

The Cairo–Qom Pipeline

How the Muslim Brotherhood's Antisemitism Became the Theology of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Abstract

The Islamic Republic of Iran's hostility toward Israel and the Jewish people is widely understood as a feature of Shia revolutionary politics. What is far less understood is that this hostility has no roots in Shia theology, tradition, or scholarship. It was imported wholesale from Sunni Islamist ideology—specifically from the writings of Sayyid Qutb, the Egyptian theorist of the Muslim Brotherhood. The transmission occurred through a documented chain of personal contacts, translations, and institutional relationships spanning three decades before the 1979 revolution. The current Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei, personally translated four of Qutb's books into Persian. The ideology's foundational anti-Jewish claims directly contradict the Quran's own statements about the Children of Israel and the Torah. This article reconstructs the full pipeline—from Cairo to Qom—and demonstrates that the Islamic Republic's anti-Jewish theology is neither authentically Shia nor Quranically defensible.

I. Introduction: An Ideology Without Indigenous Roots

The Islamic Republic of Iran has made the destruction of the State of Israel its animating geopolitical principle for over four decades. Its Supreme Leaders have called Israel the “Little Satan.” Its proxies—Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Houthi movement—constitute a network explicitly dedicated to Israel's elimination. Its state media, its educational curriculum, and its diplomatic posture are saturated with anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish rhetoric.

The standard assumption—in Western policy circles and in public discourse alike—is that this hostility emerges organically from Shia Islam, or at minimum from the Iranian revolutionary tradition. This assumption is false.

The anti-Jewish and anti-Israel ideology of the Islamic Republic was not generated from within Shia theological tradition. It was imported from Sunni Islamist thought, specifically from the Muslim Brotherhood and its chief ideologue, Sayyid Qutb. The transmission was not diffuse or

incidental. It occurred through specific individuals, specific texts, specific translations, and specific institutional relationships—all of which are documented.

This article reconstructs that pipeline in full and then demonstrates that its core theological claims—about Jews, about the Torah, about Israel’s relationship to the Holy Land—contradict the Quran itself.

II. The Source: Sayyid Qutb and the Theology of Cosmic Antisemitism

Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) was an Egyptian writer, educator, and political theorist who became the Muslim Brotherhood’s most influential ideologue. His literary output was immense: twenty-four published books, at least 581 articles, and a thirty-volume Quran commentary titled *Fi Zilal al-Qur’an* (In the Shade of the Quran). He was executed by the Nasser government in 1966 on charges of plotting against the state, an event that transformed him into a martyr figure across the Islamist world.

The Anti-Jewish Framework

Qutb’s treatment of Jews went far beyond political opposition to Zionism. In his essay *Ma’rakatuna ma’a al-Yahud* (Our Struggle with the Jews), published in the 1950s, he constructed a comprehensive theological framework casting Jews as a cosmic, satanic force engaged in an eternal war against Islam.

Scholars have established that this essay characterises Jews as a “cosmic Satanic evil” and argues that a permanent state of war exists between Islam and the Jewish people. The conflict is not territorial or political—it is ontological. Jews, in Qutb’s framework, are enemies of Islam not because of what they do but because of what they are.

This was not traditional Islamic teaching. Scholar Bassam Tibi has drawn a clear distinction between three phenomena: traditional Muslim attitudes toward Jews (Judeophobia rooted in dhimmi status), secular pan-Arab antisemitism (nationalist and territorial), and Qutb’s Islamised antisemitism (theological and cosmic). The third is Qutb’s creation, and it represents a qualitative break from anything that preceded it in Islamic thought.

Critically, scholars have also established that Qutb’s anti-Jewish writings drew heavily on European antisemitic sources. His claims about Jewish conspiracies for world domination, Jewish control of finance and media, and the inherent evil of the Jewish character echo the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and Nazi propaganda. Jeffrey Herf has demonstrated that Qutb’s *Our Struggle with the Jews* was directly influenced by wartime Nazi propaganda that had been broadcast into the Arab world.

