Supreme Leader's Speech in Meeting with Participants of 31st International Quran Competitions - 3 /Jun/ 2014

The following is the full text of the speech delivered on June 3, 2014 by Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a meeting with participants of the 31st International Quran Competitions. The meeting was held on the occasion of the birthday anniversary of Imam Sajjad (a.s.) in Imam Khomeini (r) Hussainiyah.

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and greetings be upon His messenger and upon his immaculate household.

I would like to welcome all the dear participants, the dear brothers and sisters - particularly the guests of the Islamic Republic - the honorable ulama and qurra and the esteemed hafiz of the Holy Quran who have come from Islamic countries. I would also like to thank those people who have organized this magnificent, meaningful and blessed ceremony - whether the managers and officials in charge of charitable work or those brothers, ulama and great personalities who held the Quran competitions in the best way possible during the past few days - and I hope that all of you will benefit from the blessings of the Holy Quran.

Words fail to describe our appreciation of the blessing of people's interest in the Holy Quran. Whenever I listen to the news or see on TV that our youth throughout the country are interested in the Holy Quran, I begin to thank Allah the Exalted from the bottom of my heart. This is a great blessing. I understand this blessing and its greatness.

At some point in time, we witnessed that memorizing and reciting the Holy Quran was not common in our country. When we take a look today, we see that our youth, our men, our women and our teenagers show interest in the Holy Quran thanks to the Islamic Republic. They learn Quranic teachings, they try to read the Holy Quran and they memorize it.

Of course, these are not primary and ultimate goals. The ultimate goal is understanding and acting on the Holy Quran. However, these initial steps are necessary. If the Holy Quran becomes common in society, if it is promoted, if memorizing the Holy Quran becomes common and if people from different social backgrounds establish a close relationship with the Holy Quran, then society will get close to acting on the Holy Quran. This is what we want.

The Holy Quran is enlightenment, guidance, eloquence and clarity. The Holy Quran speaks to us. It speaks to our hearts and our souls. We should establish a close relationship with the Holy Quran. It is one's prepared heart that gains the first benefit from the Holy Quran. If you see that your hearts are close to the Holy Quran, you should thank God. If you see that you easily accept and believe in Quranic teachings, then you should know that Allah the Exalted has decided to guide you: "Those whom Allah in His plan wills to guide, He opens their breast to Islam. Those whom He wills to leave straying, He makes their breast close and constricted, as if they had to climb up to the skies. Thus does Allah heap the penalty on those who refuse to believe" [The Holy Quran, 6: 125].

This is the characteristic of the Holy Quran. If your hearts get close to the Holy Quran and if you establish a close relationship with the Holy Quran, you should know that Allah the Exalted has willed to guide you and this is the greatest divine blessing.

My dear ones, today the world of Islam is faced with great problems. You know, you have heard and you are aware

that the greatest problem of the world of Islam is its ignorance about the plots and the malevolent hands of its enemies. This is one of the greatest or the greatest problem of the world of Islam. Those who dislike Islam, those who bolt when they hear the name of Islam and those who are prepared to confront and fight against every truthful invitation - and Islam is a truthful invitation which invites to truth and justice - are not idle in the world of Islam. They have not been idle particularly since the emergence of the Islamic Republic.

After the formation of a system on the basis of Islam in this sensitive geographical area in the world, their plots increased in number and became more complicated. Today, their plots are more complicated than they were in the past. Everyone in the world of Islam should understand this. They make us kill one another and they pit brothers against one another. The policy of the enemies of Islam is to promote fratricide and wage domestic wars by their agents. Their policy is to sit aside and watch us kill one another. Well, this is the reason why we should know the enemy and understand his plots. This is the shortcoming of the world of Islam.

There are some people among the Islamic Ummah who join hands with the enemies of Islam in order to confront their Muslim brothers. Today, we have such people. They approach shaitan in order to oppose, fight against and confront their Muslim brothers. Today, there are some people who are prepared to cooperate with the Zionist regime in order to destroy their Muslim brothers: "They took the shaitans for guardians beside Allah, and they think that they are followers of the right" [The Holy Quran, 7: 30].

They befriend and join hands with the shaitan and they vainly think that they are stepping on the path of guidance. These are Quranic standards. These are clear standards that the Holy Quran has offered to us. We should understand these standards. When can we understand them? We can understand them when we establish a close relationship with the Holy Quran and when we open our hearts to it. The whole of this ceremony is an introduction to this.

I advise you dear youth to get closer to the Holy Quran. Those who have established a close relationship with the Holy Quran should appreciate the value of this relationship. Those who have memorized the Holy Quran should appreciate the value of this memorization. They should preserve this precious jewel for themselves. Those who constantly recite the Holy Quran should take care not to lose and let go of this blessed rope. Those people who are close to the Holy Quran should consider their goal to be thinking deeply about Quranic meanings and concepts.

These are things which help us get close to the Holy Quran step by step. If we become attached and get close to the Holy Quran and if Quranic concepts influence our hearts, then we can hope that the Islamic Ummah will achieve the dignity which has been promised by Allah the Exalted: "Honor belongs to Allah and His Messenger and to the believers" [The Holy Quran, 63: 8]. If we do this, God will offer this dignity to the Islamic Ummah. If we get close to the Holy Quran, these are its fruits and blessings.

Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to all the officials in charge of this ceremony. I thank the ulama, the participants of these competitions, the dear youth, the managers in charge of this beautiful and magnificent ceremony and the people who welcomed it. I hope that Allah the Exalted will protect and preserve all of you. I would also like to thank the honorable and eloquent host who beautifully managed the meeting both in this place and in the place where the ceremony was held.

Greetings be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings