

The Role of Mosques and Friday Prayer in Emergence and Spread of Islamic Awakening

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Abstract

The Islamic Awakening movement is one of the most important developments in the Islamic world during the past century. The Islamic Awakening is a development inspired by "consciousness" and "will" in the sleepyhead Islamic societies in order to revitalize rights and restore Muslims' individual and collective identities. Given the mission and position of mosques and pray, particularly Friday Prayer in the Islamic Awakening, this article deals with the role of mosques and Friday Prayer in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening on the basis of documentary qualitative method by considering recent developments in the Middle East. The findings show that from the beginning, "mosque" has had various functions. From the start of Islam until now, mosque has been the basis of blending religion and politics, a base for raising consciousness of masses, a place for general unity and brotherhood, and a trench for mobilization and struggle of believers against tyrant rulers. As the most important basis of popular revolutionary mobilization in the Islamic Revolution was mosque and in Palestinian Intifada was Al-Aqsa mosque, today also the most glorious popular uprisings in such countries as Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, Bahrain and Libya are resulted from mosques and Friday Prayers. During the Islamic Awakening in the Middle East, we can obviously find out that beside mosques, the Friday Prayer has a vital role in enlightening people and mobilizing revolutionary forces in order to protest against dictators. This fact can be realized through paying attention to naming Fridays under different revolutionary titles in different phases of combat.

Key words: Islamic Awakening; Mosque; Friday Prayer; Islamic Revolution; Middle Eastern Countries

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Introduction

In recent years, Islamist movements have become the mainstream in the Islamic world and an important issue at the international level. Islamic Awakening has been a great phobia for the West so the West's strategies have been designed for dealing with this issue. The West, particularly the US, tries to present its audience with an image of Islam according to its demands and objectives through providing unreal information and manipulated image of Islam. Given the fact that one of tricks of colonialism and domestic and foreign enemies for vanishing Islam is to banish Muslims from religious instructions and abandon mosques, we should pay attention to the role of mosques and prayers, particularly Friday Prayer in the Islamic Awakening. Islamic thinkers, who raise the question of revitalizing Islamic thought in order to recover Muslims' backwardness and decline, emphasize returning to the authentic Islam and applying its instructions by using mosque and Friday Prayer as religious-political worship.

Aiming at examining the role of mosques and Friday Pray in emergence and spread of Islamic Awakening, this article seeks to answer the following questions: What is the role of mosques in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening? What is the role of Friday Prayer in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening? Several hypotheses are raised in this regard: 1) As an organization in revolutionary mobilization process, mosques have various functions in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening; 2) Friday Prayer is one of the factors effective in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening.

a) Theoretical approach

Every revolution needs an organization in order to transmit the opinions of the leader to the followers and realize its leader's objectives. Such an organization has a pyramid form in which the leader of revolution places at the top, middle rank authorities place at the middle, and the bulk of followers place at the bottom of the pyramid (Hosseinfar, 2009: 178). Since there is a kind of similarity between the nature and objectives of a movement on the one hand, and the base in which the movement is shaped and organized, on the other, one can claim that one of indicators that shows the nature of political behaviors among people (through which we can find out the main factor of the people's inspiration and orientation) is the revolutionary centers from which the people's

behaviors and movements has shaped and launched (Honari Latifpour, 2011: 156). In the Islamic Awakening movement of the Middle Eastern countries, mosque constitutes a revolutionary organization whose three elements are: widespread network of mosques, Hosseiniehs and religious missions; considerable presence of clergymen and committed intellectuals among people; and masses of believers connected with mosque and clergymen (Hosseinfar, 2009: 178).

In this article, the authors have tried to use resources mobilization theory presented by Charles Tilly. In Tilly's theory, the core of research is collective action which is defined as cooperation of individuals in pursuit of shared interests. Revolution is one of collective actions. Within Tilly's theoretical framework, collective action is the result of competitive interactions of those groups who compete for gaining power. This process is depicted in an abstract framework which is called the model of polity. He divides every population into government, members of polity and challengers or a coalition of challengers who raise their claims. Due to monopolizing the sources of force and norm, government tries to prevent the challengers from entering polity and facilitate the members of polity in a costless way. In other words, these participators mobilize their collective resources for entering polity or staying in it (Samti, 1996: 140).

