



## An Analysis of the Qur'ānic Foundations Concerning the Show of Authority in the Body Language of Imam Khamenei

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### Abstract

Language and the power of speech is not the only manner by which communication with others can occur, rather a large percentage of messages – intentionally or unintentionally – are delivered to others via the physical movements of body parts and behaviors, which are called body language. These messages which are delivered by body language are more profound, impactful, and clearer than those delivered via speech.

On various and different occasions throughout his leadership, Imam Khamenei has shown to be well-acquainted and skilled in using body language. Further, one of the theories of identity within psychology claims that the movements and behaviors of a person conform to their identity and personality. Subsequently, this research aims to introduce the scholarly and Qur'ānic personality of Imam Khamenei. It has been conducted qualitatively, using a descriptive-analytical method to identify the Qur'ānic foundations for the show of authority that he has displayed in his body language in numerous instances.

The findings of this research indicate that the authoritative body language displayed by him in his meeting with government officials, observing military parades, and other such occasions, such as the taking of the Iranian-made Corona vaccine, is based on the uplifting and self-enriching decrees of the Glorious Qur'ān.

**Keywords:** Body Language, Qur'ān, Authority, Qur'ānic Foundations, Imam Khamenei

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## Introduction

Speech is only a part of how people communicate. Another important part can be said to be the forms, gestures, behaviors, movements, and signs that are made with the head, hands, eyes, etc. This part of communication, which is one of the best forms of human interaction, is called body language or non-verbal communication.

According to the findings of behavioral scientists, a large percentage of our daily communication and interaction is non-verbal and using body language, i.e., through the gestures and positions of the head, hands, eyes, legs, eyebrows, etc. (Pease 2010, 1). As a concept, body language is of global interest and is used by numerous strata of people. It has also been studied and used within many different fields of science, however, it is more closely related to the fields of social and personality psychology.

Furthermore, as this concept has wide-ranging applications, it has been used in other disciplines, such as sociology, communications, anthropology, zoology, education, family consultation, business, marketing, and the performing arts, e.g., theatre and pantomime (Piyās 2014, 1). It has also applications in politics and international relationships.

In numerous verses of the Glorious Qur'ān, this method of communication has been alluded to, for example, facial expressions (Qur'ān 67:27; 51:29), eye gestures (Qur'ān 79:9 & 17; 43:71), signals, body form, position and movement (Qur'ān 17:37 & 109; 2:143). Similarly, when referring to the propagational conduct and activities of the Infallible Imāms, we see that they were not heedless of this manner of communication (Tustarī 1988, 11: 431; Ibn Bābawayh 1958, 1: 319). While the term body language has not explicitly appeared within religious texts, its principles and techniques have been alluded to, enabling better non-verbal communication to occur. Within the verses of the Glorious Qur'ān and prophetic traditions, mention has been made of the physical movements and signals of numerous individuals, which can be beneficial in the fields of personality psychology, audience self-awareness, and self-development.



Subsequently, the skill to use and control body language, and also the reading and understanding of them require a person to be acquainted with the body language signals that a person may use in different states and conditions. This acquaintance necessitates extensive study, research, analysis, and practice on the applications of body language. The achievement of this will have many benefits, eventually leading to success and progress in our interactions and communications with others (Terry D. 2017, 9).

Body language can be divided into two categories: one is intentional and acquired, and the other is unintentional and existential. Usually, control of the second category is impossible or very difficult. Body language can only, for a very limited period, be willfully controlled and manifest the opposite of what is contained within a person (Himāyūn Ḥisām Zādah 2011, 45). Contrastingly, manipulating body language over an extended period is problematic (Pease 2010, 18).

Nevertheless, pictures that show the body language of Imam Khamenei during the period of his leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran, seem to indicate that he has always been very skilled and able in the use and control of his body language.

Therefore, it can be presumed that the control of his intentional body language stems from his firm grasp of the techniques and principles of body language, whereas the unintentional aspect of his body language springs from his personality. This is by personality psychology, which claims as one of its fundamentals, that the gestures and behaviors of a person are per their personality.

Imām ‘Alī is reported to have said in this regard, “Know that every apparent matter has an associated hidden matter. So, when a matter’s apparent is pure, its hidden will also be pure, whereas when its apparent is impure, so too is the hidden” (Nahj al-Balāghah Sermon 154).

This article intends to introduce the Qur’ānic personality of Imam Khamenei and explore and explain the Qur’ānic basis for body language.

Information was gathered qualitatively and then studied using a descriptive-analytical manner.

The distinctive features of this research are that while its concern is multidisciplinary (communications, psychology, international relationships, and Qur'ānic exegesis), it is also the only research article that explores and explains the Qur'ānic basis for the body language of the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. At the same time, the majority of the mentioned verses were also commentated on and explained by him.