Qutb's Broader Political Theology

The anti-Jewish framework was embedded within Qutb's larger political theory, articulated most fully in *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones, 1964). Qutb argued that the entire modern world—including nominally Muslim societies—existed in a state of *jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic ignorance). The solution was a revolutionary vanguard that would seize power and impose authentic Islamic governance. Jews and Zionists were cast as the principal agents perpetuating this state of ignorance.

It was this total package—revolutionary politics, antisemitic theology, anti-Western posture, and the vision of an Islamic state governed by clerical authority—that crossed from Cairo to Qom.

III. The Bridge: Navvab Safavi and the Fedayeen of Islam

The first transmission link between the Muslim Brotherhood and Iranian revolutionary Shia politics was Navvab Safavi (born Mojtaba Mir-Lowhi, 1924–1955), a young Iranian theology student who founded the Fada'iyan-e Islam (Fedayeen of Islam) in 1946.

An Iranian Muslim Brotherhood

Safavi's organisation was modelled directly on the Muslim Brotherhood. Its methods—targeted assassinations of politicians and intellectuals deemed hostile to Islam—mirrored the Brotherhood's militant wing. Its ideology was indistinguishable from Brotherhood doctrine in all essentials except the Sunni-Shia distinction.

Rashid Ghannouchi, leader of Tunisia's Ennahda Movement, has described the Fada'iyan-e Islam as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. Safavi himself reportedly declared: "Whoever wants to be a true Ja'fari [Shiite] must follow the Muslim Brotherhood."

The Fedayeen's assassination record was extensive. Their targets included the historian Ahmad Kasravi (1946), court minister Abdolhossein Hazhir (1949), and Prime Minister Haj Ali Razmara (1950). They also attempted to assassinate the Shah of Iran and Foreign Minister Hossein Fatemi.

The Qutb–Safavi Meeting

In 1953, Safavi travelled to Egypt, where he met Sayyid Qutb in person. Qutb supervised Safavi's visit and arranged for him to deliver a speech to Muslim Brotherhood members at Cairo University. The two men shared anti-colonial convictions, anti-Zionist ideology, and a vision of an Islamic state governed by religious law. Safavi absorbed Qutb's ideological framework and carried it back to Iran.

Safavi and Khomeini

The connection between Safavi and Khomeini was direct and personal. According to author Amir Taheri, Safavi was “the man who introduced Khomeini to the Muslim Brotherhood and their ideas.” The two men “spent long hours together” in discussion, with Safavi visiting Khomeini in Qom on multiple occasions during 1943 and 1944.

When Kasravi was assassinated by the Fedayeen in 1946, Khomeini’s involvement was indirect but significant. Taheri argues that Khomeini’s demand in his first book, *Kashf al-Asrar* (Key to the Secrets), that “all those who criticised Islam” are *mahdur ad-damm* (meaning that their blood must be shed by the faithful) “amounted to a virtual death sentence on Kasravi.” Khomeini subsequently pressured the Shah to pardon the assassin.

Safavi’s Execution and Its Aftermath

In 1955, after an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Prime Minister Hossein Ala, Safavi was arrested and executed. But the ideological transmission had already been completed. The Fedayeen’s surviving members turned to Khomeini as their new spiritual leader. The organisation was reportedly reconstructed by Khomeini’s disciple Sadegh Khalkhali, who would later become the Islamic Republic’s notorious “hanging judge.”

In 1965, the Fedayeen assassinated Prime Minister Hassan Ali Mansour. The assassination was reportedly authorised by a secret Islamic court composed of Khomeini followers, including Morteza Motahhari and Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti—both of whom would become central figures in the post-revolution government.

After the 1979 revolution, Safavi was elevated to the status of a national martyr. A Tehran metro station bears his name. An expressway is named after him. The regime’s ideologists consider him the true inspiration behind the revolution.

IV. Khamenei as Translator: The Man Who Made Qutb Speak Persian

If Safavi was the personal bridge between the Brotherhood and Khomeini, Ali Khamenei was the textual bridge. He did not merely absorb Qutb’s ideas—he translated them, published them, and disseminated them across the Persian-speaking world.