He uses the model of resource mobilization in order to explain collective action. The main components of this model include: interest, organization, mobilization, collective action and opportunity. The latter includes: power, repression and opportunity for threat (Samti, 1996: 141). He defines interests as the shared advantages or disadvantages likely to accrue to the population in question as a consequence of various possible interactions with other populations. Organization is the extent of common identity and unifying structure among the individuals in the population; as a process, an increase in common identity and/or unifying structure (we can call a decline in common identity and/or unifying structure disorganization). Mobilization is the extent of resources under the collective control of the contender; as a process, an increase in the resources or in the degree of collective control. Collective action: the extent of a contender's joint action in pursuit of common ends; as a process, the joint action itself. Opportunity describes the relationship between the population's interests and the current state of the world around it (Tilly, 2006: 83-84).

According to Tilly's theory, the most important prerequisite for happening revolutions is not social or socio-psychological developments but the situation of interest, mobilization, organization, strategy, repression and power. Tilly regards happening revolution as the least relationship between revolutionary conditions and revolutionary results. He mentions three sets of conditions as the revolutionary conditions: emergence of contender groups with unique claims for power, faithfulness of the major part of population to them and finally the lack of government's will or competence in repressing them. On this basis, revolution entails that a major part of population recognizes a political authority or an independent part of government as a legitimate entity (ibid, 287-289).

Here we discuss organization. As pointed out before, when defining organization, Tilly point out two major pivots: shared identity and unifying structure. After formation of organization, a group will seek to expand its organization and its members, mobilize resources and using existing opportunities for collective action in order to realize its objectives. From Tilly's point of view, the consciousness and commitment of members is the main independent variable of establishing organization and its quality of organizing in a direct or indirect way. Besides, quantity and quality of an organization is the main determiner of mobilization competence of a group; the more the quality of organizing expands and the more its social and geographical encompass, the more group's mobilization ability will grow (Panahi, 1388: 34).

Now in order to clarify the role of mosques in organizing revolutionary activities, we raise the functions of mosque as an organization in the Islamic Awakening. In revolutionary activities, mosques are the place of worship, instruction, judgment, collective communication, exchanging news, Jihad and mobilization. The unity of Muslim people (*Umma*) is meaningfully constructed in mosques in a way that it is regarded the hub of gathering people, a center for holding prays, organizing popular forces and instructing revolutionary cadres. Also holding commemoration for great personalities and socio-political currents are taken place in mosques through gathering revolutionary people. Holding such commemorations in mosques is also regarded as a political activity because under the cover of such gatherings, the issues related to the movement are discussed (Resalat newspaper, 21.8.2008).

Mosques are also active in artistic issues in different dimensions. Using art as an instrument is very prevalent for establishing and reinforcing revolutionary morality in challenging tyrant regimes and the West's cultural invasion. For example, carols, theatre, *ta'zie*, reading poems, holding galleries for photography and calligraphy and painting, wall newspapers and art instruction workshops are held in mosques and many religious concepts are transferred to the participants. Although these issues have artistic manifestations but they are regarded as a kind of political struggle against tyrant regimes and challenging the West's cultural invasion (ibid.).

b) The role of mosques in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening

The word *mosque* (*masjed* in Arabic language) means the place of *sajdeh* (prostration) which is the highest form of worship for god (Zarabi, 2002: 46). But in Quran, Islamic tradition and civilization, mosque is the temple of Muslims (Vaezi, 2004: 169).

1. Functions of mosque in history

1-1 worship function

In terms of the worship function of mosque, we can point out the following items: 1) group prayer; 2) reading Quran; 3) Eetekaf; 4) *navafel* (extra prayers); 5) pray and worship; 6) propaganda and lecture (by clergymen) (Naghizadeh, 2007: 56).

1-2 educational function

Nowadays in spite of progress in education and educational facilities, the educational function of mosques has not finished. Even in some mosques, they have tried to adjust the mosque with progress in education field. This action, which is considered as a kind of fundamentalism in mosques, is being taken place within the framework of cultural centers (Taghizadeh, 2007: 59).

1-3 social function

Since the era of the Islam Prophet Muhmmad (pbuh), mosques have been a venue for counseling and important decisions. After he passed away, his followers gathered in mosques because until then had used to such habits. One of social functions of mosques is *I'lam* (to declare)

which can have two dimensions: the first one is worship dimension, such as azan (the Islamic call to prayer); the second one is secular issues such as to declare or inform about missed things (Taghizadeh, 2007: 56-57).

1-4 judicial function

The precedence of this function also goes back to the era of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh). In that era, judicial issues like resolving rivalries and condemning criminals all were done in mosques.

5-1 propaganda function

The main purpose of Islamic propaganda is to grow and increase people's religious knowledge and preparing them for their religious duties. No other institution has played the role of Islamic propaganda as much as mosque. Since the era of the Prophet (pbuh) until now, azan, pray, preach and lecture have been of the most important programs in mosques (Fajri, 2009: 72).

