

The Right Side of History



KHAMENEI.IR

Number 24 . July 2026





Words of Wisdom

Arbaeen has become global and it will be more so in the future. This is the blood of Hussain ibn Ali which is boiling after the passage of 1,400 years! This blood will become fresher and livelier on a daily basis. This is the message of Ashura which was issued from the throat of Abi Abdullah [Imam Hussain] and of Zaynab al-Kubra (pbuh) at the height of their loneliness! Today, this message has imbued the whole world. Hussain (pbuh) belongs to humanity.

From Martyr Imam Khamenei's speech on September 18, 2019



Word for Word

Today, the world of Islam is witness to one of the manifestations of *quwwah* which is the Arbaeen march: "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power." The Arbaeen march is the strength of Islam. It is the force of the truth. It is with the force of the camp of Islamic Resistance that millions of people march towards Karbala and towards Hussain – the peak of honor, self-sacrifice and martyrdom whom all liberated people in the world should learn from. The first day when the Arbaeen march came into being, it was as significant as today.

The significance of the first Arbaeen lay in that it was the powerful medium of Ashura. From Ashura to Arbaeen – according to one narration, Arbaeen was the day when the Ahlul Bayt (as) returned to Karbala – those forty days were forty days of the authority of the truth amidst the dark world of the Bani Umayyad and Sufiyani dynasty. The true medium is the cry of Zaynab al-Kubra and the cry of Hazrat Sajjad. In which place? In Kufa, in Shaam where darkness existed in its fullness. These were the greatest media. It was these media that preserved Ashura. It was these media that helped Ashura reach the present time. This is the history and the origin of Arbaeen and the Arbaeen movement. On that day, the Ahlul Bayt (pbuh) raised a storm with their 40-day movement. A storm was raised amidst that extraordinary suppression. On that day, suppression was so fierce that there were no more than 72 individuals around Imam Hussain – the grandson of the Holy Prophet and the flesh and blood of the Immaculate Zahra... Today, the same thing is happening in the world. Today too, in the complex propaganda-saturated and tumultuous world which has dominated humanity, this movement of Arbaeen is a loud cry and a unique medium. There is no similar event in the world: millions of people take a walk, not only from a city or a country, rather from different countries, and not only from one specific denomination, rather from various denominations and even from non-Islamic religions. This is Hussaini unity.

What you said is true: "Hussain makes us united." This is really the case. Hussain brings about great unanimity. These hearts are moving forward with thousands of steps. Everyone is moving towards that mine and springhead of spirituality and freedom and they are showing it off to today's materialistic world. By Allah's favor, this should be further developed and expanded on a daily basis.

From Martyr Imam Khamenei's speech on October 13, 2019



Memorable Frame

اول زائر في الاربعين



The Karbala Governorate, in a gesture of welcoming the first Arbaeen pilgrim of the year, came out to receive the funeral procession of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

"Some people love Imam Hussain and Arbaeen. It is clear. All of us do. Well, many of you have gone on an Arbaeen pilgrimage, but I have been deprived of it although I have been willing to go: 'Although we are away from you, we speak in your memory.'" (Martyr Khamenei, Sept. 21, 2020)

He waited for it for so long. He longed for it. He endured years of separation and yearning. He was away from Karbala for decades, and at last, his dream came true. Yet no one could have imagined that one day he would return to the sacred shrine of Imam Hussain (pbuh) in a coffin draped with the flag of Iran.

Every year, millions of Iranians take part in the Arbaeen pilgrimage. But this year's pilgrimage tells a very different story. This year, the first Iranian pilgrim to arrive in Karbala was the Father of the Islamic Ummah, the Leader of the Truth-Seekers of the World, and the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei (may God elevate his noble station).

Through both his words and his actions, he guided countless people from across the world to the path of pure Islam introduced by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). But the time came for him to breathe new life into Islam and its values through his martyrdom. He demonstrated what a Hussaini death means in the modern age, embracing martyrdom while reciting the Holy Quran and observing the fast during the blessed month of Ramadan.

