Supreme Leader's Speech in Meeting with Government Officials and Participants of Conference on Islam - 19 /Jan/ 2014

The following is the full text of the speech delivered on January 19, 2014 by Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a meeting with government officials and foreign participants of the 27th Conference on Islamic Unity. The meeting was held in Imam Khomeini Hussainiyah on the occasion of the birthday anniversaries of the Holy Prophet (s.w.a.) and Imam Sadiq (a.s.).

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I would like to congratulate all of you dear audience who are present in this meeting, the dear guests of Unity Week, the ambassadors of Islamic countries and all the honorable officials who have accepted heavy responsibilities in the country, on the occasion of the auspicious birthday anniversaries of the Holy Prophet (s.w.a.) and his outstanding grandson - Imam Sadiq (a.s.). I would like to extend my congratulations to all the people of Iran, all Muslims and all liberated people throughout the world.

This auspicious birthday is the source of many blessings which have been bestowed on the lives of human beings over the course of many centuries. It has helped nations, peoples and humanity in general to achieve the best human, intellectual and mental qualities. It has helped them to create a lofty civilization and to achieve bright prospects for a better life. On this birthday anniversary, what is important for the world of Islam and the Islamic community is to pay attention to the Holy Prophet's (s.w.a.) expectations of the Islamic community and to try hard to meet these expectations.

The happiness of the world of Islam lies in this and nothing else. Islam emerged for the liberation of humanity- both liberation from the suppression and pressures of oppressive and dictatorial regimes which have ruled over all people and in order to form a just government for the entire humanity, and liberation from deceptive thoughts and illusions which dominate the lives of people and which make their lives deviate from the right path.

At a time when Islam was about to emerge, the Commander of the Faithful (peace and greetings be upon him) described the environment in which people were living as an environment of "fitna":

"At that time, people had fallen into fitna, whereby the rope of religion had been broken" [Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon 2]. Fitna means a dusty climate in which one cannot see anything. In such a climate, one cannot see the path and he does not know what to do. This was the conditions of the people who lived in that difficult area.

The same conditions dominated - in a different way - the lives of the people in great countries and civilizations which existed at that time. It is not the case that we can think the people who were living in the Arabian Peninsula at a time when Islamic was about to emerge had terrible conditions while other people living in other areas were happy. The domination of cruel and oppressive regimes, their indifference towards the position of human beings and human principles and the outbreak of disastrous wars which were waged by powers for the sake of power had destroyed the lives of people. History shows that the two well-known civilizations of those days - that is to say, the Persian Sassanid civilization and the Roman civilization - were in such terrible conditions that it makes one pity the masses of the people who were living in those societies. The living conditions of those people were terrible and they were living in captivity.

In such conditions, Islam came and freed people. This freedom first manifests itself in the hearts and souls of

people. When one feels that he is free and when he feels the need to break chains, the forces inside him will be influenced by this feeling and then he can achieve social freedom if he shows determination and if he moves forward. Islam did this for people. The same message that Islam delivered at that time exists today in the world of Islam and in other parts of the world. The enemies of freedom kill the thought of freedom in people. When there is no thought of freedom, the movement towards freedom will either slow down or stop.

Today, what we Muslims should do is to try to achieve the kind of freedom that Islam wants. The independence of Muslim nations, the establishment of popular governments throughout the world of Islam, the participation of all people in making decisions and determining fates and their movement on the basis of Islamic sharia are things which liberate nations. Of course, Muslim nations feel that they need this movement today. This feeling exists throughout the world of Islam and without a doubt, it will finally achieve results.

If outstanding personalities - whether political, scientific and religious personalities - in Muslim countries carry out their responsibilities in the proper way, then the future of the world of Islam will be a bright one. Muslims are hopeful about this future. Today, the world of Islam feels that it is awake. It is exactly at this point that the enemies of Islam - those people who are opposed to Islamic Awakening, independence of nations and the domination of God's religion in all countries - enter the arena. It is exactly at this point that all kinds of tricks are used for creating obstacles in the way of Islamic societies. And the most important trick that they use is creating discord.

It is 65 years now that the world of arrogance has been trying with all its power to impose the existence of the Zionist regime on Muslim nations and to make them accept this regime. But it has failed. We should not look at some countries and governments which are willing to act against their national interests in order to safeguard the interests of their foreign friends - who are the enemies of Islam - and to consign Islamic interests to oblivion. Peoples are opposed to the presence of the Zionists.

It is 65 years now that they have been trying to erase the memory of Palestine, but they have failed. During the 33-day war in Lebanon and during the 22-day war and - for the second time - the eight-day war in Gaza which were waged in recent years, Muslim nations and the Islamic Ummah showed that they are alive. The Islamic Ummah showed that despite the investment of America and other western powers, it has managed to preserve its identity, to slap the fake and imposed Zionist regime across the face and to frustrate the allies of oppressive Zionists who did their best during this time to preserve this imposed, oppressive and criminal regime. The Islamic Ummah showed that it has not forgotten about Palestine. This is a very important issue.

It is in such conditions that the enemy is focusing all its efforts on making the Islamic Ummah forget about Palestine. How do they want to do this? They want to do this by creating discord, waging domestic wars, promoting deviant extremism in the name of Islam, religion and Islamic sharia. They want a group of people to say takfiri things against Muslims. The existence of these takfiri orientations which have emerged in the world of Islam is good news for arrogance and the enemies of the world of Islam. It is these takfiri orientations that attract the attention of Muslims towards insignificant issues instead of letting them pay attention to the truth about the existence of the malevolent Zionist regime.

This is the exact opposite of what Islam wants. Islam has asked Muslims to be "strong against unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other" [The Holy Quran, 48, 29]. Muslims should be strong against the enemies of religion. They should stand firm and they should not be influenced by the enemies. Being "strong against unbelievers" is the clear message of this ayah. Muslims should be compassionate towards one another, they should stay together and join hands and they should hold fast to the rope which Allah stretches out for them. This is the command of Islam.

Now what happens if an orientation emerges which divides Muslims into believers and unbelievers, which targets a group of people as unbelievers and which pits Muslims against one another? Who can doubt the role of arrogance

and the security services of arrogant and malevolent governments in creating, supporting and enriching these orientations and in equipping them with weapons? These arrogant powers sit and plan for this. The world of Islam should attend to this issue because it is a grave danger.

Unfortunately, a number of Muslim governments unwittingly add fuel to the fire of this discord. They do not understand that fueling this discord will kindle a fire which will burn them as well. This is what arrogance wants: they want a group of Muslims to wage a war against another group of Muslims.

Those who give rise to this war are people who benefit from the money provided by puppet rulers. These puppet rulers give them money and weapons in order to pit people in such and such a country against one another. This move has been reinforced by arrogance in the past three, four years during which a wave of Islamic Awakening has emerged in a number of Islamic and Arabic countries. They want to do this in order to overshadow Islamic Awakening. By making this move, they are pitting Muslims against one another.

Moreover, the propaganda networks of the enemies are projecting an ugly image of Islam for public opinion throughout the world. They are doing this by magnifying events. What do people think of Islam when media networks show a person who is devouring the liver of another person in the name of Islam? The enemies of Islam have planned this.

These are not things that happen all of a sudden and out of the blue. These are things for which many plans have been devised over a long period of time. There are different policies and spy rings behind these moves. There is big money behind these moves. Muslims should confront any phenomenon which is against their unity. This is a great responsibility for all of us. Both Shia and Sunni Muslims, and different groups which exist among Shia and Sunni Muslims should shoulder this responsibility.

Unity means reliance on common points. We have many common points. Muslims' common points are more than their disagreements and therefore, they should rely on them. The main responsibility in this regard falls on the shoulders of outstanding personalities - whether political, scientific or religious personalities. Religious scholars in the world of Islam should prevent Muslims from creating sectarian and religious discord. Academic scholars should help students understand that today, unity is the most important issue in the world of Islam. The most important issue is unity for the sake of reaching goals. These goals are achieving political independence, establishing religious democracy and observing divine rules in Islamic societies.

Islam invites people to freedom, dignity and honor. This is an obligation and responsibility today. Political personalities too should know that their dignity and honor lies in their reliance on Muslim peoples, not on foreigners and those who are arch enemies of Islamic societies.

One day, arrogant powers dominated people everywhere in Islamic regions. One day, policies carried out by America and before that England and other countries, dominated the lives of people in Islamic regions. Nations gradually managed to liberate themselves from this direct domination. In the present time, the enemies want to replace this direct domination, which they imposed during the era of imperialism, with indirect domination - that is to say, political, economic and cultural domination. Of course, in some areas they are imposing this direct domination again. As you see, a number of European countries want to create the same situation which existed in the past in Africa.

The path is Islamic Awakening. The path is awareness about the position of Muslim nations. Muslim nations have many resources, they have sensitive geographical locations, they have a very valuable historical legacy and they have unique economic resources. If Muslims collect themselves, find their true identity, rely on themselves and extend the hand of friendship, then this region will be an outstanding and enlightened region and the world of Islam will witness dignity, greatness and honor.

By Allah's favor, this is what will happen in the future. One can see the signs of this future such as the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the establishment and stability of the Islamic Republic in this sensitive region.

It is 35 years now that arrogant regimes - including America and other powers - have been doing their best to work against the Islamic Republic and the people of Iran. Despite this, the people of Iran and the Islamic Republic are becoming stronger, more rooted, more powerful and more influential on a daily basis. By Allah's favor, this strength, this stability and this power will increase in the future.

In the world of Islam too, one sees that the awareness of people and youth about Islam and the future of Islam has increased compared to the past. In some countries, people are much more aware than they were in the past. Of course, the enemy is making some efforts, but if we look carefully and vigilantly, we will see that - by Allah's favor - this wave of Islamic movement is going forward.

God's mercy be upon our magnanimous Imam (r.a.) who opened up this path for us. He taught us that we should rely on God, ask Him alone for help and be hopeful about the future. Then, we moved forward on this path and by Allah's favor, we will continue to do this. I hope that Islam and Muslims achieve victory and I ask God to bestow His mercy and forgiveness on the martyrs of this bright path.

Greetings be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings