The ideological/radical religious government is a government that

recognizes the authority of religion in socio-political life but believes that religious teachings determine the content of political and social life and determine the mandatory structure that is valid for all times and all places. By adopting a textual and superficial approach, the proponents of this model try to introduce the caliphate model as the only legitimate model of government in all times and places. Although in practice, many Islamic countries have distanced themselves from the model of caliphate and instead, have adopted the model of Islamic monarchy, at the theoretical level this model has received the attention of many theorists, and emphasis has been placed on the revival and reconstruction of the model of caliphate. The practical example of this model in contemporary times can be seen in the two models of the Islamic Emirate (in Afghanistan) and the Islamic Caliphate (in ISIS).

The second rival model of religious democracy is the model of the secular government, which only recognizes the authority of religion in explaining socio-political values but does not refer to religious laws to regulate them. In other words, the authority of religion is accepted in explaining the values governing socio-political, but instead of religious laws, personal law, and human reason are recognized as the basis for regulating socio-political life.

By recognizing religion in defining values, this model departs from the model of the laic state but by bypassing the authority of religious laws and Islamic jurisprudence in adopting the required laws of the Islamic society, it distances itself from the religious state.

The secular government has no commitment to Sharia and fiqh (ju-

risprudence) with regard to socio-political life and considers them to be related to the personal life of Muslims. This pattern can be observed in some Islamic countries in the contemporary era.

Unlike the two mentioned models, by adopting a modern approach and based on dynamic ijihad, the religious democracy model of Iran recognizes the importance of Shari'a in both personal and social life. This model has adopted a popular structure in the form of the Islamic Republic and has, for more than four decades, tried to stabilize and expand the role of people in the two fields of system-making and legislation. In other words, in comparison with the two models of the ideological state and the secular state, the religious democracy model has been able to actualize a model of popular order in the decision-making system of the country within the framework of religious beliefs, values, and laws.

At the international level, too, the model of religious democracy competes more with liberalism, which is the dominant model in the international system. In the liberal democracy model, the liberalist ideology is officially recognized as the foundation of values and laws and, as a result, religion has no position in socio-political life. In this model, religion (mainly Christianity) is considered to be a personal affair and, therefore, secularism is accepted as the decisive factor in liberalism. In the contemporary era, especially since the 1970s, the model of liberal democracy has been introduced as the dominant model, and through the idea of globalization - and influenced by prevailing views - this model has spread worldwide. The wars created

by the United States of America and its Western allies in the West Asian region under the slogan of democratization are some examples of the efforts on the part of Western countries to prevalent the liberal democracy model in the world. The model of religious democracy in Iran was expressed by such a strategic quality and challenged the idea of liberal democracy by which democracy cannot be linked with religion.

The model of religious democracy introduced by Iran has categorically challenged the idea of liberal democracy that democracy and religion cannot come together. In other words, according to this model just as democracy can be realized on the basis of liberalistic beliefs and values, it is also possible to form a model of democracy based on the religious beliefs and values of Islam. This model has undermined the monopoly claim of liberal democracy and has spread this message at the world level, specifically in the Islamic world, that by referring to religious texts, it is possible to create a popular model of a political system that can compete with liberal democracy. In addition to this, it has also challenged the relevance of liberal democracy in the Islamic world the majority of the citizens of which comprise Muslims who are committed to Islamic culture and values.

In conclusion, it must be said that the model of religious democracy in Iran has been able to introduce a popular and simultaneously religious model of the political system as a moderate (not radical and secular) and democratic (not monarchical and non-democratic) religious government in the world of Islam and the international system.

Personal and Social Freedom in Iran

By: Dr. Ms. Zahra Sheikh

Different concepts have been introduced with regard to freedom. However, what is common in all of them is that freedom refers to the state of not being a slave, prisoner, etc. In other words, the person has the power to do or not to do something and use the opportunities available at the social level.

Man is a social being, i.e., his being becomes meaningful by being in the community and living together is his basic psychological requirement. In order to live together, one cannot act care-

lessly and rely only on one's own desires. All scholars agree that freedom without borders is an anomaly and chaos that endangers the foundation of social life. That is the reason that throughout history, humans have passed laws and rules to simultaneously protect freedom and ensure that one's action of one does not cause harm to others and damage society as a whole.

Today, there are countless types of freedom, perhaps the most important of which are "personal

freedom" and "social freedom". Personal freedom in its broadest sense implies the freedom of a person in making choices, owning and using property, freedom of religious beliefs and faith, and freedom of speech and opinion. The constitutions protect these freedoms against the government or any other person and protect citizens from encroachment on their freedom.