As the saying goes, martyrs are alive. Although they are no longer physically among us, their spiritual presence continues to bestow blessings upon the Muslim community. It was the spiritual influence of our martyred Leader that awakened not only the Islamic Ummah but also the consciences of free-spirited people around the world, drawing tens of millions of people in both Iran and Iraq to his funeral procession.

"Do not suppose those who were slain in the way of Allah to be dead; no, they are living and provided for near their Lord" (Quran 3:169).



The People Rise Up

Should any event befall this country, Almighty God will raise these people to confront it. The people will be the ones who will stop it.

Martyr Khamenei

Feb. 1, 2026





This year's Arbaeen pilgrims performing their pilgrimage on behalf of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Ummah



Choose the Right Side of History



Exclusive frames of Iraq's generous people, as they prepared, not so long ago, to welcome the funeral procession of the martyred Leader, just as they welcome millions of Arbreen pilgrims each year, with open hearts and open homes.





Opinion

Arbaeen: An antidote for the Orientalist Narrative

Over twenty-three years ago, when the 9/11 attacks took place, Americans gathered on the streets of New York, watching in horror as the towers burned. Amidst the crowd, a Zionist woman remarked to a reporter, “This is a great tragedy. I am from Israel, and I hope people now understand what we face daily [in Palestine].”

Her statement revealed a specific viewpoint. She quickly drew a parallel between the attacks and the Palestinian Resistance against years of occupation by the Zionist regime, aiming to further rally her American audience in support of the so-called Western “war on terrorism.” For non-American or non-European audiences, the connection between a terrorist attack and the legitimate, human resistance of a people like the Palestinians might not be obvious. However, this connection is often made by many in the West. Centuries of colonialism, along with its literature and narratives, have ingrained a mindset where any opposition to Western occupation and aggression is labeled as terrorism, savagery, or a lack of civilization. In the colonial mindset of Western civilization, Easterners—especially the nations of West Asia (known by its colonial name, the “Middle East”)—are seen as existing primarily for the benefit and comfort of the West. This mentality has been so deeply embedded in modern times through cinema, journalism, and other cultural productions that after 9/11, US President George Bush, drawing on this mindset, declared in the lead-up to the invasion of West Asia: “You are either with us or with the terrorists.”

Occupation in West Asia:**A low-cost and justified crime**

The occupation of Iraq, much like the occupation of Palestine, involved both military and cultural warfare. For decades, Palestinian identity and Resistance were depicted in media, cinema, and cultural productions as synonymous with terrorism. Similarly, the identity, Resistance, and culture of the Iraqi Arab people were severely attacked, alongside the occupation of their land. The deaths of over 300,000 Iraqi civilians due to the US war were framed by portrayals of Arab Muslims as violent, fanatical, irrational, and incapable of dialogue. Films like *American Sniper*, *Green Zone*, *The Hurt Locker*, and *Jarhead*, while containing anti-war elements, subtly reinforce this “Orientalist” view of Iraq’s Muslim population.

This cultural conditioning laid the groundwork for atrocities such as the use of uranium-enriched weapons, the torture of prisoners in Abu Ghraib, their transfer to Guantanamo, the killing of civilians by private military contractors, and more. The rhetoric of political leaders also played a crucial role in this psychological operation. Just as Israeli officials today refer to the people of Gaza as “human animals” or “the army of darkness,” George Bush repeatedly drew a line between the American people and the Muslims of the region in his speeches, portraying them as spiteful people who “hate Americans for our love of freedom and American values.” In another instance, he described them as harbingers of destruction, stating, “Their depth of hatred equals the madness of the destruction they harbor in their minds.” This self-perpetuating cycle of “military violence and negative propaganda” has left a profound impact on the minds of people worldwide, especially in the West.