The Translations

Khamenei translated four of Qutb’s books into Persian. The documented translations include:

1. *Al-Mustaqbal li-Hadha al-Din* (The Future of This Religion), translated into Persian as *Ayandeh dar Qalamrow-e Islam*, completed in 1966. This work argues for the political

supremacy of Islam and calls upon all Muslims to fight against imperialist powers, envisioning the future submission of all humanity to Islamic ideology.

2. *Khasa'is al-Tasawwur al-Islami wa Muqawimatihi* (Characteristics and Values of the Islamic Concept), translated in 1972 as *Vizhagihaye Idiyolozhi-ye Islami* (Characteristics of the Islamic Ideology). This work deals with the Islamist understanding of divinity, the universe, humankind, divine servanthood, and what Qutb called *jahiliyyah* (ignorant unbelief).

3. *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Quran). Khamenei began translating this thirty-volume Quran commentary when he was approximately thirty years old, completing the first volume covering the beginning of the Quran through verse 182 of Surah Al-Baqarah. He stopped upon learning that another translator, Ahmad Araam, was already working on the full text.

4. A **fourth work** is referenced in multiple scholarly sources but its specific title is less consistently documented.

Khamenei's Preface: A Statement of Devotion

In his preface to the translation of *Characteristics of the Islamic Concept*, Khamenei wrote of Qutb as “a prominent figure of the age and a well-known fighter” who “struggled against oppressors with his pen and speeches, and sacrificed himself in this path.” This was not a neutral academic exercise. It was an act of ideological commitment by a man who was simultaneously engaged in revolutionary activities against the Shah.

The Publishing Infrastructure

In 1966—the same year Qutb was executed in Egypt—Khamenei established a publishing house specifically to disseminate revolutionary Islamic literature. Qutb's works were central to its output. The translation movement was not limited to Khamenei: all of Qutb's major works were rendered into Persian by prominent Iranian Islamists during the 1960s and 1970s. But Khamenei was the most consequential translator, both because of his later political position and because of his personal investment in making Qutb's thought accessible to the Iranian revolutionary movement.

Institutional Consecration

In 1984, five years after the revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a postage stamp honouring Qutb's “martyrdom,” depicting him behind bars during his 1966 trial. In February 2015, Tehran hosted a critical conference entitled “Re-reading and Re-viewing the Views of Sayyid Qutb,” described by scholars as “a vivid example of the living legacy of Sayyid Qutb in today's Iran.” Qutb's ideas were incorporated into the educational curriculum taught to future members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

As one scholar has summarised: “The influence of Sayyid Qutb on the Islamist movement and the revolutionaries of Iran is still not acknowledged sufficiently and remains largely unknown in the West.”

V. Khomeini’s Synthesis: Qutb’s Ideology Meets Shia Eschatology

What Khomeini did was not simply to adopt Qutb’s ideas. He fused them with Shia eschatology—the theology of the Hidden Imam’s return—to produce something unprecedented: a revolutionary messianism in which antisemitism was not merely a political posture but a cosmic theological imperative.

The Break with Shia Quietism

For over a thousand years, mainstream Twelver Shia theology held that in the absence of the Hidden Imam (who entered occultation in 939 CE), believers should wait patiently for his return. Political sovereignty belonged to the Imam; without him, all earthly governance was provisional. Clerics guided spiritual matters but did not claim political authority. This was the consensus of the Najaf seminary, the most authoritative centre of Shia learning.

Khomeini shattered this consensus in his 1970 lectures, later published as *Hokumat-e Islami: Velayat-e Faqih* (Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist). He argued that a qualified jurist should assume full political and religious authority during the Imam’s absence. This was not guidance or oversight—it was sovereign power. Scholar Abdulaziz Sachedina has described this as the beginning of “revolutionary messianism”: the clerical establishment was no longer waiting for the Mahdi—it was acting in his place.

Jews as Cosmic Enemies

With this theological framework in place, Qutb’s anti-Jewish ideology was seamlessly integrated. In his writings and speeches, collected in the *Sahifa-yi Nur*, Khomeini developed a comprehensive anti-Jewish theology that went far beyond political opposition to Israel.

