The Leader’s remarks in meeting with people from various walks of life on the occasion of Eid al-Ghadir - 21 /Sep/ 2016

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

(Arabic prayer)

Happy your Eid [al-Ghadir]; God willing, the Almighty God will always illuminate your hearts with His favors and serenity and tranquility and grace through the blessing of this great Eid (festive occasion) and through the blessing of the memory of Mowla [Ali Amir al-Mo'menin (PBUH)] and enable us to, God willing, take good advantage and take a really desirable advantage of this occasion and the likes of this occasion. Well, our meeting today began in a very good manner; the Quran recitation was very good, [and] poems, which they read out here,were very good both in terms of format, and in terms of content. Your hearts are also overflowing with the love and compassion for Mowl-al-Mowahhedin (The Lord of Monotheists) [a nickname for Imam Ali (PBUH)] – May God’s Greeting and Salute Be Upon Him – and this very enthusiasm and this very love and this very sense of friendship and attention must, God willing, turn into a means, which would drag us in that direction that is desired by [our] Mowla [Lord].

One point is about [Eid al-]Ghadir itself. [The fact] that in some comments they have noted that Eid al-Ghadir is the Greatest Eid of Allah and is superior to all [other] eids, what is the reason and logic behind this? Well, there are verses in the Holy Quran, which cannot be ascribed to any other issue apart from the issue of Ghadir. This very famous verse [of the Quran, which says:] “This day those, who reject faith,have given up all hope of your religion;therefore, fear them not but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion,” which is among early verses in Chapter Maeda [of the Quran], cannot be ascribed to any other issue, which would be comparable to the issue of Ghadir in terms of significance and importance. It is only such an important issue [as the incident of Ghadir] about which it could be said that “this day those, who reject faith, have given up all hope of your religion.” Those who have been trying to find fault with the content of these verses [of the Quran] say things and have brought up [certain] points, [and] the opponents and those who do not accept the issue of Ghadir have interpreted this verse one way or another, but this part of the verse cannot be interpreted [in any other way].

Today is the day when enemies – [namely,] infidels – have given up hope of your religion. What has been added to the religion, which has made the enemy desperate? How important are basically those commands, which have been announced in this verse at the beginning of Chapter Maeda, both before and after this item? This comment has not been made about the [daily] prayers, has not been made about the zakat [a form of Islamic tax], has not been made about the jihad, [and] has not been made about any other of secondary divine commands that “this day those, who reject faith, have given up all hope of your religion;” so, [if follows that] this is a different issue; [and] is something different from these secondary commands. What is that issue? It is the issue of the leadership of the Islamic society, [and] the issue of the system of government and Imamate in the Islamic society.

Yes, they [Muslim rulers] may go astray – as they did [and] for a few centuries, the Umayyad and Abbasid [rulers] and the likes of them ruled as kings in the name of Imamate and caliphate and the likes of these – [but] this does not harm the [basic] philosophy of Ghadir. The story of determining Ghadir is all about determining regulation, [and] determining rule. A rule was made in Islam; [and] it was the Venerable Prophet [of Islam] (PBUH), who set this rule during the last months of his life. What is this rule? It is the rule of Imamate, [and] the rule of Velayat [guardianship of a religious leader]. Human societies have had governments from ancient times, [and] humans have experienced all

kinds and forms of governments. Islam does not endorse these governments, [and] this form of being in power and wielding power, [because] it accepts Imamate. This is the rule of Islam, [and] Ghadir expresses this [rule]. Its addressee is also specified. Amir-al-Mo'menin [Imam Ali] (PBUH) is a person that nobody, neither at that time, nor in later times, has been able to find the smallest fault with his grand personality and that he represents the concepts and knowledge of the Quran.

Well, yes, they swore [at Imam Ali (AS)], just as they swear at God as well, [and] swear at the Prophet – God forbid – as well. Insult proves nothing. No human, when they start thinking, [and] when they give up [ordinary] sentiments and biases, can ever find [even] the slightest fault – even partially – with this illuminated being and this divine embodiment [of humanity]. The Prophet appointed this [person] as the [highest] example of Imamate, [and] this became the rule [of government in Islam]. To the end of the world, anywhere that Muslims want and endeavor and be guided by God to realize [the true] Islam and materialize the Islamic society, this is its regulation and rule: they must revive Imamate. Of course, no other example will ever match up to those examples, who were specified by the Prophet, [and even] match up to lower [levels] than them. When compared with Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH), the greatest scholarly and spiritual and mystical personalities and our ascetic and ideological dignitaries would look like that dim light, which one may see a small light at the bottom of a well; compare that with the Sun; yes, it is [exactly] like that, [and]it is the same ray [of light], but how long is the distance [between these two]? How [big] is the difference [between them]?

Our greatest personalities, for example, a personality like our honorable Imam [Khomeini], which well, fairly speaking, was a perfect, great, grand, [and] overarching personality and was a prominent and outstanding personality from all viewpoints, if we want to compare them with Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH), [the result of] the comparison would be what I said: [I mean, it is like when] you compare the sunlight with that ray [of light], which for example, is seen at the bottom of a well, or at the corner of that given dark place, for example, from the Sun or [another source of] light.The distances [between Imam Ali (PBUH) and other great personalities] are like this.

Yes, these gaps do exist, but this is the regulation; it is the regulation of Imamate. The rule of governance and authority and wielding power in the Islamic society was made clear and founded with Ghadir; this is the importance of Ghadir. The importance of Ghadir is not just that [the Prophet] determined Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) [as leader of the Islamic society]; [of course,] this is important, but even more important than this is that they set the regulation, [and] set the rule [for the Islamic governance]. [Therefore,] it became clear that in an Islamic society, the monarchial rule has no meaning, the personal rule has no meaning, the rule of money and force has no meaning, the rule of aristocracy has no meaning, the rule of arrogance on people has no meaning, the rule [of those people] who seek privileges [for themselves] and [seek to meet their] excessive demands and [try to] collect [money] for themselves and add [to their personal wealth] has no meaning, [and finally] the rule of lustful people has no meaning; it became clear that it [the governance] is like this in Islam.

This rule was set in Ghadir. When this rule was set, then "those, who reject faith, gave up all hope of your religion;" then enemies gave up hope about being able to change the course of this religion, because the course of religion [only] changes when that focal point, [and] that main nucleus changes; that is, the nucleus of power, the nucleus of management, [and] the nucleus of leadership; if it changes, everything will change. Yes, changes take place in the practical reality and people like the caliphs of Umayyad and Abbasid [dynasties] rise to power under the aegis of Islam, [and people like the despotic ruler] Hajjaj ibn Yusuf [also rise to power], but these people cannot disrupt the regulation. Today, if people in the Islamic world, [and]those, who are familiar with the Islamic teachings, refer to the Quran, [and] refer to those regulations, which have been specified in the Quran for serving truth and for the life and orientation of servants of truth – that is, nations – [if they do this] it would be impossible to reach any conclusion, but the conclusion of the Imamate of Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) and his progeny.

This is our claim and we can totally prove this claim. Any person in the Islamic world, [including] the intellectuals, thinkers, those with a conviction, [and] those who have been raised with a different conviction [than the Islamic

faith] from the beginning [of their life], if they take the Quran and the Quranic values and the Quranic regulations for the life of human societies as the norm, they would reach no other conclusion than the fact that a person like Ali ibn Abi Talib (PBUH) must rule the Islamic societies; I mean, this is the [correct] path; [and] the [correct] path [is] the path of Imamate. This is about Ghadir.

Well, when Ghadir is so important, then the meaning of that other honorable verse [of the Quran] which says, “O Messenger, announce what has been revealed onto you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message” becomes clear. [The Quran says] if you [the Prophet] do not proclaim this [God’s] command, you would not have fulfilled your mission. The Prophet has been struggling for 23 years – those struggles in Mecca, those struggles in Medina, those wars, those sacrifices, those [cases of] forgiveness, that strictness on himself, [and] that huge human guidance, which that Honorable One did, all of these took place in this period – [so] what incident and what development is that, which in its absence, [as if] all these [struggles] do not exist, [because the Quran says:] “and if you do not [announce what has been revealed onto you], then you have not conveyed His message.” This cannot be a few secondary commands; this is something far beyond these things; what is that? It is Imamate.

