

Deal Partner? Read Khamenei's Mainstream, Koranic Kampf Supporting Israel's Annihilation

[Andrew G. Bostom](#) | 8:35 AM on August 24, 2015

Within two weeks of the July 14, 2015 announcement of the [dangerous and destabilizing](#) Iran nuclear deal, expatriate Iranian journalist Amir Taheri [revealed](#) the recent publication of a 414-page tract, largely a compendium of speeches delivered over the past 25 years by Ayatollah Khamenei.

Despite the publication of the Iranian Ayatollah's vitriolic tract entitled *Palestine*, Khamenei was recognized by the avatar of moderate Islam, the [Jordanian Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre's](#) 2014/15 "World's 500 Most Influential Muslims" (issued annually), as [the third most important international Muslim figure](#).

Shortly after Taheri's revelation, my colleague Daniel Akbari — a former leading Iranian Sharia lawyer [credentialed](#) to argue potential death penalty cases in the Islamic State, and now an intrepid human rights activist — procured the full Farsi text ([posted here](#)), and translated [extensive excerpts](#).

Although unabashedly targeting both Israel and the U.S. — on [p. 40](#) he calls for "Breaking the Back of the Oppressive Americans and Their Zionist Servants (i.e., Israel)" — Khamenei's opprobrium rivets upon destruction of the Jewish State.

Khamenei [elucidates](#) why Israel must be destroyed:

The centrality of Palestine for the leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Muslim world is undeniable. Even before to the Islamic Revolution, Palestine, the Palestinian people, and the injustice they were experiencing were important issues for [his theocratic predecessor, and leader of the [retrograde](#) 1979 "Revolution"] Imam Khomeini and the movement he led. We cannot observe and tolerate the existence and presence of the [Israeli/Jewish] enemy who has occupied the land ...

While this foul wound and infected gland called "the Israeli Government" remain in the heart of Islamic territories, we cannot feel we have won. ... Palestine is the most important issue of the Islamic world. Palestine is the most important issue of the world of Islam. There is not any other international issue in the world of Islam more important than the issue of Palestine.

Citing an authoritative, traditionalist interpretation of [jihad](#) — as applied with broad, modern jurisprudential consensus to the issue of "Palestine" (i.e., all of modern Israel within the 1949 armistice borders, Gaza, Judea and Samaria) — Khamenei, explaining why "Jihad is the answer," further [declared](#):

Palestine is a part of Islamic territory [i.e., “dar al Islam,” formerly non-Muslim lands conquered at any point by Muslim armies waging jihad war]. All Islamic schools of thoughts agree over this. All Muslim scholars have consensus over this claim that Palestine is a part of Islamic land that has been occupied by our enemies. Everybody is religiously obligated to wage jihad to return this part of Islamic land back.

Per Khamenei’s accurate, traditionalist Islamic interpretation that lands once vanquished by jihad (such as historical Palestine) remain, per the law of [jihad](#), a permanent Islamic possession, an often invoked conservative, alleged Iran “expert” [opined](#):

Ali Khamenei proclaims a Muslim version of the Brezhnev Doctrine which, you will recall, promised that once any land fell to communist control, it would be irreversible.

Such uninformed “conservative expertise,” [glibly espoused](#), obfuscates the Islamic centrality — *not* modern Communist rootedness — of Khamenei’s ideology, and its broad mainstream religious sanction, and appeal to the Muslim masses, Shiite and Sunni alike.

For example, the most authoritative religious educational institution within Sunni Islam since at least the establishment of the 13th Century Mamluk Empire is Al Azhar University (founded 973 C.E.), in Cairo, Egypt. Consider [two complementary fatwas](#), one written January 5, 1956 by then-grand mufti of Egypt Sheikh Hasan Ma’moun, and another from January 9, 1956, signed by the leading members of the Fatwa Committee of Al Azhar and the major representatives of all four Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence (English translation from State Department Telegram 1763/ Embassy (Cairo) Telegram 1256 D441214).