Antidote to toxic propaganda

As the presence of occupying forces in Iraq's holy cities, particularly Najaf and Karbala, began to wane, whispers of a long-forgotten religious ceremony started to reach people beyond Iraq's borders. Videos surfaced online, showing millions of Iraqis walking the roads to Karbala to commemorate the fortieth day after the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of the Prophet of Islam who stood against the tyranny of Yazid and was martyred unjustly. Each year, more and more people from around the world traveled to Iraq to witness this extraordinary event: the Arbaeen Walk, which has become a powerful counter to the toxic Western propaganda against Iraqi Muslims. The stories shared by the first non-Iraqi pilgrims who returned from Arbaeen were astonishing. They described roads lined with hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people who, despite Iraq's severe economic hardships, spent their entire annual savings to care for the pilgrims. They provided food, washed clothes, and even invited pilgrims into their homes for a few hours or even days of rest. And all of this was offered freely. The Iraqi people eagerly competed to host and serve the pilgrims, often pleading for the chance to do so. Young men carried trays of dates on their heads, sitting for long periods on the hot roads under the blazing sun, just to ensure the pilgrims were served. Even young children, unable to perform heavy tasks, offered cups of juice or handed out tissues to the travelers. The pilgrims themselves, from various countries, races, and sometimes even different religions, walked nearly 80 kilometers together, helping one another along the way and expressing deep gratitude to their hosts as they visited this symbol of love for God and resistance to oppression.

Both Muslim and non-Muslim participants in this pilgrimage, from British documentary filmmaker Emily Garthwaite to Russian philosopher Alexander Dugin, agree that the atmosphere of Arbaeen presents a new way of life, standing in stark contrast to the dominant Western model. The Western model, which has promoted the pursuit

of personal pleasure and profit as humanity's primary goal for centuries, is challenged by the pure Islamic model, where people rise above their material needs and willingly sacrifice their physical comforts for a higher purpose.

Arbaeen Walk and its civilizational contrast with the West

The Arbaeen Walk helps dispel many negative perceptions about Islam. Despite the underdevelopment of infrastructure in Muslim countries, often due to internal challenges and external interventions, the remarkable cooperation and solidarity among people during Arbaeen compensates for these shortcomings. An extensive network is organized to provide food, security, hygiene, and transportation for around 22 million pilgrims over a 20-day period. Impressively, there have been almost no reports of casualties due to hunger, heatstroke, or overcrowding. The stereotype of Arab Muslims as violent or mistreating women and children is contradicted by what happens during Arbaeen. While the US President might express regret over school shootings and the deaths of children, in Iraq, during Arbaeen, Iraqi children eagerly take part in serving the pilgrims, and many visitors bring gifts from their home countries to show their appreciation. Along the pilgrimage route, the presence of women is as significant as that of men. This is noteworthy, given that Western propaganda has long claimed that women in Islamic societies have minimal social roles. The presence of veiled women and the creation of appropriate spaces for them along the route have made pilgrims from all over the world feel safe traveling to Iraq. The hospitality and kindness of the Iraqi people are well-known among Arbaeen pilgrims, to the extent that many non-Iraqi visitors invite their hosts to their own countries to return the favor.

While racial distinctions continue to be a serious issue in Europe and the US, with racism still pervasive, Arbaeen showcases the Islamic ideal of setting aside racial and ethnic differences, as well as religious disputes, in pursuit of a common

goal. One striking image shows Sheikh Zakzaky, a Nigerian cleric with nearly 50 years of experience promoting Shia Islam in Nigeria, leading a prayer in a tent set up by Sunni Palestinian scholars along the pilgrimage route, with Muslims from Iraq, Iran, Palestine, and other countries praying behind him. For years, the Arab world was influenced by Arab

nationalism, which had Western roots and created sharp divides between Arabs, Iranians, and other ethnic groups. Racial discrimination against black people is also a long-standing and unresolved issue in the West. This image, and countless others like it, vividly demonstrate how this pilgrimage offers a new model of human relations.