Individual freedom can also be considered as the privacy of a person, which gives him the power

of choice and action in his interactions and relationships with different people and human groups, as well as presence in cultural, political, economic, legal, and ethical fields.

In his book, *Azadi-e- Ma'navi* (Spiritual Discourses), Ayatollah Motahhari has while defining freedom, written: "One type of freedom is social freedom when a person is free from other people. Others are not an obstacle to his growth and development, do not lock him up, and do not turn him into a prisoner to stop his activities. Others do not exploit him, do not enslave him, that is, do not use all his intellectual and physical powers for their own interests."

Social freedom refers to the freedom of speech, pen and press, freedom in choosing the type of government and choosing the ruler, freedom of political parties and organizations, freedom of political criticism and opposition, freedom of faith and religion, freedom of choice of job, housing and spouse,

freedom of production, distribution, consumption, etc. It is quite evident that some of these issues are of a political aspect, some are of cultural aspect, some are of civil aspect, and some are related to economic activities.

The concept of freedom in religious thought is different from the concept of freedom in non-religious thoughts. According to the frameworks and rules of religion and the worldview that governs it the definition of freedom changes according to the intellectual and ideological foundations of a person.

Usually, in non-religious thought, freedom has material roots, and freedom is defined along this path while in the divine worldview, which believes in the divinity of religious laws, the frameworks of freedom are defined within the boundaries of religion.

According to Imam Khomeini, "Islam and all monotheistic schools of thought came to free people from the bondage of those who tried to control hearts and everything and have everything under their control. Islam came to free people from captivity... Just as Islam pays attention to the material aspects of this world and the governance aspects of this world, it also pays attention to the spiritual aspects of life, and attention to the spiritual aspects is more important than the attention to the material aspects of life."

In a comparative study of the concept of freedom in Imam Khomeini's thought and Western thought the author has pointed out five issues:



▶ **The concept of freedom in religious thought is different from the concept of freedom in non-religious thoughts. According to the frameworks and rules of religion and the worldview that governs it the definition of freedom changes according to the intellectual and ideological foundations of a person.**

1- In Imam Khomeini's view, freedom is based on Islam and monotheistic laws. While in Western thought, it is about absolute freedom.

2- In Imam Khomeini's thought, the source of freedom is divine laws, and in Western thought, it is materialism.

3- In Imam Khomeini's view, the boundaries of freedom are both personal and social, determined



by divine laws, which govern personal and social issues, while in Western thought, the boundaries are determined on the basis of man-made laws and If there is any limitation, it is based on the principle of conflict of freedoms.

4- In Imam Khomeini's thought, the existing obstacles to freedom are both internal and external, but in Western thought, the obstacles are only external and no attention

has been paid to the inner aspect of man, i.e., human growth and perfection and the spiritual aspect of man.

5- In both views, freedom can be both positive and negative.

It should be noted that acceptance of absolute freedom causes anarchy and disorder, and denial of freedom leads to tyranny. In the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran, an attempt has been made to

consider security and public interest in a non-absolute framework, while maintaining the principle of freedom, public order, and Moral-Islamic frameworks.

Considering that Iran's Islamic state is a system that has made both Islamism and republicanism the foundation of its establishment and views freedom from the religious point of view, it is obvious that all these principles have been

taken into consideration in the constitution of the country, which are referred to as “fundamental rights and freedoms” or “rights and duties of the government and individuals”.

Articles 19 to 42 of Chapter 3 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, are dedicated to the individual, social, judicial, and security rights and freedoms of the people. It is to be noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the leading countries in preserving the freedoms of its people, and equality between both genders, all races, ethnic groups, and religious sects. Based on Islam’s emphasis on the equality of all human beings and that piety is the only cause of superiority (before God Almighty) and not skin color, wealth, and status, creating equal opportunities in benefiting from educational, developmental, and welfare facilities has always been on the agenda of the agents of this country. Iran has also been one of the leading countries in the field of protecting women’s freedoms and giving them equal rights and opportunities and making their presence in different jobs including being teachers, university professors, firefighters, pilots, ministers and deputy ministers, and members of the parliament and Islamic Councils possible.

One of the strengths of the Islamic Republic of Iran is creating equal opportunities in the whole country, for all people, in the field of using communication tools. Considering that today the Internet is the most important means of communication in the world, efforts have been made

to provide the possibility of using it on all roads and in all cities and villages, and everybody can use all conventional and authorized means of communication such as telephone, telegraph, telex, e-mail, fax, internet, etc., within the framework of legal limits.