Despite the fact that in January 1956 Israel was a rump state within the 1949 armistice borders, these rulings elaborated the following key initial point: that all of historical Palestine — modern Jordan, Israel, and the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria, as well as Gaza — having been conquered by jihad, was a permanent possession of the global Muslim *umma* (community), “fay territory” — booty or spoils — to be governed eternally by Islamic law (the Sharia).

The [January 1956 Al Azhar fatwas](#)’ language and arguments are indistinguishable from those employed by Khamenei in his tract, revealing the same conjoined motivations of jihad and conspiratorial Islamic Jew-hatred:

Muslims cannot conclude peace with those Jews who have usurped the territory of Palestine and attacked its people and their property in any manner which allows the Jews to continue as a state in that sacred Muslim territory. [As] Jews have taken a part of Palestine and there established their non-Islamic government and have also evacuated from that part most of its Muslim inhabitants. . . . Jihad . . . to restore the country to its people . . . is the duty of all Muslims, not just those who can undertake it.

And since all Islamic countries constitute the abode of every Muslim, the Jihad is imperative for both the Muslims inhabiting the territory attacked, and Muslims everywhere else because even though some sections have not been attacked directly, the attack nevertheless took place on a part of the Muslim territory which is a legitimate residence for any Muslim. Everyone knows that from the early days of Islam to the present day the Jews have been plotting against Islam and Muslims and the Islamic homeland. They do not propose to be content with the attack they made on Palestine and Al Aqsa Mosque, but they plan for the possession of all Islamic territories from the Nile to the Euphrates.

Moreover, even when our conservative Iran expert isn't alluding errantly to the "Brezhnev Doctrine," and he mentions [in passing](#) Khamenei's use of Koranic references, the expert's glaring lack of basic Islamic understanding is once again evident.

Providing a specific illustration, this expert is oblivious to the fact that the verses he cited from Khamenei's tract (Koran [17:4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#)) represent the traditionalist Islamic quintessence of the Ayatollah's mainstream, Koranic *Kampf* for Israel's annihilation.

Khamenei invokes the 17th Sura (chapter) of the Koran, verses 17:4-8 (on [pp. 41-43](#)), as a clarion call re-affirming "Allah's Promise" to "Defeat the Jewish People Again." He avers that the Muslims "should learn from the Koran" before citing Koran [17:4](#) verbatim:

And We decreed for the Children of Israel in the Scripture, that indeed you would do mischief on the earth twice and you will become tyrants and extremely arrogant!
[Surah Al-Isra' 17:4]

Then Khamenei references [recurrent Koranic motifs](#) of the Jews as transgressors against Allah's will, refusing to follow his path ([1:7](#)), and inveterate sowers of "mischief" and corruption ([5:33](#); [5:64](#)). Thus authoritative classical and modern Koranic exegeses insist that the Jews are doomed to chronic humiliation ([2:61](#); [2:90](#); [3:112](#)), and even, as Khamenei [emphasizes](#), repeated bouts of annihilation, including at the hands of the Muslims:

Allah's soldiers will come to punish you for the corruption you did on Earth. Any nation that walks on the path of Allah — with the weapon of truth and justice — Allah will help him. But any nation that makes mischief, oppresses the people, and ignores humanity will be destroyed and perish.

Khamenei [next uses](#) a metaphor for Israel/the Jews' corruption that has been repeated uniformly by contemporary Shiite Iranian religio-political leaders regardless of their [arbitrary designation](#) as "hardliners" (Khomeini; Ahmadinejad), "moderates" (Khatami; Rafsanjani; Rouhani), or [\(Soylent\) "Green Movement"](#) reformist "heroes" ([Mousavi](#); Montazeri [[FBIS](#), Dec. 1987]): the Jewish State as a cancerous nidus that must be removed:

An Infected Cancer Called "Israel," Cause of Division Among Muslims [[p.42](#)]: Imperialists, the enemy of human beings, planted this infected cancer gland within Islamic-Arabic territory. Today this gland has grown and become the cause of division among Muslim governments. You see how the leaders of Islamic countries

who call themselves Muslims do not perform their Islamic duty about the issue of Palestine. Why? Because they have been busied with internal problems. Where their problems have come from? From this infected gland named “Israel” that was created by the superpowers.