Arbaeen: Beginning of a new way of life

In contrast to the narrative pushed by Western politicians against Islam and political Islam since the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Arbaeen Walk today stands as a powerful testament to Islam's ability to mobilize people in support of the oppressed, guided by their religious leaders. In a speech on September 18, 2019, Imam Khamenei emphasized: "Today, we must introduce Hussain ibn Ali to the world... There are countless efforts to spread propaganda against

Islam and its teachings; in response to this hostile movement by the forces of disbelief and arrogance, the message of Hussain's knowledge can stand strong, confront it, and present the true essence of Islam and the Qur'an to the world. The logic of Hussain ibn Ali (peace be upon him) is the logic of defending truth, standing against oppression, tyranny, and arrogance. This is the logic of Imam Hussain, and today, the world needs this logic."

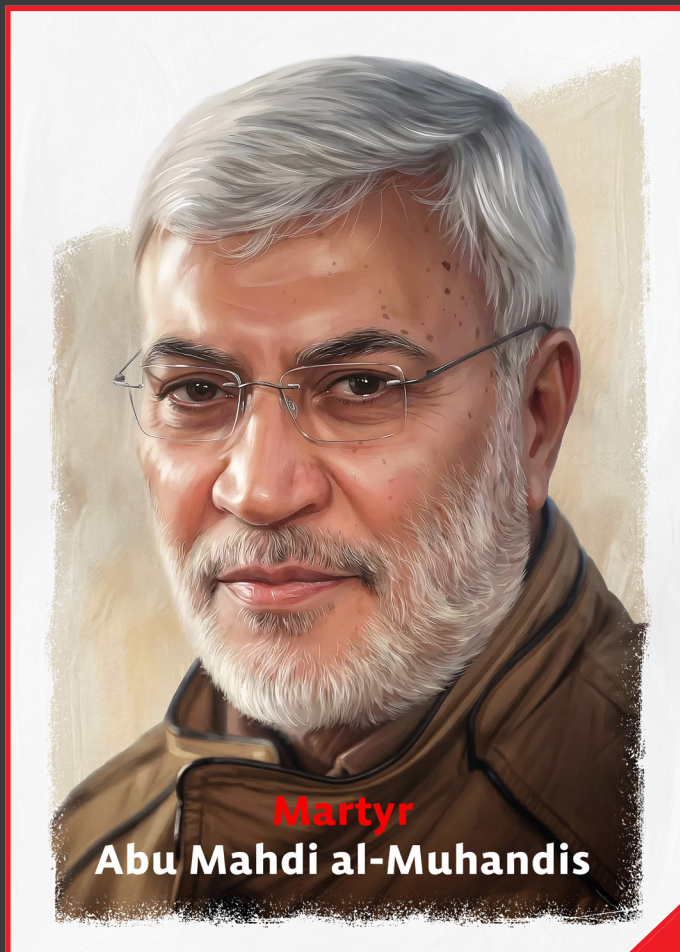


A Moment with Caravan of Martyrs

Martyr Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis: A life of resistance and sacrifice

Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis was one of the most influential commanders of the Iraqi resistance, a man whose name became inseparable from the struggle against occupation, terrorism, and tyranny. Born in Basra in 1954 to an Iraqi father and an Iranian mother, he grew up in a family rooted in faith and shaped by the political turmoil of the region. He pursued his early education at the University of Technology in Baghdad, where he studied civil engineering, before expanding his knowledge into the field of international relations, earning a master's degree and a doctorate in Tehran. Alongside his academic pursuits, he studied Islamic jurisprudence under Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohsen al-Hakim in Basra, grounding his political activism in a deep religious foundation.

From the early 1970s, al-Muhandis was active in the Islamic Dawa Party, which positioned him against the Ba'athist regime from the very beginning. The regime's brutal crackdown on the party forced him into exile in 1980, first to Kuwait and later to Iran. Those years of exile were not years of retreat. In Iran, he joined the Badr Corps, the military wing of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and over time he rose through its ranks, eventually assuming command in 2001. He played a key role in the armed struggle against Saddam Hussain's regime throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and after its fall, he turned



Martyr
Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis

his attention to the American occupation of Iraq, which he regarded as a continuing assault on the sovereignty and dignity of the Iraqi people.

