Leader stresses unity with East Azerbaijan masses: - 18 /Feb/ 2024

In a meeting with thousands of people from East Azerbaijan Province on the morning of Sunday, 18 February 2024, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution enumerated two fundamental tasks. The first is that, in looking at ourselves, we should "strengthen our strong points, achieve prosperity and eliminate our weaknesses." The second is that we should look at the enemy intelligently and be outside being victims of its machinations. He stressed the importance of national unity and saw the February 11th elections as a solution to problems and a means to resolve issues. He called upon everyone to participate enthusiastically in this important national event and mentioned some important points about choosing the best candidate, the accuracy and integrity of the elections and avoiding electoral malpractice.

The Leader related a call by a former president of the United States for the Iranian people not to participate in one of the past elections; the result, he said, was that the president unknowingly helped Iran because the people, out of spite and opposition to him, participated in the elections more enthusiastically than ever before. For this reason, he said, the Americans no longer speak this way, but they now try other ways to discourage people from participating in the elections.

The Leader of the Revolution called the elections the main pillar of the Islamic Republic's system and the way to reform the country. He said, "Everyone should participate in the elections, especially those who are looking for redress and to solve problems. The right way is through elections; that's what they should turn to."

He deemed it necessary to choose the most suitable candidate. He added, "All those who have passed the Guardian Council's scrutiny are qualified, but reason dictates that we must choose the more qualified among them. To recognise the best candidate, people should research as much as they can, and if they cannot, they should listen to and act upon the advice of people they trust."

Ayatollah Khamenei said that it was the duty of speakers and popular figures to encourage people to participate in the elections and emphasised, "Those who have entered the election arena should avoid immorality, bad language, insults, and accusations against others in their campaigning and virtual space. They should also avoid black propaganda, lying and giving false information to attract people's attention because these actions will deprive them of divine blessing and grace."

He stressed the need for accuracy, integrity, and reliability in the elections on the part of officials, adding, "Of course, in the past few decades, there has never been any electoral fraud as claimed by the enemy. This claim is baseless. In some cases, where some people had made allegations, after investigation and review, some irregularities had been discovered, but these irregularities have never had any impact on the overall results of the elections. Elections in the country have always been correct, healthy, and dignified."

The Leader of the Revolution said that the victory and continuation of the Islamic Revolution rely on the unity of the Iranian nation. He stated, "In the future, we must continue this path as one united fist, and differences of taste and politics should not affect the national unity of Iran while facing its enemies."

Ayatollah Khamenei has highlighted "looking at ourselves" and "looking at the enemy" as two fundamental duties everyone should have. He said: "We must have a correct assessment of ourselves and the enemy, and neglecting this duty could be very disastrous."

Ayatollah Imam Khamenei expressed his sincere appreciation to people nationwide for their enthusiastic participation in the 22nd of Bahman (February 11th) rallies. He said, "In all the cities large and small, and from the villages, the nation has shown their revolutionary determination, enthusiasm, and pride, surprising those who wished

for the Iranian people to have become disheartened and forget the 22nd of Bahman."

Expressing his gratitude to the selfless team that organised the security for the rallies nationwide, he said that the people's meaningful participation was a source of motivation and spirit for the officials. He commented, "This nationwide expression of their presence injects fresh blood into the veins of society, the nation, and the officials."

The Leader of the Revolution called the people's uprising of Tabriz on February 18, 1978, a historic event and said, "That event prevented the uprising of the people of Qom on January 9, 1978, from failing, and it spread of the spirit of insurrection and revolutionary fervour throughout the whole country. It paved the way for the victory of the Revolution on February 11, 1979, and turned the page of Iranian history."

Ayatollah Imam Khamenei enumerated recognition of timing in fulfilling their duty and rising, doing so at the right moment, as two prominent features of the 29th of Bahman (February 18th) event in Tabriz. He said, "The Ta'ibin (the second generation of Muslims after the Prophet) did not sense their duty and did not act on time; thus, they were absent on Ashura. For this reason, despite their late uprising and martyrdom, they had no impact on history."

The Leader of the Revolution praised the people of Azerbaijan for their zeal to defend their honour, their love, passion and iman, which they have historically been the epitome of, even today.