Keeping in view the strict laws of Islam with regard to preserving human dignity, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers it its duty to protect the life, wealth, and honor of its citizens and make every possible effort in protecting their personal and private affairs in order to create a healthy environment in the society for. Even according to Article 39 of the Constitution: Insulting the honor and dignity of a person who has been arrested, detained, imprisoned, or exiled by law is prohibited in any way and is punishable.

As regards social rights and freedoms, the basic condition for freedom is that it does not harm the freedom of others and does not violate Sharia and legal standards.

▶ **One of the proudest points of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been the creation of equal grounds for men and women of all classes, groups, and ethnicities of the country to have access to free education and physical training until the end of secondary school.**

In this context, the government has tried to prevent large class differences in society by creating employment opportunities and monitoring that equal material opportunities. Helping the weaker sections of society is also one of the priorities of the Islamic Republic so that those who are destitute, especially among villagers and laborers, can have a peaceful life in accordance with their human status and dignity.

One of the proudest points of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been the creation of equal grounds for men and women of all classes, groups, and ethnicities of the country to have access to free education and physical training until the end of secondary school.

Among its results, it is possible to point out that Iran has world-class universities, professional professors, and top-class scientists at the world level. All of which have contributed to making the country independent in many scientific and practical fields. The presence of male and female scientists and experts, despite the sanctions and foreign threats, has brought acceptable self-sufficiency to Islamic Iran and promises a bright future.

The social security system of the country has the duty of supporting people who, for whatever reason, are unable to provide for their family’s livelihood and it is the responsibility of the government to cater to the needs of people in cases such as retirement, unemployment, old age, disability, road accidents. need for health care services in the form of insurance, etc., from public revenues.



The Status of Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran

By: Mojtaba Heidari

Women form an important part of society and have a role in the progress or backwardness of human societies. The colonialists and those who owe their lives to the exploitation of others have always tried to exploit women. Sometimes this issue takes place by taking advantage of their sexual attractiveness and at times by using them as the cheap labor force. Interestingly, the same abusive powers falsely claim to be proponents of women's rights in order to exploit women as much as possible. By resorting to the slogan of women's freedom they, in fact, pursue women's nudity and turning them into sexual commodities. Similarly, they use the slogan of defending women's presence in social activities and their equality with men, they seek laborers with minimum wages. Today, a large number of Western women who are trapped by the seemingly beautiful slogans of these so-called proponents of human rights, feel that they are in the worst conditions of slavery, discrimination, and injustice. They, nevertheless, feel that they have no way to escape modern slavery and in order to survive and have access to minimum livelihood, they have no choice but to submit to the illegitimate demands of the neocolonialists of the Western world.

The Elevation of the Status of Women in Iran after the Victory of the Islamic Revolution

Prior to the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the same Western trajectory was followed about the women of Iran. But after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, in which Iranian women participated courageously, women found a different identity and restored their dignity. Inspired by the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the school of Ahl al-Bayt (AS), the Islamic Revolution, defined an irreplaceable role for women in the management of society. This achievement took place so that unlike what is happening in the Western world women could - while maintaining their dignity - have an active presence in social affairs. In this way, Iranian women achieved significant positions in the pure atmosphere of Islamic society; something that had not been provided to them in history. Just like boys, Iranian girls pursued schooling and adorned themselves with the ornament of literacy, and the result was that according to the World Bank report, the illiteracy rate of Iranian women decreased from 50 to 60 percent to less than 10 percent in 2009. Also, according to the report of the World Economic Forum, the Islamic Republic of Iran has won first place in the world in educational justice between girls and boys.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, arrangements were also made for greater participation of girls in higher education as a result of which the percentage of girl university students in

higher education has increased from less than 25 percent in the pre-Islamic Revolution to more than 50 percent.

The Islamic Revolution created such conditions for women to achieve any position they deserve - based on their qualifications and capabilities - without facing any obstacles or discrimination and within the limits of Islamic laws.

The presence of women in social activities increased day by day and they established a large number of institutions with cultural-educational, entrepreneurial, charitable, and even research approaches. According to reliable statistics provided by the Department of Women and Family Affairs more than 2,700 organizations related to women's affairs had been operating in different provinces of the country in 2017.

