Leader’s remarks in meeting with thousands of teachers from across the country - 7 /May/ 2015

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

You are very welcome my dear ones! You have made this Hosseiniyeh (religious center) fragrant with your pure souls. The soul of a teacher is indeed a pure soul and any space where teachers are present, one can be sure that the divine mercy and the divine blessings will, God willing, be present in that space and in that place. I hope God would help you, both you teachers and you, the officials of Education [Ministry], to succeed in doing this great job, [to fulfill] this huge responsibility in the best possible manner.

It is the [lunar] month of Rajab and in this meaningful and beautiful ballad that you sang here, there was a mention of the month of Rajab; the month of recourse; the month of attention and prayer. In this honorable month, the faithful pray to God and ask him as such: “O God! Guide me as you have guided the guided ones and help me to persevere like true perseverant ones and don’t allow me to be among those who are negligent and far away [from you].” How important are the last three items! The last item is about forgiveness, which is the basis of all works: “And forgive me on the Day of Resurrection.” The guidance of the guided ones and perseverance of those who persevere is what we ask Almighty God in this prayer. Just think if only these two characteristics existed in me and you, all problems would have been solved. [In that case,] both the guidance of those who were guided by God would be given to us, and the perseverance of true perseverant persons in history of humanity would be evident in our deeds, our words and our demeanor. In the third item, mention has been made of a harm: “And don’t allow me to be among those who are negligent and are far away [from you].” Negligence is the biggest of harms; negligence of the path, negligence of the goal, negligence of the abilities, negligence of the opportunity, negligence of the enemy, negligence of the duty that weighs on my and your shoulders today; negligence. Negligence is our greatest enemy. The first enemy that brings us to our knees in front of our other enemies is negligence; and don’t allow me to be among those who are negligent and are far away [from you]. The outcome of this negligence is getting far; far from God; far from goals; [and] far from success. The themes of prayers are knowledge, are monotheism; are lessons in life. [Let’s] read the prayers with attention [to this point] and take advantage of the opportunity of this month.

The Teacher’s Week has been named after the auspicious memory of our dear and honorable martyr, the late Ayatollah [Morteza] Motahhari. Martyr Motahhari had many prominent characteristics, but in my viewpoint, the main feature of his personality was being a teacher; [he] was a teacher. He taught in the seminary and taught in the university; he [also] taught in ordinary life. His speeches were teaching; were lessons; because he was devoted; he was perseverant; that is, [his life was characterized] with perseverance. I had seen many examples of scientific endeavors of this noble man up-close. He had notes on any subject; when he came across a point anywhere, he immediately took a note and put it in a special place. He had shown me envelopes in which he had put notes about various subjects. At that time, I was surprised [at] what patience, what vivacity, what follow-up and what an endeavor [he had]! Well, the result is that today, 35 years have passed since the martyrdom of this man, [but] his books and his words are still alive. Today, the same books, the same words, the same teachings are [still] useful to the young generation of today, [and] are useful to our researchers. Of course, I don’t want to mean that these are sufficient; no, there are many new things to say, there are new thoughts, there are new doubts and people have to work the way Motahhari did; however, this name is a lasting name.

Well, most of what I want to say today, is a few points about education. Of course, there are other issues [and] perhaps I will touch upon them, but the most important issue today is the issue of education; an issue, which is very important to me. The reason is that education [sector] is, in fact, the main center that creates the future world. After

all, we will have a future; 20 years later, 25 years later, another generation will take charge and today that generation is coming into being, is being produced; and its producer is the teacher and education. You are producing a generation; how do you want to produce it? This is very important. The future of the country, the future of our world depends on present effort [made in the field] of education; this is not a small matter.

