

Pezeshkian vows Ayatollah Khamenei's flag 'will never fall'



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Tehran awash with sorrow in lachrymose adieu to martyred Leader

Delegations from nearly 100 countries pay last respects

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Hundreds of thousands of people gather in Tehran's Grand Mosalla on July 4, 2026, to say farewell to martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Culture at Heart of Ayatollah Khamenei's Legacy

By Hannaneh Darashti
Political affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Wars are often remembered through the number of lives lost, the scale of destruction they leave behind, and the geopolitical shifts they trigger. Yet what ultimately shapes the destiny of nations is the body of ideas that live on long after the guns fall silent. At such pivotal moments, revisiting the intellectual legacy of national leaders is more than an act of paying tribute to the past; it is an effort to understand the theoretical foundations of the future. From this perspective, the cultural and social thought of Iran's martyred Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, constitutes one of the most significant components of the Islamic Republic's intellectual legacy—a body of thought that has, for more than three decades, been reflected in many of the country's major cultural, educational, and social policies. Within the late Leader's intellectual framework, culture was never confined to artistic and literary activities or official ceremonies. Rather, it was viewed as the spirit that permeates society and shapes both individual and collective identity. It influences patterns of thought, social relations, consumer behavior, public morality, civic responsibility, social trust, and even the quality of

governance. It was for this reason that, in numerous meetings with members of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, he described culture as the foundation upon which all other sectors of the country rest. He consistently argued that economic development, political progress, and national security cannot achieve sustainable and balanced advancement without a strong cultural foundation. This perspective was articulated with greater clarity during his landmark speech in North Khorasan Province in October 2012, where he introduced the concept of "lifestyle" as the software dimension of the New Islamic Civilization. In that address, he distinguished between the instruments of progress—such as science, technology, the economy, and national power—and the ultimate objective of development: the quality of human life. From this perspective, development acquires meaning only when it is reflected in people's everyday conduct, social ethics, interpersonal relations, respect for the rule of law, sense of responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and commitment to society. In other words, if the economy and technology serve as the engine driving society forward, culture is the compass that determines its direction. One of the defining characteristics of this vision is the close connection it draws between culture and everyday life. Within this framework, cul-

ture is neither an abstract concept nor something confined to official institutions. Rather, it manifests itself in the smallest aspects of social behavior—from interactions among family members and neighbors to work ethic, respect for the rights of others, use of media, consumer habits, observance of the law, and even the manner in which people engage in public discourse. Consequently, cultural reform is understood not as something that can be achieved through administrative directives, but as a gradual transformation of lifestyles accompanied by a stronger sense of social responsibility. The family also occupies a central place in Ayatollah Khamenei's cultural thought. It is regarded as the primary institution through which values, ethics, identity, and social capital are passed from one generation to the next—the environment in which an individual's character is formed before entering school or society. Strengthening the family is therefore viewed not merely as a social or demographic policy but as an integral part of a broader cultural strategy aimed at building a society founded on trust, solidarity, and responsibility. Within this framework, many of society's broader challenges—from reducing social harm to strengthening social capital—are understood to stem from the quality of family relationships and the upbringing of future generations. Education is viewed through the

same lens. Schools are not merely institutions for transmitting knowledge; their primary mission is to cultivate character, nurture identity, and reinforce social ethics. Universities, meanwhile, are expected not only to produce scientific knowledge but also to educate specialists who are committed and responsible toward the future of society. Scientific advancement, in this view, can lead to genuine progress only when it is accompanied by ethics, responsibility, and a strong cultural identity. Within this same framework, the roles of the media and the arts extend far beyond information and entertainment. In Ayatollah Khamenei's speeches, the media is portrayed as one of the principal forces shaping public opinion and lifestyle. It has the capacity either to strengthen hope, trust, identity, and civic responsibility or, conversely, to foster mistrust, individualism, and social fragmentation. From this perspective, the media does more than report events; it also plays an active role in shaping social and cultural reality, thereby assuming responsibilities that go well beyond the simple dissemination of news. A similar perspective applies to the arts. In his thought, art is not merely a means of creating beauty but a powerful language through which values, identity, and human experience are conveyed.

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Tehran awash with sorrow in lachrymose adieu to martyred Leader

Delegations from nearly 100 countries pay last respects

National Desk

The farewell ceremony for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, kicked off at Tehran's Grand Imam Khomeini Mosalla in the early hours of Saturday, drawing a deluge of tearful mourners in a historic display of national unity.

With the gates opening earlier than scheduled at 6 a.m. on Saturday, mourners who had been waiting around the Mosalla and its surrounding routes since Friday night entered the venue.

The event transformed the Mosalla into a sea of grief and devotion as millions -- from all over the country, from cities and villages, as well as people from many different countries around the world -- gathered to pay their last respects to the martyred Leader.

Images of the martyred Leader were installed along the entire entrance route to the Mosalla, with a particularly large image displayed on one of the tall buildings adjacent to the venue.

Attendees, dressed in mourning attire for Imam Hussein and the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Republic, carried Iranian flags, images of the martyred Leader, the "clenched fist" symbol, and images of Ayatollah Seyed Mojtaba Khamenei. They chanted "Labbaik Ya Khamenei," and "All these armies have come for the love of the Leader," to bid farewell to the late Leader while pledg-

ing allegiance to the present Leader. Elderly attendees, some walking on foot and others in wheelchairs, could be seen among the crowds. Banners with messages such as "With a peaceful heart, O Master, he goes gracefully, Iran's soul departs", "The dignified oppressed one, I entrust you to God", "We have experienced grief, but we remain standing," and "Mount Damavand will remember your glory," were displayed along the mourners' route.

According to the headquarters for the commemoration of the martyred Leader's ascension, the farewell ceremony will continue through Sunday at the Grand Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

The main funeral procession in Tehran is scheduled for Monday. Funeral ceremonies will also be held in Qom on Tuesday, and in Mashhad on Thursday, where the Leader will be laid to rest at the Imam Reza Shrine.

Special farewell and funeral ceremonies for the martyred Leader will also take place in Iraq's holy cities of Najaf and Karbala on Wednesday, according to the organizers.