In 2007, al-Muhandis founded Kata'ib Hezbollah in Iraq, a disciplined and effective resistance group that became a central component of the Popular Mobilization Forces. The United States designated him a terrorist, yet for those who viewed resistance to American hegemony as a legitimate and necessary struggle, his standing only grew. His objective was clear and unchanging: the expulsion of American forces from Iraqi territory and the preservation of Iraq's independence and Islamic identity. When Daesh emerged in 2014 as a violent and expansionist threat, al-Muhandis was

among the first to respond. Following the fatwa of Grand Ayatollah Sistani calling for a popular mobilization, he was appointed deputy commander of the Hashd al-Sha'bi, though he was widely regarded as its operational commander. He commanded from forward positions, often under direct fire, and rejected the comforts of headquarters. He maintained that his decades of jihad were not a burden but a privilege, and that the battlefield was where he belonged.

Al-Muhandis was equally clear in his commitment to the broader causes of the Islamic world, including the liberation of Palestine and the defense of the holy sites. He viewed the American presence in West Asia as a primary obstacle to justice and stability, and he worked tirelessly to dismantle it through military and political means. His alliances extended across the region, and his loyalty to the Resistance Front was absolute.

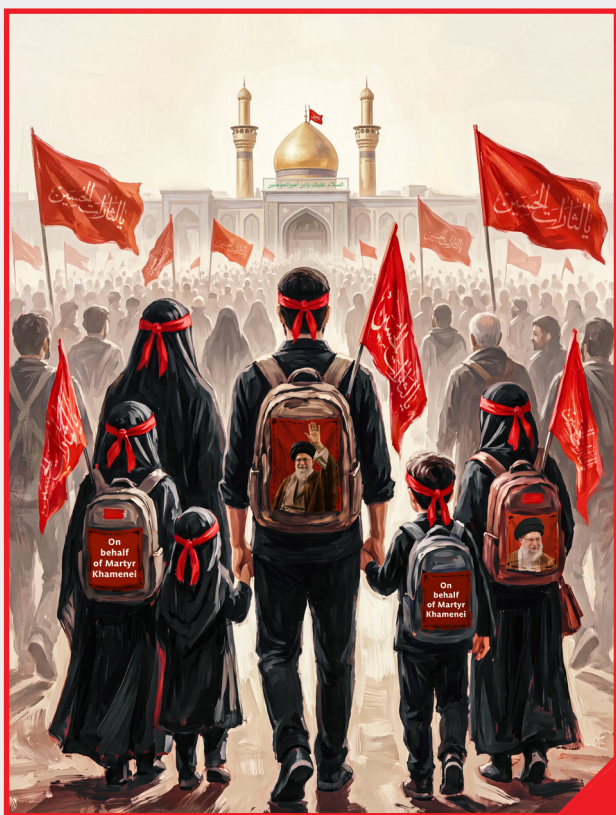
On January 3, 2020, al-Muhandis was martyred alongside General Qassem Soleimani in a US drone strike near Baghdad International

Airport, an act of state terrorism authorized by the criminal American president. The news of his martyrdom was met with an outpouring of grief across Iraq, Iran, and the wider region. His body was carried through Kadhimiya, Karbala, Najaf, Ahvaz, Mashhad, Tehran, and Qom, as millions of mourners took to the streets to pay their respects. He was laid to rest in Wadi al-Salam in Najaf, near the shrine of Imam Ali (pbuh), a resting place worthy of a man who had dedicated his life to the path of truth.

Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis left behind a legacy that is not measured by titles or ranks, but by the depth of his sacrifice and the clarity of his conviction. He was a commander who led from the front, a strategist who never sought comfort, and a devoted companion to General Qassem Soleimani — a bond forged over decades of shared struggle and sealed in martyrdom together. Their friendship was not merely personal; it was a union of purpose, a partnership in the service of the Resistance.



