

# ECHO

of Islam



## The Importance of Islamic Unity

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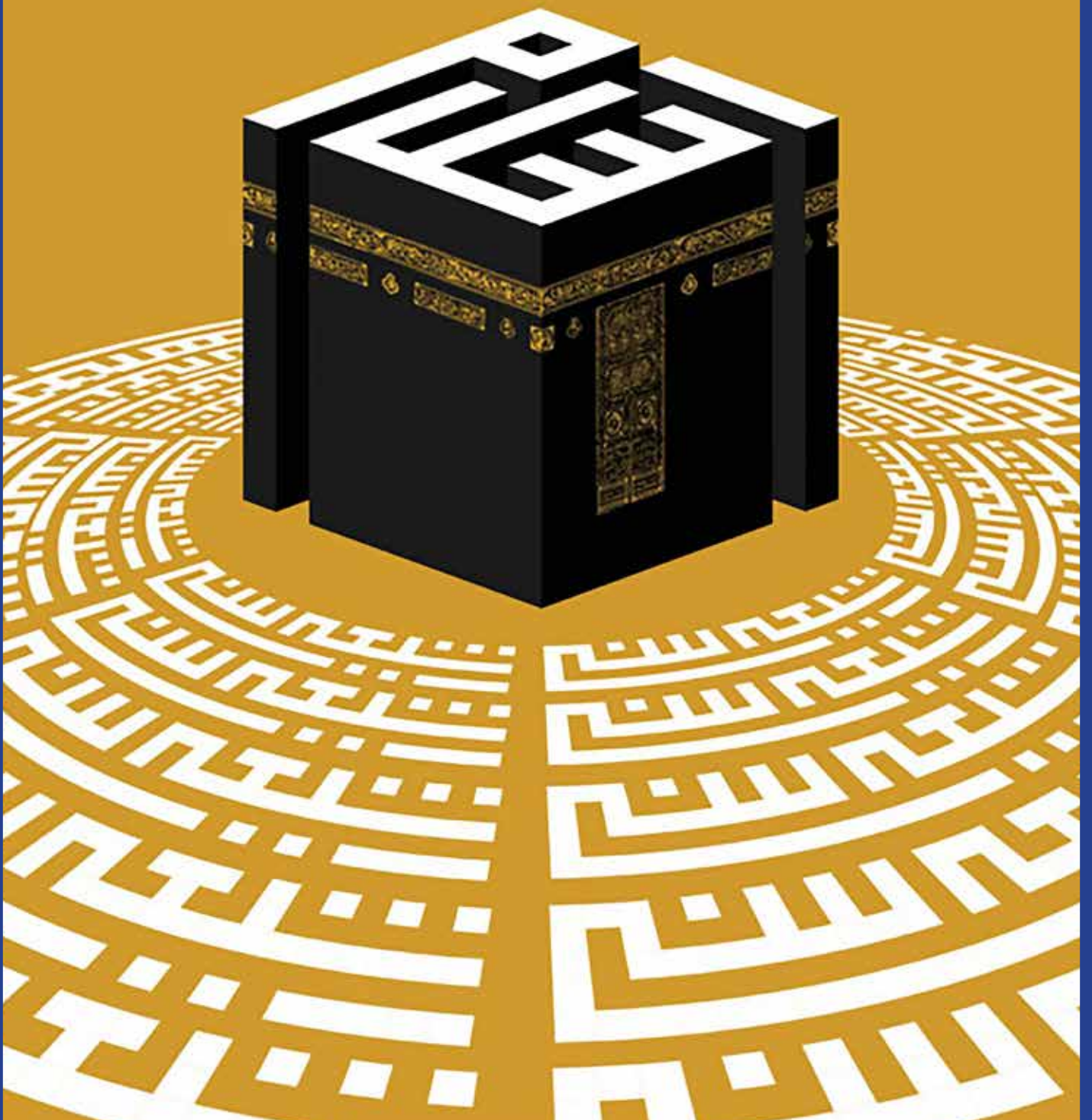
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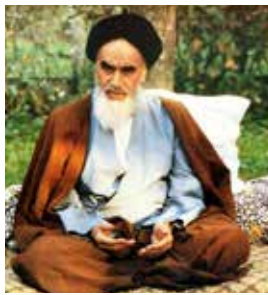
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# Islamic Unity







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<b>Islamic Unity is the Need of the Hour</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Imam Khomeini (RA) and Islamic Unity</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic...</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Iranian President Inaugurated the 36th International Islamic Unity Conference</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Islamic Unity, Peace and Avoidance of Division and Conflict in the Islamic World</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>The Concept of Islamic Unity</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Unity of Muslims; the Universal Message of the ...</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>The Importance of Islamic Unity</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Finding Faults, Ignoring Faults</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>The Islamic Unity Week</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Excerpts from the Views Shared by the Participants</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>The Holy Quran and the Factors of Islamic Unity</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Islamic Unity Week and Milad Al-Nabi Celebration in Africa</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>The Foundations and Causes of Recent Disturbances in the Islamic Republic of Iran</b>	<b>44</b>

# Islamic Unity is the Need of the Hour

**Mohammad Asadi Movahed**  
**Managing Director of Alhoda International Cultural,**  
**Artistic, and Publishing Institute**

Unity, cohesion, convergence, and integration among the Muslims of the world are among the most important needs of Islamic societies in present times. Considering that the Islamic world is in the most sensitive stages of its social life, strengthening the foundations of unity is one of the most basic ideas and suggested solutions to face the challenges facing the Islamic world.

Islamic unity is an important issue that has always been raised in the history of political and social thinking of Muslim thinkers as a basic and vital issue or strategy against the widespread and comprehensive invasion of colonialism. Basically, one of the ways to achieve material and spiritual goals in the fields of international relations is convergence and, therefore, many societies and countries of the world spend a part of their interests to achieve their main goals and perspectives in the process of forming convergence; based on their desired values.

Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to and examine

the platforms, capacities, potential and actual capabilities, and other factors in the Islamic world that precede convergence.

It is an undeniable truth that Islamic societies have special capacities and capabilities and they have been granted many privileges in terms of population, the richness of Islamic culture, underground resources, strategic locations, and many other things. Thus, if Islamic countries join hands, they can be victorious and proud in front of the strongest enemies.

Effective confrontation of the dangers that threaten Islam as a result of division and divergence calls for cohesion and solidarity in Islamic Ummah vis-à-vis powerful, hegemonic, and colonial, which have united together to prevent the spread of Islamic teachings among the nations of the world. In other words, if complete and ideal unity and integration are formed in Islamic societies, no power in the world will be able to mistreat Islamic countries either socially or economically. Therefore, today the need for unity and alignment in



all fields is quite evident.

If the leaders of Islamic countries are literally looking for the honor of Islam and Muslims, they can pursue their economic and social goals through the formation of common markets. The duty of all Islamic scholars and thinkers throughout the Islamic world is to strengthen the foundations of unity in Islamic societies on the basis of proximity views and establish unity and brotherhood in the true sense of the word by creating solidarity among Muslims. This is because without a doubt, only with unity and integration can we take fundamental steps on the path of excellence and evolution in various fields of scientific, industrial, civil, technical, and specialized issues and walk the paths of advancement and excellence well, and introduce and spread the religious culture of Islamic in the world.

Keeping in view the current existing situation, it is necessary

on the part of the scholars of the Islamic world as well as the intellectuals, experts, and personalities sympathetic to Islam and Muslims - from all Islamic denominations and schools of thought - to sit together, to form a joint and international Islamic council, to actually direct the public opinion of the Islamic world and do not allow the people who are biased, misguided, ignorant and bigoted who have wrong and petrifying religious concepts and beliefs, to easily excommunicate many communities of Muslims or accuse them of being apostates. It seems the formation of a council of broad-minded Islamic scholars can prove to be an important move in fostering convergence among Islamic societies. It goes without saying that in the absence of Islamic unity, our future generations will easily fall prey to the plots and conspiracies of the enemies of Islam. This is because their efforts to destroy the Islamic identity and create differences among Muslims are quite noticeable and evident.

The recent incidents following the death of Mahsa Amini reflect upon the false propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran on the part of western media exaggerating the extent and spread of protests and making it look as if the majority of Iranian women are unjustly treated and have no role in the affairs of the country. However, the truth of the matter is that besides having a decisive and unifying role in the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iranian women have



always had a constructive role in the development and progress of their country over the past four decades. For instance, in the course of the 8-year imposed war on Iran the Iranian women were constantly active in providing different forms of support to the Islamic combatants of Iran both morally and in the form of attending to those injured and wounded in the battlefronts and materially by providing them with necessary supplies, food, and clothing. Interestingly, these services were performed spontaneously and voluntarily by their presence in public centers such as mosques, schools, etc. One such Iranian

woman was Ms. Farangis Heidarpour who, with her unique bravery, killed an invading Baathist officer and captured another One when she was only 18 years of age and became an icon of resistance to our Islamic land.

In the post-war era and with the availability of required infrastructures Iranian women have had outstanding achievements in different areas including, higher education, medicine, entrepreneurship, science and technology, sports, the film industry, etc.<sup>1</sup>

1. For further information see the last article in this issue.





## Imam Khomeini (RA) and Islamic Unity

- Muslims should be awake, Muslims should be alert that if a dispute takes place among Sunni and Shi'ite brothers, it is harmful to all of us, it is harmful to all Muslims. Those who want to sow discord are neither Sunni nor Shia, they are agents of the superpowers and work for them.

- If Islamic brotherhood comes to the fore among Islamic countries, such will become a great power, which none of the global powers will be able to cope with.

- Shia and Sunni brothers

should avoid every kind of dispute. Today, discord among us will only benefit those who follow neither Shi'ia nor Hanafi. They neither want this nor that to exist and know the way to sow dispute between you and us.

- We must pay attention that we are all Muslims and we all believe in the Qur'an; we all believe in Tawheed and must work to serve the Qur'an and Tawheed.

- The Muslims must be a united hand against all arrogance.

- If the Muslims were a united, single fist, none can rise against them.

- Do not keep saying "unity but not go after it. Be active together, you are brothers to one another.

- All Muslims are brothers and equal, none is separate from another and all must be under the banner of Islam and monotheism.

- Muslims are brothers and will not be segregated by the pseudo-propaganda sponsored by corrupt elements. The source of this matter - that Shiites should be on one side and Sunni on the other - is, on the one hand, ignorance and, on the other hand, propaganda of the foreigners.

- The communities themselves must be a single Um-

mah; they should assemble together and not be separated; they should not regard the borders as causes for the separation of the hearts.

- O you powerful Muslims! Beware! Know yourselves and let the world know you. Cast aside the sectarian and regional disputes, which have been created by the world-devouring powers and their corrupt agents for the purpose of plundering you and treading upon your human and Islamic honor. Mercenary akhunds (mullahs) and the nationalists know nothing of Islam and of the interests of the Muslims. The harms of these people to Islam are no less than those of the world-devourers. They show Islam upside-down and pave the way for the plunderers. May Allah, the Most High, deliver Islam and the Muslim countries from the evil of the world devourers and their affiliated and connected agents.

- Disunity among Shias and the Sunnis is what arrogant powers want. If there happens a dispute between the Iranian nation and the other nations, or between the Sunni brothers and the Shia brothers, it will be to the disadvantage of all of us, of all Muslims. Those who want to cause disunity are neither of the Sunnis nor of the Shias. They are the agents of the Super Powers and they are serving them.

- Those who try to create disunity between Sunni and Shia brothers are the groups who plot for the enemies of Islam.

They want to help the enemies of Islam to overcome the Muslims. They are the followers of western powers, and some are also the followers of the eastern powers.

- We must be awake and know that the divine judgment says: "The believers are but brothers" (Al-Hujurat: 10). There is nothing among them other than brotherhood, and they are obliged to have brotherly conduct. It is a political point to have all the Muslim nations - nearly a billion in number - be brothers to one another, in which case no harm may befall them and none of the Super Powers will be able to transgress them. O brothers! Pay attention to this! Sunnis and Shias are brothers and should avoid all disputes.