Sports

Following the victory of the

▶ **What the enemy is proposing and encouraging the young girls of society to go without the hijab is exactly in opposition to the social rights of women and the constructive role of this large section of society.**



Islamic Revolution, sports in the country, especially women's sports, underwent many changes. The increase in infrastructure and sports facilities, even in the most remote areas of the country, created positive conditions for participation in sports activities. According to the available statistics, the number of sports halls in the villages, which stood at 5 in 1379 has increased considerably, and presently more than 400 villages have sports halls. This figure does not include the sports turf fields that have been built in many villages.

The number of women's sports disciplines increased from 7 in 1379 to 38 in 2004. The number of female sports coaches has also increased from 9 to 35,000, and the number of female referees has increased from 7 to 16,000, which shows a 2,000-fold increase. Also, the number of dedicated women's stadiums has increased 30 times. In this regard, it must be noted that the structure and organization of women's sports has also improved to a very high extent. After several changes in the structure of women's sports, the Department of Women's Sports was eventually established finally in the year 2017.

The construction of special sports venues and facilities for women, for sports such as swimming, indoor games, etc., is among the measures that are unprecedented in many countries. Numerous medals won by Iranian women in international competitions is one of the great honors achieved after the victory

of the Islamic Revolution.

Women's Health

Great leaps were made in the field of women's health after the victory of the Revolution of which mention may be made of the increase in the life expectancy of women from 57.6 years to 77.8 years. Female specialist doctors increased from 15 percent to 40 percent. Female specialist doctors increased from 9% to 30%. The ratio of female specialist doctors in the field of obstetrics and gynecology has grown from 16% to 98%. In this context, the rate of maternal mortality at childbirth has decreased by 90%.

Women and Political and International Activities

The most important indicator of political participation is the right to vote and hold political positions. After the victory of the Islamic revolution, women have considerably grown in both areas.

After the victory of the Islamic revolution, women have assumed many executive responsibilities. The presence of women in the Islamic Parliament of Iran and city and village councils shows their special position in the system of the Islamic Republic. This is despite the fact that women hardly had any position in the administration of the country during the Pahlavi era.

Legal Rights of Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Special attention has been paid to women and family affairs in Iran's 2025 Vision Statement.

The rights envisioned for women in this document have been adopted in accordance with the capabilities of women and Islamic standards. In the field of legislation, women have the same rights as men. An example of this right is in the Islamic Parliament of Iran and city and rural councils, where women have the same rights as men.

Culture and Art

In the Pahlavi era women's art was mostly defined within the context of sensuality and immorality. Shiraz Art Festival is a clear example of boundless moral corruption in the field of art and culture for women. The Shiraz Festival of Arts was a clear example of boundless immorality with regard to the role of women in art and culture. With the advent of the Islamic Revolution, women's artistic activities underwent a major change, and women have found an active presence in all artistic fields by observing Islamic

dress and standards. The films and serials made and the roles played by women in them are indicative of this increasing presence and status.

A large number of girls study in specialized fields of art in universities and have created thousands of works of art. In a report titled "Iranian Women Novelists, Stars of Iran", The New York Times, reported the stunning progress of women writers in Iran after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and wrote:

"The number of women writers in Iran has increased by 13 times during the last decade and is almost equal to the number of men today... The 1979 Islamic Revolution was a turning point for Iranian women in all fields."

All these achievements and the active presence of women in different fields have been with Islamic cover. This precious experience shows that not only hijab is not a deterrent for women, but also provides the basis for their active and constructive presence as much as possible. The presence of a woman in different activities, side by side observing hijab is proof that engagement in social activities does not require discarding dignity.

What the enemy is proposing and encouraging the young girls of society to go without the hijab is exactly in opposition to the social rights of women and the constructive role of this large section of society. Not only hijab is far away from being a burden but is also a means for protecting chastity and at the same time being active and productive.

▶ **After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, arrangements were also made for greater participation of girls in higher education as a result of which the percentage of girl university students in higher education has increased from less than 25 percent in the pre-Islamic Revolution to more than 50 percent.**

Services of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Sunnis; Unity in Practice

The unity and proximity among Islamic schools of thought have always been one of the slogans of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of strong belief that religion, school of thought, and ethnicity should not cause differences. Rather, according to Islamic teachings, the value of a person is based on piety.

The aim of Islamic Unity Week (proposed by the late Imam Khomeini) is to explore the commonalities of Muslims, which are much greater than their differences. One example is the blessed being of the Messenger of Mercy, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in whom all Muslims believe. Unity Week carries this important message that if there is a difference between Muslims, it is to the extent of difference over the birthdate of the Holy Prophet, and such a thing cause a difference.