Narrating the Art



"Soon, the open arms of the generous Iraqi nation ... will once again welcome the enthusiastic pilgrims of Arbaeen, including the vast multitude who will be performing the pilgrimage on behalf of the martyred Leader of Iran."

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei,
July 17, 2026

The Arbaeen walk, one of the most iconic and sacred religious observances in the Islamic world, is held annually in Iraq and draws tens of millions of pilgrims from across the globe. The essence of this gathering is to preserve the ideals of Imam Hussain's (pbuh) uprising and to honor the steadfastness and sacrifice of Lady Zainab (pbuh) in confronting the atrocities committed by the enemies of Islam.

It was more than a decade ago when Muslims and truth-seekers from around the world, by participating in the Arbaeen pilgrimage and marching together, demonstrated their solidarity in support of Islam in the face of ISIS, helped counter the threats directed against Islamic civilization, and once again revived the values of Imam Hussain's (pbuh) movement. However, this year's Arbaeen walk is fundamentally different. It carries a significance unlike that of previous years and evokes the spirit of Ashura more profoundly than ever before, as the Hussain of our age has now been martyred at the hands of the most evil men on earth.

This year, Muslims and other free-spirited people from around the world will participate in the Arbaeen walk on behalf of the Leader of the Truth-Seekers of the World, Martyr Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei. Just as his funeral procession brought together immense crowds in Iran and Iraq, the raised Ummah, carrying the red flag of revenge, will renew its pledge of allegiance to the Master of the Martyrs, reaffirm its commitment to the ideals of Imam Hussain's (pbuh) uprising, and continue following the path of the martyred Leader until reaching the summit of Islamic civilization.



A Word to My Martyred Leader

Message to the Great Martyr Seyyed Ali Hosseini Khamenei (RA)

Salam to the leader of the oppressed of the world, to the biggest Mujahid and Shaheed of the Islamic Ummah, to the dear father and the light of truth in this world full of corruption, tyranny and oppression, to the loyal deputy of the Imam of our time (May Allah hasten his reappearance).

My dear Rehbar, you dedicated and spent your whole life in the defense of the truth and at the service of Islam, every action, word and breath of yours was for the cause, for the oppressed, for the Islamic Ummah and for Allah.

You have yearned for martyrdom your whole life, and the Almighty has accepted your prayer, placing you and your family in the high ranks of Jannah and joining you all with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.), Imam Ameer Al Mumineen (A.S.), the Holy Imams (A.S.), the Lady of Heaven Hazrat Fatima Zahra (S.A.), the Chiefs of the youth of Paradise Hassan (A.S.) and Hussain (A.S.) and the Holy Progeny (A.S.).

May Allah be pleased with you, shower you with divine rewards and endless mercy. Your whole life was a battle and the time for your eternal rest in Jannah has come.

My leader, dear father, your absence in this world is an unbearable pain and an open wound, but it was through your sacrifice, your martyrdom, that you paved the way to the great awakening and grant us enormous strength in front of the struggles and battles ahead of us.

Seyyed, today we bury you, soon we will bury the enemy, cost it whatever it will cost. The pain and the grief for you it's turning not only in strength and resilience, but also in total, visceral hatred and seek of revenge against the accursed wicked enemy, may Allah curse, punish, destroy and humiliate them and all their agents, slaves and allies. They signed their death sentence on the day they attacked and martyred you and your family in your humble residence, we won't let them breathe.

Rehbar Aziz, as you came into my dream to embrace me, I ask you to do so once again, so that I can salute you for the last time.

If I am ever worthy and Allah S.W.T. wills, I will meet you in Jannah.

Till then, I will never forget you.

I will never leave you, son of Hussain.

We will keep the banner high and defend your legacy at every cost.

Victory is promised, by decree of Allah S.W.T.

May we all get the same beautiful end as yours, if we ever deserve it.

We deeply miss you.

Once again and forever: Labbayka ya Khamenei!

With love and tears,

Alessio Hazim Rahman Sisti



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