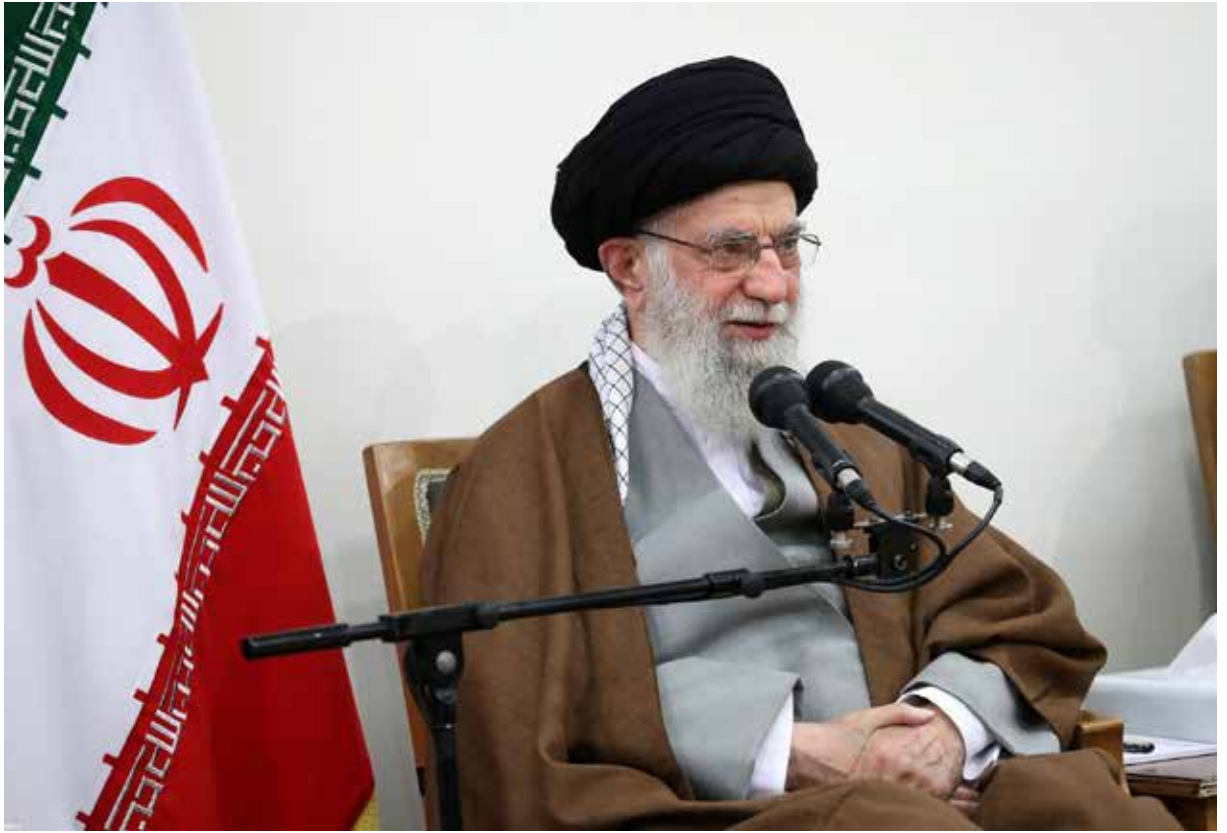
- Today, our differences will be in the interest of those who believe neither in Shiism nor in the Hanafi or in the other sects. They want neither this nor that to be. Their aim is to cause differences between us. We must realize that we are all Muslims, followers of the Qur'an and Tawheed and that we must toil for the Qur'an and to serve Tawheed. The Muslims of the world are to join together. They (enemies) are uselessly trying to create disunity.

- The Muslims are brothers and would not be disunited by the evil propaganda of some corrupt elements. Disunity is caused by ignorance and by the propaganda waged by foreigners. They even cause disunity

among the Shias themselves. They do the same among the Sunni sects, too, placing one group against another.

- Today all Islamic denominations are facing the Satanic powers who want to uproot Islam because they do know that unity of the Muslim nations would not be in their interest. Today is the day on which all the Muslims of the whole world must come together. Today is not the day for a group in one place to say: "Only we", and another group in another place to say: "Only we". Today is the time when all are to be united on the basis of the rule of Islam and the judgments of the Qur'an. The dispute among Muslims, in whatever way it may be, is prohibited by the Qur'an. Dispute will bring them failure and effaces the attractive qualities of man. This is the command of Allah, the Generous.

- Those who try to create disunity, and yet claim to be Muslims, have not found the Islam whose Book is the Qur'an, the Islam in which ka'bah is the Qiblah. They do not believe in Islam. The ones who believe in Islam are those who accept the Qur'an, which says: "The believers are but brothers". So they must comply with what the brotherhood requires. Brotherhood requires that if some misfortune happens to one brother other brothers should sympathize with him and if anything happy happens to him, they all should be happy, too.



# Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Meets the Participants of the 36th International Islamic Unity Conference

On the auspicious occasion of the birth anniversaries of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Imam Sadiq (AS), the participants of the 36th International Conference on Islamic Unity, the heads of the three branches of government (judiciary, executive, and legislative) and a group of government officials met with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in Imam Khomeini Hussainiyyah on Friday, October 14, 2022.





\* The personality of the Holy Prophet is second to none in the entire world. The majestic signs of Almighty God can be seen in all periods of the Prophet's life, even during the time of his birth. We are celebrating the Prophet's birth today. The signs and effects of these divine blessings, which culminate in the Bi'tha, can be observed by humanity even on the day of the Holy Prophet's birth. One can also witness some practical signs of tawhid on his birthday. The events that took place include: the idols inside the Kaaba fell down, the confrontation with the tyrant idols and the great tyrants of humanity during that time, the drying up of that holy lake, the extinguishment of the so-called holy fire in the fire

temple and the collapse of Taq-e Kasra (The Arch of Ctesiphon). Therefore, this birthday is no ordinary day. It is a very important day. It is a very big day. We celebrate this day because of this occasion. An important point to note is that celebrating this day as a day of Eid, is not just about celebrations and commemorations and things like that. We celebrate in order to learn something. We celebrate it to establish the Holy Prophet as a role model.

\* One of the lessons of the life and birth of the Prophet (PBUH) is that the Holy Qur'an says: "There has certainly come to you a Prophet from among yourselves. Grievous to him is your distress; he has deep concern for you, and is most

kind and merciful to the faithful." I want to stress on the term "Grievous to him is your distress". Undoubtedly, this is not specific to the Muslims of the time of the Prophet; it is addressed to all believers throughout history, that is, if today the Muslims are suffering in Palestine, Myanmar, etc., let them know that their suffering causes pain in the pure soul of the Prophet. On the opposite side, it is the situation of the enemies who are happy with your suffering. Naturally, when this is the case, that front tries to lead you towards hardship and misery. Well, what is the cause of these sufferings of the Islamic Ummah at the present time?

\* One of the most important

factors in the division of Muslims is that we are divided and when there is division among us, when we are not benevolent towards each other, when sometimes we are even malicious towards each other; well, this is the result. Here again, the Qur'an is clear: "when you dispute, you will lose heart and become weak. When there is a dispute, you will be grounded and humiliated, and you will naturally provide others the means to dominate you. This is the outcome of division.

\* We need to ensure the implementation of the objectives of Unity Week. Now, what does unity mean? What is meant by unity is certainly not the unity of schools of thought. It does not mean Muslims should shift from one Islamic denomination to another. No, that is definitely not the intention. It does not also mean geographical unity, like what happened in the 60s and 70s when some Arab countries joined together and declared that they are one, which was not and is not possible. Unity means unity in protecting the interests of the Islamic Ummah. We should first identify where and what are the interests of the Islamic Ummah and then and within this context, the nations should reach an agreement with each other. The needs of the Islamic Ummah today should be identified; with whom to be enemies, with whom to be friends, and how to be friends. These stances should be agreed upon and moved towards during the course of discussions. The purpose is to take a common



stand against the plans of the arrogant powers.

\* It becoming increasingly evident that the political map of the world is changing. The issue of being unipolar and imposing one or two powers on other countries and nations has lost its legitimacy, which means the nations have awakened. The unipolar system has been rejected, it is gradually becoming more rejected.

\* What does a unipolar system mean? It means that, for example, let's assume that the United States sits down and plans for Iraq or for Syria or for Iran or

for Lebanon, etc. that "You must do this, this must happen, this must not happen, sometimes say something and sometimes do not say it but do it". This is how it is today. They design for countries and mobilize their forces. Well, they have a plan. Arrogant powers have a plan. This state of domination that global arrogance has had on countries, nations, and various regions is, however, gradually changing; just like the change that happened during the anti-colonial movements in the second half of the 20th century when countries rose up one after the other against direct colonization.



\* Well, where does the Islamic Ummah stand in this new world? We, the Islamic Ummah; we, the Islamic countries and the Islamic nations, can have a high position in the new world that is gradually taking shape. We can be a role model, and we can be a pioneer, but under one condition. And what is that condition? Unity, absence of division, avoiding the temptations of the enemy, the temptations by the US, the temptations by the Zionists, the temptations by the companies, the temptations caused by all of them. (Surprisingly) at times these temptations are heard from

insiders. If we can implement this condition, we will certainly be able to place the Islamic Ummah in a high position in the future world and the future shape of the political geography of the world.

\* Solidarity and unity among Islamic nations is very much possible. But it needs effort. We are not disappointed with the politicians and rulers of Islamic countries, but our greatest hope is in the elites of the Islamic world; religious scholars, intellectuals, university professors, young enlightened people, writers, poets, and press managers. They should have a sense of independence, responsibility, and duty. When elites enter a particular path, they move public opinion in that direction. When public opinion is formed in a country, the policies regarding the administration of the country would naturally move in that direction.

We are a small example of it, the Islamic Republic. We stood against great powers. One day, this world was controlled by two great powers; the United States and the former Soviet Union. Both powers, which differed on dozens of issues, agreed on one issue and that was opposition to the Islamic Republic. They thought they could uproot this sapling. Today, this sapling has become a strong and well-rooted tree. How dare anyone even think of such a thing now. We resisted firmly and progressed.

\* What we need to stress on today more than anything else is the Shia and Sunni (unity). We should

not let differences of opinion and views on certain religious issues lead to conflict. There are things that create conflict, we must seriously prevent them. Now the American and British politicians, too, engage in Shia and Sunni discussions in their own circles and this is a very dangerous thing.

Those who are against Islam and neither favor Shias nor Sunnis have entered the scene. I once said "British form Shia and American form of Sunni". Some people thought and falsely propagated that when we say English Shia we mean the Shias live in England. No; British Shia may be living in an Islamic country.

What it meant was to be inspired by the British (politicians). That is, a Shia that causes fights; a Sunni that causes fights; just like the ISIS and the Wahhabis, like the takfirists. They are Muslims by name and they may even be abiding by personal rituals, but they are actually serving the enemy. One who creates rifts and division serves the interests of the enemy and it does not matter what is his position and where he lives.

We strongly believe in this. We dealt seriously with those who incited the feelings of Sunni brothers in the name of supporters of Shiism. This should become a general trend. There must be a consensus. Of course, there are some extremists on both sides, there are people in the Shia who are extremists either because of their beliefs or whatever and there are also some people among the Sunnis who have extremist views.





# Iranian President Inaugurated the 36th International Islamic Unity Conference

36th International Islamic Unity Conference, with the main theme of "Islamic Unity, Peace and Avoidance of Division and Conflict in the Islamic World - Executive solutions and operational measures was inaugurated by Hojjat al-Islam Sayyid Ebrahim Raisi, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Wednesday, October 12, 2022.

What follows are excerpts from the inaugural speech of President Raisi

My greetings and congratulations to the honorable guests from different parts of the world on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and Imam Ja'far Sadiq (AS).

Our Islamic world has a huge capital in the name of religion, religious values, religious people, Muslims, believers in the religion, and Islamic lands, which are at the disposal of Muslims with a lot of material and spiritual wealth. Islamic scholars and

thinkers including seminarians, academicians, and research scholars are a huge capital who stand together against atheistic thoughts, secular trends, and takfiri and extremist ways of thinking.

Formation of takfiri groups to kill, loot, and massacre Muslims, insulting the holy things and the first person of the Islamic world and the world of humanity, i.e., the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and other Islamic sanctities and

the spread of extremist and takfiri way of thinking are the links of a chain to create division and separation among Muslims and, therefore, Muslims should avoid division and unnecessary disputes and focus on many commonalities that exist among Muslims and promote unity.

Love of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Holy Prophet is certainly one of the strongest pivots of unity and solidarity among Muslims. Imam Sadiq (AS) had always emphasized proximity among the Islamic schools of thought, and many signs of such an outlook with regard to proximity and solidarity can be found in the sayings and attitudes of other Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) of our Prophet (PBUH). Thus, it is through proximity way of thinking that synergy can be created in the Islamic world and things can be moved forward. The focus of the takfiri outlook is division, hatred, and spite, which is very harmful and dangerous and this view must be put aside by the capable hands of Islamic scholars, intellectuals, and elites who are present here.

The intention of the enemies of Islam is to create division among the Islamic states and nations, to create an arms market for the sale of American and Western weapons in the region, and to take over the rich resources of these countries. Today, Holy Quds and Palestine are still the first concern of the Islamic world and Muslims. International Quds Day is a symbol



and expression of freedom, otherwise, Muslims always think about the freedom of Quds and their movement is in this direction.

The main policy and program of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to encounter oppression, terrorism, and the takfiri trend and this is the main cause of the hatred and malice of the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards this system. They claim to fight terrorism, but everyone knows that the champion of the fight against terrorism in the region and the world was Martyr Hajj Qasem Soleimani and Martyr Al-Muhandis (may God bless them and grant them peace) and many Mujahid forces in the region who cleansed this place from the presence of ISIS. Let us not forget that during their election campaigns the Americans did confess that they were

the ones who created ISIS.

Sustainable peace, stability, and security in the region depend on the unity and unity of Muslims and the outcome of reaching a common understanding in this meeting can definitely ensure sustainable peace and security in the region and among Islamic countries.

Reliance on the religious commonalities among Islamic schools of thought and Islamic countries is an important necessity. And this important issue has been repeatedly emphasized by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Not only dialogue among Islamic schools of thought but also dialogue with other religions have always been emphasized by our imams and leaders, as well as Shia and Sunni scholars and thinkers and there is no doubt that these dialogues can resolve many disputes.

# Islamic Unity, Peace and Avoidance of Division and Conflict in the Islamic World

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

Hold fast, all together, to Allah's cord, and do not be divided. (Surah Aal-e Imran: 103)

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

Indeed, this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord. So worship Me. (Surah Al-Anbiya: 92)

**Hojjat al-Islam Mahdi Imanipour**  
President of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization



Praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon His Prophet, Muhammad, and his pure Household and his devoted companions and whoever invites others to his call until the end of time; the call of liberation, salvation, peace, and prosperity, and unity.

These days coincide with the 36th International Islamic Unity Conference, the main theme of which is "Islamic Unity, Peace and Avoidance of Division and Conflict in the Islamic World - Executive solutions and operational measures."

The most acceptable and perhaps the most valid definition of unity and proximity, which is also the most common one, is the unity of the followers of Islamic denominations, in the sense of their friendly coexistence with each other. In other words, empathy, convergence, and Islamic solidarity.

In this definition, the followers of Islamic denominations stand beside each other by preserving and emphasizing their religious



identity. And this is the translation of what the proponents of Islamic unity have referred to as “Unity among Denominations”.

The principle of:

“نَتَعَاوَنُ فِيْمَا اتَّفَقْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَهُوَ كَثِيرٌ، وَنَعْذُرُ

بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا فِيْمَا اَخْتَلَفْنَا فِيْهِ وَهُوَ قَلِيلٌ”

(We help each other in what we have in common, which is a lot, and excuse each other for differences we have, which is little.) can be considered the strategic slogan of unity and proximity and the interpretation of the theme of the 36th International Islamic Unity Conference.

It would be wise and advisable for Muslims to free themselves from the disease of “religious obsolescence” and stop blaming and accusing each other, the acute and unprecedented form of which is the ex-communication of each other - contrary to the authentic teachings of Islam - stop judging historical events outside of their historical context, and, based on the Qur’anic verse:

“وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ”

(No bearer shall bear another’s burden) stop blaming the followers of this and that denomination for the mistake such and such a person has made.

It is not advisable to look at unity and proximity only from the viewpoint of expedience, and rather unity and proximity should be regarded as being of spiritual essence originating from the book, tradition, and reason; above all other sources (even though expedience is neither to be negated nor ignored and should rather be considered among the evidences of unity and proximity). Policy-makings, plans, and cultural-religious endeavors should be of

sincere and honest essence and committed to the necessity of using ethical values. Unity and proximity are not just slogans, but an awareness that must be spread among Muslims, and, of course, its logical means should also be taken into consideration and paid the cost for. Compliance with the requirements and commitment to pay the costs of the unity of Muslims and proximity among the followers of Islamic denominations is a firm criterion for measuring the sincerity of the claimants of unity and proximity, and a gauge for distinguishing the genuineness of the calls made. A call that does not arise from the heart, will surely be of no effect. The promotion of empathy, harmony, and unity among Muslims depends on the purity of the calls made. The most outstanding external symbol of such purity of intent is the restoration and fulfillment of the rights of Muslims towards each other.

Division and separatism are not related and limited to one trend,

one denomination, and one country, and have been activated more or less everywhere in the Islamic world and the headquarters of disharmony.

It can be said that all of these evil efforts are a conspiracy to create despair, the main objective of which is the disillusionment of Muslims from revivalism in the Islamic world. The enemies of Islam and Muslims intend to convince the Islamic Ummah that the Islamic Unity Movement or the Islamic Awakening Movement is a dead-end road and obedience to the system of arrogance is better than bearing immense material and spiritual costs, and obedience to the head of the global village is better than going astray, and in other words, being asleep is better than being awake!

This is despite the fact that the great leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA), had repeatedly emphasized that unity is the only path to salvation for Muslims, and his jurisprudential fatwas and enlightening messages also confirmed the genuineness of his words. By the same token, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khamenei, too, considers the ultimate goal of the revolution to be the formation of a new Islamic civilization that would be formed on the basis of unity in the Islamic Ummah.

Despite all the hues and cries made by some elements, the Islamic Ummah, which believes that “all roads are blocked except for the path of Muhammad (PBUH)”, is committed to its allegiance to the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH).

And our last prayer is that praise be to God Almighty, Lord of the worlds.

▶ **The most acceptable and perhaps the most valid definition of unity and proximity, which is also the most common one, is the unity of the followers of Islamic denominations, in the sense of their friendly coexistence with each other. In other words, empathy, convergence, and Islamic solidarity.**





# The Concept of Islamic Unity

Islamic Ummah is characterized by Islamic unity. In other words, the very concept of Islamic Ummah would not take

shape in the absence of an all-comprehensive unity. An Islamic Ummah sans unity would lose many of its characteristics

including, perhaps, true and sincere faith and belief in God Almighty.

It needs to be emphasized





views, levels of knowledge, cultures, methods of deduction, and research-based beliefs all of which give rise to certain understandable differences of opinions that have occupied our great scholars for centuries.

2- The necessity of taking a unified stand on a number of issues the most significant of which are:

a) The fundamental principles of Islam that are regarded as irrefutable and are common to all Muslims.

b) Common virtues that form the common characteristics of the Islamic Ummah and all Muslims are required to adhere to them in order to be a part of the Ummah.

c) The application of the Islamic Shari'ah in all aspects of personal and social life. The laws that are incontrovertible in the Islamic jurisprudence and all the divine prophets of God were appointed to establish them in human society.

d) A unified political stance towards global issues and especially those involving the main enemies of Islam i.e. the infidels, hypocrites and arrogant powers as well as a unified stance on defending the sanctity of Islam.

What has been enumerated above are some of the areas around which the Islamic community should get together and unite. Should this take place it would be possible to form a true

Muslim Ummah.

The truth of the matter is that paying due attention to the following points clearly reveals Islam's comprehensive plan for the actualization of Islamic unity:

i) The unity that Islam emphasizes is simultaneously based on beliefs and sentiments and it is also referred to as the 'unity of the hearts'.

ii) Islam addresses all Muslims equally and without any discrimination and reminds them of their common responsibilities towards Islam and Islamic society.

iii) Islam has abolished all worldly criteria of self-glorification and self-veneration and only gives importance to such virtues as God-wariness, divine knowledge, pure divine obedience, and endeavoring for the cause of Allah.

iv) Islam calls upon Muslims to fight tyranny and oppression collectively.

v) The Islamic system of prayers can play a leading role in creating the required wisdom among the believers leading to balance, proximity and Islamic unity since all Muslims face a common qiblah. During the month of Ramazan, the entire Muslim Ummah willingly and intentionally enter a process of self-purification by fasting and, as a matter of fact, expanding their divine human qualities and deepening the roots of these

that the concept of Islamic unity does not imply stereotype way of thinking and the unification of all the Islamic schools of thought for that is rather impossible. Islamic unity, however, refers to pledging allegiance to the pre-determined Islamic principles and the formation of an Ummah that should always keep in mind the following:

1- Expected differences in styles, approaches, facilities,



qualities in their being and soul.

By the same token, the Hajj pilgrimage - in the course of which Muslims from different nooks and corners of the world get together to train their souls and achieve incomparable benefits in their material and spiritual lives - is a significant platform for Islamic unity. It is this great congregation of Islam that has given meaning to such concepts as "oneness", "piety", "allegiance to monotheism", "negation of man-made systems and satanic ethical values", "adherence to the divine limitations and dos and don'ts", "freedom from all those material elements that create a rift among humankind", and "expressing bara'ah towards the infidels".

The sanctity and sanctuary of Hajj and Bayt al-Haram are implicative of certain great social concepts which will be briefly discussed here:

1) Circumambulating the house of Ka'ba signifies that man is in search of freedom from carnal desires and deviations and that he is in a position to absorb the monotheistic concepts of the religion. One of the best blessings Hajj pilgrimage could be harmony and congruence among pure and sincere hearts that endeavor towards the manifestation of unity among the Islamic Ummah.

2) Hajj reminds Muslims of their need for a center in which every Muslim, irrespective of his race, gender, and position, can express his thoughts freely and share

them with other Muslims without any apprehension of suppression by oppressive rulers. Hajj is an international forum attended by the representatives of all the nations who can review the problems and challenges of their societies, look for appropriate solutions, and get acquainted with different ways and means other Muslims resort to for attending to their responsibilities towards others, get to know about the conspiracies and devious plots against their monotheistic path and condemn them. Perhaps this concept can very well be related to the verse "And (remember) when We made the House a place of reward for mankind and a sanctuary..." (surah Al-Baqarah: 125).

3) Hajj reminds the Muslims of the world that the sanctuary and security of this sacred place can only be ensured through unity in the Muslim Ummah and, therefore, there is no room for any kind of rebellion and revolt against it or threatening the believers. And if this ideal has not been established throughout the globe it is incumbent upon all believers to expand it all over the world and make it universal.

4) Filled with love and affection the hearts of the believers are drawn to this sacred place where they can purify themselves and return to their social life free from impurities and spread the message of His pure love, mercy, and benevolence among the members of their society and pave the path for the establishment of an ideal emo-



tional atmosphere among their fellow Muslims.

Undoubtedly, the emotional atmosphere of the Hajj, which is filled with love and affection, makes it possible for the believers to absorb the message of Allah that "The faithful are indeed brothers. Therefore, make peace between your brothers and be wary of Allah" .

5) The security that has been bestowed upon human beings, animals, and plants within the vicinity of this sacred shrine (Ka'ba) is indicative of a mag-



nificent natural harmony among the different elements of the world of being for paving the path for the attainment of man's greatest objective.

There are numerous narrations that point out the natural harmony between man and nature in the process of Hajj as well as man's entire life. For instance, Kulayni narrates Imam Mohammad Baqer (AS) saying: "Moses (AS) began his ihram in the city of Ramlah in Egypt, climbed on a camel and crossed the foothills of the mountains wearing two cotton robes and reciting 'Labbayk

Allahumma Labbayk' to which the mountains began to respond."

Elsewhere Imam Mohammad Baqer (a) has been quoted narrating that Imam Ali (a) addressed his companions in these words: "When a pilgrim begins to chant 'Labbayk' all the beings to his right and left begin to chant with him and two angels address him and say "glad tidings to you the servant of Allah and behold that Allah does not give good tidings except for the heaven."

These characteristics would certainly have their effect on man's worldview and life and

indicate that when one follows in the footsteps of the divine prophets and endeavors towards the establishment of the rule of God Almighty on the earth and forming a pious Muslim society, the entire world begins to support him.

Thus, it may be concluded that Hajj is an ideal atmosphere for bringing diverse views closer and paving the path for the establishment of practical unity, balance, moderation, and rationality within the glorious framework of sincere and pure worship of God Almighty.





# Unity of Muslims; the Universal Message of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH)

Muslim Unity (Ittihad) is a term that refers to establishing good and peaceful relations among the various Islamic denominations. The primary objective of

Muslim Unity or Islamic Unity is to unite all Muslims around the world. Although some divisions such as Sunni/Shia exist among Muslims, according to the propo-

nents of Muslim Unity these divisions are negligible and Muslims from different countries should forge closer ties with each other. It has become cliché to say





lim community function, all that tolerance seems to go out the window.

Islam is very broad and wide, contrary to popular belief, and you can find a range of scholarly views on many different issues. If our scholars from the past and present have shown such tolerance towards differing views on various issues, why should the average Muslims, who do not have that level of knowledge, express intolerance for another point of view? Let us not forget that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) has said “Ikhtilaf Ummati Rahmah” meaning “The intellectual difference of opinion in my Ummah is a blessing.”

Learn to criticize without hurting: The way some Muslims criticize each other; you would think they were talking to an Islam-basher instead of a fellow brother or sister. This type of ignorant behavior is a sure way to create anger, hurt, and dissension. We must learn the etiquette of criticism, whether it is towards individual Muslims or our leaders. Observing this will not only help solve problems in a practical manner, but it will also lead to a greater sense of brotherhood and sisterhood in the community.

Do not call anyone a Kafir, Mushrik, or Bid’atee: This horrible phenomenon of calling fellow believers Kafir, Mushrik, or Bid’atee must end immediately if we want to create a climate that is conducive to Muslim Unity. Calling other Kafir is a sure way to isolate individuals from the Muslim community. If a person is expressing ideas that are not

in line with Islamic values, he/she must be gently corrected. By the same token, calling others Kafir will only fuel their ignorance, anger, and stubbornness, not to mention humiliate and embarrass them.

Surah Al-Hujurat of the Holy Qur’an provides excellent guidance on the kind of behavior that Muslims should avoid to establish Muslim unity. For instance, Allah the Almighty, advises us to avoid mockery, defamation, suspicion, and backbiting. These are all things that serve to divide us and create hatred, hurt, and dissension because one of the famous traditions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) says, “A Muslim is the one from whose hands and tongue other Muslims are safe.”

It is important to understand that Muslim unity is not an option. According to the Holy Qur’an and traditions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) Muslim unity is an obligatory duty. Consider the following references given below:

► **Surah Al-Hujurat of the Holy Qur’an provides excellent guidance on the kind of behavior that Muslims should avoid to establish Muslim unity. For instance, Allah the Almighty, advises us to avoid mockery, defamation, suspicion, and backbiting.**



that Muslims have reduced the religion of Islam to rituals and forgotten other important tenets. While it is crucial to practice the main pillars of Islam, we cannot ignore other basic aspects of the faith that emphasize brotherhood and sisterhood.

Learn tolerance towards other points of view: Is it not interesting that we can attend classes at college or speak with colleagues from work and discuss issues while being willing to disagree with them? But the minute some of us step into a mosque or Mus-

“And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves.” (Holy Qur’an, 3:103)

“The believers are but a single brotherhood. Make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers and fear Allah so that you may receive mercy.” (Al- Hujurat: 10)

“As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you have no part in them in the least: their affair is with Allah. He will, in the end, tell them the truth of all that they did.” (Al-An’am: 159)

Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, “The Muslims are like a body, if one part of the body hurts, the rest of the body will also suffer.” Meaning that the Muslims, from whatever origin they may be, are one Ummah and they cannot be separated from each other.

He is also quoted saying, “Believers are brethren, their lives are equal to each other and they are as one hand against their enemy.” “It is not permissible for two Muslims to be annoyed and angry for more than three days.” “When Muslims are angry with each other for three days. If they do not compromise, then they go away from the limits of Islam and the one who compromises first will enter Paradise earlier.”

The utmost important duty of every Muslim is to preserve and protect the Muslim unity and not to cause any division in the Muslim rank and that is the reason that the late Imam Khomeini (RA) declared 12th to 17th of the month of Rabi’ al-Awwal as the

## Unity Week of Muslims

Sectarianism serves the purpose of enemies of Islam

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran has issued a fatwa (religious verdict) declaring it unlawful to insulting any of the Sunni Islamic symbols; a fatwa that has been welcomed by the former president of al-Azhar University of Islamic Sciences, Ahmad al Tayib, and Muslims around the world. This fatwa has greatly paved the path for Islamic Solidarity and Unity)

In a statement that the fatwa was prudent and timely and would help ram the door shut to seditions, Ahmad al-Tayib wrote: “I received the blessed fatwa with appreciation, it was incumbent on all Muslims to try to keep inter-Muslim unity and certain differences among the Islamic sects should be allowed to harm the unity of the Islamic Ummah.”

► **Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, “The Muslims are like a body, if one part of the body hurts, the rest of the body will also suffer.” Meaning that the Muslims, from whatever origin they may be, are one Ummah and they cannot be separated from each other.**

Surprisingly the Western media have preferred to remain silent about this fatwa.

## Statement of Grand Ayatollah Sistani on the subject of Muslim Unity

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

“And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves;” (the Holy Qur’an, Surah Aal-e-Imran, Verse 103)

The Islamic nation is going through difficult circumstances, and facing major crises and enormous challenges affecting its present and threatening its future. Everyone is aware of this situation and needs to close ranks and reject those who fan the flames of sectarianism and we must avoid stirring sectarian differences.

Those differences that have existed for centuries, and no completely satisfactory resolution - pleasing to all parties - seems to exist, and hence should not be pursued for the sake of creating controversy and strife, but only within the framework of scientific research in a sober and in particular in a manner that does not affect the fundamentals of Islam.

Everyone believes in One God, and the message of Prophet (PBUH), and in the concept of Ma’ad (Resurrection/Judgement), and the fact that the Quran - which is guarded and protected by Allah from distortion - along with the Honorable Prophetic



Sunnah (Tradition), which is the source for the Shari'ah (Islamic Legal) rulings and the affection for the Noble Ahl al-Bayt (AS), etc. The fundamentals of Islam are shared by the Muslims in general, among which are the pillars of Islam: Prayer, Fasting, Hajj and so on. These common concepts form the basic core of Islamic Unity. We must focus on them to establish closer bonds of love and affection between the people of this Ummah, and indeed do no less than work on peaceful co-existence amongst each other, and move away from the bicker-

ing and communal and sectarian rhetoric under whatever guise or title.

#### **Muslim Ummah is like a Tasbeih/Tasbeeh**

A Tasbeih/Tasbeeh is used to keep count of dhikr. It is usually made up of 100 beads which are held together in a necklace form by a thread. As long as the Tasbeih/Tasbeeh remains in its original form, it can be used for doing good deeds. However, what happens if the thread rips? The beads fall all over the place and create a mess. Similar is the ex-

ample of this Muslim Ummah. As long as the Muslims remain united together, good results will come out of them. However, as soon as they are divided, there arises troubles and problems; something that has been experienced many times.

Lastly we end discussion on this important issue by quoting a statement from Grand Ayatollah Imam Khomeini (RA) who said: "We Muslims are busy bickering over whether to fold or unfold our arms during prayer, while the enemy is devising ways of cutting them off."



# The Importance of Islamic Unity

“Surely, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me (and no other).” (Holy Qur’an, 21:92)

The above verse points to an ideal, which is currently not being met. If we look at the current state of the ummah (the global Islamic community), we can clearly see that generally speaking, it is far from a “community”. The all to see; Muslims are making hostility, preaching hatred, see from the ongoing sectarian violence in countries like Pakistan and Iraq. The ummah is in reform.

disunity within the ummah is very apparent for false claims against one another, creating and even killing one another, as we can see a desperate situation and in dire need of

## Defining Islamic Unity

It is essential that we define what is meant by “Islamic unity”. There are various ideas and conceptions of Islamic unity. According to the highly intellectual scholar and prolific writer, Martyr Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, “There are three definitions of what Islamic unity is. The first is that all Islamic schools of thought should come together, give up their differences and form a new single denomination. The second definition is that one school of thought should be followed and all the others forsaken. Both these ideas are incorrect and impractical and do not represent the true conception of Islamic unity. The third idea is that Islamic unity is, as Ayatollah Motahhari says, “in no way related to the unity of the different schools of jurisprudence but signifies the unity of the Muslims and the unity of the followers of different schools of thought, with their different religious ideas and views. This is the correct definition of Islamic unity.”

According to this definition of Islamic unity, we do not need to make any compromises on our principles, practices, or beliefs for the sake of Islamic unity. Furthermore, we do not necessarily have to stop talking about the differences between the various Islamic schools of thought or avoid engaging in discussions and dialogue about them.

Some people believe that in order for us to unite with other schools of thought we must compromise some of our be-

liefs, otherwise, the achievement of unity would not be possible, and, therefore, we cannot possibly unite if it entails compromising our beliefs. This belief is akin to the “all or nothing” principle.

## Is Difference, the Cause of Disunity?

Many think that it is impossible for such a large community with so many diverse schools of thought, each with their own ideologies and practices, to unite. Differences of opinion in matters of practice, jurisprudence, and particularly doctrine and belief are regarded by many as the root cause of disunity in the ummah. In answer to this view, we need to revisit our definition of Islamic unity. Islamic unity is not about forming one single uniform denomination with the same doctrines and practices. Differences of opinion permeate all societies, nations, and even families. People differ

on social issues, political matters, and even familial affairs. Difference and variety are intrinsic features of this world. Differences in opinions, views, and thoughts in themselves are not bad and should not be the cause of disunity.

We must reflect upon why there is so much diversity in this world and why we have been exposed to such a wide range of religions, ideologies, sects, and lifestyles. Such diversity in the world poses a great challenge to human beings to utilize the intellect that Allah has granted them. If there were only one religion in the world then people could choose to either follow that religion or not, there would only be two options to choose from. This would lead to intellectual stagnation which would be detrimental to our existence, for it is difference that leads to intellectual exploration, reasoning, dialogue, and discussion. Having said that, that is not to say that different opinions, beliefs, and religions are all valid. There is a clear division between truth and falsehood and it is only after we start to search for the truth that we come to appreciate and understand other ideologies, a process that breeds tolerance and ultimately unity. In the words of the Holy Qur’an: “...and if Allah had willed He would have made you a single community, but (His plan is) to test you in what He has given you, therefore strive with one another in good deeds; to Allah is your return, so He will then inform you in that which you dif-

▶ **Many think that it is impossible for such a large community with so many diverse schools of thought, each with their own ideologies and practices, to unite.**



ferred.” (5:48)

However, we often tend to talk about differences between the various Islamic schools of thought more so than we do about the similarities to the extent that we tend to forget those essential tenets that make us all Muslims. All Muslims believe in one God, Allah (SWT), follow the Last Messenger, Muhammad (PBUH), have the same book, the Holy Qur’an, fast in the same month, Ramadhan, visit the house of Allah during Hajj, and finally, we all share one identity, we are all Muslims.

Ayatollah Amini, the distinguished compiler of the 20-volume book “Al-Ghadir”, says in his famous compilation:

“People are free to express views and ideas on religion. These (views and ideas) will nev-

er tear apart the bond of Islamic brotherhood to which the Holy Qur’an has referred by stating that “surely the believers are brothers...” (49:10)

Notwithstanding the differences that we have in the primary and secondary principles, we share a common point and that is belief in the Almighty and His Prophet...We all live under the banner of truth and carry out our duties under the guidance of the Qur’an and the Prophetic Mission of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The message of all of us is “Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam...” (3:18) and the slogan of all of us is “There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.” Indeed, we are (the members of) the party of Allah and the supporters of his religion.”

The division and disunity that exists in the ummah today is not due to the theological and jurisprudential differences between the different Islamic schools of thought, rather it is due to how we respond to such differences. The disunity that is so rampant within the ummah is due to our intolerance and ignorance. A major obstacle to uniting the ummah is the lack of a genuine desire to understand where the other party is coming from and why he or she holds certain beliefs and carries out certain practices.

#### Socio-Political Unity

The current state of disunity has weakened the ummah and left it in a vulnerable position. This is why we see Muslims under





attack in their own countries across the globe. In the wake of the current global political climate Islam as an institution, an ideology, and a way of life is being attacked. The incidence of Islamophobia is rising and Muslims are finding it hard to fight back due to the lack of a unified and cohesive Muslim front.

Talking about Islamic unity, Grand Ayatollah Imam Khomeini (RA) once said: "Today, world peace is such that all countries are under the political influence of the superpowers; they observe control everywhere and have schemes for defeating every group. The most important of these is sowing discord among brothers. Muslims should be awake, Muslims should be alert that if a dispute takes place

among Sunni and Shi'ite brothers, it is harmful to all of us, it is harmful to all Muslims. Those who want to sow discord are neither Sunni nor Shi'ite, they are agents of the superpowers and work for them."

The current situation of the Muslims is akin to that of a football team whose players are fighting amongst each other, leaving the goal unprotected and vulnerable to the strikers of the opposing team to score and defeat them. In order for us to wave off the attacks on Islam and Muslims, we must unite on common grounds and similarities, which we have so many of. Irrespective of the jurisprudential and theological differences, all Muslims can and should work towards similar socio-political

aims. Such aims include protecting the ummah, creating a just society, working towards the welfare of Muslims and humanity at large, disseminating knowledge and educating people, and generally speaking providing for the needs of the Muslim community on all possible levels. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has said that "He who wakes up in the morning and does not think about and have concerns over the affairs of the Muslims is not one of us".

### Dialogue

One practical way in which the community could come together is through dialogue and it can be a very powerful tool if used appropriately. Sometimes debates can lead to arguments







and polemical disputes causing more disunity. Rather, we should be holding discussions and dialogues with the sincere intention of understanding one another, to seek the truth, and to unite under one banner, and work together for a common cause.

Tolerance and understanding can be achieved through dialogue and discussion. After dispelling the myths and misconceptions about one another, and either agreeing on issues of difference or agreeing to disagree on such issues, Muslims can then come together and constructively discuss the socio-political problems of the ummah and society in general and set aims and objectives as to how to tackle such problems. In his refreshing book, "Doctrines of Shi'i Islam", Ayatollah Ja'far Sobhani writes as under:

"The Imami Shi'a do not regard differences in juristic details as undermining Islamic brotherhood or as precluding the solidarity of the Muslims as a unified community. They believe that by engaging in scholarly discussion, in a calm atmosphere, many of the intellectual

and jurisprudential differences and difficulties can be resolved. In principle, human society is characterized by the fact that there will always be differences of opinion. Closing the door of intellectual discussion and enquiry to the intellectual causes the swift demise of knowledge and learning, for it cannot but erode intellectual thought and reflection."

The Holy Qur'an says: "Invite (all) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in the best manner: for your Lord knows best who have strayed from His Path, and those who follow the right way." (16:125) How can we refuse to share the blessing and the mercy that has been bestowed upon us by Allah with others, especially so considering that Islam is a universal religion, open to all people. As

► **One practical way in which the community could come together is through dialogue and it can be a very powerful tool if used appropriately. Sometimes debates can lead to arguments and polemical disputes causing more disunity**





such we must make it accessible to everyone, through various means such as dialogue. In a hadith, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (AS) says:

"Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus) (AS) stood up to address the children of Israel (bani Israel), he said: 'O children of Israel! Never reveal wisdom to the ignorant since this is tyranny on wisdom (itself), and never conceal it from those worthy of it since this will be tyranny on the worthy.' "

### Conclusion

Martyr Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr has been quoted saying:

"...from the time I was able to recognize my existence and realize my duty in this community I have considered my existence dedicated equally to the Shias and Sunnis. I spread the message of unity and the belief that

unites the people. I have lived my life solely for Islam; the path to salvation and the goal of all Muslims. Thus my dear Sunni brothers I am with you, just in the same way as I am with the Shia brothers. I have regard for you in the same proportion you have regard for Islam." We

► **"Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus) (AS) stood up to address the children of Israel (bani Israel), he said: 'O children of Israel! Never reveal wisdom to the ignorant since this is tyranny on wisdom (itself), and never conceal it from those worthy of it since this will be tyranny on the worthy.' "**



must all work towards uniting our ummah and begin to realize that we are all one. Any differences of opinion should be a cause for constructive dialogue rather than destructive debate, fostering intellectual inquiry rather than mutual sectarian denigration. As the Holy Qur'an says: "Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs: for them is a dreadful penalty..." (3:105) "And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love so that by His Grace, you became brothers; and you were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make His Signs clear to you: That you may be guided." (3:103)



# Finding Faults, Ignoring Faults



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Shia Sunni Unity: Shia Sunni Differences, Shia Sunni Conflict

The centuries old Shia Sunni differences are the major obstacle to Muslim unity (Shia Sunni unity). The enemies of Islam to their benefit have always fanned these differences. Unfortunately, some so-called Muslim scholars on their payroll have also played a key role in keeping these differences alive.

Although I was born into a Sayyid Sunni family, I did not know of many differences while growing up as a child. Our families always respected Imam Husain (peace be upon him) and his parents and participated in ceremonies marking the anniversary of his martyrdom (the 10th day of the month of Muharram which is called Ashura) by reciting the first chapter of the Holy Qur'an (al-Fatihah) and other chapters and verses of the Holy Quran and fasted on the ninth and tenth days of that month.

Now when I give lectures on Islam to non-Muslims, one of the questions they always ask me is if I am Shia or Sunni. I ask them if they know the difference. They have no knowledge, other than what has been given to them by the media. So they say Shias are the ones who are the bad guys, the militant version of Islam, and cause all the trouble in the Middle East these days.

These non-Muslim American audiences of mine are surprised to learn that the known tyrant Saddam Hussain was a Sunni, just as they are surprised to learn that Tariq Aziz (Former Iraq's Foreign Minister) was Christian and

not a Muslim.

This is what I say to them about Shiites. "If Ali ibn Abu Talib (cousin of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)) was a Shia, then I am a Shia. If he was a Sunni, then I am a Sunni [i.e., a follower of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)]." In Islam there are five recognized schools of Divine Law: 1) Hanafi; 2) Shafi; 3) Maliki; 4) Hambali and 5) Jafari.

The first four are called Sunni, and the fifth one, who in addition to following the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), also follows those of Ali ibn Abu Talib and consider him as the rightful successor of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), are called Shia. The first four have many major theological differences among themselves and according to a Christian friend of mine, "The only time Sunnis are united is when they are fighting Shias." Shiism started as a political movement (Shia means follower or partisan) to help Ali ibn

Abu Talib become the successor of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Around every successful popular figure, there are some admirers whose own future interests rest with the rise of their leader. Thus in Indiana, we have "Friends of Lugar Club", who are hoping that someday Senator Richard Lugar will become a US President. Nationally, we now have a "Hillary Rodham Clinton Fan Club" with 4,000 members! Thus, there were the Followers of Ali ibn Abu Talib Club, which later on became a political movement. During the initial battles with unbelievers, Ali ibn Abu Talib, the Sword of Islam, was in the forefront and defeated and killed many of their leaders whose children and grandchildren, even when they became Muslims, always remembered who killed their father (animosity).

Ali ibn Abu Talib was raised by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a child so he knew Islam very well. Thus, when Ali ibn Abu Talib became a judge, his judgments were based on strict Islamic principles, much to the disappointment of many who expected him to be lenient to the rich and powerful. Ali ibn Abu Talib was so well respected and trusted by both Caliph Abu Bakr and Umar, that in difficult cases they asked his opinion.

Nevertheless, I tell my non-Muslim audience that both Shia and Sunni have many things in common. They both believe in One God (Allah), follow the same Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the last Prophet, offer five daily prescribed prayers, perform the

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prescribed fast in the month of Ramadan, go to Makkah for the Hajj pilgrimage, read the same book of Allah, Holy Qur'an, and pay the poor-due (Zakat).

However, my answers can only satisfy my uninformed non-Muslim audience. The Sunni brothers, misguided by western propaganda, who are ready to embrace non-Muslims (especially the white ones), under the pretext of invitation to Islam, will not do so for Shia. They are ignorant Sunnis. Our job as a missionary should be to invite both groups to true Islam and not chase them out. There is a movement in the Sunni world to have Shias labeled as disbelievers. I have been told that Shaykh bin Baz of Saudi Arabia has declared an edict that the meat of the People of Book (Jews and Christians) is permissible for Sunni Muslims to eat but not the meat slaughtered by Shias.

There are scholars on both sides, like Imam Khomeini and Shaykh Shaltut of al-Azhar who have done their best to minimize these differences and bring unity, but it is not working due to the misinformation prevailing in the common masses of Sunnis about Shiism. Thus I am listing their misconceptions of Shia beliefs and practices. For answers, I have consulted two Shia scholars in America. Dr. A. S. Hashim of Washington and Imam Muhammad Ali Elahi of Detroit.

Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr wrote to me "to ignore and not waste time in responding to such wrong allegations." He also mentioned that "a great deal of money and effort is being spent

in the last few years to fan the fire of hatred between Shia and Sunni in the Persian Gulf region with obvious political and economical fruits for powers-to-be." However, in the interest of Islamic unity, I must deal with the questions rather than shun them. Please note that Imam Ja'far Sadiq (AS), founder of the Shia school of law, was the teacher of Imam Abu-Hanifa.

- Misconception #1: Shias have a different Holy Qur'an. They add another 10 chapters to the original Holy Qur'an.

Response: Not true. I have checked many times Holy Qur'an kept in Shia homes and mosques. I still find it the same as the original Holy Qur'an. More recently, I took care of an Iranian lady patient hospitalized here. I saw a copy of the Holy Qur'an by her side. I borrowed it from her and browsed through cover-to-cover. In Arabic, it was the same as our Holy Qur'an. Of course, since I did

not know the Persian language, I can't say much about the translation. It is a sin to even say that the Holy Qur'an can be changed or added to by Shia when Almighty God protects it.

- Misconception #2: Some Shia considers Ali ibn Abu Talib as God.

Response: Not true. It is disbelief to even think of such a thing. During the time of Ali ibn Abu Talib, some pagan groups called Gholat did consider Ali ibn Abu Talib as Lord. When he found out, they were burned to death.

- Misconception #3: Shias have different declarations of faith and they add to the call to prescribed prayer.