Who is the first Imam? The Prophet himself. When in Mina [as part of Hajj rituals], Imam Sadeq (PBUH) said, “Verily, the Messenger of God was also Imam;” [therefore,] the Prophet (PBUH) was the first Imam [as well]; “then Ali ibn Abi Talib comes after him” and then other [Shia] imams. After the Almighty God tested Prophet Abraham with all those tests, [and after he] went through all those difficult stages – he was thrown into fire when he was young; then came to Babel and made all those efforts and worked hard in those regions where he was – [after all this] when he reached senescence, then God says, “I am making you an Imam for people;” [God says,] now I want to make you the Imam. This is the [real] meaning of Imamate. This is conviction; [this is an] Islamic conviction based on strong grounds and irrefutable arguments. We invite the entire Islamic world and all thinkers [and tell them] that this unity, which the Islamic world needs today, can be easily realized through reflection on the verses of the Quran and deep thinking about these facts, [of course,] if those who are given to thinking and given to [study of] the fundaments [of Islam] follow up on these issues.

Of course, their sentiments must not be incited from this side. Some people think that proving [the truth of] Shiism depends on one continuously swearing at the dignitaries, who are believed in by Sunnis and other people; no, this would be against the conduct of [Shia] imams. [The fact] that you see radio or television stations are launched in the Islamic world, whose main job is to insult dignitaries, who are believed in by other Islamic sects, under the aegis of Shiism and in the name of Shiism, it is clear that the budget [allocated to such activities] comes from the budget of the British treasury; the budget of [such activities] comes from Britain’s budget, [and] this is the British-style Shiism. Nobody should think that promotion of Shiism and the Shia conviction and strengthening the Shia faith hinges on this insulting behavior and this [type of foul] talking; no, these [measures] backfire. When you insult [them], a [virtual] fence of anger [and] of sentiments is built around them and even the truth would not be tolerable for them.

We have many plausible things to say and many logical things to say, [and these are] remarks that would be accepeted if heard by any thinking person; we have a lot of [such things to say]. Let these remarks be heard, [and] let these remarks find the opportunity to infiltrate into the hearts of the opposite side. When you swear, [and] when you insult, a barrier is erected and what you say is not heard at all, [and] they don’t listen to it; then wicked and dependent and mercenary groups that take money from America and the CIA and [the British] Intelligence Service – like Daesh and al-Nusra Front and the likes of these – take advantage of a bunch of ignorant [and] negligent laypeople and trigger these conditions, which you have observed in Iraq and in Syria and in other places; this is what the enemy does. The enemy is waiting for an opportunity; [and] the enemy takes advantage of any opportunity. We have a true statement to make, we have logical things to say, [and] we have a strong statement to make. A small example of it was what I told you today. This is about Ghadir.

[Next, I will talk] about Amir-al-Mo’menin (PBUH). All the values and traits that a person – whether as a person

who has faith in Islam, or as a person who has faith in any religion, or as a person who does not believe in any religion; [I mean,] any kind of human being – respects them and venerates them can be found altogether in Ali ibn Abi Talib (PBUH). I mean, Ali ibn Abi Talib (PBUH) is a personality you would respect if you are a Shia, you would respect if you are a Sunni, [and] you would respect [even] if you are not Muslim at all, [if] you know him and study his life and works. There are also many people from among Sunnis, who have written about the virtues of Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) over long years.George Jordac, who is a Christian, has written that five-volume book; a Christian writes a book about Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) many years ago which is full of love. This very personality came here to meet with me and we talked about his book. He said, "Since adolescence, I had become familiar with [Imam Ali (PBUH)'s book] Nahj-ul-Balagha. Nahj-ul-Balagha guided me to know the personality of Ali ibn Abi Talib;" [and then] he wrote this book [whose title is] "[Imam] Ali (PBUH), the Voice of Human Justice." [Even] a person who has [faith in] no religion – I mean, who does not believe in any religion – when he comes to know the personality of Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH), he would feel humble and bow before him.

There are three groups of traits in Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH): one [group] is those spiritual [and] divine traits, which are not measurable for us at all by any scale. [They include] faith, that sublime [and] profound faith; being a pioneer in accepting Islam, [and] making sacrifice on the path of Islam. Devotion [is another of Imam Ali (PBUH)'s traits]; there is not the smallest factor apart from the divine intention in his actions; do we understand [this] at all? Can this state be comprehensible for the likes of me? [When] all deeds are for God, are aimed at [obtaining] the divine satisfaction, [and] to carry out the divine command, [this would mean] devotion. These [traits] are [among] those things, which cannot be measured by us at all, [and] cannot be correctly explained neiher. [Another trait] is the knowledge and understanding of Allah; understanding of Allah. What do we understand about God? When we say [in our daily prayers that] "Praiseworthy is my Great Lord and I eulogize Him," what do we understand of this grandeur, [and] what Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) understands of it? Understanding of Allah [is an important trait of Imam Ali (PBUH)]. These are a chain of Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH)'s traits, which are not really describable for us at all, [and] are not understandable. [Therefore, even if] they sit down [with us] and explain [these traits] to us, we would not understand their depth, so humongous they are, [and] so profound they are. These are [just] one group of Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH)'s traits.