We have no other organ that is so important. Yes, they also study in the university, they study in the seminary, they are educated at [other] social environments, but the influential role of teacher is unique; the role that teacher can play in having intellectual and spiritual effect on this addressee, who is our today's child and our future man and woman – during childhood [and] adolescence up to the end of this 12-year period – has no parallel; is one of a kind. Neither father, nor mother, nor the environment can play this role. This is what a teacher is; [and] education [ministry] is such an organ. From the viewpoint of being in contact with people's lives, education [ministry] has the biggest degree of direct contact with the society; you have about 13 million students [under your care], [and] along with their parents – whose parents add up to 26 million – it amounts to 39 million [people], [along with] one million teachers and employees of education [ministry]. [Therefore,] about 40 million people are directly related to this organ; what other organs do you know with such an effective and important contact level with the society? This is why I put emphasis on education.

Well, let me say a word about this organ and it is – as I have said frequently and repeat it again – that whatever [amount of money] we spend on this organ is actually not an expense, but an investment; look upon the education economy from this viewpoint. The economy of education is not like the economy of any other organ; here, whatever [money] you are spending is, in fact, being invested. This is that basic and main point to which I expect all country officials, state officials and people pay attention. Well, this [will suffice about importance] of the education organ.

In this big organ, who is the pivotal point, the centerpiece, the vanguard who is actually managing this field and everybody should provide him with logistics? [He is] the teacher. The main vanguard is the teacher. Various organs, various organizations, different documents, textbooks, and such and such, are all supporting this main vanguard. A good teacher is the one whose influence – as I said before – is unique. If we have good teacher, even in a system like Maktabkhaneh [an old education system which is now obsolete], they will be able to raise great men; just in the same way that you see they have [trained great men]. A good teacher can create, [and] can produce big men, big human beings, [and] prominent personalities even under a [ruling] system which is not very compatible [with this goal]; so, teacher is the basis [of education].

Well, what a teacher wants to do? I have written it down here. [He wants to] produce a generation with these characteristics: be knowledgeable, be faithful, with self-confidence, with hope, with liveliness, with physical and spiritual health, [that will] be insightful, be resourceful, be of low cost and high profit; teacher wants to raise such a generation; these are not small matters. When it is said that teachers are doing the prophets' job, well, this is a word that we utter; [let's] go to the depth of this; what does it mean? "…sanctifying them, and instructing them in the Book and wisdom"[a verse of Quran]. This is what prophets do; prophets' job is to save humanity; prophet's job is to build a superior and loftier human society; this is the job of prophets. We say, "teacher is doing the job of prophets," "teaching is a job for prophets;" this is the depth of this remark and the pith of this remark. This is [the true meaning of] teacher.

Well, this has requirements. One of those requirements is the issue of economy that I mentioned before. The economy of education, the livelihood of teachers, is one of those requirements. I am aware of the limitations of state organs, I am no stranger to limitations and problems that exist, but the will should exist among state officials to pay special attention to this sector. As I said before, this is investment; it will pay off; it produces added value; this is not just a cost and expense; this should be among our top priorities in governmental managements and in state decisions. If we don't do this, our enemy will exploit [the situation]; you are seeing this. From this point, the enemy with its media, in its radio, through its agents, with [the help of] people who are pessimistic about the [Islamic] Establishment and about Islam; with these tools and means, the enemy will exploit [the situation]. Of course, our

teachers are both vigilant, and modest and faithful; I really believe in this. I have tested this during all these years and today we see across the country [that] our teachers are not ignorant of the enemy's plots.

These people who chant a slogan about the "livelihood," and mix it with a few seditious and political and factional slogans, everybody knows that their motivation is not a healthy motivation; it is not out of sympathy for teachers; they have other goals. Just in the same way that you see a certain foreign medium starts maneuvering on this issue – which you see they are now busy [doing this and] have been busier since a while ago – this is not out of sympathy; this is [aimed] to cause problem for the [Islamic] Establishment, to cause trouble for the [Islamic] Establishment. It is out of spite and grudge toward Islam and toward independence of the country and toward the establishment of the Islamic Republic; however, after all, we must not give them an excuse [to do this]. State bodies and officials in charge of financial issues and economy pay attention to this point; put this on their main agenda. This is one point. Of course, as I said before, teachers should be vigilant and [they] are [vigilant]; fortunately, our teachers are careful. [The fact that] some people do injustice to the Establishment, do injustice to the revolution in any form they can – they show their spite, their remarks are venomous, [and] are at loggerheads with the Establishment – it is out of grudge toward the Establishment; not out of kindness toward teachers. They will take advantage of any other slogan they may come across.