Some 14,000 journalists from domestic media and 900 foreign media outlets are covering the farewell ceremony. Foreign journalists have expressed astonishment at the unprecedented turnout and the deep devotion of the people to the martyred Leader.

Facilities for sending news, images, and



Some mourners, dressed in traditional mourning attire, soil their clothes with dust and mud in Tehran's Grand Imam Khomeini Mosalla on July 4, 2026.

● TASNIM

live video and radio broadcasts are fully prepared, with domestic and foreign journalists stationed among the crowds to cover the monumental event.

On Friday, a ceremony was held in Tehran for foreign delegations to pay tribute to the martyred Leader. The commemorative event brought together one of the largest gatherings of foreign dignitaries in Iran in recent decades, with representatives from across Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas, and major international organizations attending the event.

The delegations included presidents, prime ministers, parliamentary speakers, foreign ministers, senior government officials, political leaders, and representatives of religious organizations and resistance movements, underscoring the broad international participation in the ceremony.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Friday that delegations from nearly 100 countries, along with public figures and civil society groups, would attend the farewell ceremony for the martyred Leader.

"We have high-level delegations from neighboring countries. At least eight



heads of government, including presidents or prime ministers, and parliamentary speakers from 12 countries will attend," Baqaei said. "Many other countries will be represented at the level of foreign ministers, other ministers, or special envoys."

He added that public groups and prominent figures from around 100 countries would also participate in the ceremony. Baqaei said official delegations, public figures and members of parliament from Eastern European countries would attend the farewell ceremony. However, he said countries in Europe that had officially supported the military ag-

gression by Israel and the United States against Iran had not been invited to attend the ceremony.

Ayatollah Khamenei was martyred following the launch of the latest bout of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression against Iran on February 28.

The aggression, which also claimed the lives of senior officials and countless ordinary civilians, prompted Iran to respond by staging at least 100 decisive and successful retaliatory strikes against sensitive and strategic American and Israeli targets. The reprisal prompted the United States to announce a unilateral ceasefire on April 7.

Pezeshkian vows Ayatollah Khamenei's flag 'will never fall'

International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian underscored on Saturday that the Iranian people would prove, through grief and resolve, that the ideals for which their martyred Leader gave his life would continue.

In a message on the social media platform X on Saturday, Pezeshkian reaffirmed the Iranian nation's enduring loyalty to the martyred Leader after massive crowds of mourners attended a farewell ceremony for late Ayatollah Khamenei at Tehran's Grand Imam Khomeini Mosalla in a historic display of national unity.

"The great nation of Iran, with hearts brimming with grief and wills filled with hope, will prove that the flag for which the martyred Leader strived to keep raised will never fall to the ground," Pezeshkian wrote on X. Closing his post with a Quranic



verse from Surah Al-Qasas, the president stated, "And We wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors."

Farewell ceremonies for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali

Khamenei and his family began on Saturday morning, with the presence of grieving people at Tehran's Mosalla.

The martyred Leader attained the lofty rank of martyrdom on February 28 during a savage and terrorist attack by the US-Zionist enemies.

Iran warns of consequences for any military adventurism in Hormuz

International Desk

Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs has warned that any military adventurism in the Strait of Hormuz will have consequences, saying that the responsibility of ensuring the security of the waterway lies with its coastal states, as reported by Press TV.

"The Strait of Hormuz is not a theater for military display by extra-regional powers," Kazem Gharibabadi wrote on his X social media account on Saturday, reacting to a joint statement by France and Britain on the Strait of Hormuz.

"Iran, as the responsible power and guarantor of the strait's security, warns against any military movement in this sensitive waterway," he said. Gharibabadi emphasized that "the security of Hormuz lies with the coastal states," adding, "Crisis-mongers will be responsible for the consequences of their adventurism; this is a serious warning." The British Prime Minister's office released a joint statement on Friday by Keir Starmer and French President Em-



manuel Macron, in which the two leaders described the Strait of Hormuz as a "vital artery for the global economy".

The statement claimed that Oman has agreed to cooperate with Britain and France to secure its territorial waters against shipping risks.

London and Paris also announced their readiness to deploy what they called a "broader multinational military mission" to support freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz to hostile states and their allies in response to the US-Israeli aggression and then began asserting more control in retaliation for the US sustaining an illegal naval blockade of Iranian ports and vessels despite a standing ceasefire.

'Mind your malnutrition rates': Qalibaf shreds Trump

International Desk

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf hit back at Donald Trump, calling on the US president to "mind your malnutrition rates" after he claimed Iran needed American food exports. Ghalibaf stressed that Iran makes decisions about its own assets and noted that US officials should focus on the malnutrition rates in their own country

"Imagine having forty-something million of



Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf
● IRNA

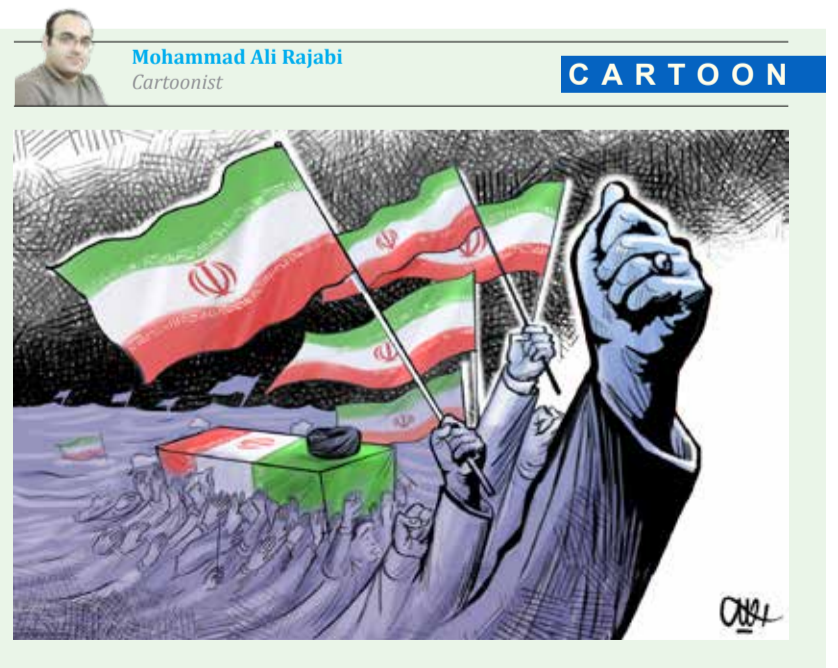
your own citizens on food stamps and calling another

nation hungry," Qalibaf wrote in a post on X.

"This is not a proclamation. This is a projection. Keep your SNAP advice. Our assets, our choices. Mind your malnutrition rates."

Trump claimed in an interview with CNBC that Iran was struggling with "300 percent inflation" and was "making no money."

"They need food. They need corn, wheat, and soybeans, and we're going to have exclusively our American farmers provide that," Trump claimed.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON

Iran begins Japan oil talks under sanctions waiver, seeks to revive exports



Economy Desk

Iran has begun talks with Japanese companies on resuming crude oil sales under a US sanctions waiver, sources told Reuters, marking a potential first such deal since 2019 as Tehran seeks to revive exports.

In Tehran, Nicaragua's foreign minister said he was satisfied with talks with Iran on energy cooperation "despite the geographical distance between the two countries."

A memorandum of understanding signed between Tehran and Washington on June 18 provides Iran a 60-day window to sell crude

oil and petrochemical products outside the scope of sanctions. The waiver, issued on June 22 and valid until Aug. 21, is part of the 60-day talks between Tehran and Washington.

Three Japanese buyers are considering purchasing Iranian crude for the first time since 2019, two Iranian sources told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Japanese and Iranian officials are also holding preliminary talks on possible oil sales, a Western industry source familiar with the matter said.

An official at Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and

Industry (METI), which oversees fuel supply infrastructure, said he was unaware of any such discussions.

Japan, South Korea, India and European countries halted purchases of Iranian crude after the United States tightened sanctions following US President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018. China has remained Iran's main buyer in recent years.

Mohammad Lahouti, head of the Iran Export Confederation, said the understanding could help boost oil and petrochemical exports in the short term and gradually restore maritime trade to normal conditions. However, Lahouti told ISNA that no breakthrough has been achieved in non-oil trade, banking transfers or access to the SWIFT financial messaging system, adding that sanctions effects remain in place.

Sources told Reuters that prospective buyers are seeking a longer waiver and assurances over shipping safety.

Expanding energy diplomacy

Nicaragua's foreign min-

ister Valdrack Jaentschke Whitaker said on Saturday that talks with Iran on energy cooperation were progressing well despite geographical distance.

Speaking after meeting Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad in Tehran, he said Nicaragua's energy needs were limited due to its size but negotiations were moving forward.

According to IRNA, both sides stressed expanding cooperation in oil and energy.

Paknejad said Iran offered "golden investment opportunities," particularly in energy, adding that close political ties provided room to expand cooperation.

Iran has also stepped up efforts to expand oil markets. Paknejad used the sidelines of the 11th BRICS Energy Ministers Meeting in India on June 25-26 to reach understandings with India on refining and petrochemical cooperation and with South Africa on potential resumption of Iranian oil exports and technical collaboration.

A senior Iranian oil ministry official told Reuters that the National Iranian

Oil Company (NIOC) had contacted traditional buyers, including Japan, saying that if a peace deal is reached and sanctions are lifted, Iran would like them to resume purchases.

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on Tuesday that Tehran had exported more than 40 million barrels of crude oil at prices about 20% higher than before the US-Israeli war, following the lifting of the US naval blockade on June 18 and the suspension of sanctions.

The exports marked a sharp recovery after Iranian crude shipments were largely suspended from mid-April to mid-June due to the blockade.

Supporting the reported increase, TankerTrackers said on X that Iran had exported 50 million barrels of crude oil since the restrictions were lifted, estimating an average of 1.66 million barrels per day in June 2026, with most regional producers still below pre-war levels.

Based on TankerTrackers' estimate, Iran is earning more than \$233 million per day from oil exports.

Kazakhstan emphasizes transit cooperation with Iran, backs logistics hub at Shahid Rajaei port



Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Yermek Kosherbayev
● IRNA

Economy Desk

Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Yermek Kosherbayev emphasized expanding strategic cooperation with Iran and developing transit corridors during a visit to Tehran, Kazinform reported, including support for a planned logistics terminal at Iran's Shahid Rajaei port. Kosherbayev, in talks with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, reviewed the implementation of agreements reached during Pezeshkian's visit to Kazakhstan in December 2025 and discussed regional developments, Kazinform said.

According to IRNA, talks between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Kazakh counterpart covered bilateral relations, cooperation in regional and international organizations, and ways to expand economic ties between Tehran and Astana.

Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry said the discussions

focused on transit and logistics cooperation, with Kosherbayev welcoming the allocation of land at Shahid Rajaei port for a Kazakh logistics terminal.

He described the project as an important step in increasing transit capacity and export potential. The ministry said the terminal is expected to boost bilateral trade, which rose 26.4% in 2025 to \$430.2 million.

Kazakhstan signed a \$25 million agreement in June to develop a logistics hub at the port, which Iranian officials say will support the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). Aman Malgazhdarov, head of QazExportPromotion, said bilateral trade currently stands at about \$400 million and could rise two to three times following the project.

The agreement follows 14 memoranda of understanding signed during a visit by Iranian Roads and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq Malvajerd to Kazakhstan, originally concluded during Pezeshkian's visit to Astana last year.

Martyred Leader's economic vision:

Production the missing link to Iran's economic prosperity

Economy Desk

An economic expert has emphasized that reducing reliance on oil revenues is only achievable by strengthening domestic production, developing productive employment, and moving away from a brokerage-based economy. He added that alongside these efforts, transparency in the expenditure of tax revenues can boost public trust.

Oil remains Iran's main source of foreign exchange earnings and an important source of government revenue. According to OPEC estimates, Iran earned \$46.7 billion from exports of crude oil and petroleum products last year.

Valiollah Salehi, in an interview with ISNA, discussed the Martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution's views on the necessity of self-reliance and reducing oil dependence. He stated that in recent years, the primary focus of late Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has been on eliminating dependence on oil and oil revenues, as well as promoting domestic self-reliance. Salehi noted that the Leader heavily stressed the need to strengthen domestic production and rely on indigenous industries with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency.