Returning to Sura 17, Khamenei cites verse [17:7](#) in the context of the Muslim Palestinian, and larger global Muslim jihad (“Defeating Israel by Muslims is Pivotal for Muslims’ Salvation in the World” [[p.43](#)]) to destroy Israel, and annihilate the Jews, as a prelude to re-establishing full Islamic hegemony.

If you do jihad in the cause of Allah, if you obey Allah’s command and fight against the enemy of humanity and the religion of truth, O Palestinian Muslims, you have done a good thing that benefits you. When we create a glorious Islamic power in the region, this power can punch superpowers in the mouth.

Khamenei’s [gloss](#) on these pivotal Koranic verses is not a *sui generis* interpretation born of modern Communist “Brezhnev Doctrine”-infused “Islamic radicalism.” Rather, Khamenei’s exegesis is entirely consistent with the most authoritative classical and modern Muslim commentators on the Koran, including [Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai’s](#), “The measure of balance/justly held scales in the interpretation of the Quran,” which is regarded as the most important 20th Century Shiite Koranic commentary. Indeed the mainstream Islamic Studies academy—both Western and Iranian—have designated Tabatabai the leading modern Shiite religious scholar and philosopher, dubbing him a “theosopher.” Allameh [Allamah] Tabatabaei [Tabatabai] [University](#), named in honor of this celebrated Shiite authority and “theosopher,” is the largest specialized state social sciences university in Iran and the Middle East, with 17000 students and 500 full-time faculty members. Affirming his continued lofty stature, and relevance, an Iranian national conference was held on May 3, 2012, in Qom, [dedicated to](#) “recognizing the interpretative methods and principles used by Allameh [Allamah] Tabatabae [Tabatabai] in [his Koranic] exegesis.”

Tabatabai’s [authoritative modern Shiite gloss](#) reiterates—and validates—the notion established by a millennium of exegeses (discussed below) that Koran 17:4-7 refers to Allah’s brutally just punishment of the “corrupting” Jews (specifically, the destruction of the two ancient, historical Jewish temples by the Babylonians and Romans):

There is no wrong in considering their coming upon the Israelites with everything involved, such as devastating manslaughter, captivity, imprisonment, pillaging, and destruction, as a Divine mission, because it was a way of requital for their bringing corrupting in the land, and for their haughtiness and for their coveting of what is beside the truth. For Allah is not the One who wronged them by sending their enemies and supporting them against them, but it was they who wronged themselves...: ‘We sent them (to torment your faces) by making grief and sorrow apparent in them, and by creating a visible impact of humiliation, misery, inferiority and subjugation visible on [your facial expressions] as a result of what [these tormentors] committed against you in terms of devastating murder, captivity and pillaging. Within the phrase “...to enter the sanctuary, which they had also entered

the first time...” the sanctuary means the Farthest Mosque i.e. [the place of] the temple [in Jerusalem].

Tabatabai also [recapitulates](#) Shiite traditions claiming the “corrupting” Jews conspiratorial responsibility for the murder of Shiism’s most lauded “martyrs”—the fourth Caliph Ali, and his son Husayn:

In Tafsīr al-Burhān [it is relayed] from Ibn Qūlūya through a chain that goes back to Ṣāliḥ ibn Sahl, who has [a tradition] from Abū `Abdullah (peace be upon him) about the word of Allah, Mighty and Supreme. [About the text] “And We ordained for the Children of Israel in Scripture that you will surely bring corruption in the land two times”, he said: ‘This is the killing of the commander of the faithful and the stabbing of Ḥasan the son of `Alī (peace be upon him)’. [About] “And you will rise to great arrogance”, he said: ‘This is the killing of [`Alī’s second son] Ḥusayn (peace be upon him)’. [About] “So when the threat arrived for the first of them”, he said: ‘When Ḥusayn’s victory will come’... “We sent against you servants of Ours – those of great military might, and they searched the homes”: That is a people that God will send before the redeemer will rise up. When they call upon the family of Muḥammad separately, they will then certainly capture him. “And it was a threat fulfilled.”

Perhaps most striking is Tabatabai’s [approving affirmation](#) of these (“and other”) traditions, that the two corruptions mentioned in the Koran were the murdering of Ali and Ḥusayn. Such traditions are [currently cited](#) as a Shiite rationale for Israel’s destruction, whereas earlier, Tabatabai ultimately invoked Muhammad himself as a final validation for this viewpoint:

... presented to reflect all the things that go on within this nation and what comes forth from it, from the Israelites, truthfully reflecting what the prophet [Muhammad] (may Allah honor him and grant him peace) repeatedly reported, namely that this nation will commit exactly what the Israelites committed [before] in completely the same way. They would even take possession of a lizard’s hole [in retaliation] for [that lizard] disturbing them.

Moreover, lest there be any doubt about Tabatabai’s endorsement of traditionalist Islamic bigotry vis-à-vis the Jews, per the Koran, here is [his gloss](#) on Koran 5:82, arguably the central Koranic verse [defining](#) Islam’s eternal attitudes towards Jews, and Judaism:

[T]he Jews, although they had the same alternatives as the Christians, and they could retain their religion with payment of the jizyah [Koranic poll tax, per verse 9:29], yet they continued in their haughtiness, became harder in their bigotry, and turned to double dealing and deception. They broke their covenants, eagerly waited calamities to befall the Muslims and dealt to them the bitterest deal...[T]he enmity of the Jews...toward the divine religion [Islam] and their sustained arrogance and bigotry, have continued exactly in the same manner even after the Prophet... **These unchanged characteristics...confirm what the Mighty Book [the Koran] had indicated.**

Notwithstanding Tabatabai's specific Shiite contextualization, classical and modern Sunni Koranic commentators provide consistent glosses on Koran 17:4-8, underscoring the Jews' eternal punishment for their inveterate perfidy. Reproduced below is the conclusion of the gloss on the critical last verse in this series (17:8) from the seminal [Tafsir al-Jalalayn](#), meaning "The Commentary of the Two Jalals," named after its Egyptian authors: [Al-Suyuti](#) (1445-1505), a brilliant multidisciplinary scholar; and his mentor Jalalu'd-Din [al-Mahalli](#) (1389-1459). The [late, seminal contemporary](#) Dutch Islamologist Johannes J.G. Jansen noted in his treatise "[The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt](#)," [Tafsir al-Jalalayn](#) remains one of the most popular as well as the most authoritative Koranic commentaries in Egypt.

We said this in the Book. 'It may well be that your Lord will have mercy on you' after the second time, if you repent. 'But if you revert to what you did' in terms of corruption, 'We also will revert' to punishing you. They reverted by denying Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and power over them was demonstrated by the killing of the [Medinan Jewish tribes] Qurayza and the Banu Nadir and the imposition of jizya [the deliberately pauperizing, and debasing Koranic poll-tax, per Koran 9:29] on them. 'We have made Hell a prison for the unbelievers'.

The earlier [conclusion](#) of 14th century Muslim historian and Koranic exegete Ibn Kathir's gloss on 17:8 is quite similar:

The Children of Israel returned to aggression, so Allah sent this group against them, Muhammad and his companions, who made them pay Jizyah, with willing submission, and feeling themselves subdued.

Demonstrating the consistency of such classical glosses, [Ibn Kathir](#) (d. 1372) cites Tabari (d. 923), the greatest early Muslim historian and Koranic commentator, for affirmation of this gloss.

