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Session 37: A Scrutiny of the Issue of Violence

We have stated that just as Islam has decrees based upon magnanimity, mercy and benevolence, promoting brotherhood, love and friendship, it has also decrees associated with severity, harshness and violence in special or exceptional circumstances, calling for struggle and resistance against the criminals and seditionists.

Of course, since this discussion is of secondary importance and beyond the scope of our main concerns, we shall only touch on it briefly. The propaganda in newspapers and articles on this issue, however, show that there is need to elaborate comprehensively upon the station of love and violence in Islam. For this reason, we shall examine the subject to the extent suitable in this session.

The enemies' sinister propaganda and activities against Islam

Since the beginning, the enemies of Islam have presented it as a religion of violence that was propagated at the point of the sword on the ground that the obligation to struggle and wage *jihad* against enemies is upheld in Islam; the Qur'an contains many verses about *jihad*; and, *jihad* has been considered as one of the obligatory acts and branches of religion [*furu' ad-din*]. They have instilled the fact that Islam is a religion of violence in the minds of people, saying that it was forced down the throats of people during the initial decades of the Caliphate.

Meanwhile, some people try to defend Islam by claiming that there is no violence in Islam for it has always enjoined mercy and compassion; the injunctions of *jihad* and the harsh and violent expressions about *jihad* in Islam are related to a particular time and circumstances; today, those injunctions are no longer applicable and must not be discussed; at this time, one must only talk about flexibility, accommodation, indulgence, and negligence!

Our nation is aware of the motives of the enemy's propaganda campaign against Islam and will not be influenced by it. It must be noted, however, that the issue is beyond that and does not end here. By employing various forms and diverse methods of propaganda and by using various literary and artistic means, they cast doubts upon Islamic teachings that can have a profound and dangerous impact upon

our culture and weaken some people's faith in the religious fundamentals.

This is something that has been affirmed by psychological theories and actual experience. We can evidently see for ourselves how a generation is influenced by the enemy's unrelenting scientific and literarily embellished propaganda. The new generation can possibly forget its religious-national identity and primordial self and assume a different cultural outlook as a result of the enemy's sinister propaganda.

Among Western concepts and values that have been introduced in our culture are the concepts of freedom and democracy that are presented as absolute values in our literature. They have promoted these concepts to such an extent that they have turned out to be like idols which no one dare say something against or mention their shortcomings and deficiencies. Western thinkers themselves have written many books criticizing and rejecting democracy.

Even today, some political philosophers and sociologists criticize democracy on various occasions, writing books rejecting it. Some of these books have been translated into various languages of the world including Persian and are accessible to our people. Yet, they have so sanctified these concepts that in the Third World countries no one will dare criticize them. If we dare to say something against Western freedom and democracy, we will be accused of being reactionaries, traditionalists and despots.

The West and its pretentious defense of human rights

Undoubtedly, the Westerners have certain long-term plans in their propaganda. In order to secure their interests and control all revolutionary countries, they persistently talk about democracy, freedom and human rights. Whoever opposes them is accused of being hostile to democracy and human rights. Yet, we see that they do not criticize some of the most despotic and unpopular regimes in the world simply because they are their satellites and secure their interests.

The falsity and insincerity of their claims can be exposed when an election is held in a country based on democratic principles and the election result is in favor of Muslims or Islamists. Truly beyond expectation, the election result will be declared null and void. After a bloody coup, a group of the armed forces will control the government. Everyday, they will kill tens of innocent people and imprison freedom-loving Muslims. Not only that, these false champions of human rights will not accuse the said regime of violating human rights or not respecting freedom, but they will immediately recognize its legitimacy, affirm its acts and offer extensive assistance to it.

When the Zionist occupiers occupied the land of Palestine, drove the people out of their homes, killed thousands, made millions refugees in other countries, none of these self-claimed champions of human rights said that the Zionists actions were violations of human rights. Instead, the superpowers granted political recognition to the usurper and occupier regime. Throughout the period of its illegitimate rule, the regime has subjected the original owners of the land to torture, persecution, murder, and plunder and

destroyed their homes. Yet, those who talk about human rights have not raised even a finger of protest.

From time to time, the United Nations issues useless and futile statements or resolutions in line with its policies and propaganda. In practice, it gives the 'go' signal to the regime—"If you do not abide by the resolutions, nothing will happen to you." As we all know, tens of resolutions and statements against the Quds-occupier regime have been approved, yet the regime has rejected them all. Meanwhile, apart from not being reproached or punished, it is gratuitously granted billions of dollars, ultramodern weapons, nuclear submarines, and nuclear technology. Is there any of the so-called champions of human rights countries that says that the regime which has violated the most fundamental human rights and rejects or opposes international treaties, agreements and resolutions is against democracy and human rights?

Resorting to violence and plotting to topple down the Islamic system

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, an extensive propaganda against violence was launched in our country. Initially, they said that the people's revolution or uprising against the "legitimate" Pahlavi regime was a form of violence. After the victory of the Revolution, groups of hypocrites that failed to win the support of people for their un-Islamic objectives clashed with the Revolution and the masses, assassinated a number of religious and political figures and did not spare even innocent people until, finally, the people decided to struggle against them and expelled them from the country. Since then up to now, however, the Westerners have been campaigning against our people and government, saying that our policy toward the hypocrites is based on un-Islamic violence!