However, the economic expert mentioned that the efforts made in this area have received little public attention; for instance, numerous measures have been implemented to reduce the budget's reliance on oil, which requires better public communication. Referring to the annual Labor Week meetings between workers and the Leader, Salehi described these gatherings



as an annual tradition. He noted that the Leader's yearly speeches to the working community demonstrated his deep attention to labor, production, and employment.

According to Salehi, Ayatollah Khamenei consistently stressed the importance of agreement and understanding between workers and employers, urging them to stand side by side.

He added that another key issue emphasized by the Leader was boosting production across all sectors, including agriculture, industry, and knowledge-based fields.

The Martyred Leader's perspective was that production drives economic growth and prosperity, and resolving people's economic problems leads to social welfare.

The economic expert also identified the management of tax collection as a method to reduce inequality. He pointed out that tax revenues have not been properly managed, and if they were, many families would have felt the positive impacts. Salehi explained that people generally expect to see the tangible effects of tax collection in their daily lives. They want to know how those

revenues are spent; therefore, if the public is informed that taxes and duties are being allocated to the country's development and prosperity, they will be more encouraged to participate.

Addressing the challenges facing the production sector despite the Martyred Leader's emphasis, Salehi recalled that the Leader always advocated for productive employment and investment in the production sector.

Salehi observed that in recent years, most official slogans have focused on supporting domestic production, employment, and investment, carrying a distinct economic tone and content. Consequently, he argued, the country must shift towards productive employment and distance itself from rent-seeking and brokerage activities, as society can only advance on the path of development when it relies on domestic production.

Discussing the Resistance Economy policy championed by the Martyred Leader, Salehi described it as a form of resilience. He noted that perhaps before the recent US-Israeli war began on Feb. 28, people did not fully ex-

perience this resilience, but the wartime condition made them more familiar with it. He added that the government also played its role effectively by ensuring the timely supply of food and basic goods, thereby eliminating concerns about commodity shortages. Touching upon the issue of food security, Salehi added that if the Leader emphasized ensuring food security in his directives, a key component of that is providing basic goods.

He mentioned that stockpiling goods, particularly wheat and agricultural inputs, is another crucial element. Therefore, the Leader stressed the need to maintain the food supply chain and focus on securing households' livelihoods.

Salehi said most agricultural products consumed in Iran are produced domestically, describing this as a major strength of the agricultural sector. He added that the country also exports surplus agricultural products.

He concluded that the agricultural sector holds significant potential that must be utilized further to improve productivity, self-sufficiency, and food security. Stating the need to transition from traditional to modern agriculture, Salehi identified the creation and expansion of agro-industrial cooperatives as a highly effective option in this regard. He suggested that numerous actions can be taken in the agricultural sector, such as halting the production of water-intensive crops and instead developing those that require less water. He also pointed out that there are vast areas of barren land that could be brought under cultivation.

Culture at Heart ...

Art that reflects hope, justice, human dignity, and national identity

can make a lasting contribution to a society's cultural development. Accordingly, support for committed and creative artistic expression, alongside respect for freedom of thought and artistic innovation within the framework of society's values, remained a recurring theme in his meetings with artists and cultural figures.

Another prominent feature of this intellectual framework is its emphasis on young people and the country's intellectual elite. In the "Second Phase of the Revolution" statement, young people are presented not simply as the audience for cultural policies but as the principal driving force behind transformation and national progress. Trusting the younger generation, empowering them to innovate, encouraging initiative, and fostering a sense of responsibility—alongside strengthening both national and religious identity—are regarded as essential prerequisites for building the country's future. This perspective views culture not as a static phenomenon but as a dynamic process in which every generation has a role to play in preserving, renewing, and advancing it. Progress itself is also understood as a multidimensional concept. Economic growth, scientific development, defense capabilities, and technological advancement are all indispensable, yet none of them alone can guarantee the well-being of a nation. If these achievements are not accompanied by justice, ethics, spirituality, social responsibility, and cultural identity, society may face social and moral crises despite enjoying material prosperity. It was for this reason that he consistently emphasized that development should serve human flourishing and strengthen society rather than be reduced solely to improvements in economic indicators.

Another defining feature of this perspective is the distinction it draws between benefiting from the world's scientific achievements and

imitating foreign cultural models.

Within this framework, embracing science, technology, and successful global experiences is not only considered acceptable but essential to national progress. At the same time, such engagement must go hand in hand with preserving cultural independence, maintaining national self-confidence, and remaining rooted in Iran's Islamic-Iranian identity. It is therefore no coincidence that, in his thought, culture is consistently intertwined with the concept of independence—an independence that is rooted less in politics or economics than in cultural self-confidence. Perhaps the defining characteristic of the martyred Leader's cultural thought lies in the way it brings together concepts that at first glance appear unrelated. Family, schools, universities, the media, the arts, the economy, science, justice, and even national security are all presented as interconnected links in a single chain whose starting point is culture. The stronger this foundation becomes, the greater society's capacity for progress, solidarity, and resilience in the face of crises. Culture, therefore, is understood not merely as an administrative or policy domain but as a strategic asset for the nation's future.

Now that Iran has lost one of its most influential contemporary leaders, assessing his intellectual legacy has become more important than ever. Regardless of whether one agrees with or criticizes his views, it is difficult to deny that culture occupied the central place in Ayatollah Khamenei's understanding of social issues and his vision for Iran's future. He believed that civilization is built not first in factories, research centers, or political institutions, but in the minds, ethics, beliefs, and way of life of the people. Perhaps the most enduring message of this intellectual legacy is precisely this: that the future of every nation is shaped first and foremost by its culture, and that investing in culture is, ultimately, an investment in a sustainable, independent, and identity-driven future.

Interpretative innovations of Iran's martyred Leader

In elucidation of social capacities of Islam



The Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei takes note after reading the Holy Qur'an.
● khamenei.ir



By Najaf Lakzaei

President of the Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The book "An Outline of Islamic Thought in the Qur'an" must be considered among the most significant intellectual works of the martyred Leader. The importance of this work does not reside solely in its encompassing a collection of Qur'anic and exegetical discussions; rather, its significance derives from the fact that, within it, Islam is presented as a comprehensive school, a coherent intellectual system, and a social and civilizational order.

