



Editorial Note

The Intellectual System of the Martyred Leader Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei: From Transcendent Philosophy to the New Islamic Civilization

Introduction: The Legacy of a Transcendent Philosopher

The tragic martyrdom of His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, was undoubtedly one of the most profound losses of the contemporary era for the Islamic world. With the passing of this “transcendent philosopher,” who was a “combination of jurist, philosopher, theologian, and mystic,” Iran’s academic and political community faced a great void in the field of civilizational theorizing. The 11th issue of the *Biannual Journal of Islamic Political Thought*, published in Arabic—the language of the Qur’an and a shared heritage of Islamic civilization—recognizes this significant responsibility and seeks, through publishing articles addressing various dimensions of the intellectual system of that great martyr, to take a step toward reexamining this valuable legacy.

What you read in this issue is not merely a collection of scattered articles; rather, it is a coherent narrative of the epistemological framework of a school of thought that can serve as an effective model for the new Islamic civilization. Unlike many prevailing intellectual systems that advocate the separation of jurisprudence

from philosophy and mysticism, this intellectual framework is founded upon a holistic and philosophy-based perspective; a perspective in which the three dimensions of demonstration (philosophy), mysticism (spirituality), and the Qur'an (religious law) are employed within a unified horizon, all serving the purpose of attaining divine proximity through the establishment of a just civilization. The martyred leader's defense of Transcendent Philosophy (al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyah) was a highly strategic choice, because in the modern world—where Western civilization, through its excessive emphasis on instrumental rationality, has marginalized spirituality—this philosophical framework can offer a comprehensive model in which science, religion, ethics, and politics are integrated.

The publication of this issue demonstrates that this intellectual system is not confined to specific geographical or linguistic boundaries; rather, it can serve as a model for the Muslim community worldwide. The martyred leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, was among the few contemporary leaders who, through his command of the Arabic language and mastery of authentic Islamic sources, succeeded in creating a bridge between Shi'i and Sunni discourses and between the Arab and non-Arab worlds. The publication of this issue is an effort to convey this legacy to a broader segment of the Muslim community that seeks an indigenous, Islamic, and effective model for governance, civilization-building, and resistance.

First: Reexamining the Foundations; Redefining Key Concepts in the Light of Philosophy and Jurisprudence

The first step in this intellectual framework is the fundamental redefinition of key concepts in political science. The article "*Political*

Power in the Thought of the Martyred Leader, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei,” written by Reza Lakzaee, begins by raising a new question in the study of power—one that has been overlooked in mainstream theories of power: “How can apparently limited power ultimately prevail over immense material power in the long run?” The innovation of this article lies in presenting a fivefold Qur’anic model of agents of power within the framework of the triangle of *Taghut* (false authority) and in explaining the transformation of the nature of power from domination to service. By criticizing the conventional definitions of power proposed by Weber, Morgenthau, Lukes, and Nye, the author demonstrates that these theories, due to their neglect of the unseen sources of power and the distinct logic of servant-oriented power, are incapable of explaining historical events in which the front of truth has prevailed over falsehood. From this perspective, spiritual power—relying on the inexhaustible divine source and the support of a committed populace—possesses historical endurance and moral appeal, qualities that material power lacks due to its instrumental and transient nature.

Following this, the article “*The Theoretical Framework of Religious System-Building in the Political Thought of the Martyred Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei,*” written by Mohsen Pirbalaei and Mohammadreza Kadkhodaei, presents an eight-stage process for religious system-building through a fivefold typology of system-building theories: the philosophical perspective based on idealistic realism, the theological perspective centered on monotheism as a social doctrine, the jurisprudential perspective based on system-building jurisprudence, the theory of the revolutionary system, and the scientific typology emphasizing the integration of science and religion. The innovation of this article lies in distinguishing between

system jurisprudence (the stage of discovering and deriving principles from religious sources) and religious system-building (the stage of transforming principles into concrete structures and institutions), as well as in explaining the relationship between fixed principles and changing methods. This relationship preserves jurisprudence from rigidity without leading it toward relativism.

The article "*The Application of the Qur'an in the Religious and Political Thought of the Martyred Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei*," written by Alireza Daneshyar, employs a textual approach and draws upon the theoretical framework of perception, reference, and representation to explain three stages in Ayatollah Khamenei's thought: the redefinition of concepts, the representation of the authentic face of Islam, and the reconstruction of religious thought.

