The Leader’s remarks in meeting with Hajj officials - 22 /Aug/ 2015

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

You are very welcome dear brethren and sisters, officials in charge of Hajj, who are shouldering one of the most beautiful and glorious responsibilities you brethren and sisters, and it is to make preparations for Hajj – this unique and unparalleled Islamic obligation – for our Muslim and faithful people. I also appreciate the efforts made by responsible brethren, [and] responsible sisters –as put by Mr. Qazi Askar and also by the esteemed head of the [Hajj and Pilgrimage] Organization – who have made preparations for the improvement of pilgrimage to Hajj for the faithful. And this is the right thing [to do]; day by day, things should be made better and easier toward [the achievement of] the lofty goals of Hajj; work must be done. Every one of you brethren and sisters who have a responsibility, have a role [to play], try to play your role in the best possible manner, with sufficient motivation, by allocating necessary time, [and] with due care; such efforts in their totality will bear a sweet fruit, which is realization of desirable Hajj for people.

However, what I tell you as a recommendation is that Hajj does not belong to us Iranians alone; Hajj belongs to Islam, belongs to the Islamic Ummah, [and] guarantees continuation of Islam. The respect shown for the months of Hajj [pilgrimage] – which the Almighty God has greatly revered the months of Hajj [to show that] even time [of this pilgrimage] should be respected; [and] the place [of pilgrimage] should be respected – proves that how grand, [and] how effective this operation is; these [issues] show that this obligation has characteristics in relation to the Islamic Ummah that no other obligation has this characteristic; this [point] should be taken into account.

It is interesting that Hajj has two different and complementary aspects: an individual aspect [and] a social aspect; both aspects should be observed and paid attention to. The personal aspect of Hajj belongs to each and every hajji; every one of hajjis at this juncture of time – this juncture of Hajj and Umrah – must get connected to the Almighty God, ask for [God’s] forgiveness, [and] provide provisions for his own person. The holy verses of the Quran about Hajj say, “And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah;” the fear of Allah has been recommended [in this Quranic verse]. Every one of the esteemed hajjis who are honored by this great blessing must think about filling their vessel, [and] carry all necessary provisions – “…and seek forgiveness of your Lord;” – ask for forgiveness [from God], supplicate [before God], pray, ask the Almighty God, [and] vow before the Almighty God [to do whatever is needed] for their future and for their life and for their activities; this is the personal aspect [of Hajj pilgrimage].

In this personal aspect of Hajj, every hajji must in fact get closer to God through this movement, [and] through this journey; must purify his soul, [and] must collect provisions for the rest of their lives; the origin of blessings and spiritualities for a person is [to be found] in this journey, in this rituals, [and] in these days; [hajjis] must appreciate this. There are certain things which can be only realized in this journey for a person: watching Kaaba is [an act of] worship, going around Kaaba is [an act of] worship, saying prayers at the Masjid al-Haram is [an act of] worship, paying pilgrimage to the mausoleum of the Venerable Prophet [of Islam] (PBUH) is [an act of] worship; [the desert of] Arafat is an arena for praying to God, Mash’ar is an arena for paying attention to God, Mina is also like that; every hajji must take advantage of each and every one of these rites in order to purify his soul, to elevate his [spiritual] rank, [and] to save [good deeds] for the entire length of his life. This is about the personal aspect of Hajj.

Another aspect [of Hajj] is the social aspect. Hajj is the symbol of Islamic unity. [In this ritual] various colors, various skins, various nationalities, [people from] various birthplaces, various religions, [and] various tastes are all

together and on equal standing. All go around [the Kaaba] together, all do [the rites of] Sa'i together, [and] stop at Arafat [desert] and Mash'ar together; this unity is a very important thing. Islamic empathy [is important and] Hajj is the real manifestation of empathy and common language; not only for the Iranian nation, [but] for all Muslims across the world; [and] for Islamic Ummah. God curse those who tried to take the truth of the Islamic Ummah, [and] the importance of the Islamic Ummah away from [peoples'] minds; divide Muslims into various groups and into various motivations; aggrandize nationalities vs. the grandeur of the Islamic Ummah; [and] cause division among the nation; while the Islamic Ummah is [the most important] issue; grandeur belongs to the Islamic Ummah; the Almighty God pours down his blessings on the Islamic Ummah; Hajj is the symbol of the formation of the Islamic Ummah, [and] is a small example of a bigger whole. "From every distant place;" from everywhere and from remote places, Muslims come together and what a great opportunity [they have] to talk to one another, to empathize with one another, to listen to one another's sufferings, [and] to sympathize with one another. Where else [such an opportunity] would be possible except for Hajj? One of the social aspects of Hajj is the issue of unity.

Another social aspect is to demonstrate the grandeur of the Islamic Ummah. Of course, [the fact] that millions of people come together in a specific ceremony, this shows the solidarity of the Islamic Ummah. Suppose that from a country [with a population] of 70-80-million, fifty thousand people, sixty thousand people, [or] seventy thousand people have taken part [in Hajj] and this is the result; this shows the grandeur of the Islamic Ummah.

Another [social] aspect [of Hajj] is [the opportunity to] exchange experiences with one another. Many Islamic countries have experiences. Suppose that the Iranian nation has experience in confronting the enemy, in identifying the enemy, in not trusting the enemy, [and] in not making a mistake [in differentiating] the friend from the enemy; we have experience [in this regard]. We have made no mistake in differentiating the friend from the enemy; since the beginning of the [Islamic] Revolution up to now, we have understood and realized that the real enemy, the obstinate and headstrong and tenacious enemy is the global arrogance and Zionism; we have understood this. Sometimes this very basic and real enemy has talked through its proxies; we have made no mistake in thinking that this [proxy] is the enemy; no, we have stipulated and said that the [real] enemy is the [global] arrogance.

You look at people's slogans on the 22nd [day of the Iranian month] of Bahman [February 11], on the Quds Day, [and] in huge gatherings whose slogan is against the arrogance, against the United States, against the Zionists and the occupying Zionist regime; their slogans are against these [entities]. While these [arrogant powers] sometimes talk [through a given country] and take their actions through a given Islamic country, we have not chanted slogans against that Islamic country, [and] our nation has chanted no slogan against that Islamic country; why? Because [our nation] knows that it is not the real enemy, it has been deceived, [and] it is just a proxy; this is the way to identify the enemy, [and] this is our experience. Some groups that were also Islamic groups and in some countries they managed to find an opportunity, did not have this experience and made a mistake; they got along with [the one who was] the real enemy against the one who was considered as a friend, [and] they moved [in that direction] and suffered its blow. The bounty that the Almighty God had bestowed upon them, they did not appreciate this bounty.

One of the experiences of the Iranian nation is creating unity. Well, don't different viewpoints exist in our country? In political issues, in theoretical issues, [and] in ideological issues, there are a lot of differences, but despite these differences, people have maintained their unity. In some parts of our country, specific ethnic groups live; those ethnic groups take part in the 22nd of Bahman ceremony, in the Quds Day ceremony, [and] in various ceremonies that symbolize the revolution, in the same way that other people in the country do. We have a Kurdish [speaking] region, a Baluch [speaking] region, an Arabic [speaking] region, [and] a Turkish [speaking] region; sometimes their moves in favor of the revolution and in favor of the Islamic Republic Establishment are more prominent than other places; we have seen this. This is that Islamic unity and the Iranian nation has experienced this.

We have had this experience for 35-36 years that unity and solidarity should exist among people of the nation, and we have made great gains as a result of this unity and solidarity. Some other countries didn't know, [and] understand this and have not understood [this] yet. As a result of a trivial difference – religious difference, or ethnic difference

or even a party-related difference – within their countries, they start fighting each other and pound each other like enemies; well, the Almighty God strips them of his bounty. [The Quran says:] “Have you not seen those who exchanged the bounty of Allah for disbelief and settled their people [in] the Home of Ruin? [It is] Hell, which they will enter [to burn], and what a wretched abode it is;” when we don’t appreciate the bounty that the God has graciously provided [to us], bestowed [upon us], and given [to us] as blessing, [and when we] do not thank [God] for it, [and] waste that bounty, well, the Almighty God will change His behavior toward such a nation; “…[Allah] would not change a bounty which He has bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves.”

As long as I and you tread the right path, move along the straight road, [and] adapt ourselves to the divine will – as far as it is possible; now [adapting] completely [to the God’s will is too much because] we are much smaller than these things – [in that case] the Almighty God will maintain His blessings for us. However, when we undermine ourselves at our own hands, create difference by ourselves, conspire against each other, [and] engage in fighting each other, [then] the Almighty God will remove His bounty; the God is relative to no one. “That is because Allah would not change a bounty which He has bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves.” The bounty that [He] has given you, God will not take that bounty from you unless you ruin the context; when you ruin the context, the bounty will be taken away. This is the experience of the Iranian nation who have been able to keep the divine bounty for themselves. Well, such experiences must be transferred.

Today, Islamic countries are facing conspiracy, do we understand this or not? Today, [the conspiracy] is not [simply] against Shia, nor against Iran, nor against a given specific denomination, [but] the conspiracy is against Islam, because the Quran belongs to Islam; that center and focus which cries out “… never will Allah give the disbelievers over the believers a way [to dominate them]” is not Shiism, [but] it is the Quran, [and] it is Islam; therefore, they are opposed to it. they are opposed to any center, to any voice, which would awaken people and nations; they are opposed to any hand that fights against the arrogance and that hand is the hand of Islam, [and] that voice is the voice of Islam; therefore, they are opposed to Islam.

Methods used to deal with Islam and show animosity toward Islam are also diverse; [there are] many kinds and types. [Enemies] sit down and think, [and] find a way to infiltrate, [and] to deal a blow. It was early years after victory of the Islamic Revolution that we were informed that the Zionist regime has set up a group and has given them money to sit down and think about, study, and examine Islam and Shiism; well what this study is for? This study is [conducted] in order to see how it is possible to foil this huge factor, this awakening, [and] this Islamic awakening; [to see] how [they] can deal a blow to Muslim nations that have awakened, have understood that they have power, [and] have understood that they can do something. They sat down [and] spent lots of money. This [case] that I mentioned, was only one [case]; tens of centers and foci – about some of which we have information and the rest we know on conjecture – have been established in Europe, in America, in Zionist regime, [and] in some countries that are affiliated [to them] and under their command, in order to see what the ways [of dealing a blow to Islam] are. Then you see that they consider creating discord, creating violence, defaming Islam, disintegration of Islamic countries, pitting Muslim nations against one another and pitting peoples of a nation against one another as an obligation for themselves; one day, the means [to do this] is, for example, American Blackwater [company], [and] another day, the means is Daesh (ISIS) in Iraq or Syria or the likes of these. They search [and] find a means in order to create discord.

These are our experiences; these are works and things that the Iranian nation has understood and come to know these up-close. [The fact] that we put so much emphasis on the issue of unity among Islamic denominations, [including] between Shiism and Sunnism, [and also] among Muslim nations, is not just rhetoric; we have recognized the [main source of] pain, [and have also] found the remedy [because] we pity the Islamic Ummah; [and] this is [the main goal] that we pursue. This has been established for the Iranian nation [but] it has not been established for many nations. Hajj is an opportunity for these [experiences] to be transferred [to other Muslims], to be reflected [and] to be told. Of course, well, this [goal] has [its own] opponents. Those people who want these differences to remain in place, do not want these exchanges and these contacts and these friendships and these transfer of experiences to take

place, [but we] must at last find the [right] way [to do this].

One of the important parts of Hajj is its personal and individual aspects. [The fact] that we put so much emphasis on social aspects of Hajj should not make us neglect the personal aspects of Hajj: supplication, humbleness, fear [of God], [and] prayer. This is a good opportunity; no other place is like the Masjid al-Haram; no other place is like the Masjid an-Nabawi; this opportunity is open to you, [and] is open to every hajji. It would be very unfortunate for some people to give this [opportunity] up and go into the market [for shopping, spending time going] into this ship [and] into that shop. Now, they [Iranian Hajj officials] said they have banned this, [but] well, the reports that are given to me indicate that unfortunately, no, some of our hajjis are still afflicted with this misfortune: go into this market [and refer to] this shopper, [and] that shopper – women one way, [and] men another way – to buy a lemon at twice its [normal] price, take it on the airplane [and] bring it to Tehran or another given city; [this] is wrong; [this] is very wrong.

Our people should note that this is a wrong thing to do. Shopping can be done anywhere, [you] can go to the market anywhere, the commodity can be bought anywhere, [and] the money can be squandered in this way anywhere – this is nothing but squandering money; one can squander money anywhere – [but] try to do something that cannot be done in other places and can be [only] done there [in Hajj]; it is looking at Kaaba; it is saying one's prayers at the Masjid al-Haram; [and] it is kissing the footprint of the Prophet (PBUH). The Reverend Prophet [of Islam] (PBUH) has walked in this city, [and] has talked [in this city], [therefore] this place teems with the waves of the Reverend Prophet of Islam's voice; isn't it a pity for one not to breathe in this atmosphere? Wherever else in the world this [opportunity] can be found? Our hajjis must appreciate these things; otherwise, going to the market and roaming about and the likes of these, well, these things can be done all across the world; they can be done in Tehran, they can be done in Isfahan, they can be done in Tabriz, they can be done in Mashhad, [and] they can be done all over the world. Try to do that thing, which cannot be done in these places and is special to Hajj; these are my recommendations. I hope the Almighty God, God willing, will help all of you conduct an acceptable Hajj [pilgrimage]. I ask you to pray for me as well.

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