

Islamic unity in support of Gazans

INTERVIEW

Islamic unity has always been a pivotal point in the thoughts and statements of Iran's Leader of the Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and he has often highlighted how this unity can help the Islamic Ummah to solve the issue of Palestine. During his meeting with Iranian officials in charge of conducting and organizing the Hajj pilgrimage on May 6, 2024, Ayatollah Khamenei called this year's Hajj to be "a Hajj of renunciation" against those who show hostility and animosity toward Muslims, namely the Zionists and their supporters. In this interview, Hadi Kobaysi, a political analyst, looks into those features of Hajj that can make Islamic unity and renunciation go hand in hand to provide broad support for the people of Palestine from across the Muslim world.

Hajj is one of the greatest grounds for unity, cohesion, and empathy within the Islamic Ummah. How can this great capacity be utilized to solve the problems of the Islamic world in the best possible way?

Meeting other Muslims in Hajj is to get to know them face-to-face and learn about their issues and the issues of their countries, especially since many Muslims and many people in the new era have their own personal interests or are engrossed in their own interests and the internal affairs of their countries and do not care about other Muslims and their issues. Therefore, Hajj is a suitable platform for direct and mutual sympathy and to get to know one another closely in order to exchange insights and opinions about those problems and challenges.

Another issue is that Hajj, in essence, is migration from one's homeland and appealing to Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, and freeing oneself from worldly matters for a short period of time. There-



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators hold a huge Palestinian flag during a demonstration in New York, United States, on November 24, 2023.
● SELCUK ACAR/ANADOLU

fore, there is a spiritual and unworldly atmosphere in Hajj that allows Muslims to pay attention to general and comprehensive Islamic issues. Another effective factor in Hajj is Muslims getting familiar with the breadth of the Islamic world, the diversity of the Islamic world, and the greatness of the Islamic world. People of different nationalities come to one place. They breakdown the national, sectarian, language, and ethnic barriers between Muslims and look at Islam as an element involved in all of the individual, political, and social issues.

Hajj is a unique opportunity for the declaration of the support of the Islamic Ummah, in general, and the pil-

grims, in particular, for the people of Gaza. In your view, what actions can be taken during Hajj to that end?

The gathering of Muslims in a place with this spirit and with these psychological and social preparations enables many special activities as well as public and group activities. They put aside their minor affiliations, connect with the vast Islamic world, and make use of it to create momentum and present an image to the whole world and other civilizations. This image reflects the reality of Islamic civilization. Hajj is a mutual identity and force in which pilgrims express their moral and political positions through collective actions such as demonstrations and marches of renunciation, as well as through meetings of multinational groups to discuss the current issues of the Islamic world. To solve these problems, they benefit from different suggestions, ideas, cultures, and experiences in

the Islamic world that are offered there.

What is the significance of "renunciation of the enemies of the Islamic world" in this year's Hajj, which is being held at the same time the genocide of Muslims in the Gaza Strip is unfolding?

The renunciation initiative completes monotheism. When we say "There is no God but Allah," we, first and foremost, reject "the Taghut" (idols, tyrants, etc.); we reject the worship of the Taghut; we reject the worship of any deity other than Allah Almighty. The US, global Zionism, and the temporary Zionist entity are nothing but the Taghut, which invites people to be silent before all moral abominations and be silent in the face of the unprecedented and great crimes that are happening in Gaza. Renunciation is a condition and necessity of this worship. It is not possible for a person to worship Almighty Allah and



At the center of this illustration is US President Joe Biden, whose actions in support of Israeli war crimes in Gaza has triggered widespread protests inside and outside the US.
● NEW ARAB

remain silent in the face of these crimes and not sympathize with the residents of the Gaza Strip and the Muslims of the Gaza Strip. Muslims [in Gaza] have been oppressed for many decades, they love worshipping Allah and reading the Qur'an and memorizing it. They are undoubtedly the real oppressed people and need spiritual and political support in all forms.

Therefore, this renunciation is not a political activity on the sidelines of Hajj; it is at the core of Hajj rituals including Tawaf [walking in circles around the Kaaba] at the core of worshipping Allah. It reflects the readiness of Muslims for self-devotion and confrontation. With trust and confidence in Almighty Allah, renunciation [of polytheists] shows the desire of Muslims to devote themselves to the path of Allah and to answer the divine call, self-devotion, and jihad in the path of Allah. This Jihad and this self-devotion are the sacrifices that every pious person makes. Therefore, this renunciation is an integral part of Hajj, and it is an integral part of the general position of Islam and the general humanitarian position, which has gone beyond the Islamic world in supporting the resistance of Gaza and rejecting the ongoing crimes in the Gaza Strip.

The full interview first appeared on khamenei.ir.

Game will change if all pilgrims raise Palestinian flag

INTERVIEW

Iran's Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has issued a powerful call to action ahead of the annual Hajj pilgrimage, urging Muslims worldwide to make this year's journey a "Hajj of renunciation". Speaking to the country's Hajj officials, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized the intersection of religious devotion and geopolitical tensions, calling on pilgrims to disavow the actions of Israel and its supporters, who are hostile towards Muslims, particularly in light of the ongoing crisis in Gaza. As Muslims prepare for the sacred Hajj pilgrimage, Ayatollah Khamenei's directive underscores the importance of using this occasion to confront injustice and oppression, with a focus on unity and solidarity among believers.

In this interview, Dr. Bilal Al-Lakkis, a political researcher, further explains how Hajj can be utilized to become a platform to support the oppressed people of Gaza and Palestine.

How can the Hajj pilgrimage, a powerful platform for unity and empathy within the Islamic community, be leveraged to effectively address the challenges facing the Islamic world?

In the first place, the opportunity of Hajj can be utilized by emphasizing the principles and commonalities among Muslims, especially since all Muslims without exception agree on the necessity of supporting Al-Quds, Gaza, and Palestine, and fighting against the Israeli devil. Muslims agree on many cultural, social, moral, and humanitarian issues. All of these are patterns that cannot be seen in any other society. Muslims getting closer to each other and talking to each other is one of the best ways to strengthen unity because division hurts everyone.

Muslims today are in a strong position, and there is a great opportunity ahead of them that they can make use of at the regional and international levels. The peace and security that God wants to prevail among Muslims and among all humanity will be achieved through direct communication between different sections of the Muslim community and relying on their great common religion, Islam. This peace and security will not be achieved by leaning toward the outside [of Islamic societies].

Hajj provides a special opportunity for the declaration of the support of the Islamic Ummah, especially the pilgrims, for the people of Gaza. In your view, what actions can be taken during Hajj to that end?

Today, the world is looking to the great



The left picture shows a woman wearing ihram clothing next to the Kaaba, raising the Palestinian flag. The right picture shows a few moments later when a Saudi security member (R) is seen approaching her, attempting to stop her from raising it.
● WATAN NEWS



Islamic Ummah to know its position regarding the current genocide in Gaza, which wounds the hearts of all freedom-seeking and honorable people in every part of the world. If the people of the world see disunity in the ranks of Muslim pilgrims in Mecca and in Baitullah al-Haram, then they will come to believe that Muslims will ultimately not succeed in strengthening their unity. Therefore, the realization of unity by pilgrims is very important. The only call that is expected to be heard from the pilgrims is the call for

piety, that is, the call on certain [Arab] regimes to get out of disgrace and humiliation. We should ask those who sold themselves out to these regimes in exchange for a handful of dinars to come to their senses. If today all Muslims shout with one voice, "Victory belongs to Palestine, and disgrace and humiliation belong to Israel", then you will see that Israel will fall due to fear and terror.

What role does the renunciation of enemies play in the Hajj rituals, especially in light of ongoing conflicts involving Muslim communities, such as the situation in Gaza? With the United States and Israel often seen as adversaries by some Muslims, what impact could this collective act of defiance have on the broader Islamic community?

If all the pilgrims of Baitullah al-Haram raise the flag of Palestine, then the game will change. Do you know what will happen if two million pilgrims raise the Palestinian flag and wear shrouds? If their governments are preventing them from demonstrations, they can rise up [during the Hajj season] to express their renunciation of Zionism, even if this action ends up killing them. If this happens, these people (Hajj pilgrims) will become martyrs of the path of Al-Quds.

Such action will guarantee a message to the hypocrites in the Islamic Ummah. Such action will demonstrate Palestinians as the oppressed. I doubt that the ruling family in Saudi Arabia can confront millions of Muslims. Mecca belongs to the Islamic Ummah, and Hajj belongs to God. Mecca and Hajj do not belong to a house or a government that can prevent pro-Palestine slogans with its interferences.

The interview first appeared on khamenei.ir.