After examining the definitions of body language, this article aims to explain the Qur'ānic basis of his body language as manifested in three instances: 1. show of reverence in front of the arrogant, 2. authoritative, and 3. humility. These are further clarified by utilizing his remarks and statements made on various occasions.

### **Definitions of Body Language**

The word body language is composed of two words: body and language. According to linguistics, language is a patterned system of arbitrary sound signals, characterized by creativity, displacement, duality, and cultural transmission (Aitchison 2012, 14). More precisely, language can be defined as a collection of conventionally agreed-upon signals that over a period of time is used to transfer messages. What is meant by 'over a period of time' is that every signal comes into turn after another and it is this collection of signals that forms mental concepts for humans over time (Najafī 2008, 26-34).

Linguistics considers every word to be a signal and sign. These can be either written, spoken, or physically indicated. Therefore, human language has many forms, such as spoken language, written language, and physical language (Fāḍiliyān 2019, 92).

The body can be said to be the complete structure of an individual living organism or the collection of parts that make up its physical existence. The word that is used for this in Arabic is *badan* or *jasad* (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1991, 112). Whereas in Persian, numerous words have been coined for it,



such as *tan*, *tanah*, *indām*, *jism*. *kālbud*, etc. Arabic lexicographers have not discussed the word *badan* as being applied to animals (Ibn Fāris 1978, 1:211; Fīrūz Ābādī 1994, 18:48). Therefore, in Arabic, this word is only applied to the structure and parts of a human being.

In the Glorious Qur'ān, the word *badan* only appears once, in the story of Mūsā and Fir'awn (Qur'ān 10:92). From its derivatives, the word *budun*, which is the plural form of the word *badnah* – which means a big, fat camel – also only appears once in the Glorious Qur'ān (22:36). From the words that are related to *badan*, mention can be made of the word *jism*. This word appears twice in the Glorious Qur'ān (Qur'ān 2:247; 63:4). It is also thought that the word *saw'ah* (Qur'ān 5:31) also means body.

The word *jasad* can also be taken to mean body, therefore, the verses that contain this word can also be said to mean body (Qur'ān 21:8; 38:34). However, some lexicographers have said that *jasad* refers to something more particular than *jism*, as it is only applied to an object that can be colored. Whereas, *jism* can be applied to clear and non-colorable things, such as water and air (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1991, 196). The questions that then arise are, is a *jasad* a *jism* with or without a soul? Can the word *jasad* be applied to non-human things? (Ṭabrisī 1987, 4:359).

The term body language - *lughat al-jasad* in Arabic and *zabān tan* in Persian – as was shown in the literature review section, is a relatively new term that has grabbed the attention of scholars and scientists from various fields and disciplines (Piyās 2004, 1). As a result, each of these scholars has studied and applied this phenomenon from their own specific point of view. They have also then defined and explained it as per its instances in the outside world.

Nevertheless, a more comprehensive definition of body language defines body language as a collection of behavioral and non-verbal codes and signals that are usually hereditary, natural, and necessary. These, then, usually manifest themselves spontaneously and unintentionally, by means of gestures and movements of the body parts, such as the head, eyes, hands, etc., or by body postures and forms, such as the manner of standing,

walking, dress, etc., and even by the tone and manner of speaking, during various situations and occasions, such as times of excitement, stress, while telling a lie, fear, showing affection and so on. By doing so, one or numerous messages are delivered to the target audience (‘Alawī Zādah 2022, 21).

## Literature Review

Discussions concerning body language have a long past within religious texts and popular literature, and many points concerning it can be derived from these sources. This is because the history of body language begins with the birth of man. It can even be claimed that even before the coinage of words, humans communicated with body language. However, that which represents a skill and technique has only come to the fore over the last forty years or so (Wadāyi‘ 2012, 16). Anthropologists and researchers in the fields of psychology, sociology, communications, and linguistics, have conducted a plethora of research on the applications of body language, which, over time, has developed in great strides.

Some of the important books that have been written on this subject are *Body Language in Action*, authored by Richard Mulvey, *How to Read and Understand Body Language* by Terry D. Clark, and *The Definitive Book of Body Language* by Allan and Barbara Pease.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, mention can be made of the following articles focus that have discussed body language from a Qur’ānic perspective: “*Barrasī Balāghī Dalālat hā ye Zabān Badan dar Qur’ān Karīm*” (*Muṭāli‘ah Mawridī : Zabān Dast*) by ‘Abd al-Riḍā ‘Adāshī published in *Zabān wa Adabiyāt* ‘Arabī, Spring/Summer, 2018, No. 18), *Barrasī Zabānshinakhtī Ista‘ārah hā-ye marbūṭ bi A‘ḍā-ye Badan dar Sūrah Baqarah wa Āl-i Imrān (Ruhyakard Shanakhtī)*, written by Ḥamīd Ṣabāhī Girāghānī and Aḥmad Riḍā Ḥaydariyān Shahrī, published in *Majalah Pajūhish hā-ye Qur’ānī dar*

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<sup>1</sup>. These are the titles of the original books; it must be noted that the author used their Persian translations for the writing of this article (Trans.)