A recurrent theme was that the Jews—not merely Israel or Zionism—are Islam’s eternal enemies. He asserted that “from the beginning, Islam has had to contend with the Jews, for it was they who first established anti-Islamic propaganda and engaged in various stratagems.” Jews were described as a “satanic” source of corruption, divinely cursed for having “meddled with the text of the Quran.” They are “attempting to distort the truth of Islam and lead Muslims astray,” since they are “opposed to the very foundations of Islam.”

He attacked the Torah itself, calling it “a corrupted and altered one” that did “not meet the standard of even the speech commonly acceptable of a human being.”

The State of Israel was cast as the political manifestation of this cosmic evil—“a merciless listless viper,” an enemy of Islam and all Arabs, a “germ of corruption.” Its destruction was not merely desirable but theologically necessary.

The Eschatological Dimension

Khomeini fused this anti-Jewish theology with Shia messianism. Jews and Zionists were cast as the embodiment of cosmic tyranny that the Mahdi himself was destined to destroy. The destruction of Israel was positioned as part of the preparation for the Mahdi’s return.

This eschatological antisemitism reached its most explicit expression under President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005–2013), who called for Israel to “vanish from the page of time,” publicly denied the Holocaust, and hosted international conferences for Holocaust deniers in Tehran. These were not aberrations. They were the logical extensions of the ideological framework Khomeini had constructed from Qutb’s raw material.

VI. The Scale of the Contradiction: What the Quran Actually Says

The ideology assembled by Khomeini from Qutb’s materials does not merely lack Quranic support. It directly contradicts the Quran on multiple points. The contradictions are not ambiguous. They are textual, specific, and irreconcilable.

Contradiction 1: The Torah

Khomeini called the Torah “a corrupted and altered one” that did not meet the standard of human speech.

The Quran refers to the Torah as the *Tawrat* and treats it as a genuine divine revelation. Surah 5:43–44 states:

“But how do they come to you for judgement while they have the Torah, wherein is the judgement of Allah?” – Quran 5:43

And Surah 5:44 describes the Torah as containing “guidance and light” by which the prophets judged. One cannot simultaneously instruct people to judge by their scripture and claim that scripture is worthless. If the Torah is “corrupted” beyond all value, as Khomeini claimed, then the Quran’s instruction to judge by it becomes meaningless—which would require the Quran itself to be in error.

Contradiction 2: The Holy Land

Khomeini and his successors have declared Jewish sovereignty over any part of the Holy Land to be illegitimate.

The Quran, in Surah 5:21, records Moses addressing the Children of Israel:

“O my people! Enter the Holy Land which Allah has destined for you. And do not turn back or else you will become losers.” — Quran 5:21

The Arabic word *kataba* (“prescribed,” “ordained”) is the same term used for divine commandments. The Holy Land is assigned to the Children of Israel by divine decree. No verse in the Quran revokes this assignment or transfers it to any other community.

Contradiction 3: The Ingathering

The Islamic Republic characterises the return of Jews to the land of Israel as an illegitimate “occupation.”

Surah 17:104 states:

“And We said to the Children of Israel after him: Dwell in the land; and when the promise of the Hereafter comes to pass, We will bring you forth in a mingled crowd.” — Quran 17:104

The Quran itself speaks of a future ingathering of the Children of Israel into the land. Far from negating the Jewish connection, it anticipates its eschatological fulfilment.

Contradiction 4: Divine Election

Surah 45:16 affirms:

“We gave the Children of Israel the Scripture, wisdom, and prophethood; We provided them with good things and favoured them above all peoples.” — Quran 45:16

Khomeini described Jews as “satanic” and “opposed to the very foundations of Islam.” The Quran describes them as recipients of divine scripture, wisdom, and favour “above all peoples.” These statements cannot be reconciled.

Contradiction 5: The Tanakh

Beyond the Quran, the Hebrew Bible itself—the text Islam acknowledges as original divine revelation to Moses—presents a covenantal framework that Islamic supersessionism cannot accommodate.

Jeremiah 31:35–36 pegs Israel’s national existence to the permanence of the natural order:

“If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever.” — Jeremiah 31:35–36

Leviticus 26:44 explicitly denies that exile constitutes covenant termination:

“And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them.” — Leviticus 26:44

Deuteronomy 30:3–5, Ezekiel 36:24, and Isaiah 11:11–12 all describe a physical ingathering from exile—a return to the land that is national, geographic, and concrete.

The doctrine of *tahrif* (corruption) attempts to neutralise these texts by claiming they have been altered. But the Dead Sea Scrolls—dated to approximately 250 BCE–68 CE—demonstrate the substantial textual stability of the Hebrew Bible across centuries. These covenantal passages are not late insertions. They are integral to the oldest recoverable strata of the text. And the Quran itself treats the Torah as authoritative, making the strong form of the *tahrif* claim internally contradictory.

VII. What Traditional Shia Islam Actually Held

The full scale of the ideological import becomes visible when one examines what Shia Islam actually taught before Khomeini.

Traditional Shia Islam, centred on the seminary city of Najaf in Iraq, maintained a quietist orientation for over a thousand years. Palestine was not a Shia cause. Jerusalem’s significance in Shia tradition related to the Prophet’s Night Journey (*al-Isra’ wa’l-Mi’raj*), not to any territorial claim. Shia communities in Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran had historically maintained neutral or even cordial relations with Jewish communities.

The senior Shia scholarly establishment rejected Khomeini’s innovations. Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Kazem Shariatmadari, who outranked Khomeini in the traditional seminary hierarchy, rejected absolute clerical governance. Grand Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri, initially designated as Khomeini’s successor, ultimately broke with the regime and argued that sovereignty belongs to the people. The Najaf seminary never endorsed Wilayat al-Faqih in its absolute form.

As one analyst has summarised: “War, conquest, Jerusalem and anti-Imperialism cannot be found in Shia tradition or literature. Khomeini and Khamenei imported them from the founding literature of the Muslim Brotherhood.” Palestine was “exclusively a Sunni issue, never a Shia problem, at least until 1979.”

VIII. The Timeline: From Cairo to Tehran in Three Decades

Date	Event
1928	Hassan al-Banna founds the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
1946	Navvab Safavi founds the Fada'iyān-e Islam in Iran, modelled on the Brotherhood
1943–44	Safavi visits Khomeini in Qom on multiple occasions; introduces Brotherhood ideas
1946	Fedayeen assassinate historian Ahmad Kasravi, with Khomeini's implicit support
1950	Qutb publishes <i>Our Struggle with the Jews</i>
1953	Safavi meets Qutb in Egypt; delivers speech to Brotherhood members at Cairo University
1955	Safavi executed; Fedayeen turn to Khomeini as spiritual leader
c. 1960	Young Khamenei (age ~16) meets Safavi; later describes this as the moment “the first fire of revolutionary Islam was ignited” in his heart
1964	Qutb publishes <i>Milestones</i>
1966	Qutb executed in Egypt; Khamenei establishes publishing house; translates <i>The Future of This Religion</i> into Persian
1970	Khomeini delivers lectures on <i>Wilayat al-Faqih</i> , fusing Brotherhood ideology with Shia political theology
1972	Khamenei translates <i>Characteristics of the Islamic Concept</i>
1979	Islamic Revolution; Khomeini invites Yasser Arafat to take over Israeli embassy in Tehran; anti-Zionism becomes state doctrine
1982	Iran founds Hezbollah in Lebanon via Ambassador Mohtashamipur
1984	Islamic Republic issues postage stamp honouring Qutb's “martyrdom”
1989	Khamenei succeeds Khomeini as Supreme Leader; holds rank of Hojatoleslam, not Grand Ayatollah

IX. Conclusion: A Borrowed Hatred, a Contradicted Book

The antisemitic and anti-Israel ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not indigenous to Shia Islam. It was constructed from materials supplied by the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood, transmitted through specific personal relationships (Safavi–Khomeini, Safavi–Khamenei), rendered into Persian by the man who now serves as Supreme Leader, and fused with Shia eschatology by a revolutionary cleric who broke with a millennium of his own tradition's consensus.

This ideology contradicts the Quran—the text the Supreme Leader claims to guard—on at least four specific points: the status of the Torah, the assignment of the Holy Land, the ingathering of the Children of Israel, and the divine election of the Jewish people. It contradicts the Tanakh—

the text Islam acknowledges as original divine revelation—on the irrevocability of the covenant and the certainty of restoration. And it contradicts over a thousand years of Shia theological tradition that maintained political quietism and never treated Palestine as a Shia cause.

The Cairo–Qom pipeline is fully documented. The personal contacts are named. The translations are published. The institutional links are on the record. What remains to be reckoned with is the implication:

The Islamic Republic’s foundational hostility toward Jews and Israel is not a product of authentic Islamic theology. It is a twentieth-century political construction, assembled from borrowed ideology, maintained by state power, and sustained by the systematic suppression of the Quran’s own testimony.

The Guardian of the Islamic Jurist has built his authority on an ideology that his own Book repudiates, his own tradition rejected, and his own predecessor imported from a foreign movement. Once that genealogy is made explicit, the question is no longer whether the ideology is theologically coherent. It is not. The question is how long a state can sustain a founding doctrine that contradicts everything it claims to be founded upon.

Notes

1. Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'rakatuna ma'a al-Yahud (Our Struggle with the Jews)*, first published 1950s, reprinted by the Saudi government in 1970. English translation and commentary in Ronald L. Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987).
2. On Qutb's absorption of European antisemitism and Nazi propaganda: Jeffrey Herf, ed., *Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
3. Bassam Tibi, "From Sayyid Qutb to Hamas: The Middle East Conflict and the Islamization of Antisemitism," in Charles A. Small, ed., *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity*, Vol. IV (New York: ISGAP, 2013).
4. On Navvab Safavi and the Fada'iyān-e Islam: Sohrab Behdad, "Islamic Utopia in Pre-Revolutionary Iran: Navvab Safavi and the Fada'ian-e Eslām," *Middle Eastern Studies* 33, no. 1 (January 1997): 40–65.
5. Amir Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah: Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution* (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1985), pp. 98–101, 115, 187.
6. On Khamenei's personal encounter with Safavi: Ali Khamenei, quoted in article published 1998, cited in multiple sources including FDD and IPT analyses.
7. Yusuf Ünal, "Sayyid Qutb in Iran: Translating the Islamist Ideologue in the Islamic Republic," *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 1, no. 2 (November 2016): 35–50. Published by Indiana University Press.
8. *Tehran Times*, "Leader's Persian Translation of 'In the Shade of the Quran' Published," June 11, 2019.
9. Khamenei's preface to his translation of *Characteristics of the Islamic Concept* (1972), cited in Ünal (2016).
10. On the 1984 postage stamp: Ünal (2016); multiple secondary sources.
11. Ramin Parham, *L'histoire secrète de la révolution iranienne* (Paris: Denoël, 2009).
12. Khomeini, *Sahifa-yi Nur*, collected speeches and writings. Anti-Jewish passages cited in Meir Litvak, "Iran and Israel: The Ideological Enmity and its Roots," *Iyunim be-Tkumat Yisrael* 14 (2004): 367–392; and in *The Tower*, "On the Roots and Branches of Shi'a Anti-Semitism."
13. Hussain Abdul-Hussain, "Khomeini's War: Sunni Islamists Taught Shia Iran to Hate Israel," *Foundation for the Defense of Democracies*, June 2025.
14. Quran 5:21, 5:43–44, 7:137, 17:104, 45:16.
15. Jeremiah 31:35–36; Leviticus 26:44; Deuteronomy 30:3–5; Ezekiel 36:24; Isaiah 11:11–12 (Hebrew Bible / Tanakh).
16. On Dead Sea Scrolls and textual stability: Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).
17. On Khamenei's insufficient clerical rank: TRENDS Research & Advisory, "The Declining Legitimacy of Absolute Velayat-e Faqih," March 2025.
18. Mohsen Sazegara, co-founder of the Revolutionary Guards, interview testimony cited in Ramin Parham, *Global Watch Analysis*, July 2024.

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