Another issue is the issue of the university of teachers, which I previously, in my private talks with the esteemed minister [of education], and in a public address to teachers, pointed to this issue; the university of teachers is [a] very important [issue]. All processes that end in recruiting teachers for teaching and for education, should be wholesome and be based on Islam and revolution as the standard. If we did this, the result would be the same thing that you want; it would [both] satisfy God and – as I said before – would give birth to an awesome and hope-inspiring generation for the future of the country. If these cautionary measures are not taken, no [that goal will not be achieved]. In the university of teachers both subject matters and content of lessons are important, those who teach are important, [and] the faculty is also important. What kind of people, what kind of humans, are we going to train and send for children of people to go and train them and produce great human beings? This is very important. Therefore, the issue of qualifications, the issue of teachers, the issue of textbooks, [and] the content of lessons in [this] university are all very important.

Another issue is the issue of fundamental changes in education, which was fortunately referred to by the esteemed minister today and [he] gave a brief account on measures that have been taken [in this regard]. I had already observed its report. The important point about this fundamental changes is that our education system needs [such] changes and everybody has agreed to this. This old education system in the country, even if it had no other flaws, [the fact] that there has been no innovation in it in the course of time, it is enough for one to reject it and believe in [the necessity] of fundamental changes. This document of change, which was fortunately drawn up two [or] three years ago and was notified and has been taken as basis for planning, is a good and solid document from the viewpoint of experienced and prominent experts on education; those who are specialized in this field, [and] are experienced in this field, have confirmed this document. [They] say the fundamental change document, which has been drawn up through [many] hours of work over a long period of time and through [a lot of] endeavor; everybody has helped and this documents has been, thank God, drawn up and notified, this [document] has been confirmed by experts and specialists in education and [they] say, it is a very strong and important document. Therefore, this document should enter into force. Of course, in such matters, you must not look for rapid results; these are not matters whose results will be revealed in one year and two years and five years. These are matters that need patience and persistence, need work, need continuous work.

One [important] point is that the cohesion of this document should be maintained. It was mentioned that a number of the articles of this document has already entered into force; this is very good; however, all of its articles must come into force; this is a solid collection. If we only enforce some of the articles, for example, forty articles or something like that, and ignore the rest, it will not achieve its goals. The cohesion of this collection must be maintained. When all the articles of this collection are enforced, then the work will be facilitated, will be accelerated

and will be done correctly.

Another point is that the main body of the country's education [system] should become familiar with this document; [to] know the main goals of this document. A teacher, who teaches at a certain primary school or high school, must know what this fundamental change [document] expects from him. The principal and head of the primary school or high school should know what is their duty and obligation with regard to students on the basis of this document. The goals of this document must become clear; plans should be made in order for us to expound the goals of this document on a broad scale across the education [system] and discuss [those goal].

Another issue [is that] publicity organs and the national medium [the IRIB] must come to help. Sometimes, it is even proposed that a television channel should be dedicated to this purpose to be able to explain this issue and make it understood. Of course, this depends on the officials of the education [ministry] to work with the officials of the IRIB and cooperate with them

Another matter which is important with regard to this document, which was fortunately mentioned by the esteemed [education] minister today, is the capacity of the sixth [development] plan. At present, the policies of the sixth plan are being formulated, then the plan itself will be drawn up, approved, and implemented. [Both] in the context of this plan and under it, the issue of education and the fundamental change document must be certainly taken into consideration, so that, we would know what we would have in [our] education [system] by 1404 (2025).

This is a basic point, [and] I am telling this to education officials that be careful [and do not allow] hasty plans and trivial and mundane changes to be substituted for the fundamental change; [such trivial changes] should not satisfy us [and] make us happy that we are making change. Changes on the surface are not important; the basis is those articles of fundamental change, which [must be carried out] so that this building can be gradually reconstructed; this is important.

Fortunately, conditions are provided; I look all across the country; it seems to me that today, conditions are more ready for you and esteemed officials of education [ministry] to increase quality of education [and] for a basic and fundamental change in this important and sensitive organ [to come about]. There was a time when we had 18 million students, [but] today, there are less than 13 million students; this is an opportunity. There was a time when we faced serious hardship for [providing] education spaces; the number of double- and triple-shift schools across the country was not few. Today, fortunately, that situation does not exist. In most parts of the country, schools are in good shape; [and] people who are interested come and enter [those schools] and this situation [should be maintained.] Therefore, today, conditions are ripe for us to make this change. At any rate, the country is fortunately stable, is secure, [and] state officials are working with [keen] interest. Today is the day that we would be able, God willing, to take education to a decisive point in terms of quality, in terms of content, [and] in terms of fundaments. And as I said before, teachers are the pivot of this change; the person who stands in the middle of the field is you, dear teachers. Hereby and using this opportunity, I salute all teachers across the country and I hope God would keep you all dear teachers under His protection.

There is a point not related to education, which is among basic issues of the country and that [point is] the way enemies deal with the Islamic Republic Establishment. During the past 35 years [since the Islamic Revolution], the grandeur of this huge popular movement has always and incessantly drawn attention from enemies of the Islamic Republic. They have boasted a lot, [and] did whatever they could, but the Iranian nation and the establishment of the Islamic Republic has been grand in their eyes; this grandeur should be safeguarded; this grandeur should be protected; and it is a reality, not delusion. We [are] a great country, a nation of seventy-and-odd million [people], with profound and pristine cultural and historical background much more than many [other] parts of the world, [and are characterized] with courage, with determination; a nation that defends its identity and character. An example of this was seen during eight years of Sacred Defense. During those eight years, all the world powers – both East and West – and their proxies and reactionaries, and all and all, joined hands to bring the Iranian nation to its knees [but]

they could not. So, is it a surprise that this nation looks so grand and awe-inspiring in the eyes of world observers?

This grandeur should be safeguarded. We are a system [about] which political officials of other countries and those who are informed, have told me this – some have told me [and] some did not want to tell me but said this in their [private] gatherings and I heard its news – that if the sanctions that they have imposed against Iran and this pressure that they have exerted on the Islamic Republic had been [exerted] against any other country, that country would have been destroyed and collapsed, but they failed to make the Islamic Republic budge [from its positions]. This is no small matter. This is a very big event. Of course, global propaganda [machine] always puts a cover, a curtain, a [layer of] dust before [the eyes of] its audiences and does not allow them to see many realities. Nonetheless, many people in the world, [and] many nations, especially those that are closer to us, see the realities; and all political officials of the world see the realities. Don't look at what they say; the same political chiefs and officials and spokespersons of various [state] organs in the West and Europe and America, and others who sometimes utter nonsensical remarks, all of them, deep in their hearts, confirm this grandeur, this awe, this power [and] this merit for the Iranian nation and see it, but they talk about it in a different manner.

I have frequently talked about these [nuclear] negotiations and nuclear [issue] and the likes of that; I have talked a lot and have said what I had to say. However, everybody should pay attention – both our foreign policy officials, and other different officials, and elites in the society – that if a nation fails to defend its identity, [and] its grandeur as it is, in the face of the foreigners, [that nation] will be certainly humiliated; there is no mistake about this. You should know the value of your character and identity. The enemy threatens. During the past few days, two American officials have posed military threat [to Iran]. We don't care about those people who do not hold very important and sensitive posts. I don't understand what is [the meaning] of negotiations under the shadow of threat? [They expect us] to negotiate under the shadow of threat! Just like a sword is held over [our] head. Iranian nation is not like this; the Iranian nation will not tolerate negotiation under the shadow of threat; why you are threatening [us]? Why you talk in such a nonsensical way? They say if [negotiation] does not go on like this or that, we may attack Iran militarily. First of all, this is nonsense. Secondly, in the time of former American president – they also threatened then – I said the time for hit and run [attacks] is over. This is not the case that you say 'we hit and run'; no, your feet will be stranded and we will follow up [on what you have done].

