




Abrahamic Hajj and Its Role in New Islamic Civilization

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The concept of “New Islamic civilization”, which has been raised in recent decades is considered one of the central issues in the intellectual system of Grand Ayatollah Khamenei. Although some written works have been published about the essence, nature, dimensions, elements, and characteristics of this concept, many of its dimensions and aspects have not yet been analyzed and there is room for many research works on this subject. Similarly, there are certain factors that can contribute to the establishment and expansion of the New Islamic Civilization and it deserves the need to be pondered upon and analyzed.



an objective image of it. From this point of view, civilization is basically an objective phenomenon that manifests itself in such forms as art and architecture, techniques and industries, and administrative and political organizations. However, the two-dimensional approach takes into consideration both material and non-material dimensions to be necessary for civilization. From this point of view, the main foundation of civilization is based on non-material elements, especially religion, ethics, and culture, and material progress are considered the manifestations of civilization. This approach prevails mostly among Muslim thinkers. Thus, it can be said that civilization is a platform for mankind to progress both materially and spiritually and achieve his desired divine goals (See Mahdinejad, Seyyed Reza, "An Analysis of the Relationship between Hajj and New Islamic Civilization from the Viewpoint of Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, Periodical on Researches on the Civilizational Discourse of the Islamic Revolution, Vol. 2, No.3, PP. 181-182)

The Concept of New Islamic Civilization

The idea of the New Islamic Civilization put forward by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, is, on the one hand, rooted in the ancient Islamic civilization and, on the other hand, it is somehow in confrontation with the new Western civilization. Grand Ayatollah Khamenei considers the ancient Islamic civilization to be a source of pride and honor for Muslims and believes in the pos-

sibility of such a civilization in the contemporary era to be more than in the past. (August 1, 2016) In his words: "

The Islamic Ummah can, through meticulous and diligent efforts, design and lay the foundation of an Islamic Civilization suitable for this era and present it to mankind." (December 29, 2015) Based on such a view, the position of a comprehensive religious rite like Hajj will be very prominent in the realization of the New Islamic Civilization.

The Effects that Hajj Can Have on New Islamic Civilization

Keeping in view the importance of Hajj in Islam, there arises the question "In what ways can Hajj have an effect on the realization of New Islamic civilization?". Some of these ways are discussed hereunder.

1. Hajj is a manifestation of both spiritual and material aspects of human life

It may be appropriate to consider the most important characteristic of the New Islamic Civilization to be its comprehensiveness from the viewpoint of spirituality and materiality. Of course, the two-dimensionality of the New Islamic Civilization does not mean that there is no priority between the two. Rather, spirituality is the main pivot of this civilization. In other words, although there is material progress in the New Islamic Civilization, this progress is spirituality-oriented and is in pursuit of the ultimate goals of spirituality and not just the creation of unlimited

On the other hand, Hajj is of an outstandingly privileged position in Islam. Hajj is one of God's eternal reserves, the center of Islamic awareness, and an exceptional duty that comprises a set of Islamic values that cannot be collectively found in any other duty. A civilizational approach to Hajj can depict a new manifestation of this obligatory act of worship for Muslims and increase its influence on the Islamic Ummah. As regards the definition of civilization, two approaches can be taken into consideration; a material approach and a two-dimensional approach.

The material approach considers civilization to be more or less a material phenomenon and highlights

material prosperity and hedonism.

On the other hand, Hajj is the source of spirituality that continuously pours out its blessings on the Islamic world and Muslims so that everyone and every group can benefit from it to the extent of their capacity and capability. When people are attracted to the center of performing the divine duty of Hajj, they leave the boundaries of material life and enter a completely spiritual space where man can get truly purified and return. Hajj begins by responding positively to the Divine invitation. In the words of the Supreme Leader: "All the rites and rituals of Hajj, such as the state of Ihram, clothing, and prohibitions of Ihram, Tawaf, Sa'y, Salat, and Wuqufain (staying in Arafat, staying in Mash'ar al-Haram) somehow attract a part of our being to spirituality and getting close to God Almighty (April 5, 1995).

2. Unification of the Ummah in Hajj; A fundamental step in the realization of New Islamic Civilization

Civilization is the product of the collective and coherent efforts of a group of people. Therefore, the formation of civilization is impossible without coherence and solidarity among human beings. The most important precondition for the realization of the New Islamic Civilization in the world is, in the first step, to create bond and unity among its constituents, that is, Muslims and the realization of such solidarity and cohesion can

take place in various ways. Hajj is one of the most important and unique platforms for creating social association and solidarity among the Islamic Ummah. This association can create a large and unified Islamic society in the form of the Islamic Ummah, which will, in turn, be the basis for the realization of the New Islamic civilization. Hajj is a unique opportunity to resolve differences and wrong perceptions and mindsets and create greater understanding and cognition between Muslims by resorting to common principles. The solidarity of the great Islamic society is one of the social goals of Islam, which can be objectively learned during Hajj. It is as if they all practice and experience unity by wearing similar outfits, performing the same acts, uttering the same words, and pursuing the same goal. By relying on the common elements of Muslim identity such as one God, one Qibla, one prophet, and one book, practicing common social life within a specific time frame, and performing the same rituals, Hajj serves as a platform for the greater unity of the Islamic society. It provides room and space for the elimination of sectarian, cultural, and political differences and this social unity can become the basis for the creation of a New Islamic civilization.

In fact, the strengthening of the religious identity of Muslims in the form of the Islamic Ummah can lead to the creation of a common religious identity and the realization of the new Islamic civilization in the next step.

3. Determining identity and otherness of civilization in Hajj

Determining one's identity is a two-way issue, i.e., defining one's own self and defining the other and the existing difference. This point is also applicable to the issue of civilization in the sense that a part of civilizational identity is the outcome of determining civilizational otherness. One of the characteristics of Hajj, which is considered to be a determining factor of unity among Muslims and in a way determines the boundaries between Islamic and non-Islamic society is the issue of repudiation of the common enemy, namely infidels. Islamic civilization is inherently incompatible with a civilization that is based on infidelity. It is not easy to talk about Islamic civilization in its true sense, but do not believe in the distinction between it and the civilization that is fundamentally in conflict with religion and spirituality in general and Islam in particular. The civilizational interpretation of the repudiation of infidels means distinguishing between Islamic civilization and non-Islamic civilization.

Abrahamic, Muhammadan, Alawi, and Hosseini Hajj is the one in which paying attention to God and taking refuge in His authority and power is accompanied by turning one's back against the power of tyrants and oppressors. This means in the absence of repudiating infidels Hajj is incomplete and it will not be approved by the Prophet (PBUH) and his Ahl al-Bayt (AS).