6-1 political function

One of the important functions of mosque is its political function which is emphasized since the era of the Prophet (pbuh). On this basis, after establishing Islamic political system, he chose mosque as a public venue and a place for gathering Muslims for doing religious duties. Mosque also was chosen as a base for Islamic political government, and politics and religion merged in this venue. Also in the next periods, most of political affairs such as introducing khalifa (successor of the prophet), allegiance ceremony, remove and appointment of governors and agents and so on were taken place in mosque (Fajri, 2009: 74-75).

7-1 media function

Of humankind's important needs are communications through which they inform each other and seek help. Also when enemies invade, people inform each other and prepare for defense. As a divine religion, Islam has considered this need since 1400 years ago and has introduced a venue namely mosque as a very important communicative base for increasing humanistic ties and Islamic cultural development. For this reason, the function of communications with all their technical developments is successful when it establishes deepest relation with the audience which is only found in mosque (fajri, 2009: 77).

2. The role of mosques in creating Islamic solidarity and unity

1-2 mosque as a temple for collective worship

One of the most glorious manifestations of unity among Muslims is to hold collective pray which is the most important aspect of the Islamic culture. Collective prayer demonstrates the gloriousness, authority and unity of Muslims. Regardless of political, social, cultural and economic differences, Muslims worship Allah in united queues side by side in order to enforce Allah's commands. This collective worship which is free of class gaps, race privileges, skin color and language are so virtuous that its meritorious features cannot be estimated (Vaezi, 2004: 173).

2-2 mosque as a center for mutual understanding and sympathy

Of other symbols of unity among Muslims on the pivot of mosques is that mosque is a center for mutual understanding and sympathy, exchange information about religious brothers and solving their problems. This was so important that if a Muslim did not go to mosque for several days, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) accompanied by his followers went to his home and if he had a problem, they solved it. Basically one of motivations for Muslims to gather in mosques is to solve the problems of individuals and reform Muslims' affairs (Vaezi, 2004: 176).

2-3 mosque as a centre for conclusive presence

Another manifestations of mosque as the symbol of Muslims' integration and sympathy is the presence of compassionate and public-spirited people who care about the destiny of society. From Islamic clergymen's viewpoint, those Muslims who do not attend mosque and do not feel responsibility towards their society, should be isolated by other Muslims. Mosque is the place of gathering Muslims and glorious manifestation of Muslims' solidarity; it preserves religion and society, demonstrates prayers' sympathy and guarantees the survival of Islam. Attendance of prayers in mosque makes the enemies of Islam disappointed. The enemies of Allah's religion are always in ambush so that they can destroy Muslims' integration through dividing them and penetrate into their circles. Attendance in collective prays by all Muslims including Shiites and Sunnis may subvert the plots of enemies and makes them disappointed (Vaezi, 2004: 171).

3. The role of mosques in the Islamic Awakening of the Middle East countries

Mosques, Friday Prayers and preaching sessions are the most important channels that play an unprecedented role in revolutions. This issue clearly indicates the role of mosques, religious places and Friday Prayers in the political mobilization and promoting their revolutionary goals. Mosque is a place for exchanging news and information, and talk about them in order to enlighten public opinion. Thus the news related to conditions of society in all aspects reaches the folks and they react quickly to the distortions and perversion in society. Preaching sessions and enlightening lectures by clergymen in mosque has an efficient role in people's awakening and consciousness. Consequently mosque is a base for uprising revolutionaries and religious believers who challenge distortions and perversions in society, and organize revolutionary movements (Honari Latifpour, 2001: 156). In order to clarify the significant role of mosques in Islamic movements and awakening, we can point to the following cases:

3-1 the role of mosques in the Islamic Revolution of Iran

Now we point out functions of mosque in order to clarify the role of mosque in the Islamic Revolution of Iran:

3-1-1 propaganda function of mosque

In the Iranian Islamic movement, from 1963 to 1979, given that mass media and communications were monopolized by the Shah regime, and revolutionary forces were deprived of any cultural, social and political activities, mosques were the most appropriate medium for awareness of folks and the most valuable base for organizing and directing the revolutionary tendencies among the nation (Sharifpour, 2001: 128).

3-1-2 socioeconomic function of mosques

Before the Islamic Revolution, mosques act as centers and bases for agitation and encouraging Muslim people, even non-Muslims, to participate and show solidarity. In communities, mosques had a responsibility for leadership in social affairs and occasionally resolved the problems facing the people. Mosques were bases for gathering revolutionary forces, protests and popular demonstrations. Those families that were striking or arrested, were supported by mosques and mosque-goers. On the other hand, mosque-goers played a major role in organizing

humanistic aids to deserted families and damaged families like Tabas earthquake remainders (Sharifpour, 2001: 68 – 69).