The Iranian nation will not let go of somebody who may want to violate the Iranian nation; we will follow up. Everybody must pay attention to this point; our [nuclear] negotiators must also pay attention; the red lines and basic lines that have been explained must be always observed by them, which of course, [they] certainly do [observe these lines]; God willing they observe them and will not cross these red lines. However, this issue is not acceptable that they [enemies] continuously sit and threaten. What threat? Your need to these negotiations is no less than our need; yes, we like sanctions to be removed, but if sanctions are not removed, we will be able to manage our affairs through other ways; this has been proven. One day, I raised this issue [and] fortunately today we see economists, various officials, [and] persons that are aware of the country's economic issues, are all continuously repeating this. They say this is not the case that economic problems in our country are tied to sanctions, so that, with the removal of sanctions, economic problems are resolved. No, economic problems may be resolved with our own will, with our intent, with our hands, [and] with foresight; whether sanctions exist or not. Of course, it would be easier if sanctions did not exist; with sanctions, it would be slightly more difficult, but still possible.

Our position with regard to negotiations is such a position. However, the incumbent American administration really needs these negotiations; in their track records, one basic point that they can raise is that we managed to bring the Islamic Republic of Iran to the negotiating table and imposed a given matter on them. This is what they need. [Therefore,] if the need of the opposite side to these negotiations is not more than us – which certainly is – it is, at least, no less; [so] why they keep threatening [us]? I do not agree with negotiations that take place under the shadow of threat. [Our negotiators can] go and talk, negotiate, reach an agreement; there is no problem with that – of course, in the event that they have observed those main lines. However, [they should] by no means accept imposition; should not accept force, should not accept humiliation; should not accept threat.

Today, they have been disgraced in the world. You see the move that Saudi government is taking in the case of Yemen; it cannot be justified by any logic, by any expression. One sends airplanes to another country on the ground that 'why you do not accept a given person as your president; [why you] do not accept a given person'; [and then] start hitting people, hitting infrastructure, commit crimes, kill women and children, set every place on fire; this has no justification. Americans are supporting this unjustifiable move and this huge crime; what disgrace can be more [obvious than this]? Today, America has no credit in the eyes of regional nations; everybody is seeing this situation; they explicitly say that we are supporting [Saudi aggression], [and] they feel no shame. Then they tell us 'why you are helping [Yemenis]'? We wanted to send medical aid, we wanted to send medicine for patients; we did not want to send weapons; they [Yemenis] do not need our weapons; all the garrisons of Yemen and the Yemeni army are in control of combatant and revolutionary people and in control of this Ansarullah group. They do not need our weapons; we [only] wanted to send them medicines.

You have come and laid medical siege on a nation; laid food siege, laid energy siege, [and] then you say nobody should help them! You didn't even allow the Red Crescent to render services. At the same time, they are providing military information to Saudis from across the world, provide weapons, provide logistics, [and] encourage them politically. They are disgraced. The path chosen by the Iranian nation is correct and strong and leads to good outcome and, through divine assistance and in spite of the enemies, this path will reach its goals, and the Iranian nation will be successful, and enemies will see that they have not been able to realize their ominous goals against the Iranian nation.

May God have mercy on our dear martyrs who laid down their lives, and on our great Imam [Khomeini] who cleared this way for us, and may God have mercy on you dear faithful and interested brethren and sisters who are so present in the arena.

Peace be unto you and so may the mercy of Allah and His blessings.