The innovation of this article lies in demonstrating the dynamism of a mode of thought that continuously presents new issues and subjects to the Qur'an through constant reference to the sacred text. Unlike many contemporary intellectual currents influenced by leftist, Marxist, or liberalist discourses, Ayatollah Khamenei's approach was formed on the basis of textual reasoning and reliance on authentic religious sources. This approach is manifested in his work "*A General Outline of Islamic Thought in the Qur'an*" and his interpretations of the Qur'anic chapters Al-Mujadilah (The Pleading Woman) and Al-Bara'ah (The Repentance/Disavowal).

Second: Civilizational Strategies; From the 250-Year-Old Human Being to the Resurrection of Prophethood

After establishing the foundations, the present issue turns to the operational and civilizational frameworks of this school of thought. The article "*Qur'anic Civilization-Building Based on the Theory of the 250-Year*

Human: An Examination of the Political Thought of the Martyred Leader Ayatollah Khamenei with Emphasis on the Divine Traditions," by Seyyed Sajjad Ale Seyyed Ghafoor, examines the six divine traditions (*sunan ilāhiyyah*) mentioned in the Qur'an (trial, succession, divine support, respite, gradual entrapment, and reprieve) and demonstrates that the theory of the 250-Year Human is the concrete embodiment of the immutable laws of history in the resistance of the Infallible Imams (A.S.). The novelty of this article lies in extracting a three-dimensional theoretical model of civilization-building (the spiritual-identity dimension, social networking, and capacity-building for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi) and applying it to concrete fields of civilization such as the resistance economy, indigenous science, and the Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress. In response to the possible criticism of determinism, the author emphasizes that strategic unity means sharing the same ultimate objective, while the diversity of the eight tactical approaches (from peace to uprising) clearly demonstrates the will and agency of historical actors within the framework of the divine traditions. The findings indicate that the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the contemporary Axis of Resistance are prominent links in this civilizational chain, which, by relying on the traditions of divine support and succession, continue the path toward the realization of the divine promise: "He will surely make them successors in the earth." (Qur'an 24:55)

In the same context, the article "*The Social Resurrection of Prophethood: The Continuation of the Method of 'Text-Based Thinking' and the Strategy of the Monotheistic Society-Building Orientation,*" by Mohammad Sadegh Yousefi Moqaddam, employing thematic and textual analysis, introduces the theory of the social resurrection of prophethood as a new theory that

directs Qur'anic exegesis toward transforming the external environment and the reality of human society with the aim of building a monotheistic society. The novelty of this article lies in distinguishing between the general social orientation and the particular orientation toward monotheistic society-building in the Qur'anic interpretation of the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei, as well as in explaining the concept of text-based thinking as his principal method of interpretation—a method which, unlike a purely tradition-based (*atharī*) approach, provides a more effective basis for interrogating the Qur'an and the transmitted traditions. The author shows how this method, in explaining such strategic concepts as *taqwā* (God-consciousness), *ṣabr* (patience and steadfastness), and *wilāyah* (guardianship), transforms them from merely lexical concepts into concepts that shape social relations. The article also emphasizes that building a monotheistic society is a universal duty for Muslims in every age, and that the proper understanding of awaiting the Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is to establish a society resembling the Mahdian society during the period of occultation.

At the level of governance, the article "*The Functions of the Institution of Wilāyat al-Faqīh from the Perspective of Ayatollah Khamenei*," by Seyyed Kazem Seyyed Bagheri and Hanieh Mollashafi, emphasizes four fundamental functions of the institution of *Wilāyat al-Faqīh*: resolving legal deadlocks, providing guidance in times of sedition, fostering unity through affection, and providing value-based leadership for society. By drawing an analogy between the relationship of *Wilāyat* and society and that of the soul and the body, the article argues that society suffers from functional disorder in the absence of *Wilāyat*. The novelty of this article lies in its emphasis on the institutional function of *Wilāyat al-Faqīh*. In other words, the survival, public acceptance, and effectiveness of this institution do not depend on the charismatic personality or the unique qualities of

the individual *Walī al-Faqīh*; rather, they are the result of the institutionalization of its roles and functions. This approach makes the political system resilient against rigidity and against the risk of collapse resulting from the replacement of those in power.

Third: Participatory Governance: The People, Justice, and Contemporary Challenges

At the heart of this intellectual framework, the people are regarded as the principal agents in the realization of justice and civilization-building. The article "*The Position of the People in the Political Thought of the Martyred Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei*," by Ali Aghajani, through a comparative analysis of religious democracy and Western democracy, presents a model of popular governance that is not a religious version of Western democracy but rather an independent theory with its own foundations, objectives, and mechanisms.

The novelty of this article lies in distinguishing between the right to sovereignty (which belongs to God) and the actualization of government (which depends upon the people), and in explaining the role of the people as an intrinsic pillar of the political system, rather than merely a source of legitimacy. Through a comparative analysis of religious democracy and Western liberal democracy, the author shows that the model proposed by the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei, by combining divine guidance with popular participation, strengthens the capacity of the New Islamic Civilization in the second phase of the Islamic Revolution.

This article precisely depicts the intellectual transition that has, in some formulations, been described as the transition from personal guardianship (*wilāyah*) to institutionalized guardianship—a transition in which *Wilāyat al-Faqīh* is incomplete without the

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people's participation, and the people constitute the main pillar of the political system.

This perspective is reinforced in the article "*Justice as a Generator of Participation: An Analysis of the Mechanisms of Alid Governance in Activating the Social Sphere*," by Ali Mohammadian and Reza Mollazadeh Yamchi, through a reexamination of conduct of Imam Ali (A.S.). Although this article does not directly address the thought of the martyred leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, its novelty lies in its precise and systematic explanation of five key principles in the conduct of Imam Ali (A.S.) for establishing social justice as the foundation of popular participation: (1) a system of public oversight and governmental transparency; (2) social compassion and public service; (3) direct and unmediated engagement with the people; (4) the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities; and (5) the empowerment of disadvantaged social groups. The findings show that Imam Ali (A.S.), by emphasizing justice in the distribution of wealth, restoring the dignity of the deprived, and encouraging the active participation of the people in decision-making, laid the foundations of a comprehensive system of social justice that, while strengthening public trust, provides the basis for social cohesion.

Finally, this issue turns to the contemporary challenges facing the Muslim world. The article "*A Jurisprudential Explanation of Artificial Intelligence Policymaking in Islamic Governance*," by Ehsan Vahidi Rad and Alireza Yari, presents a three-level model consisting of epistemological and jurisprudential foundations, jurisprudential principles, and governance and implementation, and demonstrates that governmental jurisprudence (*fiqh al-hukūmah*) possesses the capacity to regulate artificial intelligence policymaking within a

legitimate, ethical, and effective framework.

The novelty of this article lies in explaining data justice and distributive justice as two fundamental components of artificial intelligence policymaking, as well as in clarifying the relationship between data governance and Sharī'ah governance. This framework directs technological development away from the dominance of a purely instrumental and profit-oriented logic toward an approach centered on justice, human dignity, and the higher objectives of the Sharī'ah.

The article "*A Political Interpretation of Islamic Unity: Necessities, Strategies, and Obstacles in the Thought of the Martyred Ayatollah Khamenei*," by Morteza Gharasban Rouzbahani, classifies the strategies for achieving Islamic unity into three levels—cognitive and attitudinal, motivational and dispositional, and behavioral and practical—and demonstrates that, within this intellectual framework, unity is not merely an ethical recommendation but rather a political and civilizational strategy for safeguarding the Muslim Ummah, confronting foreign domination, and reconstructing the collective power of Muslims. The novelty of this article lies in distinguishing the political interpretation of unity from interpretations that are merely ethical, jurisprudential, or exhortatory in nature. The findings indicate that religious ignorance, extremism, *takfir*, the divisive policies of hegemonic powers, and media warfare are among the principal obstacles to the realization of Islamic unity.

The article "*The Mission of the People and the Reproduction of Political Legitimacy under Conditions of Hybrid Warfare: An Analysis of the Discourse of Resistance and Social Agency in Iran (1404-1405)*," by Masoud Moeinipour, conceptualizes the mission of the people (*bi'that al-nās*) and distinguishes it from such concepts as social mobilization, political participation, and national solidarity, explaining how society is transformed from a state of

passivity into one of active engagement in the defense of national security. The novelty of this article lies in combining discourse theory, hegemony theory, and social agency theory to analyze the political culture of resistance, while also integrating theoretical analysis with empirical data from the years 1404–1405 (2025–2026). Drawing upon the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe, Gramsci's concept of hegemony, and Foucault's theory of agency, the author argues that resistance has functioned as the central signifier in Iran's recent developments, around which signifiers such as Iran, national security, martyr, the people, and republicanism have been articulated. The findings show that political legitimacy in contemporary Iran is not reproduced solely through institutional and electoral mechanisms; rather, under conditions of crisis, it can also be strengthened through collective action, national solidarity, and social participation.