Speaking of unity is beautiful and pleasant when it is manifested in action. Practical unity is realized when there is no discrimination between

Sunni and Shia; between Persians, Arabs, Turks, Baloch, Kurds and Turkmens, etc.

The services of the Islamic Republic to the border areas with the majority of Sunnis are a sign of the attention of the officials to practical unity. These services encompass cultural schools of thought and economic development. For instance, countless mosques have been built in Sunni areas. Although like in the case of Shia mosques, the construction of these mosques has been done by the people, in many cases, the land of the mosques has been provided by the authorities. As a result of the cooperation of the system with the Sunni Muslims of Iran today there are more than 17 thousand Sunni mosques in Iran. According to statistics, the per capita share of Sunnis with regard to mosques is more than that of the Shiites.

Regarding the services of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Sunnis in the area of mosques, Maulavi Abdul Samad Karim Zaei, Friday Prayer

Imam of Iranheshar and principal of Khadijah Al-Kabri School says: Before the Revolution, there were 5 mosques in Iranshahr, and now, thanks to the Revolution and the Islamic government, there are 135 mosques in this city.

The religious freedom that the Islamic Republic of Iran has given to the Sunnis is not limited to building a mosque and rather, Sunni religious schools have also received a large share. Currently, several thousand students are studying in Sunni seminaries. This fact is better perceived when the number of students and seminaries is compared with before the revolution. For example, before the revolution, there were only 3 religious seminaries in Sistan and Baluchistan province and this number has increased to more than 220 in which more than 22,000 students are studying. Darul Uloom Zahedan is one of the religious schools of Sistan and Baluchistan province. This school had 60 students before the revolution and presently more

than two thousand students are studying there.

Mamusta (teacher) Mohammad Amin Rasti, a member of the Planning Council of Ahl al-Sunnah religious schools and the interim Friday Prayer imam of Sanandaj, says: The Islamic Republic of Iran has established Sunni seminaries to address the concerns of Sunni students' livelihood, and the seminary service center supports the Sunni students with such services as life insurance, supplementary insurance, marriage loans, etc. Furthermore, equipping schools with computers and libraries, and paying stipends to teachers and students is also on the agenda.

The amount of stipend determined for Sunni students is not less, if not more, than that of Shia seminary students, and with the facilities provided, Sunni students can continue their education up to the Ph.D. level.

In the field of culture, too, Sunni areas have grown significantly. Today, the level of education among Sunnis of Iran has increased greatly. A large number of young people are engaged in higher education at the best universities of the country. Presently, there are more than 26,000 school classrooms and about 700,000 students in Sistan and Baluchistan province. In this province, about seven million books to the value of 220 billion Rials are distributed free of charge among Sunni students every year. This is despite the fact that before the revolution, the level of education in this province was very low.

In terms of infrastructure, too, Sistan and Baluchistan province has made good progress compared to before the revolution. Among these developments, mention can be made of the construction of as-

phalt roads and railways. Sistan and Baluchistan province has also been blessed with natural gas supplies by the current government.

In terms of insurance and health care, too, Sistan and Baluchistan province has experienced considerable growth in the post-revolution era. Presently, 2,300,000 people in Sistan and Baluchistan are covered by health insurance, of which 1,600,000 are rural and nomadic who are insured by the government free of charge. In addition to villagers and nomads, 300,000 deprived people living in the cities of Sistan and Baluchistan have also been issued free health insurance booklets so that they can benefit from medical services like other insured people.

Nabi Bakhsh Davoudi, the governor of Iranshahr and the deputy governorate of Sistan and Baluchistan, says about the services of the Islamic Revolution to the people of Sistan and Baluchistan province: The fatherly view of the Supreme Leader and the optimistic view of the government towards this province - which is evidenced

by the President's four visits to the province in recent years - confirm this issue. Currently, many big and small projects are being handled in the province, which has created a very bright horizon for the development and future of this region. These include projects like the expansion of railways, natural gas for domestic use, petrochemicals of Chabahar, further development of ports, airport, transit system, development of universities, and irrigation projects.

All these services are in alignment with the objective of the Islamic Republic of Iran for promoting unity in practice. The importance of the development of deprived Sunni areas has been one of the main concerns of officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Supreme Leader has in this regard said:

After the victory of the revolution, I was commissioned by the late Imam (RA) to travel to Sistan and Baluchistan province to see the situation.