This book is the product of 28 sessions of lectures delivered by the martyred Leader during the blessed month of Ramadan in the Persian calendar year 1353 (1974) in the holy city of Mashhad. At that same time, a summary of these discussions was published; however, the complete text of the lectures was transcribed and published after the triumph of Iran's Islamic Revolution, upon the discovery of the audio tapes of the sessions by the Sahba team. Hence, the book that is presently in our possession is, in actuality, the edited text of those very lecture sessions.

To comprehend the importance of this work, one must refer to the introduction that the martyred Leader himself wrote for it. His primary concern in this introduction is the presentation of Islam as a "social and comprehensive school;" a school that possesses coherent and harmonious principles and that is observant of the collective life of human beings.

Islam transcending merely individualistic system

The entirety of the martyred Leader's endeavor in this work is directed toward filling a historical hole in Islamic studies. This hole consists of the absence of a comprehensive presentation of Islam in its capacity as a social and civilizational system. In the martyred Leader's expression, a substantial portion of existing Islamic research has been devoid of this characteristic. For this reason, those who compare Islam with modern schools of thought, at times, entertain the notion that modern schools possess more lucid responses to social and political questions. But, in fact, Islam enjoys an immense capacity in this sphere, too,

yet this capacity has been insufficiently elucidated. He considers his objective to be the presentation of the blueprint of an integrated and cohesive school; a scheme that situates the various components of Islamic thought in relation to one another and that clarifies their relationship vis-à-vis other schools.

Critique of abstract approaches to religion

One of the significant critiques advanced in this work is the critique of abstract approaches to religion. Numerous Islamic works treat religious questions at the level of mental and abstract concepts; whereas religion ought to possess a social and political extension and ought to be capable of generating obligation, commitment, and a practical program for the individual and for society. In this conception, Islam is not merely a collection of theoretical propositions; rather, it is a school that must provide solutions and orientations for the administration of the individual and social life of humanity.

On the other hand, the martyred Leader emphasizes the scholarly authority of the Holy Qur'an. In his view, the understanding of Islamic principles must be grounded upon the primary texts of the religion and, above all, upon the Holy Qur'an. Accordingly, he deems three characteristics to be essential for Islamic intellectual studies: the exit from abstraction and sheer subjectivity, a systemic perspective toward Islamic knowledge, and reliance upon authentic religious sources, especially the Holy Qur'an.

Faith; commencing point of Islam's intellectual system

One of the most significant modalities for reading this work is the faith-centered and wilayat-centered reading. The book commences with the discussion of faith and subsequently proceeds to tawhid, nubuwwah, and wilayat. This sequence is entirely meaningful; for, in this perspective, the human being is a dynamic entity, and every movement requires a propelling force. The driving engine of the Muslim individual is faith; faith in God, the prophets, the Qur'an, and the Day of Resurrection.

The martyred Leader speaks of "conscious faith". If the human being has attained faith in God, he must perceive the world through a tawhidic lens; and, if his worldview becomes tawhidic, his lifestyle, too, must become

tawhidic. Hence, faith leads to commitment; commitment before God and adherence to the execution of His command. However, this commitment is not the end of the trajectory. Conscious and committed faith is generative of action, and its fruit is "righteous deed". In this conception, righteous deed is the natural product of faith. Faith without action has not reached its ultimate aim and destination.

the wilayat of the comprehensive-jurisprudent faqih. Here, a longitudinal wilayat is constituted among God, the Prophet, the Imam, and the Umma; and, alongside it, a latitudinal wilayat emerges among the believers themselves. The third pillar of this system is the cognizance of the enemy and disavowal of the enemy.

The martyred Leader grounds wilayat upon three pillars: "love," "assistance,"

Strategic and future-oriented approach

One of the important readings of this book is the "strategic reading". In this perspective, the "strategic human being" is one who contemplates the future and who is concerned with the repulsion of future threats; threats that pertain both to the worldly life of human beings and to their otherworldly existence. In Qur'anic thought, the human being is

tion. Concepts such as faith, security, piety, expenditure, and hypocrisy are reinterpreted in this work with a strategic perspective. For example, the martyred Leader, concerning the concept of expenditure, states that the mere bestowal of wealth and money is not the criterion; rather, true expenditure is that which is directed toward addressing needs and resolving the priority problems of society. A significant innovation is also discernible in the martyred Leader's thought concerning the concept of taqwa (piety). Taqwa does not merely signify abstention and withdrawal; rather, it signifies responsible presence in the arena and conscious movement along the path of dangers and difficulties. In his view, piety signifies the taking of a shield along the path of performing one's duty, not the abandonment of the arena.

Systemic understanding of religion

Among the most important innovations of the martyred Leader in this work is the presentation of a systemic understanding of the verses and traditions. To elucidate this matter, he cites a tradition from Imam Baqir (PBUH), according to which the destiny of the human being is linked to the social and political orientation of the society in which he lives. Employing the analogy of a train, he explains that if the human being is placed upon a trajectory whose destination is erroneous, mere individual actions cannot convey him to the desired destination. The purport of this tradition is not the precedence of society over the individual; rather, it is the calling of attention to the reality that the human being cannot consider himself separate from the social and historical destiny of his society.

Cultivation of the active believer

The entirety of the martyred Leader's endeavor in this work is the cultivation of the "active believer". The believer, in his intellectual system, is not an isolated and passive human being; rather, he is a human being who is defined in connection with religion, the leadership, and other believers; and the leadership constitutes the point of connection among the individual believers.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Iran.



The Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (c) meets with prominent clerics in Tehran, Iran.
● khamenei.ir

Faith and the establishment of religion

From the martyred Leader's perspective, the objective is not merely the explanation or propagation of religion; rather, it is the call to the "establishment of religion". Faith and righteous deed, in another expression, constitute the very establishment of religion. For this reason, the reader of his book arrives at the conclusion that he must render his faith more conscious and more committed and must consider himself responsible before God, the Prophet, and the divine authorities. One who proclaims "I bear witness that Muhammad (PBUH) is the Messenger of God" has, in actuality, committed himself to obey the Prophet; and one who bears witness to the wilayat of Imam Ali (PBUH) must consider himself obligated to follow that wilayat.