*Adabiyāt*, Year 2, Autumn/Winter, 2015, No. 2, Issue 4), *Mutālī‘ah-ye Taṭbīqī Zabān Badan dar Qur’ān wa Tarjumih hā-ye Fārsī Ān (bā Takyah bar Ḥarakāt Dast dar Tarjumih hā-ye Khuram-Shāhī wa Garmārūdī* written by Muḥammad Jawād Pūr‘ābīd, Sayyid Nāṣir Jābirī Ardakānī and Āminah Firuzān Kamālī.

Nevertheless, no direct and independent study has been conducted on the body language of Imam Khamenei. Therefore, the distinctive feature of this research article is that the Qur’ānic foundations of Imam Khamenei’s body language during meetings with diverse individuals, as well as his statements and remarks about it, have been utilized to explain and explicate it.

### **Show of Authority in the Body Language of Imam Khamenei**

What follows is a study and analysis of the Qur’ānic foundations of the show of authority as exhibited by Imam Khamenei’s body language during three distinct situations: meeting with heads of state, observing military parades, and taking the Iranian-produced Corona vaccine.

#### **1. Meeting with Heads of State**

One of the most memorable moments of Imām Khomeini’s leadership was his meeting with the then-foreign minister of the former Soviet Union, Eduard Shevardnadze. When Gorbachev sent the reply to Imām Khomeini’s historical message, Imam Khomeini entered the gathering wearing a kufī hat and *shamd* and not his usual official garb. He also did not look at anyone as he entered. He only remained in that gathering for a few minutes before he got up in a manner of disapproval during the reading of Gorbachev’s message by Eduard Shevardnadze and left the gathering in a manner that combined haste with awe (Rajā’ī 2012, 2:326).

After the demise of Imām Khomeini, Imam Khamenei has followed in his footsteps and has exhibited this form of authority on numerous occasions, going higher than the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union and replicating it, to an extent, when meeting with heads of state.



### Meeting with Putin

Imam Khamenei's meeting with the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, was one of the most important diplomatic meetings held in the last few years. Throughout the meeting, Imam Khamenei leaned on the back of the chair, never leaning forward, His arms and hands were open, stretched and visible. This posture conveys ascendancy and superiority to the opposite side, indicating that Imam Khamenei has a high degree of efficiency in portraying messages through his body language. Furthermore, he replicated and repeated this form of sitting when meeting with the heads of other states, such as China and Switzerland.

In these meetings, the individual who was facing him, would sit forward on the chair, not leaning against the backrest, their hands would either be placed one on top of the other or intertwined. This posture indicates submission and surrender to the other party. For example, Mr. Putin, in his meetings with other heads of state, was in full control of the gathering, however, in his meeting with Imam Khamenei, he sat with the utmost humility, with his hands intertwined.





**Putin Meeting with three American Presidents**



Contrarily, whenever Imam Khamenei meets with different groups of people, or visits the homes of the martyrs or the academic, cultural, and artistic elites, his body language is very different. In these gatherings, his body language inclines towards humbleness, fatherliness, affection, and the like. Whenever he meets the families of the martyrs, he does not completely lean back into the chair, he leans forward towards the people with his hands being closed or intertwined, i.e., he is conveying his humility and submission to the families of the martyrs.



It could be said that the basis for this type of body language can be found in verses, such as

﴿وَأَخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

‘and lower your wing to the faithful who follow you.’ (Qur’ān 26:215)

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾

‘and indeed you possess a great character.’ (Qur’ān 68:4)

﴿فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ﴾

“It is by Allah’s mercy that you are gentle to them; had you been harsh and hardhearted, they would have surely scattered from around you.” (Qur’ān 3:158)



﴿رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ﴾

“...and merciful amongst themselves.” (Qur’ān 48:29)

The reason for why people gathered around the Noble Prophet can be sought in these blessed verses, but the details of such an investigation go beyond the scope of this article. Similarly, the show of authority conveyed in the body language of Imam Khamenei when meeting heads of state can also be found in numerous verses of the Glorious Qur’ān and prophetic traditions. What follows is a study of these verses and prophetic traditions.

#### **Necessity Trust in Allah (*tawakkul*)**

Correspondingly, his body language is also impacted by verses like,

﴿وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

“...in Allah let all the faithful put their trust.” (Qur’ān 64:13)

Regarding the reason for the revelation of the above verse, it has been reported that during the battle of Dhāt al-Riqqā’, the Noble Prophet stopped under a tree alongside a valley. All of a sudden, a flood occurred, separating him from his companions. During this time, one of the polytheists managed to get the jump on the Noble Prophet and stood over him with his unsheathed sword. He then said to the Noble Prophet, ‘Who will save you now Muhammad?’ To which the Noble Prophet replied, ‘Allah.’ Just then, the Angel Jibra’īl pushed the polytheist from the back, causing him to fall down and drop his sword. The Noble Prophet quickly grabbed it and stood over the polytheist and said to him, ‘Now, who will save you from me?’ he replied, ‘No one!’ He then recited the *shahādātayn* and became Muslim (Ṭabrisī 1988, 3:263; Majlisī 1984, 25:305). In the exegeses of this verse, it has been said that a believer must solely put his trust in Allah because he knows that there is no assistance other than His (Fayḍ Kāshānī 1995, 1:396).