3-1-3 cultural and identity-building function of mosques

In the Pahlavi regime, people were feeling the disturbing conditions of cultural, social and economic life in their everyday experience. Everyone had an analysis about the conditions of that era dependent on his/her consciousness and information. When the Islamic Revolution permeated, mosques got a serious role in this regard. Clergymen and scholars presented lectures in mosques, Hosseiniehs and religious places, and familiarized people with corruption, injustice and cruelty in the different aspects of state affairs. Mosques not only played a crucial role in rejecting Pahlavi regime, but also were efficient in return to self, self-examination and assessment of the Islamic identity of Iranian people. Through mosques, people restored their forgotten identity and returned to their authentic culture, sublime ideals, humanistic values and Islamic knowledge (Sharifpour, 2001: 123).

3-2 The role of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Palestine's uprising (intifada)

The main cores of Palestinian people's struggle commenced from mosques and Islamic thought and it spilled across the borders (Kuhruudi, 1380: 303). In fact, one of important features of Palestinian uprising in the end of the twentieth century (intifada) was that it started from mosques as a holy place. Parallel with increasing the Islamist spirit among people, the number of mosques increased in the occupied Palestine. During past 35 years, twenty mosques have been added to the previous one annually, and in sum, the number of mosques increased from 400 to 750. Also in the Gaza Strip, the number of mosques has been added three folds. These mosques have become centers for dialogue about present day political issues and demonstration against occupiers starts from mosques. Some social activities such as aiding poor families, establishing kindergartens and organizing workshops are taken place in mosques (Habibollahi, 2005: 847).

All political sources of the world admit that intifada started from mosques and turned every house into a mosque. Nowadays Al-Aqsa Mosque has been the center for Palestinian resistance and uprising, and the dominance of Allah Akbar as an enjoyable and enemy-defeater motto has frightened the occupiers. The second stage of intifada in the last

months of 2000 known as Al-Aqsa intifada commenced from Al-Aqsa mosque as the result of humiliating acts of Ariel Sharon (ibid, 2005: 848).

The second intifada commenced in Quds and in the 1948 territories. Sharon's insult on Muslims' sanctity provoked the Arab citizen, particularly Muslims. These protests spilled across into the occupied territories of 1967 and bring a kind of integrity and solidarity for the Arab world, particularly Palestinians with religious and non-religious tendencies, Islamists and seculars, and those living in the 1948 and 1967 occupied territories. Sharon's entrance into the Al-Aqsa mosque gave a color of religious nature to the conflict. The attention paid to the Arabs within the green line did not prevent from realignment with the Palestinian leadership in the occupied territories. While the Islamic factor was in the core, the motto "Al-Aqsa is in danger" reinforced coherence sense and religious ties (Habibollahi, 2005: 849-850).

Regarding the role of mosques in Palestinian intifada, the Imam of Al-Aqsa mosque says "At present, mosque has been an association for Muslim groups and also a source for inspiration and coherence in order to challenge the occupier enemy. Mosque has gained a lot of success and given many resources to Muslims in order to challenge troubles and it has proven that human beings are alive with their beliefs. The greatest backer for this nation is its Islamic belief without which it had lost its identity in confrontation with all great events. Mosques and clergymen are the main base of struggle and sociopolitical activities. Inspired by Islamic instructions, they play a crucial role in creating psychological motivations for challenging injustice, creating unity among revolutionary forces, increasing sociopolitical activities and intifada (ibid, 2005: 304 – 305).

3-3 the role of mosques in the Islamic Awakening of other Middle Eastern countries

There is no doubt that mosque is a strong factor in creating solidarity and unity among the Muslims of the world. In contemporary world in which the Islamic Awakening has expanded, mosque has many functions such as political social and cultural ones, and it is a base for popular mobilization and protest against status quo and organization of revolutionary forces. There are many examples in this regard in the Islamic countries as follows:

1-3-3 Bahrin

In those Muslim societies that Sunnis are in majority, such as Libya, Jordan, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Friday Prayer is the strongest medium by which people establish their protests on Islam. In these countries, mosque enjoys a deep influence in order to affect and create unity and solidarity. But in Shiite majority countries, beside Friday Prayer as a powerful and coherent medium, they enjoy smaller and more coherent mediums such as Husseiniehs. Shiites mourn for Imam Hussein (PBUH) and Hazrat Zahra (PBUH) in mosques and Husseiniehs which act as medium and are effective for deepening social motivation and mobilization. These institutions create more capacities in comparison with such media as Facebook and Twitter, and they reproduce a kind of soft power due to raising a shared concern and common identity (Mo'ud website, 23 April 2011). What is happening in Bahrain is a phenomenon like the Islamic uprising of Iranian people in 1979 Islamic Revolution in which SAVAK (the intelligence organization of the Shah regime) tried to prevent this medium from functioning. Due to population combination in which Shiites are majority and Sunnis are minority in Bahrain and the majority's rights are violated, people and government have been always in a hidden conflict so the Al-Khalife family have always put the threat on Islamists and repressed them in their agenda after Islamic Revolution in Iran (Ganji, 2009: 202). Al-Saud and Al-Khalife and their American advisors in Bahrain have studied Iranian nation's soft power and found out that Mosques have a great revolutionary potential, particularly in Friday Prayer and mourning ceremonies so they have tried to destroy mosques and Husseiniehs in Bahrain different cities (Mo'ud website, 23 April 2011). As the Bahrain protests and demonstrations had begun from mosques and continued toward Manama city center, Al-Khalife showed its hatred and anger by destroying mosques by bulldozers (Amirdehi, 2011: 144).

3-3-2 Tunisia

As a movement claiming to revitalize Islamic principles, the Tunisian Islamist movement emerged in 1970s. In fact, this movement is one of the most important instruments for Tunisian society in order to express their Islamic identity and solidarity. Since Tunisian people had increasing concerns about their identity, they inclined towards this movement in order to preserve these components. Consequently the spirit of vividness

came back to mosques, newspapers and other media, and in universities and educational centers, they bridged the gap between Islamic identity and modern world (Ibrahim et al., 2006: 70-100).

In spite of Bourguiba and Ben Ali's attempts at promoting secularism in Tunisia and creating limitations for doing Islamic rituals and people's attendance in mosques, during the recent Islamic Awakening, we can obviously see booming in mosques and Friday Prayers and widespread inclination towards *hijab* in Tunisia after Ben Ali escaped during recent events. Nowadays the Islamic movement in Tunisia has revitalized and its leaders have come back to the country from exile and Islamism is one of substantial elements beside other motivations such as justice and freedom. Mosques and Friday Prayers play a crucial role in the Tunisian Islamic Awakening (Iranshenakht website).

3-3-3 Egypt

During past three decades, Egypt has been the hottest hub of Islamic movements in the Arab world. As the first Islamist movement, Muslim Brotherhood emerged at the end of 1920s and spread to other Arabic countries (Ibrahim et al., 2005: 21-24). In spite of the US attempts at weakening the Islamic aspect of Egyptian revolution and showing it as a civic and liberal movement, the Egyptian people are immensely religious and their faith has increased rapidly during recent years. There are many mosques in Egypt and clergymen play a crucial role in leading people towards religious goals; particularly their performance in the Tahrir Square indicates this impression clearly. The focal point for resistance against the previous regime and support for revolution in the Tahrir Square was "Omar Mokaram" mosque which was built by Egyptian Sadat two hundred years ago. This mosque had a crucial role in directing people, gathering revolutionaries and helping the wounded protesters. During the revolution, the mosque organized revolutionaries and it was a venue for holding collective prays and collecting the bodies of martyrs. The Friday Prayers were hold in the Tahrir Square and it played the role of uniting revolutionaries and expressing their requests (Resalat newspaper, 17 July 2012).

The Western media focused on the social networks such as Facebook as the main organizing network but in fact, mosques and religious gatherings were the main motivation for popular revolt (Fars News Agency, 5 July 2011). Apart from the pivotal role of mosques, the Islamic

clergymen participated actively in struggling against Mubarak regime and they were martyred during the protests. As the bases of popular resistance and holding collective prays, mosques were acted even under hard circumstances created by police and security forces; a matter which was not hidden from the eyes of even ordinary people. The head of Al-Adhar (appointed by Mubarak) issued a fatwa in which he banned participation in anti-Mubarak demonstration which indicated the spirit of Islamism among revolutionaries. On the other hand, the triumph of Islamist candidates in the parliamentary elections and their majority in the parliament, and the victory of an Islamist candidate in the presidential election in spite of the US's vast attempts at preventing it are strong reasons for the Egyptian people's Islamist approach towards the revolution (Resalat Newspaper, 17 July 2012).

The other point that indicates the significance of mosques in the Egyptian Islamic Awakening is that the first elected president instead of holding ceremonies remained from Mubarak's era went to a mosque and declared his first public attendance by collective pray (Mehr News Agency, 21 August 2012).

3-3-4 Libya

Libya is one of those countries in which many significant Islamic movements have taken place but its slow trend was due to Ghaddafi's attempts at marginalizing religions in the Libyan society (Dokmchian, 2009: 11). The Middle East developments in the early 2011 were storms that reached Libya and made Ghaddafi to try to overcome the storm through violence and repression (Mohaghegh, 2011: 46). After the start of Islamic Awakening and its penetration into Libya, we can obviously find out the role of mosque as the main base of revolutionaries and Friday Prayer as the most important popular meetings. In such important cities as Benghazi, people were mobilized from mosques and united against Ghaddafi regime. The important role of mosques in the Libyan society can be understood by paying attention to this fact that Islam constitutes the main body of Libyan social context. No doubt in such circumstances, popular protests were colored by religious atmosphere. Ghaddafi knew that he should occasionally talk about Islam in order to not lose his legitimacy in an Islamic society. Therefore before soaring the protests, he went to a mosque and did pray ceremonies in a demonstrative way. Then he read Quran during which he read many verses wrongly! But his

Islamist show was hypocritical from the very beginning. Therefore his show did not culminate in any result and political thoughts prepared for challenging the regime. Knowing that Islamism is powerful social force, he started his combat against clergymen. In one of his measures, he ordered to close all doors of mosques in Tripoli and preventing from holding prays. According to an analysis, his measures were due to concern about the role of mosques and preventing from constituting revolutionary communities and mobilization against his regime. The recent events have proven the correctness of this analysis (Pouyandeh, 2011: 28-29).

3-3-5 Yemen

The positive role of mosques in the Islamic Awakening is also observable in Yemen. Due to this reason, the Yemen government has tried to destroy mosque in order to repress the popular revolt. According to the Fars News Agency, Houthi Movement asserts that during the revolt in different regions of Al-Sa'ada province, 90 mosques have been destroyed in air strikes and mortar attacks by Yemeni army. Al-Allama and Al-Moayadi mosques in Zahyan region, and Al-e-Sa'id and Al-Zorya mosques have been destroyed during shelling and air strikes (Vali-e-Asr website).

C) The role of Friday Pray in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening

1. The role of Friday Pray in creating Islamic solidarity and unity

"Unity" is one of essential issues for every individual aware of social problems. "Axis" is necessary for creating "unity". This axis is occasionally a "person", a "place", a "program", a "ceremony" or a "pray". Religious ceremonies such as *haj*, Friday Prayer, collective prayer and *eid* prayer have a unifying content, and popular attendance in the Friday Prayer venues guarantees this unity. Here, "bodies" beside "hearts" create a glorious union and counterplot enemy's plans (Mohadesi, 2004: 21).

Pray is one of the greatest worships in Abrahamic religions and Friday Prayer is the first sign of realizing Salehin's government (a government run by good people) and commencing believers' guidance. Among all worships, Friday Pray and collective pray are occasions for instructing the Islamic politics and the manifestation of society's union and

demonstration of Islam's power. Different Muslim classes and groups experience their unity and coherence in the organized rows of Friday Prayer (Latifi, 2004: 160).

The glorious ceremony of Friday Pray is one of Islamic sociopolitical manifestations, a base for raising sociopolitical issues, mobilization, readiness for war and upgrading awareness regarding contemporary issues and political currents of the Islamic society. The ceremony is a tribune for publicizing Islam and invitation to edification and increasing awareness of Muslims (Mohadesi, 1998: 90-91). Every week in Friday Prayer, people including kids and youths and olds from every profession and social gather in a place and these demonstration of bodies constitute a strong unit that organize people in a coherent body in spiritual, intellectual and ideological aspects, and they solve the problems through exchanging their views regarding the religious and social issues. In Islam, the collective prays, particularly Friday Prayers in mosques are the best opportunities for hearing their concerns, resolving shortages and knowing the enemies' plots in order to neutralize them. Hearing the latest political and social news and the correct analysis provide by Imam are appropriate ways for securing cultural and political power and identity (Molanaghi, 2011: 33, 98).

2. The role of Friday Prayer in the Islamic Awakening in the Middle East

Friday Prayer is one of the manifestations of Islam's sociopolitical dimension founded by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the first days of going to Madina. His aim was to establish a center for people's weekly gathering and provide a base for raising sociopolitical issues and preparedness for war and public awareness (Mohadesi, 2004: 11). No doubt that Friday invitation to a weekly meeting in the simplest ways and the least cost and enthusiastic attendance by millions of devout people all over the country is one of purest manifestations of popular attendance in religious-political sense, and the role of Friday Prayer is undeniable. Enlightening and informing people is one of important factors of political and social growth. Every week, the Imam familiarizes people with their sensitive task which is to preserve the political system and knowing world affairs. The messages expressed by the Imams go through society and keeps people aware and sensitive (Honari Latifpour, 2004: 45).

