Ayatollah Khamenei issues a second letter to the youth in Western countries - 30 /Nov/ 2015

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a letter addressed to the youth in the Western countries, has described the bitter terrorist events in France as a ground for deliberation.

Referring to painful examples of the “effects of terrorism, which is backed by certain big powers, on the Muslim world, [powerful countries’] support for Israel’s state terrorism, and harmful military campaigns [launched] against the Muslim world in recent years,” Ayatollah Khamenei said: “I ask you, young people, to lay the foundation for an appropriate and honorable interaction with the Muslim world based on correct knowledge and with deep insight and by taking advantage of tragic experiences [of the past].”

The full text of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution’s letter is as follows:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

To all the youth in Western countries

The bitter incidents triggered by blind terrorism in France motivated me once more to talk to you, young people. In my view, it is regrettable that such events provide the ground for dialogue, but the reality is that if [such] painful issues do not provide the ground for finding a solution and a venue for consultation, the ensuing damage will double.

The suffering of every human being in any spot in the world is per se sorrowful for his fellow humans. The scene of a child dying before the eyes of his beloved ones, a mother whose family’s happiness turns into mourning, a husband

carrying the lifeless body of his wife to somewhere hastily, or a spectator who is not aware that he is going to see the last sequence of his life in moments, are not scenes which would not stir human sentiments and feelings.

Anybody endowed with affection and humanity is affected and touched by these scenes, whether they occur in France, in Palestine, in Iraq, in Lebanon or in Syria. Definitely, one and a half billion Muslims share this feeling and abhor and loathe the perpetrators of these tragedies. But the important question is that if today's sufferings do not end in building a better and safer future, they will be reduced to mere bitter and fruitless memories. I believe that this is only you, the youth , who by learning lessons from today's hardships, will be able to find new solutions for building the future, and block off-roads which have led the West to this current position.

It is true that today, terrorism is the pain we and you share, but it is necessary for you to know that the insecurity and anxiety that you felt in the recent incidents differ on two major grounds with the pain that people in Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan have endured throughout successive years. First of all, the Muslim world has been victim to terrorism and violence more extensively, on a much larger scale, and for a much longer period of time, and the second difference is that unfortunately, these acts of violence have always been supported by big powers in different ways and an effective manner.

Today, barely is someone unaware of the United States of America's role in the creation or strengthening and arming of al-Qaeda, Taliban and their ominous followers. Alongside this direct support, the palpable and known supporters of Takfiri terrorism, despite having the most primitive political establishments, have always been among the allies of the West, and that is while the most progressive and the clearest thoughts born out of dynamic democracies in the region have been ruthlessly suppressed. The West's double-standards vis-à-vis the movement of awakening in the Muslim world is a telling example of contradiction in the Western policies.

Another aspect of this contradiction is seen in the [West's] support for Israel's state terrorism. The oppressed people of Palestine have been experiencing the worst kind of terrorism for more than 60 years. If the people in Europe have been taking refuge in their homes and been avoiding gatherings and crowded centers [only] for a number of days, it has been for tens of years that a Palestinian family has not been safe from the Zionist regime's carnage and destruction machine even at its own home. What kind of violence could be compared today with the Zionist regime's settlement construction in terms of its intense brutality?

Without having ever been seriously and effectively blamed by its influential allies, or at least the self-declared independent international institutions, this regime has been demolishing the homes of Palestinians and destroying their orchards and farmlands on a daily basis without even giving them time to move their living properties or collect their crops, and all this is often taking place before the terrified and tearful eyes of women and children, who

witness the beating and injury of their family members and, in some cases, their transfer to notorious torture chambers. Do you know any other act of brutality on the same scale and dimension and at this rate of persistence in today's world? If shooting at a woman in the middle of the street only for having protested at a soldier armed to the teeth is not terrorism, so what is it? Should this barbarism not be labeled as extremism just because it is being committed by the military forces of an occupying government? Or maybe these images should no longer stir our conscience only because they have been constantly seen on TV screens for 60 years?

Military campaigns targeting the Muslim world over recent years, which have taken countless lives, are another example of the West's contradictory logic. Besides human losses, the invaded countries have lost their economic and industrial infrastructure, their drive towards growth and development has been halted or slowed down, and in some cases, turned back tens of years. Nonetheless, they are rudely asked not to consider themselves as oppressed. How can a country be reduced to ruins and its city and village be reduced to ashes and then [its people] be told not to consider themselves as oppressed! Instead of inviting [people] not to understand or forget about tragedies, isn't honest apology better? The pain endured during these years by the Muslim world due to the hypocrisy and insincerity of the aggressors is no less than material damage.