Subsequently, the authoritative and honorable body language portrayed by Imam Khamenei during these meetings indicates to the opposite party that our relationship with you is not from a point of weakness and timidity, as our trust is completely in Allah. He, whose power and might, is far beyond that of the material world. In this regard, he said to government officials, “Do not be afraid of the enemy. Know that the hand of Allah is above all hands and that He supports and assists people who support and assist His religion. Praise be to Him that this nation will do this” (Statements made during a meeting with the people of the East Azerbaijan Province, 29/11/1397, <https://khl.ink/f/41740>).

By referring to certain verses, Imam Khamenei introduces the Islamic Republic of Iran as an example for other countries. Not in the sense that they should have the same political system as the Islamic Republic, but rather in the sense of following its foundations and principles which include,

﴿أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ﴾

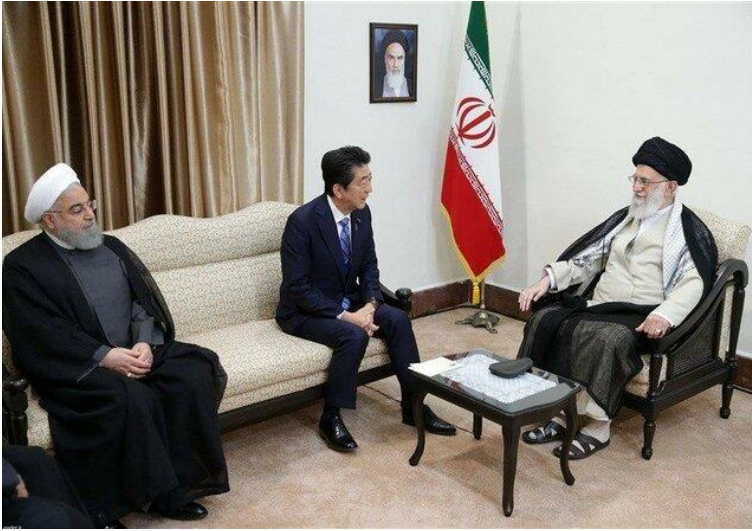
“...hard against the faithless and merciful amongst themselves.” (Qur’ān 48:29)

﴿وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

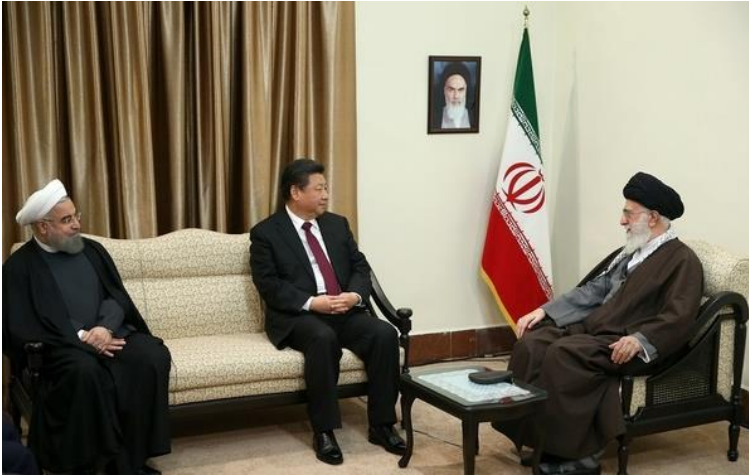
“in Allah let all the faithful put their trust.” (Qur’ān 64:13)

(Message sent to the participants of the seventh gathering of the *Ahl al-Bayt* World Assembly, 12/06/1401, <https://khl.ink/f/50878>)





**Meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan**



**Meeting with the President of China**

The Impermissibility of Allowing Non-believers to Dominate over Muslims is one of the sources of the authoritative body language of Imam Khamenei when meeting certain world leaders and heads of state. The

following verse can be one of the sources of the body language of Imam Khamenei:

﴿وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا﴾

“...and Allah will never provide the faithless any way [to prevail] over the faithful.” (Qur’ān 4:141)

So, a true believer will never allow a non-believer to prevail and dominate over his, or any Muslim, life, wealth, family, etc., rather it should be the other way. The Noble Prophet is reported to have said in this regard, “Islam dominates and is never dominated”<sup>1</sup> (Ibn Bābawayh 1995, 4:334). After the victory at the Battle of Badr, Ibn Mas‘ūd was walking through the ranks of the killed polytheists when he came across Abū Jahl taking his last breaths. So he sat down beside him. When Abū Jahl saw him sitting close to him, he said, ‘You worthless shepherd! You are sitting in an esteemed place!’ Ibn Mas‘ūd replied to him with the above-mentioned tradition, i.e., Islam dominates and is never dominated (Fakhr Rāzī 2000, 32:225).