A novel interpretation of wilayat

One of the interpretative innovations of the martyred Leader in this work is the nexus between faith, tawhid, and nubuwwah with the concept of wilayat. In this conception, the believing individual does not permit any distance to interpose itself between him and divine wilayat; whether this wilayat be the wilayat of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), the wilayat of the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them), or

and "guardianship"; in the sense that the relationship of the believer with God and the divine authorities is a relationship predicated upon reciprocal love; a love that culminates in assistance and the acceptance of guardianship. This same logic obtains among the believers themselves.

Governance as wilayat

Another innovation of this work is the possibility of its reading from the perspective of governance. Under the auspices of the noble verse: "Verily, Allah commands you to deliver trusts to their owners," wilayat is referenced as a divine trust. In this conception, every individual must occupy his proper station and must fulfill his responsibility correctly.

Governance acquires meaning when the complex and multi-faceted problems of society are resolved through the cooperation of the people, the rulers, and the official institutions, and when the Umma and the leadership collaborate under divine wilayat for the resolution of problems. In his view, faith likewise plays a fundamental role here. The more profound the faith of society, the greater will be the accompaniment of the people with the leadership in resolving complex problems; and the outcome of this accompaniment is righteous deed on a social scale.

not a self-regulating entity independent of guidance. God is the Protector of humanity, and His legislative protection is realized through religion. If the human being obeys God, he will also enjoy divine protection; and this obedience, in the final analysis, culminates in the establishment of religion.

Problem-oriented approach

One of the most crucial teachings of this book is attention to strategic and priority problems. The martyred Leader, in this work, explicitly states that many statements are correct; however, one must discern, among correct matters, which is necessary; among necessary matters, which is more necessary; and, among more necessary matters, which is an urgent and vital problem.

This work presents a novel methodology in the study of religion. In this methodology, the understanding of religion commences with faith and subsequently proceeds to tawhid, nubuwwah, and wilayat. This sequence is divergent from the conventional structure of theological books. Faith, in this perspective, is not merely a credal proposition; rather, it is the origin of a lifestyle and a mode of existence.

Novel conceptualization

This work also contains numerous innovations in the domain of conceptualiza-



In this work, the martyred Leader considers his objective to be the presentation of the blueprint of an integrated and cohesive school; a scheme that situates the various components of Islamic thought in relation to one another and that clarifies their relationship vis-à-vis other schools.

Martyred Leader's view of sports as strategic national asset

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

The issue of sports, within the intellectual framework and perspective of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, was not merely considered a physical activity or an ordinary competition. In his statements, he described sports as an important and strategic arena for achieving a strong Iran, strengthening national identity, demonstrating cultural power, and utilizing the immense potential of the nation's youth. His repeated emphasis on the obligatory nature of champion sports, the necessity of developing a coherent strategy for identifying and nurturing talent, as well as his insistence on sports justice and special support for female champions, all reflect his comprehensive approach to sports. In this perspective, sports are regarded as a tool for conveying Iranian-Islamic values to the world and advancing the country's cultural and promotional objectives.

To examine these issues and explain the leadership's views on sports in the country, as well as to assess the performance of the responsible institutions in this regard, Iran Daily conducted a detailed interview with Amir-Reza Vaez Ashtiani, a political and sports affairs expert. He has previously served as a member of the Tehran Islamic City Council, CEO of Tehran's Esteghlal Sports Club, and President of the Iran Cycling Federation.

IRAN DAILY: How do you assess the place of sports from the perspective of the martyred Leader of the revolution? It appeared that he paid special attention to sports,



Amir-Reza Vaez Ashtiani

particularly champion sports. In what areas was this approach evident?

VAEZ-ASHTIANI: Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei always had a deep, remarkable, and cross-sectoral view of sports. He regarded sports not merely as an ordinary activity but as a public necessity and consistently encouraged all people to engage in them. In the field of champion sports, he emphasized supporting the talents of the country's youth in diverse disciplines that appeal to younger generations and creating the conditions necessary for success at continental and global levels. With a clear understanding of Iran's demographic structure as a young nation, he continually stressed the optimal use of this population capacity in sports and believed that the country's sports sector required a coherent strategy for identifying and developing talented individuals. Another fundamental aspect of his perspective was the issue of sports justice, which he repeatedly emphasized. Sports justice means adopt-

ing a comprehensive and fair approach toward all sports disciplines and ensuring that the Ministry of Sports, as the primary authority, pursues equitable policies toward every discipline. He also paid special attention to and consistently emphasized women's sports, as Iranian women have achieved outstanding success in numerous fields. He pursued this support from both the standpoint of justice and cultural and social considerations. We recall one of our female champions, Somayeh Heydari, the first Iranian woman to win a Kurash medal at the Asian Games. When Korean officials insisted that she wear a tracksuit on the podium, she firmly stated, "I will only go with my chador." This action was praised by the martyred Leader. Another highly important and subtle point that he raised during one of his meetings with champions from various sports — and one that, in my opinion, received insufficient attention from the media — was his

warning about the infiltration of mafia networks into the country's sports sector. This warning demonstrated his careful monitoring of controversies and criticisms within sports, especially football. He did not limit his attention to political, economic, and cultural matters; rather, he closely followed all sectors, including sports. Through reports and feedback received from concerned figures in the sports community, he concluded that the danger of the expansion of mafia networks in sports was serious and that such phenomena should not be viewed as limited solely to the economic sphere. This insight and timely warning remain an undeniable necessity, because sports should be a clean environment free from such issues. Therefore, relevant authorities — including the Ministry of Sports, federations, and clubs — are obliged to take the necessary measures to prevent the penetration and formation of mafia structures within sports disciplines.

To what extent has the martyred Leader's justice-oriented approach to sports and his recommendation to combat mafia networks been taken seriously and implemented by sports federations and the Ministry of Sports?