Fourth: The Model of the State in Alid Thought: Order, Justice, and Salvation

Alongside the articles that directly explicate the intellectual framework of the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei, the article "*The Strategic Objectives of the State in the Thought of Imam Ali (A.S.)*," by Morteza Yousefi-Rad, adopts a philosophical-political approach and, drawing upon the method of content analysis, reexamines the conduct of Imam Ali (A.S.) as a model for Islamic state-building. By presenting a threefold framework of the strategic objectives of the state in the thought of Imam Ali (A.S.)—namely order, justice, and salvation—the article demonstrates that these objectives stand in a sequential and complementary relationship, each serving as the foundation for the realization of the next. The principal novelty of this article may be identified at three levels. First, it explains order as a primary necessity and the foundation of social life, extending

beyond physical security to encompass economic, social, and moral order, thereby providing the condition for the flourishing of human potential. Second, it explains justice as the process through which order is elevated from a merely formal level to an internal and spiritual one, and through the equitable allocation of rights to different classes and social groups, prepares the ground for human salvation. Third, it explains salvation as the ultimate objective of the state, according to which the state is understood not as an instrument of power but as a divine trust entrusted with guiding humanity toward perfection and eternal felicity. Drawing upon Imam Ali's anthropological foundations—which regard the human being as a two-dimensional (material-spiritual) being, endowed with the capacity for vicegerency (*khilāfat Allāh*) and possessed of inherent rights—the author demonstrates that, in Alid thought, the state is an ethical and human-centered institution that, while ensuring order and security, seeks to realize justice and provide the conditions necessary for the moral and spiritual development of society. In effect, this article establishes a link between the discussion of religious system-building (presented in the article by Pirbalaei and Kodkhodaei) and the discussion of the position of the people (presented in the article by Aghajani), demonstrating that the Alid model of governance can provide a foundation for theorizing the Islamic state in the contemporary era.

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Conclusion: An Enduring Legacy, Research Challenges, and Future Horizons

The collection of articles in this issue clearly demonstrates that the thought of the martyred leader Ayatollah Khamenei constitutes a complete, living, and dynamic intellectual system that possesses the

capacity to be transformed into a "New Islamic Civilization." The most significant theoretical achievements of this intellectual framework, which are reflected throughout all the articles, are as follows:

First: The revival of national-Islamic identity and civilizational self-confidence.

In a world where the hegemonic system attempts to present its own models as the only path to progress, the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei demonstrated that "it is possible to think independently, act indigenously, and exert global influence." This perspective, according to which Iranian identity is intertwined with Islamic and Shi'i identity and these two are not considered separate from one another, provided the foundation for the formation of the Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress.

Second: The intelligent distinction between constants and variables.

By distinguishing between the domain of acts of worship and definitive rulings (in which there is no room for considerations of expediency) and the domain of social, economic, and political management (in which the consideration of the interests of the Islamic system is not only permissible but obligatory), he rescued jurisprudence from rigidity without leading it toward relativism. This distinction prevents two major deviations: rigid traditionalism and unprincipled freedom in interpreting expediency. It also represents the key to the success of his approach regarding the relationship between governmental jurisprudence and the expediency of the Islamic system.

Third: The transition from personal *wilāyah* to institutionalized *wilāyah*.

By proposing religious democracy and emphasizing the people

as an intrinsic pillar of the system (rather than merely a factor for legitimization), he took a significant step toward consolidating the theory of *Wilāyat Faqīh*. From this perspective, *Wilāyat Faqīh* is incomplete without the people's mission and participation. This transition—from a ruling jurist to a system based on jurisprudence and the people—was realized in practice through reliance on institutions and laws rather than personalities.

Fourth: Presenting an operational model of revolutionary rationality.

By simultaneously emphasizing legal institutionalization and revolutionary pursuit of justice, he outlined a third path that neither remains trapped in revolutionary chaos nor falls into a rigid and conservative condition incapable of accepting any change. In this perspective, structures must be sufficiently flexible to hear the call for justice, while the pursuit of justice must be sufficiently governed by law so as not to destroy structures.

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Research Challenges Ahead

Despite the extraordinary richness of this intellectual framework, research in this field continues to face a challenging path and requires further exploration. The most important challenges include:

1. The lack of interdisciplinary research:

Despite the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei's emphasis on a systemic perspective and the integration of jurisprudence, philosophy, mysticism, and politics, coherent interdisciplinary studies capable of reproducing this integration at both theoretical and operational levels have not yet been developed. It is necessary for academic centers to engage in the reexamination of this intellectual framework through an interdisciplinary approach.