Finally, the mainstream contemporary gloss of Maulana Mufti Shafi (d. 1976) illustrates over a millennium of exegetical consensus on these verses. A former grand mufti of India (prior to the August, 1947 partition), Shafi was the author of [Maarifur Qur'an](#), which remains the best-known Koranic commentary in Urdu. He also wrote more than three hundred books, and in addition to these literary works, broadcasted his Koranic commentary on Radio Pakistan for a number of years. Shafi maintained that Koran 17:4-8 [addressed](#),

... the people of the Bani Israel [the Jews] who were present during the time of the Holy Prophet [Muhammad] (and) serves as a reminder to them...that they should not forget they were seized by divine punishment twice when they first opposed the code of [Muslim] prophet Moses, and then the code of [Muslim] prophet Isa (Jesus), Now this was the period of the code of laws [Sharia] brought by the Holy Prophet. This was a period that will continue to the Last Day. Let them [the Jews], therefore, realize that the fate of those chose to be hostile to it [the Sharia] will turn out to be no different. Consequently this was what actually happened. These people [the Jews] became hostile to Islam and the religious code of laws brought by the Holy Prophet.

When they did that, they were expelled and disgraced at the hands of the Muslims, finally [the second Temple] too came under Muslim control.

Railing [against](#) the modern “calamity of Jewish usurpation” of the Jews ancestral capital of Jerusalem, and their alleged “sacrilege” against the Muslim mosques built on the Temple Mount, Shafi [bemoans](#), the “snatching” of these monuments of Islamic jihad conquest, because,

... those who took over [the Temple Mount] had a track record of being the most disgraced people in the world, that is, the Jews.

Concordant with the mainstream tenets of ancient-cum-modern Sunni and Shiite jihad doctrine, Shafi’s Koranic gloss on Koran 17:4-8 is punctuated by this [exhortation](#):

The only weapon system and military hardware with which the [Temple Mount] and Palestine can return to Muslim hands are still there waiting to be picked up—Return to Allah...Obey the injunctions of the Sharia. Stay away from imitating and trusting others in our social and political goals...[L]et us place our trust in Allah, and wage a purely Islamic Jihad as enjoined by the Sharia.

The poignant, experientially wise observations of Iranian Jewish exile, Farideh Goldin, born (1953) and raised in the Shiraz Iran Jewish ghetto, provide an apposite segue back to the specific, mainstream Shiite Islamic rationale for Israel, and the Jews’, destruction, epitomized by [Khamenei’s](#)—and “theosopher” Tabatabai’s—shared understandings. Goldin’s moving, elegantly written 2003 memoir [Wedding Song](#) forthrightly connects the open [resurgence](#) of Shiite Islamic antisemitism in the (1979-present) Khomeini-era—after Iran’s [popular rejection](#) of the relatively brief 1925-1979 [flirtation](#) with Pahlavi-era Westernization and secularization—to the documented legacy of [traditional Shiite religious fanaticism](#) during the 1501-1925 [Safavid and Qajar theocratic dynasties](#). Her illuminating [discussion](#) about the association between paroxysms of Shiite anti-Jewish violence, and the Ashura commemorations, and re-enactments, reveals how Shiism’s unique notions of Jewish conspiracism against the sect’s iconic “martyrs” fomented [recurrent, murderous pogroms](#) against Iran’s hapless, ghettoized Jews.

Again and again across many generations, the Moslem clerics had initiated attacks on the Jews as holy wars [jihad]. The ghetto had been decimated time after time. Our elders retold the stories of horror, remembering times when pogroms had been carried on through the ghetto. Lost in their deep sorrows, highly emotional Moslem men recreated in the Jewish ghettos the story of a war lost long ago. Wanting to avenge the dead, the mourners carried on a jihad, a holy war against the Jews, to imitate Imam Ali who had shed blood for the advancement of Islam. The killing, they believed, would bring personal salvation and global peace. It would expedite the resurrection of the messiah, the twelfth Imam, who would reappear when all nations accepted Allah as the only God and Mohammed as the final prophet to replace all before him.

During the Moslem holy month of Moharam [when the Ashura commemoration takes place], my family was especially careful. “Don’t wear colorful clothes,” my grandmother reminded us. It was a month of mourning, of wearing black. None of us wanted to provoke hostility by any implications of happiness. The men came home early every night, bringing their work home if they could, although there was not much business at such times, since most of their customers were Moslems preoccupied with their rituals of grief.