It must be acknowledged that in any organization or institution, from ministries to federations, when discussing the fight against misconduct and irregularities, the first and most important requirement is the selection of competent and trustworthy individuals for the task. Managers who are expected to raise the banner of combating mafia networks alongside their other responsibilities must themselves be immune from being absorbed into such corrupt systems. Unfortunately, it appears that some current decision-makers in the sports sector have either become integrated into these invisible structures and aligned themselves with them for the sake of survival, or those

who intend to confront them lack sufficient power and support, and such efforts may even jeopardize their positions. In any case, two major concerns remain sports justice and vigilance against mafia influence. Today, we are witnessing the emergence of mafia networks in certain sports disciplines; networks whose roots can also be traced to the international level.

The late Leader proposed the strategy of "A Strong Iran Through Strong Sports." How do you assess this strategy, and how can it be realized?

He had a strategic perspective on sports that extended far beyond its recreational functions. On the one hand, sports have become an unparalleled promotional tool in today's world. The fame of stars such as Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi attracts millions of followers worldwide and, in some cases, surpasses the recognition of presidents and senior international officials. This demonstrates the global significance of sports, which should not be overlooked. Champion sports can be used to advance cultural, promotional, and even economic objectives. Unfortunately, at present, sports contribute nothing to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), whereas developed countries derive between 3 and 4 percent of their economies from professional and champion sports. This is a major loss rooted in the absence of efficient management. In addition, our sports diplomacy is very weak. With strong sports diplomacy, numerous positions and seats in various international sports organizations could be secured. From a cultural perspective as well, some domestic competitions have witnessed incidents that are inconsistent with Iranian culture and ethics, indicating that we have failed to utilize sports as a means of promoting chivalry, sportsmanship, and moral values. Although some sports have prominent figures who embody these qualities, overall we have performed weakly in this area. Therefore, it is essential for those responsible for the country's sports sector to pursue the guidance of the martyred Leader more seriously and, in particular, to give practical expression to the cultural dimensions he emphasized.

Commemorative group photo of Iran's 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic delegations with the martyred Leader

IRNA

with a 1-0 lead. In the second half, Nassaji failed to deliver their usual performance, and Mazandaran-born forward Amin Qasemi-Nejad doubled Havadar's advantage in the 53rd minute to secure the win. Although Nassaji had already secured promotion to the Persian Gulf Pro League two weeks earlier, they fielded a rotated lineup featuring several young players and were unable to capitalize on home advantage. The result marked their fourth home defeat of the season and their first loss ever against Havadar in head-to-head meetings. Meanwhile, Mes Shahr-e Babak defeated Shenaavar Sazi Qeshm 3-1, cutting Nassaji's lead at the top of the table to just two points and setting up a tightly contested finish to the title race with two rounds remaining.

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Iran expands 2026 Asian Games squad

Sports Desk

Following the announcement of the initial Iranian delegation for the 2026 Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, comprising 282 athletes (191 men and 91 women), and in response to a request from the Ministry of Sports and Youth to review the team composition in light of special national circumstances, the National Olympic Committee, in close coordination with the ministry, has completed the revision and finalized the entry list.

As a result, the final delegation has been expanded to 308 athletes, consisting of 214 men and 94 women. The team will compete under the name "Minab Angels" (Martyrs of Shajareh Tayebbeh School), ac-

cording to IRNA.

In its correspondence, the Ministry of Sports and Youth emphasized, based on technical and expert evaluations, the opinions of sports federations, joint meetings of the technical supervisory commission, and national sports policies, the importance of a strong Iranian presence at the Asian Games as a symbol of national unity, cohesion, solidarity, and sporting strength on the international stage. This decision reflects the ongoing close and constructive cooperation between the National Olympic Committee and the Ministry of Sports and Youth, aimed at maximizing the country's sporting capacity for a stronger performance at the 2026 Asian Games.

Nassaji suffer first setback under Enayati

Sports Desk

Mazandaran-based Nassaji suffered a 2-0 home defeat to Tehran's Havadar in Week 32 of the Iranian First Division, marking both their first-ever loss to the capital club and their first defeat under head coach Gholamreza Enayati. The result reduced Nassaji's lead over closest challengers Mes Shahr-e Babak from five points to just two, tightening the title race with two matches remaining in the season. According to IRNA, Nassaji Mazandaran and Havadar Tehran met on Friday in one of the Week 32 fixtures of the Iranian First Division at Shahid Vatani Stadium in Qaemshahr.

Havadar took a more effective approach in the first half and opened the scoring in the 41st minute through Amir Mohammad Sayad, going into halftime

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● IRNA

Cinema pays tribute to martyred Leader in photo exhibition

Staged at the Documentary, Experimental & Animation Film Center (DEFC) in Tehran's Shahid Qandi Square, the exhibition runs from July 3 to July 6 under the banner Filmmakers' Gathering Place, welcoming filmmakers, media professionals and the public, IRNA reported. The exhibition features photographs document-

ing Ayatollah Khamenei's meetings with directors, actors and other cinema figures over the years, as well as handwritten and published memorial messages released by members of Iran's film industry following his martyrdom. A 90-minute video program is also screening throughout the event, bringing together

archival footage of the Leader's remarks on cinema, his assessments of selected Iranian films, and his reflections on the cultural significance of filmmaking. The program also includes rare archival images from the National Film Archive of Iran highlighting his interactions with filmmakers. The gathering forms part of



the broader cultural initiatives accompanying the official farewell ceremonies for the martyred Leader, whose funeral and burial events are scheduled to take place from July 4 through July 9 in Tehran, Qom, Najaf, Karbala

and Mashhad. The exhibition seeks to preserve a visual record of the Leader's longstanding engagement with Iranian cinema while reflecting the industry's tribute to his cultural legacy.