I paid a visit to the various regions of this province and sensed my duty toward this province. I sat with the people of these regions and I even went into their huts and got to know the pains and sufferings that they had gone through during the previous regime. Thereafter, work began and Construction Jihad and volunteer groups started working in these areas. Today's youth of Zahedan, Iranshahr, Chabahar, and Zabol do not know what was the condition of this province like in the pre-revolution era. If the terrible life condition of this province in the past can get depicted, it becomes clear what great and precious services the Islamic system has done in this region.

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Scientific and Cultural Achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran

By: Hafez Najafi, Faculty Member of the Department of Ethics of the Academy of Hajj and Pilgrimage

1- Scientific Achievements

A- Educational Achievements

i- Increase in the number of educated people from 25 percent in 1979 to over 88 percent in the year 2016.

ii- Growth of schools from 47 thousand to 220 and institutions of higher education from 15 to more than 2600 in 2014.

iii- 25-fold increase in the number of students in higher education from 76 thousand in 1979 to 4.3 million in 2015 education year, i.e., from 248 per every 100 thousand people to 5486.

iv- A major transformation in the area of women's education and higher education:

a. Increase in the number of educated women from 35 percent in 1979 to about 90 percent.

b. Increase in the number of girl students from 2 million in 1976 to over 6 million in 2016.

c. Increase in the number of women with higher education from 6 percent in 1976 to 45 percent.

d. Increase in the number of women university teachers from 1.2 percent to over 20 percent.

e. Establishment of dozens of universities, colleges, and research institutes for women.

f. Before the Islamic Revolution, only 125,000 women worked in the field of education, but recent statistics show that this number has gone up to 532,000.

g. Female general practitioners have grown 16 times from 3,500 in 1355 to 60,000 in 2016. And the number of women MDs has shown a 50-fold increase from 597 to 30000.

h. The number of female writers has increased from less than 50 people in 1979 to 8 thousand in the post-Revolution era and the num-

ber of female story writers has increased from less than a handful to 4 thousand people.

i. Eighty percent of the participants of 11,000 Qur'anic institutions are women, which counts for more than 6 million people

B- Science and Technology

1- As reported by Scimago Journal, Iran's ranks in the field of scientific activities and production has increased from 53rd in 1996 to 16th in 2015. In terms of research, Iranian researchers have registered 8,513 scientific articles, and rank 16th among the scientists and researchers of the world. Currently, Iran's rank in science production is 13.

2- In the field of biotechnology Iran's rank has gone up from 56th to 14th in the world (increase in the number of articles from 11 to 618).

3- In medicine Iran, presently, ranks 19th in the world. (increase in the number of articles from 64 to 3 thousand)

4- In the field of chemistry Iran's rank has gone up from 48th to 19th in the world. (increase in the number of articles from 79 to over 3 thousand)

5- Iran's world ranking in physics has gone up from 64th to 19th in the world. (increase

in the number of articles from 21 to over one thousand)

6- According to a report by ICESSCO the Islamic Republic of Iran ranks first among the 57 Islamic countries in terms of science, research, and patents (more than 26196 patents in 2012).

7- Successful entry in the field of nanotechnology, which was the monopoly of a few advanced countries, and ranked seventh in the world.

8- Success in other new sciences including laser, microelectronics, the science of making robots and achieving global success in robotics competitions, hardware development and supercomputer construction, and software development, winning 362 medals in various science Olympiads. Changing and turning the country into a regional hub of health tourism and accepting and treating foreign patients for all kinds of diseases, progress in the field of stem cells, and ranking among the top countries for kidney transplants and treating eye diseases.

9- Iran's rank in the field of atomic energy has gone up from 83rd to 11th (an increase in the number of articles from 1 to 418). Progress in the field of nuclear fuel cycle and being among the top five countries in the world. Iran was able to build a 20%

enriched nuclear control rod in 2011 and elevate it to 60% enrichment in 2023. Iran being among the 13 countries that have a nuclear fuel cycle uses this energy and has many advantages in such fields as agriculture, medicine, engineering, etc.

10- Space technology; Iran's world ranking in the field of aerospace engineering has gone up from 43rd to 11th in the world (an increase in the number of articles from 4 to 341). The Islamic Republic of Iran succeeded in launching the "Sina 1" satellite in 2004, and launch the "Research" probe (sending a living being into space) in 2012.

C- Medical Sciences and Healthcare Services

1- Due to the expansion of health centers and homes, presently more than 85% of the population of deprived

areas of Iran have access to primary medical care.