Islamic jurists have used this verse and prophetic tradition to establish the rule of *naft sabīl*, which has numerous applications in the derivation of Islamic law. Similarly, Islamic theologians have used this tradition to establish the claim that Islamic logic is superior to all other logic and argument (Muṭahharī 2008, 1:198-199).

By referring to the above verse, Imam Khamenei says:

The enemy, with its apparent and outward grandeur, is nothing but Western arrogance and a decaying, ignorant, and oppressive culture. This enemy has appeared throughout the centuries and has latched on to every nook and cranny of this world, and has seeped into its economic, cultural, human, and political resources. However, it has

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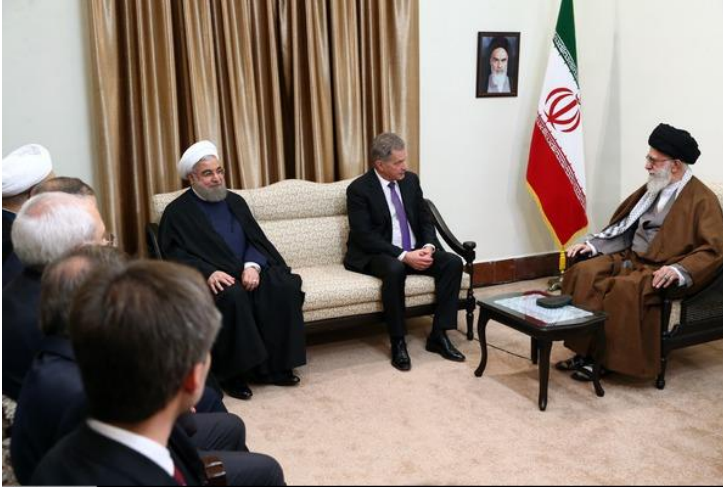
<sup>2</sup> . رسول الله ﷺ: «الإسلامُ يَغْلُو ولايَغْلَى عَلَيْهِ».



found a barrier in true Islam, not proclaimed Islam. Nevertheless, Islam is a mere proclamation. They call themselves Muslims, but they benefit and satiate themselves from these things. The true barrier is true Islam, the Islam of the Glorious Qur'ān. Islam which portrays, '...and Allah will never provide the faithless any way [to prevail] over the faithful' (Qur'ān 4:141) and 'Judgement belongs only to Allah...' (Qur'ān 6:57). (Statements made during a meeting with a group of Revolutionary Guards, 24/09/1375, <https://khl.ink/f/2821>).



**Meeting with the President of Switzerland**



**Meeting with the President of Finland**



**Meeting with the Prime Minister of Italy**

### **The Impermissibility of Inclination toward the Enemy**

Another verse that can be used to explicate Imam Khamenei's body language is the verse,





## ﴿وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا﴾

“Do not incline toward the wrongdoers.” (Qur’ān 11:113)

It has been reported from the Infallible Imāms, “Inclination towards the oppressors signifies friendship, well-wishing and obedience to them” (Ṭabrisī 1988, 5:306). It is reported that Ibn Abbas said that a believer should never incline toward a disbeliever concerning his religious affairs (Ibid). Consequently, the verse implies that they should not be trusted, their words should not be relied upon, and their actions should not please you, nor should they be befriended, associated with, or flattered (Ṭurayhī 1983, 6:256).

In this regard, Imam Khamenei has said,

These that you see who scold a president or king of a particular country because of their stance against other nations, against the people, against peace, against tranquility, against the stability of countries and governments, are those very people who the Glorious Qur’ān has harshly admonished. People have to understand this point. When the Glorious Quran tells us, “Do not incline toward the wrongdoers, lest the Fire should touch you” (Qur’ān 11:113), i.e., we should trust the oppressors. Unfortunately, this is the reason for the sad state of people today. They listen and then get deceived. You have witnessed that some of these Arab nations initiated a good movement, that created resistance, uprising, and awakening. However, it all died down, just like a candle who have water soil thrown on it. Why? Because they did not act on, “Do not incline toward the wrongdoers” (Qur’ān 11:113). They inclined towards America and the Zionist entity. They did not understand that they had to make the effort, and this is how they ended up. (Statements made during a Qur’ānic recitation gathering, 16/02/1398, <https://khl.ink/f/42448>)

By accepting the Islamic impermissibility of inclination towards oppressors in different religious, personal, social, political, economic, military, and cultural affairs, Imam Khamenei aims to portray to the person

sitting opposite from him that we Muslims do not trust in or depend on you.

