

Address of Hazrat Ayatullah-ul-Uzma Syed Ali Khamenei to the Leaders of the Islamic Conference

The supreme spiritual leader began his address by commending the congregation on their valuable contribution to the propagation of Islam. He praised it as an act which pleased the Almighty and said that they were following in the footsteps of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) who was the first propagator of Islam.

He stressed that it was the words and deeds of noble men that spread the message of Islam and not the sword, which serves only to remove obstacles in the path of Islam. Preaching and practising true Islam by its propagators has resulted in Islam spreading far and wide and is still flourishing. An example of this is Iran and also the ex-Soviet Republics where 70 years of tyranny failed to wipe out Islam from the hearts of the people, he said.

He reminded his listeners that they possess the holy Quran and follow the path shown by the Prophet and the Imams (PBUT). Just as communism could not crush Islam, neither shall the western world. He predicted that the next century belonged to Islam and cautioned the leaders about the heavy responsibility that rests upon their shoulders. He said that the invitation towards Islam should be made after understanding the invitees background so that the tone and content of message is effective.

He expressed his sadness at the way Islam is relegated only to

matters of worship and personal affairs, leaving it out of other very important areas like politics, economics, society etc. He pointed out that Islam, as preached and practised by the Prophet (PBUH) permeated every aspect of human affairs. Another damaging attitude, he said, was to disregard the Quran and Islamic knowledge and to look to the West to prove Islam right. Even though today Europe and America have made great progress in all spheres and possesses power wealth and know-how, it lacks spiritual contentment, love for humanity, social justice, it's youth is restless and directionless and the fabric of the family is being torn apart, he said.

In their society personal freedom is thought to be very important, yet freedom of entire peoples under subjugation is disregarded. In this respect he cited the example of Palestine whose people were left nationless. He accused the West especially USA and Israel of being hypocrites, on one hand preaching humanity and on the other practising inhumanity. They also started and fought the bloodiest wars in history that killed millions and also practised terrible oppression of the natives of Asia and Africa under colonialism and imperialism.

The exalted leader warned that the western world has mounted a cultural invasion against the Islamic world. He clarified that all cultures must benefit from each other but it must be a give and take

relationship and no culture must capitulate to another. Now that the world is awakening to Islam, the Muslim Nations want to be their own Masters.

He pointed out that Iran has good relations with all nations except USA and Israel because of their anti-Iranian and anti-Islamic activities. He said that Iran gave a befitting reply to anyone wishing to subjugate or invade it. Enemies do not create insurmountable problems, only dampen the speed of progress to some extent.

Ayatullah Syed Ali Khamenei appealed to the propagators of Islam to combat this cultural invasion by launching a counter attack of a positive nature that shall attract people towards Islam. The world, he said, is in dire need of justice providing Islam. However, through the arts, media, films, books, re-writing of history, etc., the western world seeks to undermine Islam and spread dis-information.

In order to combat this onslaught, the leader appealed to the artists of the Muslim world to use their artistic talents to protest against this oppression and protect their rights especially in Palestine. The atrocities and injustice are not to be forgotten as things of the past, which is what the west wants.

However, he emphasised, what needs to be forgotten are the internal conflicts between Muslims and made an appeal to all Muslims to consider themselves one commu-

nity albeit comprising of separate races and nationalities. He declared that this Islamic Conference should be used as a platform to end or at least lessen tensions between Muslim nations and expressed satisfaction at the state of Iran's relations with brother Muslim nations the

most recent being with Saudi Arabia.

He called upon all the Muslims to stand united to practise, propagate and defend Islam and work towards a common goal of establishing Islamic unity.

PERSIAN LITERATURE IN INDIA

The history of the Persian language in India is inextricably linked to the 800 years old Saga of the rise and fall of Muslims in India. Persian has played a very important role in the rise and development of Indian social and cultural life during Medieval period of India.

Indian languages like Pali, Sanskrit, Bengali, Tamil, Marathi, Telegu, etc. contain many Persian words. This is due to common ancestry through the Aryans and also because the Persian speaking Muslims came to India to make it their home and not as foreigners.

The conquest of Punjab by Mahmud Ghaznavi in 1021-22 AD marks the advent of Persian into India. Khwaja Mas'ood Sa'ad Salman was a great poet of this period. The first Persian book in India was Syed Abul Hasan Hajwari's "*Kashf-ul-Mehjoob*".

The first important Indian poet of Persian was Amir Khusrau Dehlavi. Although he was primarily a ghazal writing poet, he also wrote stories, rubaiyat, poems, eulogies, about sufism, music and described Indian culture, weather, customs, flora and fauna etc. in his writings. Another important poet

of this era was Amir Hasan Alaa who was known as "*Sa'adi-e-Hind*".

It was under the benign patronage of the Mughals that Persian began to prosper. The first Mughal Emperor Babur was a lover of poetry and learning. He too was a poet and wrote in both Persian and Turkish, patronised poets and invented a script called "*Khat-e-Baburi*".

He inculcated his love for poetry in his sons Humayun, Kamran, Askari, Hindal who were themselves poets and patrons thereof. Some famous poets of this period were Qasim Kahi, Shaikh Gadai Dehlavi, etc. The Panchatantra was translated into Persian.

However, it was in the reign of Akbar that the Persian language reached it's zenith. Although unable to read and write, he was nevertheless quite learned and loved poetry. He evaluated the work of poets and patronised them generously and also wrote poetry himself. His contribution to Persian language and literature in India is without example. A great Persian poet in his court was Ghazali Mashadi.

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ARCHITECTURE OF MOSQUES

In the field of architecture, a special status is accorded to the Mosque, the House of God, which forms the spiritual and social centre of the Muslim community.

Big or small, opulent or simple, no place where Muslims reside ever lacks a mosque, be it a tiny hamlet or a bustling metropolis.



The first mosque of Islam was built in Medina where the Prophet (PBUH) and the neo-Muslims had taken refuge. The site for this premier House of God was chosen by the Almighty, and Hazrat Mohammad (PBUH) participated in it's construction. This mosque, apart from being a place of worship, also discharged several other functions like social, economic, political, etc.

The Prophet of God (PBUH) would lead the prayers at the mosque known as Masjid-e-Nabavi. This practise was continued by the righteous.

This mosque was the Prophet's (PBUH) favourite (*Masjid-e-Nabavi*)