They intentionally gloss over the devastation caused by the hypocrites to this country and the Revolution. All treacherous assassinations are not condemned either. But when a nation rises up to defend its religion and country, suppress the terrorists, imprison some and expel the rest from the country, they raise a hue and cry saying: "They (the revolutionary people) are acting against human rights!"

Similarly, when during the disturbances in Tehran after July 9, 1999 (Tir 18, 1378 AHS) a bunch of rioters and rogues set public utilities, banks, public and private vehicles, and even mosques on fire and tarnished the honor of people by removing the headscarves of women, no one said that they were acting against human rights. Instead, they presented these rioters as reformists and proponents of freedom and democracy! But when the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the devoted and selfless volunteer mobilizing [basij] forces stood up and came to the rescue of their religion, honor and ideal system and drove the rioters and foreign mercenaries from the country, they yelled hysterically "There is no freedom in Iran and the Iran political system is a dictatorship!"

The Westerners are aware of the falsity of their claims. They have adopted these means of propaganda especially after the Revolution with the aim of defeating the Islamic system. We are unaware and

uninformed of the depth of their conspiracies and plots, but given the many centuries of experience they have acquired they know well that for them to be able one day—even if it be fifty years from now as they erroneously imagine it—to topple down a popular system which is rooted in the people's religious culture, they have to engage in extensive, complex, psychological and cultural activities.

Their objective is that after the passing away of one or two generations of the Revolution, the youth who have not experienced the Revolution, not witnessed the corruption and crimes of the Pahlavi regime, not understood the achievements of the Revolution and not been trained by the Imam and his companions would be influenced by their propaganda and help bring about the downfall of the Islamic government and install their so-called democratic satellite government.

Paving the ground for the absence of people from the scene

In a bid to attain their wicked goals, they make well-calculated programs, conduct fundamental cultural activities, and utilize effective means. Among those used particularly in the past two or three years¹ is the promotion of concepts such as indulgence, negligence and moderation and condemnation of decisiveness and violence. They realize that the perpetuity of the Islamic system depends on the love and affection of the youth and basijis, in particular, for Islam and the Islamic leadership for which they are willing to risk their lives.

Through propaganda and the use of cultural means, they strive to take away bravery, sacrifice, moral heroism, and the spiritual power of religious zeal and enthusiasm from the people. They force people to see the negative, inhuman and unjust forms of violence with dire and painful consequences committed around the world, so that they consider violence absolutely condemnable and reproachable. That is, if a person talks harshly, chants the slogan "Death to America" or deals firmly with rioters, his action is violent and, therefore, condemnable and reproachable.

By campaigning against violence and labeling the defense forces of the Revolution as violent, they want our people not to take a step against the conspiracies and plots of the foreigners and the destructive activities of their paid agents and leave the scene of action so that they can stage a coup like that of August 19, 1953 (Mordad 28, 1332 AHS).² As they orchestrated the foreign-backed coup on August 19 of that year, they also considered the days after the 18th of Tir this year (1378 AHS) as an opportune moment to stage another coup in this country.

By conducting extensive studies and research, spending huge amounts and deceiving the simple-minded, they had already carried out the prelude to this event. For example, the interviews and confessions of their mercenaries who openly confessed that they had received intellectual and monetary assistance from America bespeak of this reality. When they found conditions suitable, they brought to the scene rogues, rascals and mercenaries so that they could actualize the coup by harassing people, setting public and private properties on fire, and creating chaos and disorder under extensive foreign and domestic print and broadcast media and other forms of assistance.

By condemning violence, they wanted to crush the resistance of the people and weaken their defense of the Revolution so that when they witnessed inhuman and anti-revolutionary actions, the destruction of people's property, the attack on public utilities, and the disturbances staged by a bunch of mercenaries, they would keep silent and not stop the rioters. Even if they took action, they would not take practical, physical and violent action.

They would call the rioters to sobriety and dialogue and listen to their demands. They would tell the rioters: "You have the right to protest and be upset. Send your spokesman so that we can sit together and grant some of your demands and compromise. Drop some of your demands and in turn, we will also withdraw from some of our stances.

Their demands will be nothing but the removal of Islamic laws and ordinances, Islamic slogans and mottos, and the defense of Islam. By meeting these demands, a sort of bloodless coup will be staged in the country. As a result, Islamic values will be totally obliterated and if external military support and assistance will be needed, (as they had contemplated long before), they will attack the eastern and western borders of the country, render the final blow and install a satellite regime.

The exigency of confronting cultural conspiracies and misgivings about religious sanctities

This extensive and well-calculated propaganda is remarkably launched in the broadcast media, periodicals and magazines that even some prominent figures have been deceived and fallen prey to the enemy's cultural plots, which are meant to rob the Muslims of their religious zeal and enthusiasm so that they do not stand up to defend Islam and the Revolution at the time of necessity. A manifestation of it was the incident that recently took place. Many of its facts are yet to be exposed. They shall be revealed gradually.