### **The Impermissibility of Befriending the Enemies of Islam**

Another verse that can be used to explicate the body language of Imam Khamenei when facing officials from arrogant powers is the verse,

﴿لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ﴾

‘Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends’ (Qur’ān 60:1).

This verse was revealed concerning an individual named Ḥāṭib ibn Abī Balta‘ah. He was a companion of the Noble Prophet and was one of the migrants from Makkah to Madinah. However, his family remained in Makkah. The Quraysh, before the Muslims conquered Makkah, asked his wife to write a letter to him, asking whether or not Muḥammad had plans to attack Makkah. His wife wrote and sent the letter to him. Without having permission to do so and doing what could have been considered as the disclosure of the Muslim’s secrets, he wrote back that Muḥammad intended to attack Makkah. He then gave the letter to a woman by the name of Ṣaffiyah for it to be delivered to Makkah. The Noble Prophet was informed about this matter by the Angel Gabriel. He then sent Imām ‘Alī and a few other companions to go look for her and retrieve the letter. They retrieved the letter from her and brought Ḥāṭib to the Noble Prophet. Ḥāṭib then said to him, ‘I swear I did not commit treason nor perform an act of hypocrisy. I am not from the Quraysh and my family are strangers there. I just wanted the Quraysh to support them and not trouble them when I died. Other than this, I had no ill intentions with my action.’ the Noble Prophet accepted his excuse and forgave him. It was then that the above verse was revealed, where Allah forbids the believers from befriending the enemies of Allah (‘Arūsī Ḥuwayzī 1995, 5:299; Baḥrānī 1995, 5:353).

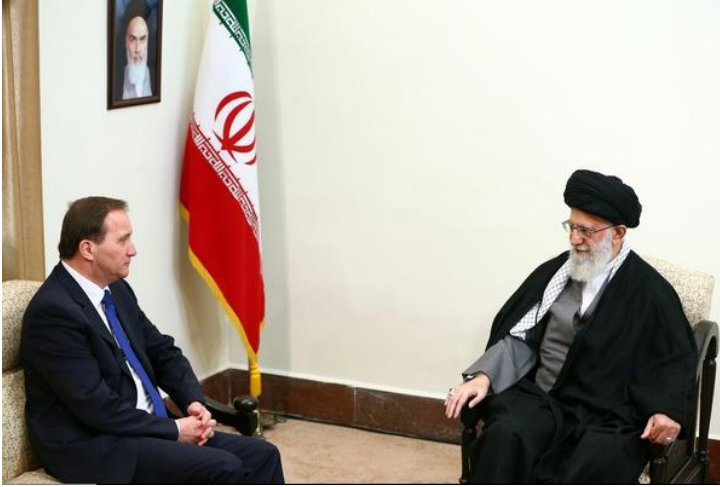
Influenced by this verse, Imam Khamenei desires to portray with his unendearing body language that Muslims, by Qur’anic decree, are not



friends and will not befriend arrogant disbelievers whose enmity has been proven, even if the prevailing circumstances necessitate a close association. He, therefore, considers those who act contrary to this verse and take as friends those who are the enemies of Allah, Islam, and the Muslims, as the real enemies of Islam from within the Islamic society (Statements made during a meeting with the participants of the *Muḥibbān Ahl al-Bayt wa Mas'alah Takfīrī hā* Conference, 02/09/1396, <https://khl.ink/f/38302>).



**Meeting with the President of Austria**



### Meeting with the Prime Minister of Sweden

#### The Impermissibility of Taking the Enemies as Confidants

It is also possible to trace the unendearing body language of Imam Khamenei when meeting with leaders of so-called world powers to the verse,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بَطَانَةً مِّن دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُّوا مَا عَنِتُّمْ قَدْ  
بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ﴾

“O you who have faith! Do not take your confidants from others than yourselves; they will spare nothing to ruin you. They are eager to see you in distress. Hatred has already shown itself from their mouths, and what their breasts hide [within] is yet worse”  
(Qur’ān 3:118)

This verse was revealed concerning a group of Muslims who had an affiliation with the Jews through friendship, family ties, being neighbors, or through wet nursing. As a result of this, they frequently interacted with each other (Ṭabrisī 1987, 2:820; Ṭabarī 1991, 4:40). Given this blessed



verse, Imam Khamenei advises the government officials of Iran to become familiar with the enemy and not to fall for their traps and deceptions, as they will enter the fray from numerous angles. Sometimes they will show a smile, sometimes they will show a fist, while at others they will be cunning. All of these are a sign of enmity. But what they have in their impure hearts, filled with hatred and disgust for Islam, Muslims, and especially the Islamic Republic of Iran, is far greater than what they allow themselves to say (Statements made during a meeting with the people of the East Azerbaijan Province, 29/11/1397, <https://khl.ink/f/41740>).



**Meeting with the President of Azerbaijan**



**Meeting with the President of Turkey**



### Meeting with the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia

#### The Necessity of Confronting the Arrogant with Arrogance

When meeting officials from arrogant countries or even those from Islamic countries, the body language of Imam Khamenei appears intimidating and outwardly arrogant. This form of behavior, in the words of the Noble Prophet, breaks their flimsy and satanic ‘grandeur.’ ‘Act with humility whenever you meet the humble from my community. And act arrogantly whenever you meet the arrogant, for this will degrade and lower them’ (Warrām ibn Abī Farrās 1990, 201). Allah also does not like the arrogant, he says,

﴿وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ﴾

“Do not turn your cheek away disdainfully from the people, and do not walk exultantly on the earth. Indeed Allah does not like any swaggering braggart.” (Qur’ān 31:18)



Humility and obeisance towards these types of individuals only motivate them to act in this manner. This is because an arrogant individual ‘believes’ that he is superior. Therefore, they must be shown similar, arrogant behavior. The legitimacy of such behavior can be derived from the following verse,

﴿الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ﴾

“...those who are unduly arrogant in the earth” (Qur’ān 7:146).

According to this verse, arrogance is of two types: duly and unduly. Self-glorification and superiority-seeking over the servants of Allah and arrogance toward the prophets and believers can be considered examples of unduly arrogance, whereas duly or praiseworthy arrogance can include instances like arrogance when facing the enemies of Allah or those who are unduly arrogant (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 8:246)

Concerning duly arrogance, it has been reported in prophetic traditions, ‘Showing arrogance in the face of the arrogant is worship’ (Ṣādiqī Tehrānī 1986, 21:332 and 26:49; Mudarrasī 1998, 6:232) or in another narration, charity (Haqqī Bursevī nd., 5:25). Correspondingly, the behavior of Imam Khamenei can be considered a form of worship and charity, as it is in accordance with the divine law, and not out of ignorance and egotism. Hence, his body language in these situations is just a show of arrogance, and not true arrogance. From another angle, true arrogance belongs solely to Allah and others do not have the right to manifest it (Ālūsī 1994, 5:59). Additionally, it is reported that Imām ‘Alī said,

«التَّكَبُّرُ عَلَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِ هُوَ التَّوَاضُّعُ بِعَيْنِهِ»

‘Arrogance in the face of the arrogant is complete humility.’  
(Nahj al-Balāghā, Wisdom 410)



## 2. When Observing Military and Police Parades

This authoritative body language of Imam Khamenei can be seen on different occasions. A clear example of this is the manner of his walking and the use of his walking stick during military and police parades over the last decade. This form of appropriate body language is rarely seen amongst the leaders of the armed forces of other countries.



During these parades, the following blessed verse is explicitly manifested in his body language:

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

‘Prepare against them whatever you can of [military] power and war-horses, awing thereby the enemy of Allah, and your enemy, and others besides them, whom you do not know, but Allah knows them.’ (Qur’ān 8:60)





In further explanation of this verse, Imām Ṣādiq says: “One of the instances that results in the enemies becoming fearful is the dying of one’s beard black” (Majlisī 1986, 1:318). The reason is that the enemy will think that the soldiers are young, no matter how old they are. So, a leader of an Islamic nation must, as per the above verse, manifest and convey strength by any legitimate means, such as body language. Additionally, employing his body language, he tells the ill-wishers and hypocrites who,

﴿إِذَا خَلَوْا عَصُّوا عَلَيْكُمْ الْأُنَامِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ﴾

“...but when they are alone, they bite their fingertips at you out of rage.” (Qur’ān 3:119)

that,

﴿مُوتُوا بِغَيْظِكُمْ﴾

“Die of your rage!” (Qur’ān 3:119)

This first part of this verse refers to an Arabic idiom, which is similar to the English, ‘biting one’s tongue.’ This proverb is used when a person is regretful, despondent, and extremely angry (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 3:387). The second part of the verse also refers to an Arabic idiom which means that may God not ease your pain until you die from it. It is obvious that such words can only be said to the enemy from a position of strength, power, and authority (Mughnīyyah 2003, 2:147).

Concerning the above points, Imam Khamenei has said:

We have many enemies. So, our defense needs to be strong. The intellect and the divine law tell us, ‘Prepare against them whatever you can of [military] power and war-horses.’ ‘Whatever you can’ i.e. to the extent of your capability. We have followed this decree. We will, God-willing, strengthen the defense of our country till the extent possible... It is this very progress of ours that has angered our

enemies, has filled them with rage. The Glorious Qur'ān says to tell them, 'Die of your rage!' Our beloved martyr, Sayyid Beheshtī translated this verse as such... Whatever Iran strengthens, they will become upset. Why? Because they know Iran has become strong, they know that their plots against Iran will come to nothing. That is why they do not want a strong Iran. Whatever we strengthen will just make them more irritated and angrier. (Statements made during a meeting with the people of the East Azerbaijan Province, 26/11/1401, <https://khl.ink/f/51999>)

### 3. When Taking the Iranian Produced Corona Vaccine

Another clear occasion when Imam Khamenei delivered an important message by means of his body language was during the outbreak of the Corona Virus. During those days, the taking of the Corona vaccine was rampant globally and the taking of the vaccine by world leaders was the clearest form of showing the academic and scientific authority of their countries. At that time, the pictures of Imam Khamenei, who was waiting for the Iranian Corona virus vaccines to be produced, was praised by the Iranian public and even those outside of Iran. In contrast to some other world leaders who had taken the vaccine, his picture showed him having a focused and firm face, fists clenched, with his eyes looking forward. In this manner, he ensured that the scientific and medical status of the Islamic Republic of Iran would be immune from the plots of the ill-wishers.