2. The methodological gap in examining the relationship between jurisprudence and philosophy:

Despite the emphasis on Transcendent Philosophy (*Hikmah Muta'aliyah*) as a comprehensive intellectual system and its social extension, a clear methodology for examining the relationship between civilizational jurisprudence and the philosophy of civilization in his thought has not yet been formulated. This methodological gap is one of the main obstacles to theorizing in the field of Islamic civilization-building.

3. The gap between theory and practice in the field of governance:

Many of the theoretical concepts presented by the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei have not yet been institutionalized at the levels of policymaking and implementation, and this gap constitutes one of the most significant challenges facing the construction of a new Islamic civilization. Researchers need to adopt an applied approach and present operational models for the realization of these concepts.

4. Neglecting the capacities of Transcendent Philosophy in the humanities:

Despite his emphasis on the role of Transcendent Philosophy in producing Islamic humanities, this intellectual framework has not yet been employed as a primary source of theorization in fields such as political science, economics, and sociology. Reexamining Transcendent Philosophy in the light of the thought of the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei can open new horizons for the development of Islamic humanities.

5. The need for comparative studies:

Despite the theoretical richness of the theories presented by the

martyred Ayatollah Khamenei, systematic comparative studies that examine these theories in relation to other intellectual systems (both Western and Islamic) have not yet been developed. Such studies can contribute to a clearer explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of this intellectual framework.

Future Research Horizons

Based on the teachings of the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei, who regarded free thinking as a bridge between jurisprudential *ijtihād* and philosophical reasoning, we invite esteemed researchers to reflect on the following research questions and gaps:

1. Examining the relationship between the theory of spiritual power and Transcendent Philosophy:

How can the theory of spiritual power be tested through empirical methods and within the framework of contemporary social and political sciences, and how can its relationship with Transcendent Philosophy be systematically explained? Can the capacities of Ṣadrāian philosophy be utilized for theorizing in the field of power and resistance? This research can contribute to explaining the logic of spiritual power as a new issue in power studies.

2. The 250-Year Human and civilizational theories:

Compared with Western theories of civilization (such as Ibn Khaldun's cycles, Toynbee's theory, or Spengler's approach), what methodological strengths and weaknesses does the theory of the 250-Year Human possess, and how can it be employed in analyzing the contemporary Axis of Resistance and Islamic movements? This research can lead to the presentation of an indigenous model for analyzing Islamic civilizations.

3. The model of transition from personal *wilāyah* to institutionalized *wilāyah*:

What theoretical and operational model can be presented for the transition from personal *wilāyah* to institutionalized *wilāyah* in the theory of *Wilāyat al-Faqīh*, based on the experience of more than three decades of leadership by the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei? How can this transition be connected with the theory of the mission of the people and institutionalized within governance structures?

4. Islamic smart governance in the digital age:

What are the jurisprudential, legal, and philosophical requirements for institutionalizing Islamic smart governance (particularly in the fields of artificial intelligence and data governance) based on principles such as justice and human dignity? How can the relationship between data sovereignty and Sharī'ah sovereignty be examined, and an indigenous model for technology policymaking in an Islamic system be presented?

5. The relationship between governmental jurisprudence and the expediency of the Islamic system in the thought of the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei:

How can an operational model for considering expediency in the fields of social management, economics, and foreign policy be developed based on the distinction between constants and variables, in a way that remains protected from both rigid traditionalism and relativism? This research can contribute to providing a framework for decision-making under complex contemporary conditions.

6. Religious democracy and theories of political participation:

What similarities and differences exist between religious democracy in the thought of the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei and

classical and contemporary theories of political participation (from Rousseau to Habermas), and how can it be introduced as an alternative model for Islamic societies?

Final Remarks

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the memory of that “transcendent Philosopher” and emphasizing the point that “civilization-building means creating a foundation for the comprehensive growth of the committed, rational, and just Iranian human being.” I sincerely extend my gratitude to all the esteemed authors, reviewers, and colleagues who contributed to the publication of this rich and enlightening issue.

The martyred leader of the Revolution, through his ontological perspective on human beings and society, presented a vision of the human being who, for his or her development, requires philosophy in order to understand the world, jurisprudence in order to know duties and organize actions, and politics in order to move society toward divine perfection. These three dimensions—namely philosophy, jurisprudence, and politics—were never separate from one another in his thought, and this constitutes the greatest lesson he offered to the future builders of society.

Undoubtedly, the continuation of this research path will be the golden key to achieving the New Islamic Civilization and attaining the dignity and authority worthy of the Muslim Ummah. It is hoped that this collection will serve as a guiding light for researchers and policymakers in the Islamic world on this blessed path.

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