Deciding to cancel a planned visit to her Iranian homeland, Goldin made these [plaintive comments](#), in a 2006 essay:

Visiting Iran for the last time in the summer of 1976, I vowed never to return. But during the past few years, the temptation slowly crept into me, like a long-abandoned addiction...My husband has never visited the country of my birth. We had planned to spend a year in Iran after he finished his medical internship...[A] medical conference in Mashad [Iran] seemed to be my best chance to introduce my husband to my first homeland. I made the decision to go with much trepidation, however. I am a woman; I am Jewish; I am a writer; each category subjected me to discrimination and suspicion...That was October 21, 2005. Barely a week later, Iran was in the headlines. Its president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, called for the destruction of the state of Israel: every man, woman and child; artist, farmer scientist, grocer; the young girl whose parents walked from Yemen; my friend who was carried out of Syria in her father’s arms, screaming from hunger; the young man from Ethiopia who left everything behind; ...—and yes, my mother, father and sister too. What are they to this fanatic leader but a small price to pay on the road to heavenly redemption? ...How could I go back to Iran? I mourn for my parents’ loss of dignity, for all the Iranian Jewish refugees still numb with the political earthquake that tumbled their lives. **The hands of evil are strong and long, seeking them still—not with daggers and clubs, as when my parents and grandparents lived in the dark ghettos of Iran, when Jew-haters, encouraged by fanatical mullahs, rampaged through their meager belongings—but now with missiles and atomic bombs.**

Conservative, [alleged “Iran experts”](#) must study and acknowledge mainstream Shiite Iranian Islam’s [half millennial](#) embrace of [jihadism](#), conjoined to annihilationist [Islamic Jew-hatred](#), and devoid of 20th century “Brezhnevian” Communist inspiration. As one final edifying example for [such experts](#)—and all those who incessantly regurgitate their “understandings”—to ponder, consider these utterances by the [Soylent] Green Movement’s late, eternal religious inspiration, Ayatollah Montazeri (d. December, 2009), who also [championed](#) Iran’s nuclear aspirations.

“His Excellency [the sixth Shi‘ite Imam Ja’far] al-Sadiq affirmed thrice that those who will ultimately exterminate the Jews will be the clerics of [the Iranian Shiite shrine city of] Qom. ([cited approvingly](#) in a public forum, and reiterated in Montazeri’s Memoirs):

Very soon through a billion strong march by all the Muslims of the world, we can liberate beloved Jerusalem, [destroy usurping Israel](#), and place the destiny of Islam

and the Muslims in their own hands... The Muslims should clearly recognize the [main danger](#) to Islam and the Islamic lands, which is the United States and international Zionism... One cannot fight against the United States and Zionism merely by holding meetings and chanting slogans. The ulema of Islam and all the Muslims should make some serious decisions... There are more than 300 verses in the Koran [about jihad](#), which are unfortunately forgotten, and about 60 books of Islamic jurisprudence are devoted to political issues, economics, judicial matters, punishments, and similar subjects. In view of this it is regrettable that the enemies of Islam and the colonialists succeeded in influencing the thoughts and attitudes of Muslims and of the ulema and Islamic writers and preachers. These enemies took away from them their Islamic character, and said that religion is separate from politics... [He \[Muhammad\]](#) did not sit in a corner and merely pray, although all his prayers would have been answered. On the contrary, he [Muhammad] carried out an uprising and had about 80 military clashes. He [Muhammad] called on the Muslims to arise, and he established a just government and powerfully implemented Allah's laws, injunctions, and justice among the people... **[In the Mahdi's occultation period, jihad is not to be abandoned; even if occultation lasts for a hundred thousand years, Muslims have to defend and fight for the expansion of Islam. Certainly, if in early Islam the goodness was in the sword, in our time the goodness is in artillery, tanks, automatic guns and missiles.](#)**"

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<https://pjmedia.com/andrew-g-bostom-2/2015/08/24/deal-partner-read-khameneis-mainstream-koranic-kampf-supporting-israels-annihilation-n6064>