His body language shown at military parades and while taking the vaccine is the manifestation of the authority and strength of a Muslim nation and a show of force to the enemies of Islam and Iran. This has resulted in the enemies becoming angry and fearful, while at the same time, creating hope and self-belief within friends and allies. He has said in this regard:

We must all know that our enemies in this battlefield, those who I have named, are not seasonal or imaginary. They are in fact essential and permanent enemies. They will strike at every opportunity. To prevent this we must strengthen ourselves. Be it in the fields of military, security, politics, economics, etc., we must strengthen them all so that the enemies cannot strike. For their enmity is essential. This thought that some have where they feel that if we draw back a bit, or slow down, then America will leave us alone, is a huge mistake. It is a clear mistake. This type of thought, where some think that we should not do anything that makes America unhappy – some say this, while some write it in the newspapers – is in direct conflict with the words of Allah in the Glorious Qur’ān where He says, “Such is their description in the Torah and their description in the Evangel. Like a tillage that sends out its shoots and builds them up, and they grow stout and settle on their stalks, impressing the sowers, so that He may enrage the faithless by them” (Qur’ān 48:29). The growth and

development of the believing elements, these fertile saplings, these believing seeds, is to enrage the faithless and to make the enemies unhappy. And because this they become even angrier. They are angry at the sprouts sowed in the fields of knowledge, sacred defense, services, military, etc. All of this irritates and annoys them. (Statements made during a meeting with the people of Qum Province, 18/10/1398, <https://khl.ink/f/44628>)

#### 4. After Doubts Surfaced Concerning his Health

Every once in a while, having political and security objectives, Western or Western-backed media outlets cast doubts over the health and even life of Imam Khamenei. For example, in August 2022, which can be considered to be one of the biggest psychological war scenarios to play out regarding the health of Imam Khamenei. This scenario took shape at the highest propagational level via America, with articles appearing in reputed newspapers, such as the New York Times. However, Imam Khamenei, being greatly influenced by the mentioned Qur'anic verses that promote strength and a show of strength, and those that command the enemy being made angry, quashed and ended a scenario that has played out for nearly ten days with his authoritative body language conveying his full health. By unusually giving a speech in the *Husaynīyyah Imām Khomeini*, i.e., he spoke while standing and holding the microphone, he not only quelled all the rumors concerning his health but also brought the validity and reputation of the highest levels of Western media into question.

With his well-timed use of body language and the distribution of pictures that showed his health to the entire nation and world, Imam Khamenei brought an end to the media campaign and psychological war. Additionally, for this manner of behavior, reference can also be made to those verses that command confrontation with rumors and lies, e.g., (Quran 33:60-62; 36:64; 11,15 & 19:24 and 4:84).



## Conclusion

In this research, the authority displayed in the body language of Imam Khamenei on different occasions was studied, such as his meeting with world leaders and heads of state, while observing military and police parades, taking the Iranian-made Corona vaccine, and during doubts concerning his health.

It was found that his behavior and authoritative body language can be traced to certain Qur'ānic principles, such as striving and being resolute against the disbelievers, showing honor in the face of the arrogant, complete trust in Allah, not relying on the power and strength of the material realm, the impermissibility of inclining, trusting and endearing to the enemies of Islam, impermissibility of befriending the enemies of Islam and the impermissibility of the disbelievers dominating the believers. During the study of his authoritative body language when meeting with the heads and leaders of different states, the Qur'ānic foundations of his

portrayal of humility and humbleness in his body language were also brought to light, i.e., Allah's command to the Noble Prophet to be humble when meeting the believers and to treat them with kindness and affection.

His authoritative body language while observing military parades, which have always caught the media's attention, is based on the Qur'anic decree of preparing and strengthening the Islamic forces in order to instill fear into the enemies.

Similarly, his body language while taking the Iranian-produced Corona vaccine and after rumors and doubts concerning his health surfaced, can be traced to the Glorious Qur'an and verses that command making the enemy angry, as they will become angry from any form of progress and strength of the believers. Additionally, reference can be made to those verses that command confrontation with rumors and lies.

Therefore, it can be said that in addition to his firm grasp of Qur'anic teachings, Imam Khamenei has also ingrained within his existence and manifests them in the form of his body language.

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