Arts & Culture Desk

The Cinema Organization of Iran opened a photo exhibition on Friday showcasing the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khome-

Golestan Palace opens damaged heritage site to international media

Arts & Culture Desk

More than 150 international journalists, photographers and television crews visited Tehran's UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace this week to document restoration work and assess damage sustained during recent attacks, according to Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. The ministry organized the visit while foreign media delegations were in Iran to cover ceremonies marking allegiance, farewell and funeral observances for the martyred Leader, IRNA reported. Reporters toured the palace's Mirror Hall and other affected sections wearing protective helmets, a visi-



International journalists wearing protective hard hats tour the Mirror Hall of Tehran's UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace to document ongoing restoration work and assess damage following recent attacks. ● IRNA

ble sign that conservation work remains under way. Scaffolding stood alongside the palace's celebrated mirror mosaics, creating what officials described as a striking juxtaposition of Persian

architectural splendor and painstaking restoration efforts. Heritage experts and site guides briefed visiting media on the extent of the damage, the historical and artistic

significance of the complex, and ongoing stabilization and restoration plans. Journalists filmed damaged areas, documented conservation work in progress and interviewed specialists about preservation standards and the palace's global cultural importance.

The visit turned the Qajar-era complex into a temporary hub of international cultural reporting, with live broadcasts and video reports transmitted directly to newsrooms around the world. Dozens of cameras and satellite transmission units filled the historic site as foreign correspondents sought to provide detailed, documented accounts of the palace's condition.

Officials said the tour was intended not only to showcase restoration efforts but also to show the broader responsibility of safeguarding humanity's shared cultural heritage in times of conflict.

Iran launches public letter campaign honoring martyred Leader

Arts & Culture Desk



The photo shows a campaign poster for Iran's 'Letter to the Martyred Leader' initiative, featuring a commemorative stamp depicting the clenched fist of the late Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Iran's National Post Company, in partnership with the Government Information Council Secretariat, has launched the nationwide 'Letter to the Martyred Leader' campaign during the farewell and funeral ceremonies for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, inviting the public to submit handwritten messages in tribute.

Participants may mail their letters to Post Office Box 8811-15875 through post offices nationwide or designated postal collection points along the funeral route until July 16, 2026.

The organizers said the handwritten tributes will be compiled into a deluxe commemorative volume, preserving personal reflections and expressions of loyalty as a lasting cultural record of the national tribute to the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Preserving soul of mourning elegy through authentic melody

By Alireza Sepahvand
Journalist

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

In recent years, the growing use of melodies borrowed from popular music and well-known songs in mourning elegies has sparked widespread debate over the authenticity of this ritual art. While the mourning elegy remains one of the most important vehicles for conveying the message of Ashura in Shiite culture, some scholars argue that moving away from its traditional melodic structures could weaken both its spiritual function and cultural identity. In Iranian-Shia culture, the recitation of mourning elegies is far more than a musical form. It is a medium for conveying the meaning, emotion and history of Ashura. Over centuries, it has forged a profound bond between society and the tragedy of Karbala, becoming an integral part of the people's religious identity. In recent decades, however, social change, media expansion and growing competition for audiences have

reshaped both the structure and content of mourning elegies. The adoption of melodies borrowed from popular entertainment music, changing audience tastes and the influence of social media have, according to some experts, distanced mourning elegies from their authentic roots. Others, however, stress the need for innovation and adaptation to contemporary realities. The real challenge is finding the balance between artistic creativity and preserving authenticity, a balance that will determine the future of this ritual tradition. To explore these issues, Iran Daily spoke with Hooshang Javid, a senior researcher of Iranian regional music and ritual chants and founder of several festivals dedicated to ritual and ethnic music.

IRAN DAILY: Why have today's mourning elegies drifted away from authenticity?

HOOSHANG JAVID: This trend began in the late 1990s and gathered momentum in the mid-2000s. Several factors contributed to it, including changes in government approaches and cultural policies introduced with successive leadership changes in cultural institutions. During that period, many



Hooshang Javid

religious elegy reciters began using melodies from popular street songs and media productions, while some even borrowed tunes from singers based abroad. In my view, this caused serious harm to the composition and recitation of mourning elegies. At the time, I published some of the earliest critiques of this trend in Maqam magazine, warning that reciting a mourning elegy is fundamentally different from singing. Those who chose this path generally lacked a proper understanding of the roots of ritual melodies and the authentic vocal traditions of religious music, resulting in undesirable changes to the structure of mourning elegies.

What damage does using song melodies cause?

The book *Kitab al-Aghani*, written by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, recounts that the great musician Abu Ishaq Ibrahim al-Mawṣili, on his deathbed, advised his son, "Do not set a mourning elegy to the melody of a song; instead, compose the song for the mourning elegy." His reasoning was that using unsuitable melodies distracts listeners from the message of the mourning elegy while diminishing its dignity and spiritual purpose. When one of the greatest musicians of his era offered such advice, it shows that this concern has existed for centuries. In my view, using entertainment-based melodies for mourning elegies is inappropriate, although some continue to do so today in an effort to retain audiences.

Where is the line between innovation and harming tradition?

Innovation is valuable only when it grows from a deep understanding of tradition, not through imitation of non-ritual music. Anyone who truly understands the foundations of ritual melody, vocal styles and the structure of religious music can compose a new mourning elegy without compromising its identity. But once mourning elegies begin following the patterns of commercial or entertainment music, they have already moved beyond the framework of ritual music.

What role have the media and social media played?

Traditional media and social media have both played a significant role in spreading this trend. Competition for audiences has led some religious elegy reciters to adopt familiar, popular melodies in order to attract more listeners. Over time, however, this approach gradually weakens the authenticity of religious ritual music.

What should be done to restore authentic traditions?

In my opinion, the primary responsibility lies with the country's cultural institutions, particularly the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, the Ministry of Culture

and Islamic Guidance, and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

It is regrettable that after decades, Iranian universities still lack specialized academic programs devoted to ritual arts, religious music or Iran's traditional ceremonial practices.

Although the country has distinguished researchers, professors and composers capable of teaching this heritage through rigorous academic study, higher education continues to focus primarily on Western music, while Iran's regional musical traditions receive only limited attention in university curricula.

These three institutions should work together to establish specialized academic programs dedicated to ritual arts so this heritage can be passed on to future generations in a scholarly, documented and authentic manner.

Otherwise, if the current trend continues, this heritage will undergo even greater cultural transformation over the next decade. Today, even the styles of chain-beating rituals and ceremonial movements have gradually changed over the past two decades, yet no serious effort has been made to study or guide these developments. Unless cultural institutions address the issue, the drift away from authentic traditions will continue.