In almost every cities, great demonstrations are commenced from the venue of Friday Prayer or it is destined at there. Mosalla (the venue of Friday Pray) is memorized by gathering, meeting, enthusiasm and consciousness. Friday Pray does not allow that Islamic Umma loses its awareness towards social issues. Informing participants in Friday Pray regarding current issues and what goes on, is one of main axes of Friday Prayer lectures. Through this mission, Friday Prayer can bridge the gap and give awareness to society (ibid., p. 45).

On the one hand, Friday Prayer is related to the leadership of Islamic Umma and it has governmental status, and on the other hand, it is commenced by lecturing and Imam who is the representative of Islamic governor, presents his lecture in which besides religious devotions, he remembers past events and warns about future ones. In Friday Prayer lectures, Imam informs prayers about the good and bad events related to Muslims happening all over the world (Taghavi, 2006: 73).

One of the important functions of Friday Prayer is to establish and reinforce unity and solidarity among Muslims. Through creating unity and reinforcing contenders for reaching their main aim which is the realization of true Islam, Friday Prayer can deal with preventing from enemy's divisive plots. Given these points regarding the role of Friday Prayer in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening in the Middle East, we mention several examples of the Islamic Awakening movements affected by Friday Prayer in the region.

The movements recently created in the Arab countries are quite popular and spontaneous and they have marshaled against the world arrogance. The prominent feature of these popular movements is being Islamic which is quite evident in their precedence and their content and form. Their bases have rooted in Friday Prayers (Soroush & Asgharian, 2011: 139). For example, in Egypt, the popular movements started from mosques and Friday Prayers and this fact discredits those claims that try to reduce these movements to a color revolution or nationalist ones (Ettelaat, 8.2.2011). Ayattollah Khamenei, the Iranian Supreme Leader explains the nature of these protest movements as follows:

"There are two characteristics in these developments: the first consists of popular presence and the second is their religious motive. These two elements are fundamental. People participate by their bodies; similar to that of the Islamic Revolution... People entered the scene here their tendency and orientation is religious. Their tendency is towards Friday

Prayer, collective prayer, the name of God, clergymen, missionaries and the founders of religious thought. These people entered the scene so people also participated." (Lecture presented by the Supreme Leader in Imam Reza Shrine, 21.3.2011)

The Arab Muslim people of the Middle East and North Africa quite emphasize "Friday" for increasing exiting aspect of their demonstration against dictatorships. We can see the symbols of the aspect in naming revolutionary Fridays such as "Friday of anger" (for showing revolutionaries' anger), "Friday of quitting" (for convincing dictators to quit power), "Friday of remembrance" (for remembering the martyrs), "Friday of emancipation" (for the final attack on the remainders of dictatorships) (Social Philosophy website, 26.2.2012).

Ben Ali's dictatorship feared from the popular Islamic unity, so from the early days of his government, he banned every religious meetings in mosques. Friday Prayer was also banned all over Tunisia. The issue caused that when Ben Ali quitted Tunisia and his government collapsed, after twenty years, azan was heard from mosques and people spurred towards holding Friday Prayer. Also in Egypt, this Islamic procedure was followed and all combats started from the Friday Prayer of "anger day" that culminated in overthrowing Mubarak regime. In this direction, the Western analysts declared that the Egyptian Revolution was not a Twitter or Color revolution but an Islamic one that enjoyed Islamic components such as Friday Prayer (Political and Security Website, 22.1.2011).

At the peak of the Egyptian protests that culminated in overthrowing Mubarak regime, some experts claimed that they are affected by the so-called social networks like Twitter while Mubarak regime had filtered these social networks, internet and short message system in order to repress the movement. But these measures did not yielded and the Islamic uprising culminated in its final end. The question is that in these uprisings which have not leader or social media for guiding street protests how do they continue their trend? In the Muslim societies with Sunni majority (including Libya, Jordan, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and particularly Egypt) Friday Prayer is the most powerful medium which is enjoys a great influence, in spite of being traditional (Mo'ud Website, 23.4.2011).