2- According to the statistics provided Iran Medical Council (IRIMC), there are 78,000 general practitioners, 36,000 specialists, 25,000 general dentists, 2,000 specialist dentists, 19,000 doctors in pharmacy, and 200 PhDs in laboratory sciences.

3- Pharmacology: Although the country's pharmaceutical industry has a history of 80 years, this industry developed extensively after the Islamic Revolution to the point where 34 all-Iranian biotechnology drugs are now produced in the country. Since 26 years ago, Iran has achieved many advances in the field of using stem cells in the treatment of diseases and vaccine and serum production.

4- Treatment of foreign patients: Even though Iran is facing sanctions in the field of medicine, with the advances in medical science, many foreign patients come to Iran for the treatment of complex diseases.

5- Decrease in mortality and increase in life expectancy: Unlike the pre-Revolution era when due to poor health and medical services the rate of mortality was quite high, with Iran's progress in various health and medical fields, not only these statistics have decreased, but life expectancy has also decreased. Presently,

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Iran ranks 11th in terms of reduced child mortality.

2- Cultural Achievements

Being founded and established by a Shiite mujtahid, a mystic and scholar on the basis of the enlightening teachings of Islam, the Islamic Re-

public of Iran has had great cultural achievements some of which are enumerated hereunder.

1- Changing the country's political system, from an autocratic monarchy dependent on foreigners to a republic system that has two distinct characteristics: 1) being ex-

tensively popular, i.e., giving importance to people's votes; and 2) being Islamic, i.e., being based on the culture and teachings of Islam. ✓

2- Expansion of Qur'anic culture: With the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Quran came out of isolation and people started learning, memorizing, reciting

the Qur'an, and applying its teaching in their lives. Establishing radio and TV Qur'anic channels and creating at least 400 Quranic websites, founding hundreds of Qur'anic institutes and Dar al-Qur'an in provincial centers, and creating the most popular TV series based on Qur'anic stories. International Qur'an competitions, translation of the Qur'an into 130 living languages of the world, the annual international exhibition on the Holy Qur'an, printing and publishing of more than 37,000 books about Qur'an and its teachings, the establishment of the Qur'an University and Qur'anic faculties, research centers and institutions, and publishing Qur'anic magazines, books, encyclopedias, etc. are some of the achievements in this area.

3- In addition to the cultural centers of the Islamic Republic of Iran in different countries, Al-Mustafa International University has more than 170 educational units inside the country. and in more than 60 countries. By 2014, this university had more than 50,000 male and female students from 122 nationalities 25,000 of whom have graduated. Al-Mustafa community is a member of these organizations and unions: 1- International Union of University Presidents, 2- International Union of Universities, 3- Union of Islamic World Universities, and 4- Islamic World Students' Union.

4- Changes in the content of books and textbooks: Unlike during the Pahlavi era in which the contents of the books were mainly anti-religion and propagated the capitalist system, and false schools of thought, in the Islamic Republic the contents of the books are based on teachings appropriate Iranian-Islamic culture. Statistically, the average number of books written annually stood at two thousand, and thus number has increased to about 53,000 books published annually in Islamic Iran. In this context, mention should also be made about the Tehran International Book Fair, which was founded after the Islamic Revolution.

5- Print Media; The number of print media which stood at 86 during the Pahlavi era has increased to more than 400 in the Islamic Republic.

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6- Art and artistic activities: during Pahlavi's time, art was used as a tool to spread immorality and unethical values through broadcasting obscene programs and films. But a religious model has been drawn for art in the Islamic Republic the purpose of which is to cultivate and educate people, to develop moral virtues. In fact, in the area of culture and art, vulgarity has been replaced by real art and revolutionary and Islamic themes. In this regard, the Fajr International Film Festival, Film Festival of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Rushd Educational Film Festival, Fajr National Theater Festival, Provincial Theater Festival, Fajr National Hymn Festival, International Qur'an Recitation, and Memorization Competitions, Book Reading Competitions, Essay Writing Competitions and traditional arts exhibition, Quran exhibition, cultural heritage exhibition, international exhibition are held every year.

8- Radio and Television: Before the Revolution, there were only two TV channels and very few radio channels, each of which had only a few hours of programs per day. Presently, there are more than 130 provincial, national, regional, and global radio and television channels, which include more than 35 radio and television channels that broadcast their programs internationally.