He said that we must learn from the important factors that were responsible for the 29th of Bahman (February 18th) event in Tabriz.

Ayatollah Imam Khamenei said that everyone has two fundamental duties: to "look at ourselves and look at the enemy." He said that we must have a correct assessment of ourselves and the enemy, and neglecting this duty would be a great calamity.

He explained the goal of self-knowledge is to appreciate, preserve, and strengthen our strong points, as well as compensate for and eliminate our weaknesses. In explaining the strengths of the Revolution and the nation, he said, "The most important achievement of the Revolution was uprooting a despotic monarchy that was oppressive, godless, and completely corrupt. This system did not recognise the people, nor did they recognise their rights, respect, or role. In many cases, we were practically ruled by following the orders and carrying out the will of the American and the British embassies." The Leader added, "Today, at the opposite pole to that decadent system, the people are the owners of both the country and the system, and by directly or indirectly electing the main officials of the country, they can determine in what direction the country will be turning."

Ayatollah Imam Khamenei mentioned that another significant achievement of the Revolution was that it generated national self-confidence and a sense of empowerment in various fields of science and technology, defence, medicine, and other areas. He said, "This self-confidence is also evident in the international arena and in dealing with powers different to the era of the arrogant regime."

The spread, especially in the region, of the ideas and values of the Revolution, its relative success in arresting the spread and domination of Western culture, the formation of self-organised people's groups in all areas, the expansion of services to all parts of the country, and the nurturing of world-class scientists in various fields were some of the other successes that the Leader pointed to in his assessment of the movement of the Revolution.

Continuing along this line, he added, "Some people are rightfully concerned about the increase in the number of specialists leaving the country, but the other side of the coin is Iran's power to export specialists and effective people."

In explaining another aspect of the duty of introspection concerning identifying weaknesses and striving to eliminate

them, the Leader of the Revolution said, "Along with our strengths, we also have weaknesses, which are not few. For example, we are lagging in building a strong national economy. And despite the good work that has been done, we are still far from the desired aim to achieve complete social, economic, and judicial justice, which have been among the most important slogans and goals of the Revolution."

The Leader of the Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, mentioned that two fundamental duties that everyone should perform are to "look at ourselves" and "look at the enemy". He said, "We must have a correct assessment of ourselves and the enemy; neglecting this duty can cause great calamity."

In explaining the general duties for strengthening strong points and eliminating weaknesses, he outlined the attitude of the government, the parliament, and other official centres in this respect, which should be having firm determination, being assiduous in their work, having integrity in action, being honest with the people, and preferring national interests over personal ones. He added: "Thank God, today, senior officials of the country enjoy certain privileges, but these positive characteristics should be spread to cover all levels of government officials."

Ayatollah Imam Khamenei also specified that the elite should take responsibility for identifying gaps and dangerous loopholes and giving conceptual assistance to officials to close them. In outlining the various duties of young people, he said: "Today, many young elites are employed in the government. Young people, who are the driving force of society, must attain the necessary readiness and qualifications to be present in the various fields in the future and to take on heavy responsibilities."

He described the duty of the general public as preserving national unity and supporting officials, public servants, and good work. He said, "Everyone should note that fulfilling these duties and responsibilities is an act of jihad against the enemy; because they do not want these duties to be fulfilled, and for this reason, they oppose any good work that is done in the Islamic Republic."

In explaining the second important duty, namely "looking at the enemy," the Leader of the Revolution said, "We must not be unmindful about the enemy, his tricks, deceptions, and his tools. While we must not assume the enemy to be weak and incapable, we must not fear it, its threats, its pressure, and its ranting."

He attributed all the tricks and psychological pressures resorted to by those who wish Iran ill, point to the strengths and progress of the Islamic Revolution. He added, "We must not lie prone to the machinations of the enemy because their policy is to humiliate and demoralise the other side."

At the beginning of this meeting, Hujjat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen Al-Hashem, the Leader's representative in East Azerbaijan Province and the Friday Imam of Tabriz, hailed the people of the Azerbaijan region as the standard-bearers of the nation's revolutionary struggles at various junctures in history, who have demoralised and defeated its enemies and those who sow discord.