Dear youth! I expect you to change this hypocrisy-infested mentality at present or in the future; a mentality whose art is covering up far-fetched goals and embellishing sly intentions. In my view, the first step to establish security and calm is to reform this violence-breeding mentality. As long as double standards dominate the Western policy, and as long as terrorism is divided in the eyes of its powerful supporters into good and bad categories, and as long as interests of governments are given precedence over human and moral values, the roots of terrorism should not be sought anywhere else.

Unfortunately, these roots have also penetrated deeply the cultural policies of the West through consecutive years, and have led to a soft and silent onslaught. Many countries in the world take pride in their indigenous and national culture; cultures that have fed human communities for hundreds of years at the same time that they have been flourishing and reproducing. The Muslim world has been no exception to this rule. But in the contemporary period, the Western world, benefitting from advanced tools, has been insisting on cultural simulation and unification in the world.

I consider the imposition of the Western culture on other nations and belittling independent cultures as a silent and very harmful act of violence. Humiliating rich cultures and insulting their most respected parts are happening while the alternative culture is by no means qualified to supplant them. For instance, the two elements of "aggressiveness" and "moral promiscuity," which have unfortunately turned into the main components of the Western culture, have downgraded its acceptability and standing even in its own birthplace. The question now is if we would be committing a sin if we rejected a belligerent, obscene and culture that shuns spirituality? If we block the flood of destruction, which is streaming towards our youth in the form of different quasi-artistic products, will we be guilty? I do not deny the significance and vale of cultural bonds. These bonds have led to growth and prosperity and richness

every time they have been made under natural conditions and through respect for the accepting society. On the contrary, incongruous and imposed bonds have proven to be unsuccessful and damaging.

I regret to say that vile groups like Daesh are born out of such unsuccessful bonding with imported cultures. If the problem was really ideological, such phenomena must have been seen in the Muslim world before the era of colonialism as well. However, history proves the contrary. Historical evidence makes it clear how the colonialism's concurrence with an extremist and ostracized mentality in the heart of a primitive tribe, planted the seed of radicalism in this region. Otherwise, how is it possible that a refuse like Daesh could have been born out of one of the most ethical and the most human religious ideologies in the world that, in its essential fabric, draws a parallel between killing a human being and killing of the entire humanity?

On the other hand, one must ask why some people, who have been born in Europe and grown up intellectually and spiritually in the same environment, are being attracted to this kind of groups? Can one believe that these people suddenly turn so extremist as to shoot and kill their own countrymen only after one or two trips to war zones? Definitely, one should not ignore the impact of a lifetime unhealthy cultural feeding in a contaminated and violence-breeding environment. A comprehensive analysis must be carried out in this regard, an analysis to explore the overt and covert sources of contamination of a society. Maybe, the deep-seated hatred that has been sown in the heart of some [social] classes in the Western societies throughout years of industrial and economic prosperity due to inequalities and, at times, [as a result of] legal and structural discriminations, has given rise to complexes that emerge from time to time in such a sickening manner.

At any rate, it is you who should break through the outer layers of your society, find knots and grudges and do away with them. Instead of being widened, the rifts must be narrowed. The big mistake in fighting terrorism is hasty reactions that increase existing chasms. Any emotional and hasty move that would isolate or scare away and unsettle the Muslim community living in Europe and America, which comprises millions of active and responsible human beings, and deprive them of their basic rights more than before, and ostracize them socially, will not only fail to solve any problems, but also increase distances and deepen grudges. Superficial and reactionary measures, particularly when legalized, will have no other outcome but to clear the way for future crises by increasing existing polarizations. According to reports received, in some European countries certain regulations have been adopted to obligate citizens to spy on Muslims. These behaviors are unjust and we all know that injustice is willy-nilly produces reciprocal response.

Furthermore, Muslims do not deserve such ingratitude. The Western world has known Muslims for centuries. Both the day that the Western people settled in the territory of Islam as guests and cast a covetous look on the wealth of their host, and the day that they were the host and benefited from the Muslims' work and thought, they mainly saw nothing [from Muslims] but kindness and patience. Therefore, I ask you, the youth, to lay the foundation for a proper and honorable interaction with the Muslim world based on correct knowledge and deep insight and by [learning lessons from past] tragic experiences. In this case, in a not distant future, you will see that the edifice you

have erected on such a foundation will spread the shadow of confidence and trust over the heads of its architects, grant them the warmth of security and clam, and radiate the rays of hope in a bright future on the world.

Seyyed Ali Khamenei,

Azar 8, 1394; November 29, 2015

The first message by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution addressed to the Western youth had been published in February.