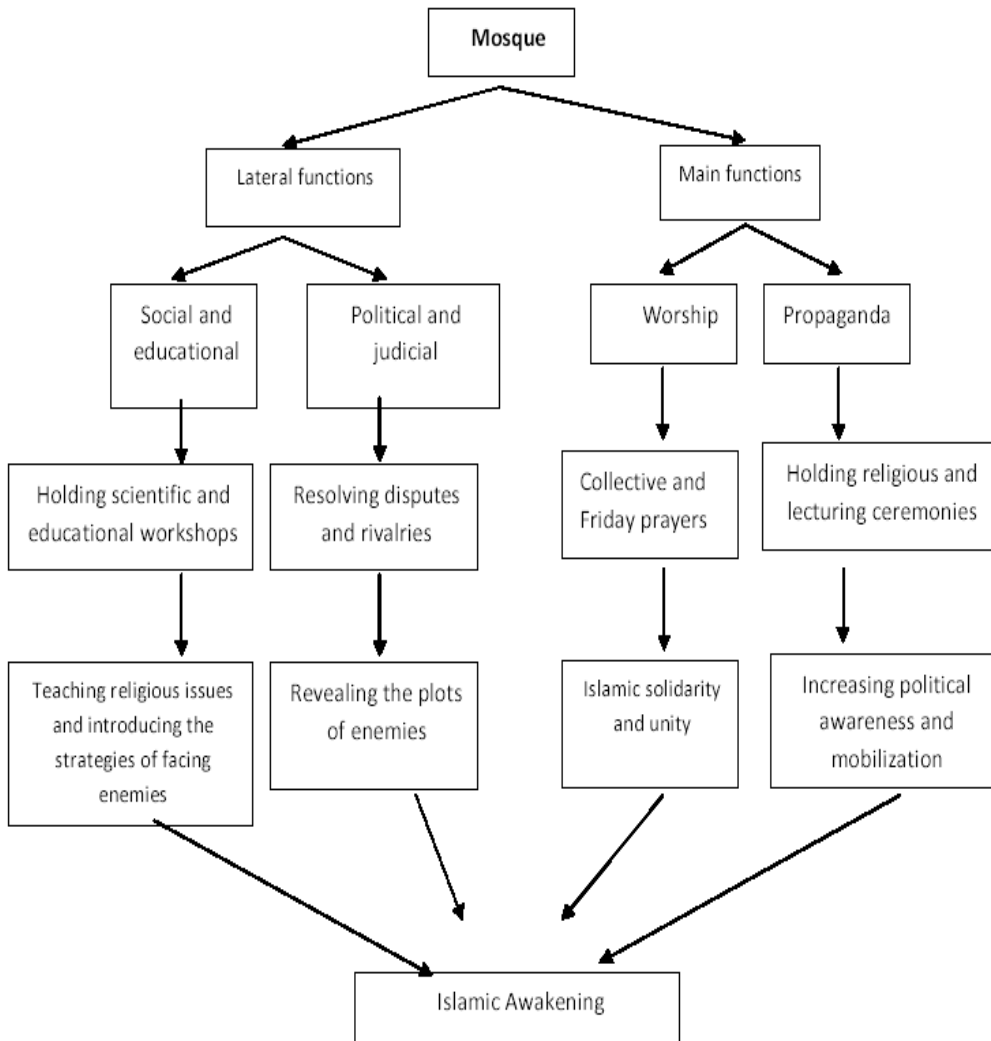
The pivotal role of Friday Prayer in awakening and informing people is also observable in Bahrain. For example, Ayatollah Isa Qasem, leader of Bahraini Shiites, in Friday Prayer lectures had dealt with the recent developments of Bahrain and the factors of popular political uprising in

which injustice played a great role. He regarded the injustice of rulers against nation, administrative corruption and violation of human rights in Bahrain constitution as the reasons of the uprising. In fact, he considered Bahrain domestic conditions as the reason for popular uprising. By raising this point that the repressions and media propaganda about constitution amendments cannot stop the uprising and the only solution is to provide people's demands, he played a great role in awakening people and encouraging them (Shia news website, 4.5.2012).

Conclusion

This article was seeking to answer this question: "What is the role of mosques and Friday Prayer in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening?" in order to respond this question, we used Charles Tilly's theory for explaining the functions of mosque as a revolutionary organization. Then we pointed out the functions of mosque and Friday Prayer in the Islamic Awakening. Regarding the functions of mosque and Friday Prayer in the Islamic Awakening, it can be said that not only the intellectual arrangements of Islamic movements are provided in mosques but also mosque is the main base of mobilization and formation of popular communities in the framework of Friday Prayer and collective prayers. These communities have a fundamental role in enlightening different currents and informing different classes of people. During revolutionary activities in the Middle East countries, mosques have a positive impact on creating cooperation and solidarity among prayers and increasing social aspect among Muslims. During these uprisings, mosques were the centre for challenging cruel rulers, creating coherence and facilities for continuing combats, and preserving the achievements. Gathering, organizing and collecting forces in the time of enemy aggression take place in mosques. Due to these reasons, enemies fear from mosques and have offended them repeatedly. Nowadays domestic and foreign enemies are trying to banish the youth from mosques. We have depicted the functions of mosques and Friday Prayer in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening in the following conceptual model.

Figure 1: function of mosques and Friday Prayer in emergence and spread of the Islamic Awakening



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