It was on account of that, based on my personal discernment, that I sensed a serious cultural threat as a prelude to a military coup to topple the Islamic system. I entered the scene and decided to refute the enemies' objections and propagated notions, thwart their cultural designs, warn the people, and awaken the happy-go-lucky and those who are in deep slumber because of their propaganda. At least, by creating doubt and uncertainty in the false beliefs and ideas of Western cultural propaganda, I could inform them of the menacing threat to their religion and culture, and by infusing enthusiasm in society and raising questions, I could contribute in making the people less vulnerable to their vicious propaganda.

In line with the fulfillment of my duty, I decided to break the idol of the absolute negation of violence and refute the notion that every form of violence is bad while every form of flexibility is desirable. We all know that, each of them is desirable under certain conditions. The same is true about freedom. I reject absolute freedom. Freedom within the framework of Islamic values is desirable. At that time, some

colleagues got angry because they thought I was saying something against freedom.

However, when they saw the conspiracies behind the curtains, became aware of the far-reaching exploitation of freedom, and found out that under the pretext of freedom some elements were busy trying to uproot the lofty religious sanctities and values of our nation, so much so, that a distinguished political figure said in one of his speeches, “Our people are free even to demonstrate against God,” these colleagues explicitly said, “The desirable freedom we are concerned with is freedom within the framework of Islamic values.” Had I not pointed out this issue and infused enthusiasm in society, perhaps the officials would have not deemed it necessary to defend “the theory of freedom within the framework of Islamic values” and reject absolute freedom.

Today, some elements condemn and consider as violent and undesirable any action done in line with the defense of Islam and Islamic values. This is a reality and not only an imagination that pops up in my mind for some people to claim that my issue is an isolated one and that I am talking in a vacuum. Incidentally, *I do not claim without evidence.*

As we have no time to deal with each case, I will mention some of them. Some individuals bring the principle of jihad into question and describe it as violent. One of them said in his speech at Tehran University during a commemoration ceremony of ‘Ashura, thus: “The murder of the Doyen of the Martyrs (‘a) was a repercussion of the violence done by the Holy Apostle (s) during the Battle of Badr!”

This person condemns Islamic jihad, the battles and military expeditions of the Holy Apostle (s), saying that when the Apostle (s) killed the polytheists, their children also came forward and killed his (s) children. Had the Apostle (s) not killed them, their children would not have killed the children of the Apostle (s)! In reality, he praised the forces of Yazid and condemned Islam and the Apostle (s).

At that time no one said that his speech was an affront to the Holy Apostle (s), a distortion of the personality of Imam al-Husayn (‘a) and the event of Karbala’, and a denial of the essentials of religion, and some newspapers published and highlighted the whole text of the speech with an impressive headline! Unfortunately, the officials did not show sensitivity to these infamies. In the country where a revolution was staged in the name of Imam al-Husayn (‘a) and has survived in the name of Imam al-Husayn (‘a), the uprising of Imam al-Husayn (‘a) was blemished and it was concluded that if we do not want such incidents to happen and the Husayns of our time to be killed, we must not have a violent attitude!

I am now addressing the writer who has written in a newspaper with mass circulation that as I am allegedly talking in a vacuum and dealing with out-of-topic points, I have to reconsider continuing my series of talks. Am I talking in a vacuum or in the midst of the social atmosphere of my time? Is what I said not the hottest issue in our country?

Do my talks not reflect the daily reality in this country? Should I reconsider my decision or should you, who was once a member of the international Islamic party and proud of supporting *Fada’iyan-e Islam*

[the devotees of Islam]?³

At this juncture, I deem it necessary to quote a part of the late Imam's (s) eloquent and problem-solving words to warn us of the cultural threats and conspiracies under the guise of freedom:

My advice to the Islamic Consultative Assembly, Presidents, Guardianship Council, Supreme Judicial Council and governments, now and in future, is to maintain the news agencies, the press, and the magazines in the service of Islam and interests of the country. We must all know that Western style freedom degenerates the youth, and it is condemned by Islam and the intellect.

Propaganda literature, written articles, speeches, books, and magazines that oppose Islam, public morality and interests of the country are haram [taboo or interdicted by religion] and it is incumbent on all Muslims to prevent their printing and distribution. Harmful liberty must be checked. If all that is haram, against the path of truth and the Islamic state, and contrary to the prestige of the Islamic Republic, is not decisively controlled, then all are to be held responsible. If any one, including a hizbullah [lit, the party of God] youth meet with a violation of these rules, he must report it to the appropriate authorities and if they fail to act then the people themselves must take preventive measure.⁴

Islam's description of God's mercy and wrath

One of the Westerners' misgivings on Islam is that the God described in the Qur'an is wrathful, harsh, furious and revengeful but the God of the Bible is forgiving, compassionate, benevolent, extremely tolerant, and so kind and affectionate that—God forbid—He sent His only son to be killed to save mankind and his blood to become the ransom for the sins of sinners! Is the God described in the Qur'an really harsh and wrathful, or merciful and compassionate?

The reply to the abovementioned misgiving is that God has the Attributes of both mercy and wrath. He is both "the Most Merciful of all the merciful" [*arham ar-rahimin*] and "the most severe of punishers" [*ashadd al-mu'aqibin*]. Out of 114 *surahs* [chapters] of the Qur'an, 113 *surahs* begin with "In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful" [*bismillah 'ir-rahman 'ir-rahim*] and in both descriptions of Allah His Attribute of mercy is mentioned, i.e. "All-beneficent" [*ar-rahman*] and "All-merciful" [*ar-rahim*].

Only one *surah* of the Qur'an (*Surah at-Tawbah* or *Bara'ah* 9) does not begin with "In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful" but in *Surah an-Naml* (27) "In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful" is repeated twice. Apart from at the beginning of the *surah*, it is also mentioned in the middle, when Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, reads the letter of Hadhrat Sulayman (Prophet Solomon) (*'a*) which begins with "In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful" to her.⁵ In any case, "In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful" which contains two attributes of divine mercy is repeated 114 times in the Qur'an. But alongside the description of boundless divine mercy, some verses also reveals God's attribute of wrath and anger. Take for example the following passages:

﴿...وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ﴾

“...And Allah is all-mighty, avenger.”⁶

﴿إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِمُونَ﴾

“...Indeed We shall wreak vengeance upon the guilty.”⁷

﴿...فَبَأَوْا بِغَضَبٍ عَلَى غَضَبٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ﴾

“...Thus they earned wrath upon wrath, and there is a humiliating punishment for the faithless.”⁸

If the Europeans describe their God as kind and merciful only and say that “Our God has no wrath and anger”, then they have not correctly described God as described in Islam and the Qur’an. Our belief is that God’s mercy supersedes and prevails over His wrath and anger. Thus, God said:

﴿...كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ...﴾

“...**He has made mercy incumbent upon Himself...**”⁹

This concept is mentioned in many *mutawatir* traditions reported by both Sunnis and Shi’ahs. It is mentioned in our supplications, thus:

يَا مَنْ سَبَقَتْ رَحْمَتُهُ غَضَبَهُ!

“**O He whose mercy supersedes His wrath!**”

That is, God’s mercy does not negate but rather prevails over His wrath. As long as divine wisdom, grace and favor demand it, His servants shall savor His grace and mercy and His wrath and anger shall not surface except when it is necessary for some people to incur His wrath and anger. As such, we can observe that God sent His wrath on the communities of ‘Ad,¹⁰ Thamud¹¹ and Lut (Lot)¹² annihilating them, also mentioning why in the Qur’an.

It was because apostles of Allah repeatedly invited them to the path of guidance and, miracles and divine signs were also shown to them. Yet, they chose rebellion and corruption, and did not give up their wicked and abominable acts. They further indulged in sins and defied the commands of God and His apostle and incurred the wrath and anger of God to serve as a moral lesson for the corrupt and obstinate.

Islam is based upon mercy and compassion, not harshness and violence, and its guiding principle is mercy. However, in certain cases the Creator needs to use strictness, severity of action and violence in order to correct the totally misguided. Logically, a God should possess the attribute of mercy as well as that of wrath, anger and vengeance.

The necessity of confronting enemies and hypocrites, and eliminating impediments to guidance

Islam initially calls for the guidance and enlightenment of people. At the same time, the Qur'an enjoins struggle against those who hinder the spread of the message of the apostles, the Prophet of Islam in particular. As such, during the time of the Apostle (s) and the Infallibles ('a), *jihad* was initially ordained to remove the impediments to the guidance of people. On this basis, when the Prophet of Islam (s) began his prophetic mission, the issue was not whether he could interfere in the affairs of the Byzantium or Persian empires.

The truth of the matter is that the Apostle (s) was sent for the guidance of all mankind. So, if someone, be it the Shah of Persia or the king of Byzantine, opposed the invitation of the Apostle (s), it was incumbent upon him to wage war against him. For this reason, he sent letters to the different leaders of the world at that time, inviting them to Islam and asking them to make way for him and his envoys to guide the people in their respective countries.

Thus, *jihad* is one of the indisputable principles of Islam and all Muslim sects—Sunnis and Shi'ahs—unanimously agree on it without having any dissenting opinion, and the reason behind the waging of war and *jihad* against the leaders of unfaith was that they hindered the guidance and enlightenment of their people and the message of the Apostle (s). As such, in order to remove these obstacles, the Messenger of Allah (s) was duty-bound to wage war against them. Given these facts, how can one say that Islam does not permit and deem necessary to wage war and *jihad*? Can we dismiss and conceal the Qur'anic verses about *jihad* and the struggle against the faithless, the hypocrites and enemies of Islam?

Yes, war and resistance against the enemies of God is one of the indisputable principles of Islam. It is true that in the decrees on *jihad* Islam has enjoined the observance of the highest humanitarian principles, but at the same time, it emphasizes that we have to fight the obstinate and those who consciously oppose the truth, the religion of God, and, violate treaties:

﴿فَقَاتِلُوا أُمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ﴾

“Then fight the leaders of unfaith—indeed they have no [commitment to] pledges—maybe they will relinquish.”¹³

Similarly, in *Surah at-Tahrim*, verse 9, and *Surah at-Tawbah*, verse 73, God commands the Apostle (s) and the Muslims to fight the faithless and the hypocrites, and deal with them sternly and violently:

﴿إِنَّمَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا
عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوْلَوْهُمْ﴾

“Allah forbids you only in regard to those who made war against you on account of religion and expelled you from your homes and supported [others] in your expulsion, that you make friends with them.”¹⁴

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ
الْمَصِيرُ﴾

“O Prophet! Wage jihad against the faithless and the hypocrites, and be severe with them. Their refuge shall be hell, and it is an evil destination.”¹⁵

(The said writer has written that the verses on *jihad* pertain to the faithless and did not notice that in the abovementioned verse God had ordered *jihad* against the hypocrites from within the community in addition to the faithless.)

Elsewhere, God also says thus:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلِيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً وَعَلِمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

“O, you who have faith! Fight the faithless who are in your vicinity, and let them find severity in you, and know that Allah is with the God-wary.”¹⁶

In the above mentioned verse, God commands the Muslims to fight the faithless who are living in their vicinity, not to be heedless of them, and express their wrath, severity and firmness to their faithless

neighbors so that they are afraid and do not commit treachery and hatch any plot. God also says in another verse, thus:

﴿وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهَبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَأَخْرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ...﴾

“Prepare against them whatever you can of [military] power and war-horses, and create awe thereby in the enemy of Allah, and your enemy, and others besides them, whom you do not know, but Allah knows them...”¹⁷

(I advise those who are familiar with Arabic literature to see for themselves the equivalent of the word *irhab* in other languages. If I would mention it myself, newspapers will place headlines saying so-and-so supports terrorism.)

In any case, the Qur’an has enjoined severe and harsh treatment of those who cannot be dealt with logically, who impudently obstruct the path of guidance, enlightenment and invitation of the Apostle (s), and consciously wage war against Islam out of animosity and contumacy. The Muslims are further instructed to strike dread and fear in them so that they do not entertain the idea of attacking, betraying and rendering a blow to the Muslims. It cannot be said to them: “Your religion is for you, and our religion is for us. Let us live together peacefully under the bond of brotherhood and friendship.”

Opposition to the penal and criminal laws of Islam

Some writers express their protest to us, arguing that Islam has issued orders in relation to the faithless that one should deal with them strictly and harshly, and not with the Islamic state’s own citizens. They forget that Islam has set in its penal code severe punishments or penalties for certain crimes, violations and offenses when committed by Muslim citizens. Regarding a thief, for instance, Islam has commanded that his hand be amputated. Regarding adultery or fornication [*zina*] and other indecent acts, it has commanded that the guilty be punished.

For example, the fornicator must receive a hundred lashes. In some cases, it has set the penalty of execution for some acts of indecency. In reality, the penalties set by Islam for these types of crimes are very harsh and unbearable. It must not be lost sight of that Islam has set difficult conditions to prove some crimes against chastity, like *zina*. On account of these difficult conditions, these crimes can rarely be proven and the punishments implemented.

The existence of religious punishments and ordinances prompts the enemies of Islam to use them as a tool and weapon against Islam, claiming that Islam violates human rights, acts violently in implementing its penal laws, and disregards human dignity. Yes, the enemies and pretentious human rights activists

assert that the amputation of the hand of a Muslim who has committed theft is an inhuman and violent act and is repugnant to human dignity because the person whose hand is amputated is deprived of an important body limb for the rest of his life and is known in society as a thief.

On the contrary, in their alleged defense of Islam some people say that those penal laws are related to a specific time in the past, and today there are better ways to maintain security and prevent theft and other crimes, and there is no need for a thief's hand to be amputated. If there were really better ways of maintaining security and preventing crimes, a crime should not be committed every 15 minutes in America, as it actually does, and there should be no need for a number of policemen to be stationed in high schools.

Those who say with utmost impudence that the Islamic penal laws are abrogated, because they are violent and related to 1,400 years ago and accepted by no one, seem to have forgotten that the Imam branded as apostates [*murtaddin*] those who called the bill on retaliation [*qisas*] inhuman and demonstrated against it, saying that their spouses were *haram* for them, their blood permissible to be shed, and their properties transferrable to their Muslim legatees?

Yes, the American human rights activists condemn and present as inhuman and harsh the penal laws of Islam. We would like to tell them that we acknowledge that in some cases the penal laws of Islam are severe. At the same time, we defend the severe laws of Islam and are willing to face the well-planned conspiracies against them. We do not accept these laws to have been abrogated for we firmly believe that "Whatever Muhammad (s) declared *halal* shall be *halal* till the Day of Resurrection and whatever Muhammad (s) declared *haram* shall be *haram* till the Day of Resurrection."

We staged a revolution in order to implement the laws and ordinances of Islam. In fact, the Shah also used to say: "What I am saying is in accordance with the spirit of Islam and the clerics are reactionary and in error!" The laws and decrees mentioned in the Qur'an or promulgated by Islam must be implemented—the same Islam for whose sovereignty its beloved children offered their blood in the past, and are ready to sacrifice their lives for its sake today; the same Islam presented by the Supreme Leader, saying: "Pristine Islam is the very Book and *Sunnah*."

The divine laws and decrees must be inferred from these two magnificent sacred sources by using the appropriate method and way of *ijtihad*. Those who do not accept this Islam have basically not accepted Islam because we have no Islam other than this one."

Violent measures not confined to the domain of penal and criminal laws

One of the writers had written in his article published in a newspaper that the cases of *hudud* and *ta'zirat* and the violent actions permitted in Islam are related to penal laws. We also accept that the laws Islam has set for criminals, violators and offenders are more or less severe. But the violence under discussion

which we condemn is not related to the penal laws of Islam.

Essentially, the penal laws of Islam have not been the subject of discussion on violence. He has asserted that I am discussing matters not related to my topic. Some newspapers have headlines saying that I am speaking outside the scope of my topic! Let me say that the subject of my discussion is the cultural deviations in our society. It is written in the same newspapers that the murder of the Doyen of the Martyrs (‘a) was the repercussion of his grandfather’s harshness in the Battle of Badr! O judge and lawyer who writes in the newspaper about me, tell me: What does the one who has expressed such an opinion about the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (‘a) mean by violence and what type of violence does he negate? I am talking about the same cases, instances and topics discussed in society.

I am talking about the instances of exploitation of concepts like violence, freedom and moderation. For example, they have said: “The Battle of Badr was an instance of violence; hence, Islam is a religion of violence!” Do you still say I have gone off the topic?

One can easily argue: “We deny those insinuations and exploitations. We do not regard Islam as a religion of violence. Our question is: Can the people also act violently, enter the scenes of action and resort to physical measures beyond the framework of official police function? “Do you regard the Islamic Revolution as violent or not? Those who can remember the event that happened in Tehran on September 8, 1978 (Shahrivar 17, 1357 AHS) know what our dear youth and heroic people did against the Pahlavi regime.¹⁸

Were the demonstrations and actions of people against the Pahlavi regime violent or not? Were they appropriate or not? Did Islam allow those actions and movements or not? If Islam did not allow them, then the revolution becomes illegal because Islam is devoid of violence and it does not permit violent actions! Similarly, were the sacred blows rendered by the late Nawwab Safawi¹⁹ and other members of the *Fada’iyan-e Islam* to the Pahlavi regime appropriate and proper, or inappropriate and improper? It was on the basis of their valuable revolutionary actions that their names are immortalized in our country and held in high esteem and regard, and nowadays, some streets in Tehran and other cities are named after them. The same question also applies to the dear brothers of the Coalition of Islamic Societies [*Hay’at-ha-ye I’tilaf-e Islami*], viz. Martyr Muhammad Bukhara’i and his dear colleagues who sent to hell the henchman premier of the Shah.²⁰

One can say that they should not have acted violently. They should have peacefully formed an official party and sat on the negotiating table with the Shah’s regime and presented their demands and stances. But would anyone have listened to them. If the regime had really listened to them, they would not have been forced to resort to violent actions. When they saw that nobody was listening to their legitimate demands, they had no option but to resort to violence.

That judge might say: “I condemn those violent actions. They should have behaved with utmost sobriety, patience, fortitude, and composure, and pursued solving their problems and securing their demands!”

Let me ask: “Did you silence and stop those violent groups who poured into the streets after Tir 18, 1378 AHS, staged riots, set mosques on fire, destroyed public and private property, removed headscarves of women, and chanted anti-Islamic slogans with smiles, flattery and embrace? Or, was it not our own beloved basijis who came to the scene, risked their lives, faced dangers, and stopped the rioters? It is indeed regrettable that no one ever recognized and appreciated what they did. They came to the scene for the sake of God, to defend Islam and the Revolution, and God will abundantly recompense them.

That gentleman might still say: “We condemn the actions of the *basijis* in suppressing and dispersing the seditionists, rioters and foreign mercenaries. No confrontation with them should have taken place. They were free to express their views and stage a protest.” According to the Americans, those who staged the uprising, poured into the streets, and burned mosques were freedom-lovers. So, they had the right to say that they wanted freedom and not religion! Exactly what that gentleman said in his speech, ‘people have the right to demonstrate even against God!’

If he says, “When they sensed that the government would not listen to them if they openly said that they did not want Islam or religion, they were forced to vandalize public and private property, set mosques on fire and chant anti-Islamic slogans in order to be heard; so, their action was justifiable but not that of those who stopped them,” we will tell him, “So, finally, you also permit violence, because you have to endorse one of the two actions: either you have to say that the action of those who poured into the streets, burned mosques, and chanted slogans against Islam and the system was justifiable, though violent or, you have to say that the action of the basijis, the masses and the disciplinary forces in stopping the rioters was appropriate and justifiable, though violent. Now, which violence do you deem permissible?

We do not support or encourage opportunists who change their stances and principles. For us the criterion is the architect of the revolution, His Eminence Imam Khomeini (q). We learned from him the sublime laws and government of Islam. He said: “If the *hizbullahi* youth and people witness propaganda, articles, books, and magazines repugnant to Islam, public decency and national interest, they must report them to the appropriate authorities that are duty-bound to attend to such things.

But if the concerned authorities fail to act and check these deviations and sinister propaganda by legal means, then there is no other option but for the religious people and youth themselves to take preventive measures, and, incumbent upon every Muslim to take action.

When the apostate Salman Rushdie wrote *The Satanic Verses* in which he insulted the Holy Apostle (s) and ascribed many abominable and unscrupulous things to the Qur’an and the Apostle (s), Imam Khomeini issued the death sentence for him and declared it incumbent upon every Muslim to kill him whenever he had access to Rushdie. Indisputably, the said religious edict [*fatwa*] and decree [*hukm*] was not confined to the Imam only as other *fuqaha* also issued the same edict and Muslim countries endorsed it.

Now, the question is: Was the edict of the Imam not violent? It is clear that the Imam also regarded permissible and even exigent a violent action against a person who presumptuously insults the essentials of religion and indisputable principles of Islam, who intends to plot and render a blow to Islam and cast aspersion against Islamic sanctities, and the Imam described such person as an apostate who, the Quran says, must be executed.

Islam and the need to answer all academic objections under all circumstances

Of course, if a person has no intention of hatching a plot and rendering a blow, but a question regarding the essence of religion and the essentials and laws of Islam, he may raise it and one must listen to him with utmost respect and answer him logically and rationally. It is because Islam is the religion of logic and based on argument and proof. It wants the Muslims, the ‘ulama’ in particular, to answer questions and objections under all circumstances with utmost composure, forbearance and openness, by the use of sound logic and rational and textual proofs to prove the truthfulness of Islam.

As such, the Qur’an even says that if at the time of battle one of the enemy’s army raises a white flag and comes to the Muslims to search the truthfulness of Islam and ask a question, the Muslims are duty-bound to provide him with escorts and guards for his protection, to listen to him with utmost kindness and benevolence, and convey the truth to him by presenting reasons, proof and evidence. Thereafter, while providing him with escorts and guards he should be sent to his original place even if it is in the midst of the enemy’s army:

﴿وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“If any of the polytheists seeks asylum from you, grant him asylum until he hears the Word of Allah. Then convey him to his place of safety.”²¹

The Qur’an says that even if the person who came to research and ask questions did not accept Islam and become a Muslim, he must still be provided escorts to return to his place of safety. No one should hinder him because he has come in the first place to ask questions. His safety must be guaranteed and his questions answered. Where in the world and in which school of thought is such sublime humane treatment enjoined?

However, if out of contumacy and plot to topple the Islamic system, a person raises objections casts doubt upon the beliefs, principles and values to which the Muslims are strongly attached, he must be dealt with. He is different from one who has questions and doubts and sincerely wants to pose his

question and get an answer.

Confronting the conspiracies and reaction of foreigners

One must not sit idly vis-à-vis the extensive cultural and propaganda activities of the enemies of Islam and their mercenary agents from within that target the religious principles, values and beliefs of the people. They have certainly hatched an extensive plot through activities carried out under the garb of cultural exchange, but their agents write in newspapers that there is no conspiracy in the offing, and claiming that it exists is nothing but an illusion. However, the unfolding of recent disturbances and trends in line with the same activities and cultural policies of the enemy revealed to the people the truth behind the existence of a conspiracy.

Those actions and demonstrations against the Islamic system, attack on government establishments, and riots and disturbances indicated that there was a serious conspiracy behind the event against the Islamic system, already confirmed by the Supreme Leader. It was on account of this reality that when the devoted children of this heroic nation put a stop to the rioters, rascals and rogues and extinguished the fire of sedition, a wave of support for them and condemnation of the Islamic system swept across the West. Many members of the American legislative body even demanded the official condemnation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and enactment of a law against it because the Islamic state confronted foreign mercenaries and agents and did not allow the rioters to do what they wanted!

In different parts of the world strikes and skirmishes take place everyday and some people get killed or wounded. On a daily basis, we witness the Zionist regime firing on Muslims who are clamoring for their rights, killing some of them. Even in some regimes supported by America, hundreds of people are killed by their respective regimes. Yet, no one condemns them and says that the crackdown on them is against freedom. Instead, those regimes are fully supported and it is claimed that those killed people revolted against legitimate governments who had the right to defend themselves.

But when a hue and cry was raised in Iran and someone was suspiciously killed in a university and the killer could not be identified—as expected, he might be one of the enemy's infiltrating agents and the rioters themselves—or another person was incidentally killed on the scene, and also, when a number of rioters and rogues poured into the streets, burned mosques and violated the chastity of people and were confronted by the revolutionary forces, a great reaction was seen in the Western countries, America in particular, and our government was condemned for its alleged opposition to freedom and democracy. It was claimed that the demonstrators were in pursuit of freedom and the grant of their rights but Iran had suppressed them. As a result, apart from condemning the Iranian state, they attempted to enact a law to campaign against the Islamic state of Iran!

The Qur'an and the need to repudiate and be inimical to its enemies

We can conclude that firstly, Islam describes God as having the attributes of both mercy and wrath. His mercy being greater prevails over His wrath but it does not mean that His mercy negates His wrath. In fact, on account of their persistence in sins some communities earn the anger of God and they incur His wrath and punishment.

Secondly, Islam has severe and harsh decrees against the enemies and opponents of Islam, and it enjoins Muslims to openly express abhorrence for the enemies of God. It is appropriate for friends to study *Surah al-Mumtahanah* in which Muslim behavior toward the polytheists and faithless has been described and those who plan to befriend the enemies of God are rebuked, and God warns us of secretly reconciling with the enemies of Islam and establishing friendship with them.

In the said *surah*, God commands the Muslims to learn a lesson from Ibrahim (Abraham) (‘a) and his companions and make his attitude toward the polytheists and enemies of God as the model, and not smile at the enemies, hypocrites, and the enemy’s open and secret agents who are determined to annihilate Islam and the Muslims!

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ﴾

“O you who have faith! Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends, [secretly] offering them affection (for they have certainly defied whatever has come to you of the truth, expelling the Apostle and you, because you have faith in Allah, your Lord) if you have set out for jihad in My way and to seek My pleasure. You secretly nourish affection for them, while I know well whatever you hide and whatever you disclose, and whoever among you does that has certainly strayed from the right way.”²²

﴿قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحَدُّهُ...﴾

“There is certainly a good exemplar for you in Abraham and those who are with him, when they said to their people, ‘Indeed we repudiate you and whatever you worship besides Allah. We disavow you, and between you and us there has appeared enmity and hate for ever, unless you come to have faith in Allah alone...’”²³

They tell us, “Talk about life and do not chant the slogan, ‘Death to America’ anymore.” Never! The slogan “Death to America” must be chanted and moreover, like Ibrahim (‘a), we have to tell them, “So long as *you do not* submit humbly to the truth, bow down meekly to God, desist from hegemony and arrogance, stop from treading your way, end up plundering the resources of people around the world, and discontinue your crackdown on free nations, there is enmity between us and you.

While they have plundered wealth and resources of our country and other countries, brought enormous losses to us, rendered a blow to our honor and dignity, and killed a number of our beloved ones, how can we befriend and express affection for them? Are the hundreds of experiences in the world not enough for us to realize that they do not think of anything but dominance and their interests, and that we should not be deceived again by them?

Thus, Islam and the Qur’an command us to openly disavow and repudiate the enemy. If we follow this Islam or Qur’an, how can we dare to say that one must smile at everyone and be kind to all?

1. That is, from 1997 to 1998 or 1999. [Trans.]

2. Mordad 28, 1332 AHS coup: the US and British–orchestrated coup d’état that toppled down the nationalist government of Dr. Muhammad Musaddiq (1882–1962/1261–1346 AHS) and reinstated Shah Muhammad Ridha Pahlavi to power. [Trans.]

3. Fada’iyan–e Islam organization was established in 1323 AHS (circa 1944) by Martyr Sayyid Mujtaba Nawwab Ṣafawi and one of the religious parties and organizations in Iran at the time with a long record of sound faith in Islam and in the role of the ‘ulama’ in leading the people. The assassination of ‘Abd al–Husayn Hajir and General Razmara (the Shah’s Prime Ministers) was one of this group’s militant undertakings. Nawwab Ṣafawi and other members of the group were arrested by the Shah’s agents in 1344 AHS (circa 1965) and were expeditiously tried and executed. [Trans.]

4. Imam Khomeini, Wasiyyatnameh–ye Siyasi–Ilahi [Political–Religious Testament], Article 2.

5. “It is from Solomon, and it begins in the name of Allah the All–beneficent, the All–merciful” (Surah an–Naml 27:30). [Trans.]

6. Surah Al ‘Imran 3:4.

7. Surah as–Sajdah 32:22.

8. Surah al–Baqarah 2:90.

9. Surah al–An‘am 6:12.

10. See Qur’an 7:71–72; 23:40–41; 26:139; 29:38; 41:16; 46:25–26; 51:41–42; 54:18–21. [Trans.]

11. See Qur’an 7:73, 78; 11:66–67; 26:158; 27:51; 51:44–45. [Trans.]

12. See Qur’an 7:84; 11:81–83; 15:66, 73–74, 79; 26:172–173; 27:58; 29:34; 51:32–37; 53:53; 54:34, 37–38; 69:9–10. [Trans.]

13. Surah at–Tawbah (or, Bara’ah) 9:12.

14. Surah al–Mumtahanah 60:9.

15. Surah at–Tawbah (or, Bara’ah) 9:73.

16. Surah at–Tawbah (or, Bara’ah) 9:123.

17. Surah al–Anfal 8:60.

18. Shahrivar 17, 1357 AHS (September 8, 1978), later named as the “Black Friday”, is one of the most eventful days of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. In pursuit of the splendid and grand demonstrations held in Tehran on Shahrivar 13 (September 4) and the ‘Īd al-Fitr congregational prayers, similar demonstrations were also held in Tehran on Shahrivar 16 (September 7) and arrangements were made for other demonstrations for the next day (Friday) to be held in the Zhaleh Square of the capital. Early on Friday, the people streamed into the Zhaleh Square such that by 6 in the morning some one hundred thousand people were gathered there. The Square was surrounded by the Shah’s military units on all sides with machinegun barrels aimed at the people from every side. At this hour, the radio unexpectedly announced that martial law is declared for Tehran and ten other cities. Immediately after the announcement, machinegun volleys strafed the crowd. On this occasion more than 4,000 people were killed and several hundred were wounded. The Shah’s regime placed the figures at 58 killed and 25 wounded! [Trans.]

19. Martyr Sayyid Mujtaba Nawwab Īafawi was the founder of Fada’iyan-e Islam. [Trans.]

20. Prominent figures of the Coalition of Islamic Societies were responsible for the assassination of Prime Minister Hasan-‘Ali Mansur who was responsible for the passage of the capitulation bill in 1963 under which all of the US political agents, diplomats, advisors, and military advisors as well as their immediate family members were granted political and legal immunity in Iran. [Trans.]

21. Surah at-Tawbah (or, Bara’ah) 9:6.

22. Surah al-Mumtahanah 60:1.

23. Surah al-Mumtahanah 60:4.

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