Response: The declaration to become a Muslim, as administered to non-Muslims, is the same. Some Shias add to themselves, "Ali ibn Abu Talib is a friend of God or Ali ibn Abu Talib is a spiritual leader of God," after the call to prescribed prayer, but not as part of the call to prescribed prayer.

- Misconception #4: Shias do not perform Sunnah prayers. Sunnah prayers are non-obligatory prayers performed by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Response: Shias do perform non-obligatory prayers, 36 cycles per day in total, but call it Nawafil and not Sunnah.

- Misconception #5: Some Shia believes the Angel Gabriel made a mistake and prophethood was meant for Ali ibn Abu Talib and not Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Response: Not true. No Shia

▶ **• Misconception #5: Some Shia believes the Angel Gabriel made a mistake and prophethood was meant for Ali ibn Abu Talib and not Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Response: Not true. No Shia thinks of such false claims. "Only demented minds think of such questions."**



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- **Misconception #6:** Shias slander and ridicule the first three caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman) and Prophet Muhammad's wife, Ayesha.

Response: Shia considers the first three caliphs as companions and administrators, but not spiritual leaders (Imams). Imam Jafar as Sadiq (peace be upon him), whose mother and grandmother came from the line of Abu Bakr, said of Abu Bakr, "He gave me birth twice." Ayesha is respected by Shias as the "Mother of Believers," as Ali ibn Abu Talib respected her when he sent her back from Basra to Madinah after the Battle of the Camel. If some Shias do slander the three caliphs and Ayesha, they do it out of ignorance and should ask God's forgiveness. (As we have witnessed how Imam Khomeini, The Shias bravely declared the death of Salman Rushdie - The author of Satanic Verses who abused the wife of Prophet Ayesha and Shia Leader declared blasphemy, just for his Fatwa the whole western countries became against Iran. See how much price did Shia pay to defend Ayesha - while Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE etc. etc. as the Sunni governments were silent they did not defend Ayesha. Now who loves Ayesha?)

- **Misconception # 7:** Shias combine all five prayers into one prayer in the evening.

Response: Not true. In Shia

mosques, whether in Iran or the USA, all five daily prayers are performed. Shias do combine noon and afternoon and evening and night, but Shia scholars recommend performing them separately. Such combinations may not be ideal, but better than not praying at all. How can a Sunni who does not pray at all be better than a Shia who combines prayers?

- **Misconception # 8:** Shias do not pay zakat (poor-due).

Response: Not true. They not only pay 2.5% left over from savings as zakat but also an additional 20% as Khums or general charity. However, they prefer to pay directly to the needy rather than the corrupt Sunni government.

- **Misconception #9:** Shias practice temporary marriages (Mut'ah).

Response: Temporary marriage (Mut'ah) was allowed during the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and he himself practiced

it. Ibn Zubayr was born out of temporary marriage. Later on, Caliph Umar prohibited it due to social reasons as the Islamic world was rapidly expanding. Shias discourage Mu'tah but do not consider it prohibited. Some do abuse this. As a temporary privilege during travel, it is better than adultery.

- **Misconception #10:** They consider Imams infallible and above the Prophets.

Response: Not true. All prophets are born prophets but as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an about Abraham that after passing the test, a prophet becomes a leader (Imam). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the Prophet (Nabi), Messenger (Rasul), and leader (Imam). Imams are carriers of the message of Islam. Shias consider Ali ibn Abu Talib only as an Imam and not a prophet.

With the little knowledge I have, I tried to do my best as a Sunni in defending my Shia brothers in Islam with the hope and prayer to God Almighty that He will "instill love in the heart of the believers" and bring us closer to each other so that we jointly can fight our common enemy, Satan, and his followers.

"Knowledge is better than wealth because it protects you while you have to guard wealth. It decreases if you keep on spending it but the more you make use of knowledge, the more it increases. What you get through wealth disappears as soon as wealth disappears but what you achieve through knowledge will remain even after you."

▶ **• Misconception # 8: Shias do not pay zakat (poor-due). Response: Not true. They not only pay 2.5% left over from savings as zakat but also an additional 20% as Khums or general charity. However, they prefer to pay directly to the needy rather than the corrupt Sunni government.**

# The Islamic Unity Week

12th of Rabi al-Awwal marks the start of the Islamic Unity Week (12 to 17 Rabi al-Awwal) initiated in 1979 by the founder of Iran's Islamic Revolution, the late Imam Khomeini (RA), following the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, in order to promote unity among Muslims and bring Muslims of all denominations on a common platform on this auspicious occasion.

The birth anniversary of God Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is an occasion of joy. It is an event to celebrate in order to promote the dynamism of fraternity and brotherhood transcending the superficial divisions of ethnicity, lineage, social status, language, skin color, geography, and nationality, by focusing on the immaculate personality of the Prophet of Peace, who bequeathed to humanity practical precedents that ensure harmony and development; if followed diligently.

He was born in the monotheistic Hashemite clan that adhered to the path of his illustrious ancestor Prophet Ibrahim the Iconoclast and was entrusted with the universal mission of Islam to unite people.

Foretold by all Prophets of the past, he excellently accomplished his mission, and during the 23 years that he discharged his duties, he trans-

formed fratricidal tribes into the fraternal Ummah that soon became the torchbearer of science and civilization.

Unlike the numerous sects and castes that Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and other creeds are divided into watertight compartments, Muslims, whatever their jurisprudential affiliations, follow the same fundamental tenets of Islam.

For instance, they believe in the One and Only God as the Creator of the universe, face the same focal point (the Holy Ka'ba in Mecca) for the daily ritual prayers; recite the

same single Qur'an as the Revealed Word of God (as opposed to the different versions of the Christian Gospels); fast in the blessed month of Ramadhan; perform Hajj in the same days of Zilhijjah; and unanimously regard Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the Seal of all Divine Messengers.

So, where are the points of difference about which the enemies of Islam brag about, in order to sow seeds of discord amongst Muslims?

Only the devilish elements who masquerade as Muslims, but whose hearts are devoid of faith, bite the Zionist-Imperialist bait and turn into Takfiris to terrorize and slaughter innocent Muslims.



Now we understand why these deviated elements consider the celebration of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as “bid’ah” or innovation because they are fearful that Islamic unity will sound the death knell for their creators in the

day the “Mercy unto the creation” was born.

The Holy Qur’an says:

“Hold fast, all together, to Allah’s cord and do not be divided; and remember Allah’s blessing upon you when you were enemies, then He

Keeping this in view there is no doubt that there ought not to be any dispute amongst Muslims regarding the Prophet of Peace and his universal message.

As Muslims of various denominations join together these days to celebrate the birthday of God’s Greatest Creation – no matter if the heretical Takfiris seethe in anger and threaten to kill Shi’a Muslims – we indeed feel indebted to the foresight of the Father of the Islamic Revolution for taking the commendable step 43 years ago and declaring Islamic Unity Week to span these two dates of Rabi al-Awwal, so that the plots of the enemies of Islam, especially the Americans and the Zionists, and their agents – and terrorist groups – could be nipped in the bud.

According to the holy Prophet (PBUH), a true Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands others are safe. A true Muslim should not oppress anyone, since oppression is a grave and unforgivable sin. Trampling the rights of others disrupts the psychological health of persons and is the most important factor for discord and separation. The Seal of Prophets made it clear that Muslims should regard themselves as brethren of the same community, and anyone who is not concerned about the affairs of fellow Muslims is not a true Muslim. It means, a Muslim should not betray another Muslim, let alone slander or kill him. As per the practice and behavior of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), a Muslim ought to be the mirror of his Muslim brother.

West.

Thus, in view of these facts, the existing difference of opinion about the birthdate of the Prophet is not a matter of fundamental dissimilarity. It could be a scribal error in those days when paper was not yet available and the Arabic numerals had not yet been standardized.

Another explanation in this regard is the chain of authorities of transmitters of hadith. For example, based on certain narrations by the Sahaba of the Prophet believe that he was born on the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal, while the Shi’ites, for their part, by referring to the narrations received from the Ahl al-Bayt, consider the 17th of the same month as the auspicious

brought your hearts together, so you became brothers with His blessing.”

The need for Muslims to keep united is clearly underscored in this verse. Not only has the Islamic Unity Week ensured that all Muslims come together to celebrate the birth of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) over the period of a whole week together, but it has also provided a shield against those who seek to exploit their own interests by dividing and segregating Muslims into different sects. Sunni and Shia Muslims have resisted such efforts by coming together in these celebrations.







**36th International Islamic Unity Conference, with the main theme of “Islamic Unity, Peace, and Avoidance of Division and Conflict in the Islamic World**

# Excerpts from the Views Shared by the Participants

**Hojjat al-Islam Shahriyari, Secretary General of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought:**

One of the objectives of this

conference is to design a plan for the attainment of the New Islamic Civilization and examine the ways and means of its practical implementation. In this regard

there are some points that need to be taken into consideration:

\*Approving ijtihad in all Islamic schools of thought and respecting the differences,



\* Clarifying ignorance is one of the duties of the scholars and exposing the enemy's projects is one of the duties of the Islamic media, and we should make the Jihad of Tabyin (lit. "struggle to explain/clarify" unknown facts) on the agenda using modern tools,

\* Islamic nations must pursue their rightful demands from autocratic governments,

\* Ethnic and sectarian prejudice is against the teachings of Islam and the Muslim Ummah should avoid it, and all should hold on to the divine rope and know that the criterion of superiority in our religion is piety and adherence to divine guidance,

\* Adhering to rational methods to resolve disputes, and

\* Constructive and healthy competition between Islamic countries.

#### **Hojjat al-Islam Sayyid Ali Fa- zlullah, Friday Prayer Imam of Beirut:**

All Islamic schools of thought and trends must be respected. Islam is a religion of love, compassion, and friendship, and we must prove this important thing to the rest of the world by creating unity and seriously avoiding division and war in order to achieve salvation. Of course, Islamic countries have good facilities and capabilities that if they unite, they can liberate occupied Palestine from the clutches of the enemy - the usurper Israel.

#### **Sheikh Khaled Al-Molla, the head of the Iraqi Sunni Ulema community:**

This conference is being held in a situation where Islamic countries are facing complex problems. Today, the people of Iran, who are

obedient to their leader and support the oppressed nations of the world, have been targeted by the enemies, and we must act vigilantly to confront them and explain the concept of Jihad of Tabyin that the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution has proposed. Today the enemy is trying to increase the differences and create division among Muslims and incite more sedition in the Islamic Ummah.

#### **Mawlawi Eshaq Madani, Chair- man of the Supreme Council of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought**

The Qur'anic verse "وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا" which has been repeatedly brought to the notice of the Muslim Ummah after the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the same verse that the Holy Prophet of Allah resorted to at the time when there had occurred





some disputes among his companions. Today, both hypocrites and enemies of Islam cannot tolerate the unity of the Islamic Ummah and are always trying to destroy it. Therefore, we must know and realize the importance and power of Islamic unity in facing

our common enemies. We hope that this Islamic Ummah will be fully alert and finally we will be able to achieve what we want, i.e. the New Islamic Civilization.

**Sheikh Muhammad Abdul Ha-meed, head of the department**

### of Islamic education of Juranpur College of Bangladesh:

All the differences that are going on in the Islamic world are about details, otherwise, there are no differences in the fundamentals of Islam. Therefore, in order to avoid differences and divisions, it is bet-





ter to follow someone whose ijti-had is stronger or most people follow his opinion. In this way, it would be possible to avoid unnecessary conflicts and disputes. It is very sad that conflicts and differences in the Islamic Ummah are increasing and Jewish, Chris-

tian, and infidel groups are seizing these opportunities to harm Muslims.

**Hojjat al-Islam Ramin Igidov, Chairman of the Georgian Muslim Administration:**

Sometimes some people consider unity as a tactic, but this is not a tactic or a tactical step, but an important strategy and plan to achieve a goal, and it is necessary for the growth and excellence of Muslims in political, social, and other fields. It certainly takes strength to face the enemy, and if we are separated, we cannot overcome them. But if there is unity and solidarity among one billion and 700 million Muslims under the existing situation, we will witness what a terrible picture will be drawn in front of the enemy. God the Most High says "collectively hold on to the divine thread and never divide. However, there are people who do not consider uni-

ty among Muslims possible, and even if they have a positive view of interfaith dialogue, they consider proximity among Islamic schools of thought a mistake, which - as specified by the Holy Qur'an - is the wrong way of thinking.

**Irfan Rashid Sharif, Deputy Minister of Awqaf of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq:**

The religion of Islam is a unifying religion to strengthen cohesion and solidarity in society, and the Holy Qur'an has emphasized brotherhood and peaceful coexistence among Muslims. We Muslims should strive to strengthen unity and cohesion among the Islamic Ummah by following the life of the Messenger of God (PBUH) and following the Qur'anic teachings. Also, we consider it obligatory upon ourselves to thank the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran in bringing the hearts of Muslims in the region closer to each other.



# The Holy Quran and the Factors of Islamic Unity

The Qur'an has looked at the issue of unity from its social point of view and has emphasized the importance of unity among the worlds, religions, Muslims, and the institution of the family, and considers the connection between the hearts of believers as a kind of divine intervention, and in order to create and maintain such unity, it has predicted certain solutions, part of which are to prevent division, and the

other part is to strengthen unity.

1- Concentrating on the common points: There are certain common points that the Qur'an has specifically pointed out and has called on Muslims to unite on their basis. Emphasizing that humans are all created from dust (Al-Hajj: 5) or born from one parent (Al-Hujurat: 13). The fact that human dignity belongs to all humans - and color and race do not affect it - (Isra':70) is

to draw attention to these common points with regard to unity. The invitation to the followers of divine religions and People of the Book to come to common points of belief (Aal-e Imran: 64) has also been done for this reason.

2- Holding fast to Allah's cord: In its most explicit verse, in the call for unity, the Holy Qur'an has called on all the believers to grasp the divine cord and avoid



division: "And hold fast to the rope of God and do not be divide" (Aal-e Imran: 103) and also in Verses 146 and 175 of Suraj Al-Nisa' and verse 101 of Surah Aal-e Imran it talks about resorting to God. Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an has asked believers to turn to God in their conflicts and differences. In the words of the Qur'an: "And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allah..." (Al-Nisa': 59) Therefore, in addition to being the axis of unity, the Qur'an can, in case of the eruption of differences, restore unity in the Ummah. Such a role for the Qur'an is due to the fact that, in addition to calling on everyone to unity and warning them against division, it outlines a coherent and harmonious ideological, moral, and practical system that anyone who refers to it, will subconsciously connect with millions of the follower of the Qur'an.

3- Referring to the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH): In addition to the fact that the Qur'an recognizes the very being of the Prophet (PBUH) as a key for the unity and solidarity among Muslims (Aal-e Imran:159), it considers referring to the Prophet's Sunnah to be a way for creating and preserving it: "And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allah and His Messenger..." (Ibid.) The Sunnah of the Holy Prophet, explaining the teachings of the Qur'an can remove the ambiguities, mistakes, and misunderstandings, which may be the cause of dispersion.

4- Referring to the Ahl al-Bayt (AS): The Qur'an mentions the

Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) as "those vested with authority" and considers obedience to them as obedience to God Almighty and the Messenger also considers their words to be the means of understanding: "O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you." (Ibid.) And it is for this reason that it asked Muslims to refer to them in cases of differences among them or their understanding of religion: "had they referred it to the Prophet or to those vested with authority among them, those of them who investigate would have ascertained it" (Al-Nisa': 83)

5- Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil: After calling on the Muslims to hold fast to the divine cord and avoid division, the Holy Qur'an asks them to rise up to enjoin the good and forbid the evil: "There has to be a nation among you summoning to the good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong." (Aal-e Imran: 104) And immediately warns them not to disperse like the followers of the previous religions who suffered from many mistakes in their religion: "Do not be like those who became divided and differed after manifest signs had come to them." (Ibid.: 105) This shows that enjoining good and forbidding evil plays a special role in establishing unity and preventing division. Accepting such an effective role for these two divine decrees is the reason that fragmentation among the followers of religion is either a result of a

mistake in understanding religious teachings or it originates from selfishness on the part of individuals and groups. Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil in the form of social supervision can prevent the approach to and spreading such deviations.

6- Respecting the rights of brotherhood: The Holy Qur'an considers believers as one another's souls and asks them not to find fault with each other: "And do not defame one another (Al-Hujurat: 11); avoid suspicion, spying on each other, unjust slanders, and backbiting (See Al-Hujurat 12 and Al-Nur: 23) and refers to backbiting as eating the flesh of one's brother: (Al-Hujurat: 12). And due to the alignment of such a bond with God's will, it has asked the believers to thread on the path of truth, avoiding which would be tantamount to opposing the Prophet (PBUH) (Al-Nisa': 115). The Holy Qur'an asks the believers that - like those in heaven - to remove grudges from their hearts (Al-Hijr: 47), and to be compassionate to each other in their souls, and ask God to forgive their religious brothers before themselves: "Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who were our forerunners in the faith, and do not put any rancor in our hearts toward the faithful." (Al-Hashr: 10)

7- Reconciliation: Despite the existence of elements of unity, such as the unity of faith, differences, and disputes among religious brothers are natural to a certain extent and part of social life. In order to deal with such differences and to perpetuate



the former unity of the believers, the Holy Qur'an has asked them to promote reconciliation among religious brothers and to resolve disputes (Al-Hujurat: 9).

8- Worship programs: Acts of worship have been defined in Islam in such a way that they, very naturally, promote practical convergence and unity among individuals and in the community.

A) Supplication: In addition to calling believers to supplicate to God (Al-Ghafir: 60), the Holy Qur'an contains the highest themes of prayer, and an examination of the themes of these prayers shows that most of them are presented in the

plural form. For instance, verses 191 to 194 of Surah Aal-e Imran recommend praying for forty believers before praying for oneself and this indicates that Islam places great emphasis on the soul of unity among the Ummah.

B) Congregational prayer: Emphasis on attending mosques and participating in congregational prayer: "and bow along with those who bow (in prayer)" (Al-Baqarah: 43) as well as the promises for many rewards for performing - it many hadiths - are among the Islamic factors to create convergence.

C) Hajj: The Qur'an has con-

sidered one of the wisdoms of Hajj to be joint benefits on the part of Muslims: "that they may witness the benefits for them..." (Al-Hajj: 28). It is quite evident that one of the most important benefits intended in this verse is the strengthening of the bond of brotherhood and unity among believers and reflecting upon the strength caused by unity. The impermissibility of quarrels and disputes in Hajj (Al-Baqarah:197), wearing simple clothes of the same color during ihram, and performing the rituals of Hajj together and next to each other, pursue this important goal.



# Islamic Unity Week and Milad Al-Nabi Celebration in Africa

By Abdullah R. Makwinja

Every year millions of Muslims across the globe celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Sunni and Shia denominations celebrate this event on two different dates within the same week. The interval between these two dates is annually commemorated as Islamic Unity Week which was initiated in the year 1979, by the founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini. It is called Week of Unity so that Muslims from both schools of thought

can come together to honor the memory of the noblest of all human beings ever to grace the face of the earth. This is the period in which Muslims contemplate the vital call for unity according to the Holy Quran.

This spirit of Islamic unity was shown by 'Allamah Sharaf al-Din al-Musawi who ruled that the Shiites of Lebanon should celebrate the birth of the Prophet (PBUH) on the same day as the Sunnis. Imam Khomeini took this a step further

by declaring Islamic Unity week. Sayyid al-Sistani has also taken praiseworthy steps to promote peace and brotherhood between all Muslims and to help foster unity amongst the Sunni and Shi'a brethren. Muslims all over the world realize that it is only unity and solidarity that can enable them to utilize their vast untapped potential and rescue them from the never-ending devious plots of their enemies around the world. The message of unity is a signal of



the fact that Muslims need to rise above their shallow differences and be heedful of the malicious intentions of external forces.

The Almighty Allah states clearly in the Holy Qur'an, 48:29 "Muhammad is Allah's Prophet; and those who are (truly) with him are firm and unyielding toward all deniers of the truth, (yet) full of mercy toward one another"

"The believers in their mutual

mutual respect, and cooperation.

Unity is a cherished ideal that every Muslim must strive for at all times, especially today when sectarianism is deliberately promoted to create divisions in the Ummah. Regrettably, attempts at division have succeeded to some extent causing immense suffering in the Muslim world. The enemies of Islam - imperialists and Zionists - fear Muslim unity. They know that if the

mean Muslims should give up removing misunderstandings or abandon the quest for unity. There is no better starting point than the birthday of the noble Messenger (PBUH).

Muslims should also rise above differences of race, color, language, and sect and strive for the larger goal of Muslim unity as exemplified by the composition of the early Muslim community which comprised not only Arabs but great companions from Africa represented by Bilal, Persia represented by Salman and Europe represented by Suhayb.

From this point of view, globalization should be seen as a possibility for the growth and advancement of human good principles, as it has transformed communicative technologies and enabled citizens across the world with swift and unified connectivity. According to this approach, globalization is an appropriate opportunity to develop exalted global Islamic unity.

Muslims should take advantage of globalization. Globalization is not first all about money, market, or competition, but about people and their interconnectedness. With the advances of rapid transportation, instant information, and communication, the world, is converting into a global village; the distance and difference are changing substantively and speedily and becoming irrelevant. The line of demarcation between diverse cultures and civilizations, in the ever-shrinking world, is said to be becoming blurred. This has enabled Muslims to witness every event taking place everywhere in the world be it the oppression of Palestinians by the Zionist or celebrations of happy



love, mercy, and compassion, are like one body. If one organ complained, the rest of the body develops fever"; Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Islamic unity doesn't mean that there will never be differences of opinion among Muslims of course not. It is only normal that we sometimes see things differently. However, Muslims' unity does mean that, in spite of these differences which sometimes occur, we'll be careful to maintain a spirit of love,

Muslims were united, their plots would fail. The imperialists and Zionists would no longer be able to exploit the Muslim world or its resources. Islam's enemies succeed not because they have superior ideas but because they have penetrated the world of Islam imposing their own agents as rulers, who implement their masters' agenda.

The disrupters are often more successful than unifiers because it is easy to create doubts in the minds of people. This does not



occasions such as Milad al-Nabi in Africa or elsewhere in the world.

Milad Nabi is celebrated in almost all Muslim countries and communities throughout the world. The occasion is celebrated in a festival manner, large street processions are held and homes or mosques are decorated. Charity and food are distributed, and stories about the life of Muhammad are narrated with recitation of poetry by children. However, the main significance of these festivities is the expression of love for Prophet Muhammad.

In Nigeria and other West African Muslim communities, Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) birthday is referred to as "Eid al-Maulud". This is one of the most important public holidays in Nigeria. In most parts of Nigeria, a procession comprising men, women, and children, choose a starting point and march towards a central mosque. The procession is usually so long that it is impossible to see the beginning and the end. Christian neighbors are never left out of the parties, as they are usually served from the party buffet.

In Ghana, Eid Milad un Nabi is a time for both celebration and sober reflection. This is when faithful Muslims in the country come together to pray, especially for peace to reign in the world. The attendees usually include well-placed Muslims in Ghana, as well as other invited dignitaries.

In Kenya and other east African Muslim communities, Eid Milad un Nabi brings Muslims together. Like in most African countries, those who celebrate the birth of Prophet Mohammed join a vibrant and colorful procession that culminates

in a mosque. Kenyan dignitaries usually make up the frontlines of the procession. Children recite special poems and Qasidas they had learned just for the occasion. After prayers, a well-respected Muslim leader enjoins everyone to respect the Faith and strive to co-exist peacefully with others.

In Zimbabwe and southern African Muslim communities, Milad un Nabi is usually referred to as

and its community the opportunity to host the birthday anniversary of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The host Mosque comes alive during the celebrations. The Ziyarat Nabi celebrations are vibrant and electric because of the spiritual chants by those participating in the festivities. To keep the reason for the celebrations in sight, poetry chronicling the life of Prophet Mohammed is also featured heavily. Indeed, it is



Ziyarat Nabi and is celebrated with all beautiful poems and songs in praise of the Holy Prophet with all Islamic schools of thought together. The celebration is at most times done all night, in which a few selected Sheikhs give lectures on the birth and life of the Holy Prophet. The celebrations are held throughout the Islamic calendar ending with the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan. The philosophy behind the long celebration is to give every Islamic center

a time of joy, happiness, and sober reflections. Fairs are erected outside mosques to accommodate food stalls.

During these celebrations, Muslims try to inculcate the beautiful attribute of "mercy towards one another" by developing a clearer understanding of the Qur'an and the history of the Holy Prophet (SAAW). This is a way of cementing the bond which already exists within the Muslim communities.

# The Foundations and Causes of Recent Disturbances in the Islamic Republic of Iran

The story of the death of “Mahsa Amini”, a 22-year-old Iranian girl, has been associated with certain disturbances from the end of September to the beginning of October 2022, and as usual, on the one hand, media such as Persian BBC, Voice of America, Iran International, Manoto, and on the other hand, the officials of the White House, the Zionist regime and groups affiliated with the hypocrites and monarchists began to abuse this incident in order to achieve their sinister goals and conspiracies. The outcome of the activities of these networks and the takfiri trends was the riots that occurred in some areas during the past few days. Media networks affiliated with

the American-Western-Saudi-Zionist axis, which do not spare any opportunity to create chaos and insecurity in Iran, were the leaders of managing these riots. This is in spite of the fact that the cause of the death of Mehsa Amini is being pursued at the highest levels of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

What needs to be mentioned is that the victory of the Iranian Islamic Revolution was like an arrow to the body of the global imperialism system because as the result of this Revolution Iran was transformed from an island protecting the interests of the colonial powers in the region into a symbol of freedom of oppressed nations in the





world, one of the outcomes which was the trend of Islamic awakening. Agitated by this movement the arrogant system, using the wealth of some reactionary countries in the region, has always tried and prevents the increasing ideological and soft power of the Islamic Republic.

In the post-JCPOA period and by failing to fulfill its obligations, the US tried to put Iran in a state of recession in order to create a platform for ethnic and social riots. According to the available information, by forming a special center in the White House the Americans had since long been planning to create chaos in Iran. The US, the Zionist regime, and the Saudis had long ago assigned the anti-revolutionary groups, especially the hypocrites and royalists, to form a network to create chaos in the country and with the support received from the Americans and the Zionists, these elements took maximum advantage of the social networks in this regard.

The smallest goal of the recent riots can be seen as a kind of war to isolate Iran and to force it to accept the European version of the JCPOA advocated by the Troika (France, England, and Germany). This is because they believe that chaos and instability inside Iran will increase the bargaining power of the Europeans and the Iranian side will surrender more and more to their demands. It is worth pondering that the recent riots occurred just before the Iranian President was to attend the

United Nations General Assembly, and this clearly indicates the scenario planned against the Islamic Republic of Iran. On the other hand, the western world believes that by imposing more sanctions, it can provide a basis for maximum dissatisfaction and chaos in Iran and that is why some western officials took a stance on this issue.

The existing evidence shows that, first of all, what happened after the death of Mahsa Amini in Iran was a pre-planned conspiracy that targeted the very foundation of the Islamic system and the ideal of the Islamic Revolution. In this way, Mahsa Amini and many others should become victims of the sinister goals of global imperialism. Secondly, in the recent riots, due to the propaganda of the so-called Mojahedin Khalq group, monarchists and separatists, we witnessed the increasing power of social networks, which had practically taken over the power of directing and leading the scene and inciting the youth. However, since the foundations of this system are based on religious and Islamic ideology, the timely presence of people on the scene was able to foil the evil plans of the enemy.

What has been witnessed these days cannot be considered as demand for rights, and in this regard, it seems necessary to pay attention to several points.

- The death of Mahsa Amini, no matter how it is interpreted, could naturally create certain reac-



tions.

- There is usually a possibility to abuse any protest and gathering. There are people and groups in the country who take undue advantage of the inappropriate behavior of a person in an organization as an excuse to create disturbances and negate the very foundation of the state. These people and groups are always waiting for an opportunity to pursue their goals and to fish in troubled waters.

- Gathering and protesting can be considered a right for people, but killing others and destroying public property cannot be attributed to those whose intention is reform. Such actions are carried out with other objectives that go far beyond such issues as hijab.

- These days of ups and downs will also pass, but after things get settled the records of everyone's deed on the day of the incident will be revealed to all.

- As a matter of fact, the masterminds of these riots have openly announced their objective of seeking to overthrow the system.

- Sociologists and scholars of social sciences believe that what you see in the streets today is the result and external manifestation of some old enmities, otherwise, despite the fact that every human life is precious, it cannot find such social and political dimensions on its own.

- The main aim of the foreign media is to add fuel to the fire by magnifying the dimensions of recent events. This is because these media are mainly the mouthpieces of anti-revolutionaries who seek to overthrow the Islamic Republic system.

The events of recent days in some parts of the country proved the involvement of certain counter-revolutionary elements. And besides helping their self-sacrificing brothers and sisters in the police force of the Islamic Republic and the Basij forces, Iran's security forces succeeded in identifying certain behind-the-scene organizers, including some foreign countries, terrorist groups residing in Albania, hostile groups and sects trained by colonialists and their internal elements.

Some of the findings and arrests made from those who were overtly and covertly involved are

as follows:

- Apprehension of 42 agents and associates of the hypocrites. These people had been ordered by the terrorist group residing in Albania to produce fake news to incite the rioters, organize terror and destruction, spread slogans, to be directly present at the scenes of street riots, destroy public property, provide various equipment to confront the police and incendiary materials for setting fire to public and private places and vehicles.

- Apprehension of 77 members of Kurdish gangs, including the official mercenaries of the Zionist gangs known as Komalah, Democrat, PAK, Pejak, and some of the high-ranking cadres of these gangs, who are conspiring against the oppressed people of Kurdistan on both sides of the western borders of the country. Among those arrested, there was a prominent cadre and main member of one of the groups residing in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, who received military training in the American-Zionist bases in the said region and is known as the military commander.

- Apprehension of 5 members of takfiri-terrorist groups along with 36 Kgs. of explosives, who were trying to opportunity to detonate bombs in public circles as well as among the rioters and blame the explosions on the other sides of each, in order to intensify the conflicts.

- Apprehension of 92 people from the affiliates of the disgraced Pahlavi regime and royalists who were both overtly and covertly involved in the unrests.

- Apprehension of 9 foreign nationals from Germany, Poland, Italy, France, Holland, Sweden, etc. in the scene of riots or covertly involved in the unrests.

- Identification and apprehension of 28 thugs who have a history of imprisonment, dealing in and consuming drugs, hooliganism, rape, etc. The attack made by these people on the security forces of the country and injuring them is proof of the claim. Also, two Molotov cocktail production workshops have been discovered from them.

The initial investigation of the mentioned offenders shows the preplanned organization and preparation of various groups and professional



killers to take advantage of any incident, regardless of the type of incident, its location; whether the incident is natural or vice versa. The tragic death of the late Mahsa Amini at this point was just a pretext for a big project and conspiracy designed to incite different sections of people, bring terrorist and takfiri groups into the scene, carry out sabotage and murder within the framework of the “Zionist model of maximum violence”.

Keeping in view the false and misleading propaganda of the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, regarding the status of women in Iran, below is a list of some of the activities and achievements of Iranian women in the post-Islamic Revolution era.



### Women and Education:

- Increased ratio of female to male students by 48%
- Increased enrollment of primary school female pupils by 115%
- Increased enrollment of high school female students by 84%
- Overcoming girls' illiteracy by 99.3%
- Increase of over 33% in female university faculty members
- Women make up 34% of faculty members at medical universities
- Women make up 56% of state university students
- The active presence of 9500 female authors and 840 female publishers

### Women and Health

- Women make up 40% of specialist physicians and 30% of all subspecialty physicians
- Women make up 98% of all gynecological surgeons
- Performing deliveries by female obstetricians in 95% of cases
- Increase in women's life expectancy to 78 years
- Implementation of the Universal Health Coverage Network for all urban inhabitants and 99% of rural people and nomads

### Women, Employment, and Entrepreneurship

- Over 735 women working as managing directors in knowledge-based companies
- Founding managers of over 250 knowledge-based companies
- Some 3000 women serving on the board of directors of knowledge-based companies
- The unemployment rate of women has dropped to 13.7%
- Implementation of the National Employment Plan with a particular focus on rural and nomadic women

### Women and Media

- Increased women's participation in information technology by about 32%
- The presence of women directors and actresses as jury presidents at 45 international film festivals
- Active involvement of 903 women filmmakers in the film industry
- The active presence of more than 2000 women specialists in the production of feature films
- Women filmmakers have won 114 national and 128 international awards at prestigious festivals

### Women and Sports

- More than 50 women presidents and vice presidents for different sports federations
- About 9000 women work as referees in national and international sports events
- Iranian women hold 97 international seats in sports federations worldwide
- Iranian women have won more than 3000 medals at international sports events
- Women athletes have earned numerous Olympic and Paralympic quotas

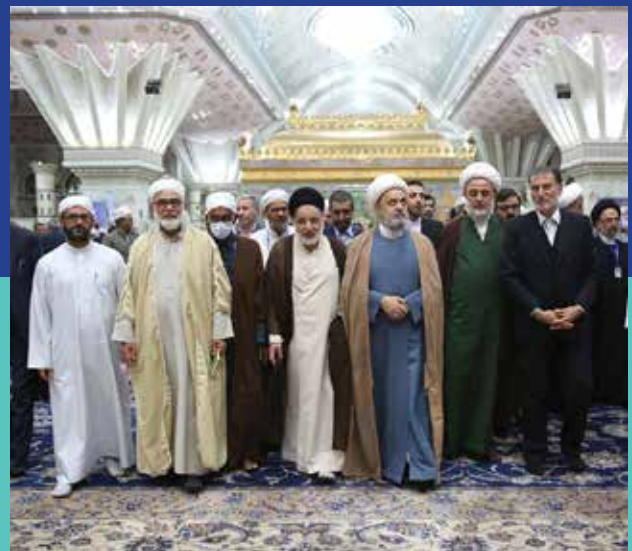
### Women in Authority and Decision-Making Positions

- Increase in the number of women candidates for membership of the Islamic Parliament of Iran by 227%
- Increase in the number of women members of the Islamic Parliament of Iran by 165% since the first parliament
- Women hold 25.2% of all government positions at all executive levels
- Women serving as the vice president of the country for women and family affairs
- Over 1000 women working as judges

### Women and Environment

- Women in charge of 40% of top executive positions in the Environment Organization
- Women serving as the president of the Environment Organization for four terms





## Participants of the 36th Islamic Unity Conference Pay Tribute to Late Imam Khomeini (RA)

Foreign and Iranian guests to 36th International Islamic Unity Conference attended the ceremony to pay tribute to the late founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA) in southern Tehran on Wednesday, October 12, 2022.

Welcoming the participants of the 36th International Islamic Unity Conference in the ceremony held at the Mausoleum of Imam Khomeini (RA), Hojjat al-Islam Sayyid Hassan Khomeini, highlighted Iran's constant support for the Palestinian nation which exceeded what was paid for the Shia community.

Hojjat al-Islam Khomeini also referred to the key role of religious scholars to alleviate conflicts, foil the intrigues and conduct dialogue in the world of Islam.

**All hold on to the  
divine thread and  
do not disperse**