Religious and Sectarian Policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran is a vast land in which several ethnic groups with different languages, dialects, religions, and religious schools of thought live. Influenced by the historical antiquity of this land and over the centuries, these different groups of people have learned to coexist peacefully with each other and have respect for different beliefs and faiths.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has defined and determined its religious policies in alignment with these realities. Therefore, it can be observed that despite Islam having been considered the official religion of the country and Shiism as the official religious school of thought, a legal space has been considered for the existence of other religions and religious schools of thought. According to the law, simply having a particular religious faith does not deprive people of enjoying civil, political, and social rights, and, therefore, all

Iranians, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, and religion are protected by the law of the country.

Usually, in every society, a particular religion or school of thought is dominant, but there are always people with other beliefs who are called "minorities". In the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, those who have a religion other than Islam and a religious school of thought other than Shiism are called "religious minorities".

Paying attention to the rights of minorities is so important that Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states: "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use

their own language. This Covenant has been approved by the National Parliament of Iran and according to Article 9 of Iran's Civil Code, this covenant is like a domestic law, and compliance with its contents is mandatory.

The Islamic Parliament of Iran has paid attention to the rights of minorities and has addressed this issue in Articles 11 to 14 of the Constitution. In the Constitution of Iran, Shafi'i, Hanbali, Hanafi, Maliki, and Zaidi minorities are recognized Islamic Schools of thought while Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are considered religious minorities, and rights are considered for them include:

1. Freedom in performing religious ceremonies and rituals.
2. The right to religious education based on one's religion: it means that religious minorities are not required to undergo religious educa-

tion based on the official religion of the country and can receive education based on their own religion.

3. These schools enjoy official status in matters pertaining to religious education, affairs of personal status (marriage, divorce, inheritance, and wills), and related litigation in courts of law.

4- As per Article 67 of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the members of the parliament belonging to the religious minorities will swear by their own sacred books while taking this oath.

5. The right to manage local affairs: in every region where the followers of any religious school of thought are the majority, local regulations will be based on the teaching of that school within the limits of the authority of the councils and while preserving the rights of the followers of other schools of thought.

6. The Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians have their own representatives in the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

7. All religious associations and places of worship are exempted from paying taxes in any form.

8. The possibility of using religious holidays in addition to the official holidays of the country.

9. According to Article 26 of the Constitution, all recognized religious minorities have the right to form parties, associations, and communities according to the established criteria provided they do not violate the principles of independence, freedom, national unity, the criteria of Islam, or the basis of the Islamic republic.

10. All religious minorities, Armenian Christians, Jews, Assyrian Christians, and Zoroastrians, are allocated government budgets through their representatives in the Islamic

Parliament of Iran.

The religious and sectarian policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran should be viewed in two parts, domestic and international. In the domestic sector, more emphasis is placed on creating peaceful coexistence free of discrimination so that all people can benefit from all the educational, scientific, economic, etc. opportunities available in Iranian society. Efforts are being made to provide a suitable platform for meeting the spiritual needs of all citizens, strengthening religious institutions belonging to all religions and religious schools of thought within the framework of the law, and ensuring peaceful coexistence and the expansion of tolerance among followers of different religions and schools of thought. There is an opportunity for congregational acts of worship for the religions recognized by the constitution, in their own place and according to their rituals and rites, which is evidenced by Sunni mosques, churches, etc.

In the international arena, the most important religious policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to pay

attention to the unity of Muslims all over the world, especially among the neighboring countries. Despite the constant efforts on the part of some Western countries to create rifts among Iran's neighbors and with Iran, the Islamic Republic of Iran has made many political efforts, along with cultural efforts, to resolve the differences with its neighbors, and has always tried to act as a mediator for peace in its neighboring lands. And Hajj provides the best opportunity for this move; i.e., creating unity among Muslim countries.

Supporting the Muslim people of "Palestine" is one of the religious-political priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and all these years, it has never recognized Israel in any political, cultural, and sports forums, and has always referred to the Israeli regime as the "Usurper Regime of Quds" and insisted on opposing its usurping policies and atrocities.

One of the important activities carried out in the form of a non-governmental organization in the field of bringing Muslims together, reconciling different Islamic schools of thought, and resolving Shia and Sunni differences, has been the formation of "The World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought" in the year 1990.

In the view of this Forum, the only way to protect the Islamic nation is the unity of Muslims and their cooperation in the cultural, scientific, economic, and political fields. Expansion of communication among thinkers, scholars, institutions and proximity trends, formation of dialogue circles among Islamic schools of thought, promotion of coalitions and joint organizations, proximity media, and other effective and unifying measures are some parts of the programs of this forum.

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