Another group [of Imam Ali (PBUH)'s traits] consists of his prominent humane traits. These [traits] are those things, which attract Muslims and non-Muslims and Christians and non-Christians and irreligious and religious human beings alike: [they include both] "bravery," and "mercifulness." A man, who fights in that way in the battlefield, when he deals with an orphaned family, he treats orphans in that way, bends down, plays with orphaned children, [and] puts them on his shoulders. These are basically among those things, which have nothing to do with whether we are religious and in what religion we believe in order to show respect for these [traits]. Any human being would feel humbled and bow down when they are faced with this grandeur. "Selflessness" [is another of Imam Ali (PBUH)'s traits]. Selflessness means to prefer others over yourself; it means forgiveness; it means that where you have a right, you would pass over this right – of course, [when it is a] personal right – for the sake of God [and] for the sake of an expediency; whether it is a financial right, a right related to your honor, [or] any other one of your [personal] rights. This is the meaning of selflessness. These are also another group of Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH)'s traits, which if one wants to enumerate, these traits will amount to a [complete] book, [and] will form a long list.

The third group of Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH)'s traits is governmental traits, which are the result of the issue of Imamate. Imamate means to rule in this way. Of course, it waxes and wanes, with its highest point being [manifest] in a personality like Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH). What are examples of governmental traits [of Imam Ali (PBUH)]? [They include] for example "justice," for example "fairness," [and] for example "considering all people on equal footing," even those people who live in your society, but do not believe in your religion. When Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) heard that Busr ibn Arta'ah [a commander of the enemy army] went into the city and entered [the sanctuary] of families, he read a painful sermon [in which he said]: "I have been told that one of their men has entered [the house of] a Muslim woman and another one [has entered the house of] a woman of the book and took away her ankle bracelet;" [Imam Ali (PBUH) says:] "I have been told" that these tyrant and oppressor and insolent

forces [of the enemy] have entered the houses of Muslim women and non-Muslim women – "woman of the book" was [a title for] the same Jewish and Christian people, who lived in the Islamic society – and pulled off and took away and plundered their clothes, their ankle bracelets, their bracelets, [and] their foot ornaments. Then [Imam Ali (PBUH)] says that if a person passes away and dies out of sorrow over this incident, he should not be blamed. Look, this is the personality [of Imam Ali (PBUH)], his mercifulness toward people, [and] his sympathy with people, and that all the people. Well, Jews and Christians and others also live in an Islamic society, who are called the People of the Book. Well, these are among his governmental traits: "justice," "fairness," [and] "equality."

"Avoiding worldly attractions and mundane ornaments for one's personal use" [was another trait of Imam Ali (PBUH)]. This is one of the scourges [which afflict most] of governments in the world. [This means that] because we have become leader of the country [and] financial resources of the country are at our disposal, we would be tempted [and say that] here is good land, here are good facilities, [and] here is big money, [therefore,] now [we can take] a share from these [amenities for ourselves]. Those people who are too vicious and miserable and infamous take everything for themselves, like Reza Khan [former Iranian monarch]. Those who are somehow fairer, give some of it to others, mostly to those close to them, [and] take some for themselves.

This is among scourges of governments. [Even] these very democratic governments of the world are like this. You hear [about that]; the wife of that given president has traveled to that given island, which has pleasant weather, on a holiday, for example, in winter or summer, [and] has spent several million dollars! From what source [this money has been paid]? [Or] that given royal family has arrived in that given city for a trip, [and during that trip] this number of hotels, [and] this number of facilities were made available to them, [and] they have spent this [several] billion [dollars] – the figures are in billion – during 10 days, [or] 20 days, they stayed [there]! The government of Imamate is opposed to these things. Personal use of public facilities is prohibited; [therefore,] avoiding [attractions of] the world for personal purposes [is a characteristic of the Islamic government].

"Prudence" [is another governmental trait of Imam Ali (PBUH)]. [It is necessary] for an Islamic society to have prudence in thinking [and show it by] separating enemies [from friends], separating friends [from enemies], [and] dividing enemies into a number of categories.

Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) was engaged in three wars; these three wars were against three groups of enemies, but he did not fight them alike. [His] war with Muawiyah and [the army of] the Levant was one way, [while] the war with [people coming from the city of] Basra was another way. When Imam Ali (PBUH) fought against Talha and Zubair, he fought in a different way. There, he called Zubair and talked to him in the middle of the battlefield, [and] advised him [by saying]: "Brother, remember our past records; we fought so much along each other, [and] did many things along each other;" [and his advice] was effective as well. Of course, Zubair did not do what he must have done; he must have joined Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH); [of course] he did not do this, but left the battlefield and went away. His [Imam Ali (PBUH)'s] behavior in the battle against Talha and Zubair was like this. However, he did not deal with [the army of] the Levant in this way; what was Hadhrat [Ali (PBUH)] supposed to say to Muawiyah? Could he tell him that 'I and you were together'? When they were together?

They had stood against each another in the Battle of Badr. [In the Battle of Badr], Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) had killed his grandfather and uncle and many of his family and relatives; [therefore,] they had no [common] background with each other. He [Muawiyah] also took advantage of the same hostilities and fought against Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH). Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) divided [his] enemies [into different groups]. In the case of [the Battle of] Nahravan, when [his enemies] added up to 10,000 people, Hadhrat [Ali (PBUH)] said, "Out of these 10,000 people anybody who switches sides toward this flag that I have hoisted, we would not fight them;" they came [to Imam Ali (PBUH)'s side], [and] most [of them] switched to this side. Hadhrat [Ali (PBUH)] said, "[You are free] to go;" [and] let them go. Yes, those who stayed and showed obstinacy and were prejudiced, [Imam Ali (PBUH)] fought against them, [and] triumphed over them. This means prudence in running the country; [which requires] knowing the enemies, [and] knowing the friends; not all the enemies are the same, [and this is why Imam

Ali (PBUH)] went easy on some enemies. Some people did not swear allegiance to Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) from the very beginning. [His military commander] Malik Ashtar was standing over Hadhrat [Ali (PBUH)] with his sword in his hand. He said, "O! Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH), allow me to cut the head of this person who does not pledges fealty to you." Hadhrat [Ali (PBUH)] smiled [and] said, "No, this [man] was bad-tempered and short-tempered when he was young, [and] now that he has got older, he is more short-tempered, let him go;" [and] they let him go. This is PRUDENCE. The highest [degree of] prudence is that a person who is on top of the power [structure] would know who he is dealing with and how he should deal with any person. This was one of the governmental characteristics of Imam Ali (PBUH)'s.

[Another trait of Imam Ali (PBUH) was] "speed of action." [He] did not dawdle, [and] as soon as he realized that this action should be taken, he took [that] action.

"Elucidation [of facts]" [was another trait of Imam Ali (PBUH)]. He explained facts to the people. You look at [Imam Ali (PBUH)'s] sermons in Nahj-ul-Balagha, [and you see that] most of them are about elucidation of realities that existed in the society of that time – [and this is evident in] both Hadhrat [Ali (PBUH)]'s sermons and in his letters – [because] part of Nahj-ul-Balagha contains [Imam Ali (PBUH)'s] sermons, [and] another part contains [his] letters. Those letters were mostly letters [written] to those people to whom Hadhrat [Ali (PBUH)] objected; they are either [his] enemies like Muawiyah and the likes of these, or were agents of Hadhrat [Ali (PBUH)] himself to whose performance Hadhrat [Ali (PBUH)] objected. It is like this most of the time. Some [of his letters] contain recommendations and directions and commands, like the letter to Malik Ashtar. In all of these [letters and sermons] he elucidates [and] explains the facts to people. This is one of the fields of Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH)'s work.

The issue of "guiding the society toward piety" [is also important]. Among Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH)'s sermons, there is seldom a sermon in which the issue of piety has not been addressed, [and the phrase] "be pious before God" [is frequently seen in Imam Ali (PBUH)'s words], because piety is [the basis for] everything. When there is piety in a society, all material and spiritual problems of that society would be solved; this is how piety works. [Of course, only] piety in its correct sense [solves problems, because] piety is not just averting eye contact with [men or women who are] strangers [and not a next of kin] or, for example assume, refraining from doing that given prohibited act; [of course,] this is [included in piety and] this is part of piety, but piety [in its real sense] is much broader than these [issues]. [What I mean is that] the real meaning of piety is to take care of oneself, take care of one's moves, and make an effort to keep oneself on the direct road and the direct path; this is the [real] meaning of piety, [and] if this [kind of piety] exists in the society, all problems would be solved. Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH) kept inviting people to piety.

[Imam Ali (PBUH)] was intrepid in acting upon [what he considered to be] right; was intrepid in acting upon justice, [and] had no consideration [in this regard]; standing on ceremony did not exist in Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH)'s life. The same person who tells Malik Ashtar let this person who refrains from swearing allegiance go, is [totally] strict in other cases, exercises care, [and] insists.

Look, this is the third part of Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH)'s traits, which are his governmental traits; [and this is] apart from his personal traits, apart from those spiritual and divine aspects [of his personality], which are not understandable for us, [and] indescribable through our feeble and flawed expression. This is the personality of Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH); that is, an overarching personality, which really [is an example of what the poet says:] "You are too great for a small mirror to reflect your image." We cannot see that enormous personality with these weak and disabled eyes [of ours], with this incomplete vision, [and] with these hearts, which are covered in illusions. However, well, we know and say something about that Honorable One [and give] a description of that Honorable One. This [unique] human being was determined [as leader of the Islamic society] in Ghadir.

Well, now, what are we supposed to do? It is evident that we cannot live, cannot act, and cannot be [exactly] like Amir-al-Mo'menin (PBUH). [Even] that Honorable One said himself, "Be aware that you cannot do that [and live

like me].” Addressing his [appointed] rulers, governors, and provincial governors, Hadhrat [Ali (PBUH)] said that you cannot act in the same way that I am acting. We must set our sight on this peak. I have said frequently [that] this is the peak [of human perfection]. They tell you, “Sir! That peak is the goal, [therefore,] move toward that peak.” This is our duty to move toward the peak. Take these traits of Amir-al-Mo’menin (PBUH) into consideration, [and try] to move in this direction in proportion to our ability [and] in proportion to our strength; do not move in the opposite direction. Our society [must] move in the direction of [reaching] Amir-al-Mo’menin (PBUH)’s ascetic life; [I do] not [mean] that it must become as ascetic as Amir-al-Mo’menin (PBUH) was – because we neither can, nor have we been required to do that – but [at least, we must] move in that direction. I mean, we must distance from extravagance, indulgence, and vying. In this way, we would become Shia [and a true] follower of Amir-al-Mo’menin (PBUH).

Our action causes people to believe in us. As [a Shia Imam has said:] “Try to be source of pride for us and don’t be a cause of shame.” He tells Shias to be “source of pride for us.” What does being a source of pride mean? I mean, how we must act so that when somebody looks [at our actions they] would say, “Wow! How good are Amir-al-Mo’menin (PBUH)’s followers!” The person who asks for bribe is not a source of pride, [but] is a [cause of] shame; that [person] who wants more [than his share] from the public funds and takes more [than his share], he is a cause of shame for Shiism; that [person] who turns a blind eye to bad things and does not feel any responsibility for guiding the society toward piety, this is a [cause of] shame for the Islamic establishment and Islamic society; [and finally,] that [person] who is given to extravagance in his personal life, he is a [cause of] shame.

We are, unfortunately, afflicted with [these blights]; we are afflicted with extravagance, [and] afflicted with indulgence. I have been giving advice to myself, people, and others in this regard for many years; I keep saying, [and] repeating this; well, we must make a headway [in this regard and] reduce extravagance in the society. Our men, our women, our youths, [and]our elders [must give up] extravagance – [including] extravagance in clothing, extravagance in food, extravagance in luxuries of life, [and] extravagance in various ornaments and jewelry; or vying, which[one may say that] in this marriage [ceremony], [and] in this party, this lady has put on such clothes, worn such jewelry, [and] used this type of cosmetic and the likes of these, [and] I must not lag behind. These are the same grave errors and risks. It is these [errors] which ruin [people’s] life, it is these [errors], which foster injustice in the society, and finally, it is these [errors], which devastate the economy.

A large part of devastation of economy can be attributed to these things. If a society wants to reach a point in terms of internal strength of its economy where it would be invulnerable, one of the obligatory steps that must be taken is to give up extravagance and indulgence and excessive consumption and the likes of these. Of course, there are many examples [to be mentioned in this regard, but] I have talked a lot about these issues and do not want to repeat the same statements. With regard to water [consumption], with regard to bread, with regard to food, [and] with regard to all types and sorts of things that we consume, we see a high degree of extravagance and indulgence and unnecessary consumption and bad consumption and the likes of these, [and this is why] we must be careful about these [issues].

Most of these [corrective] measures are not for the administration to take, [because] they must be taken by ourselves. We, ourselves, [must take these steps] inside our families [and] in our own lives. This is [true meaning of] following Amir-al-Mo’menin (PBUH).

[When we say:] “Praise be to God, who made us among those who make recourse to the guardianship of Amir-al-Mo’menin (PBUH) and his infallible progeny,” how is this recourse to [Imam Ali (PBUH)’s] guardianship? Yes, one part of this recourse to the guardianship [of Infallible Imams] is heartfelt, that is, you believe in [their] guardianship; this is both very good, and very necessary as well, [and] is also undoubtedly effective. But this is not the entire [scope of] recourse. [In this case,] recourse means that we look [at Infallible Imams] and these traits, which are achievable for us – that [high level of] selflessness and that spirituality and that knowledge and that understanding of God and that [devoted] worship and those wailings and that [high degree of] attention to God and the likes of these that are not possible for us [to achieve] and we lag far behind in these fields – [but at least] with regard to human

traits, with regard to those traits, which are related to management of the society and government and so forth and [achieving these traits] is possible for us, [though even with regard to these traits] we cannot match up to that Honorable One and [even] lower than him, but [at least] we can move in this direction; [therefore,] let's take these steps and then this could be called recourse to the guardianship of Amir al-Mo'menin (PBUH).

After all, there is a lot to say. Dear brethren, [and] dear sisters, pay attention! Look, we speak a lot, say a lot, [and] also say the truth about the enemy and knowing the enemy and [the necessity of] steadfastness against the enemy and the likes of these. I mean, these very slogans, which you and [other] friends chant and [what our] dignitaries and officials say that we [stand] against the enemy, [they] are [all] truthful, [and] are correct. I also know that there is the enemy, but pay attention [to the point] that the enemy sometimes takes advantage of our weaknesses without breaking a sweat. We must mend our personalities, [and] rectify [our errors] so that the enemy would not take advantage of our weaknesses.

Today, our enemies have focused their attention on economic needs and shortages and disorders inside the country. [The fact] that I have been talking about the economic issues, [and] the Economy of Resistance and the likes of these during these recent years regularly [both] at the beginning of the year, in the middle of the year and at the end of the year, [and] keep repeating [these statements], is because the enemy has focused its attention on this specific point. [They want to] undermine the country's economy, [and they want economic] situation of people to worsen, people's pockets be empty [of money], facilities available to people be decreased, people's money lose its value, [and] their purchasing power fall so that they would become discontent; this is the goal [pursued by our enemies]. [They want to] make people dissatisfied with Islam and with the Islamic establishment; this is the enemy's goal. Therefore, they focus on the economy in order to make people's situation worse, so that, as a result of their undesirable [economic] state, they would turn their back on Islam and on the Islamic establishment. Well, whose duty is to stand against this situation? It is a duty for all; it is a duty for the administration, a duty for the Majlis [Iran's parliament], a duty for various officials, [and] a duty for the entire people. We are all duty-bound, [and] we must fulfill [this duty].

Of course, the general movement of the country is, fortunately, a good movement. I know many people, many people who refer to me; they write letters, refer [in person], send messages, [and] present the work they have done and I spend time and observe many of these [works]. The number of young people, who are today working seriously across the country to reinvigorate Islam, [and] to promote religion is, thank God, increasing on a daily basis. These [young people] are those who, by the Grace of God [and] through the divine assistance [of God], will bring any enemy, including America and [the] Zionist [regime of Israel] to their knees. [The fact] that I say and keep repeating time and again in my different speeches that I am optimistic about the future is because of observing these realities.

We have many good realities which can help us move ahead, [and] serve as the driving force behind the general movement of the society. [These realities include existence of] good youths, faithful youths, ready youths, [and] those [young people] who when it comes to presence in [various] arenas of struggle and defending the country and defending the religion, they shed tears [and request] that [officials] allow them to go and defend [the country]. [And] this is not limited to a few and scores and hundreds [of youths], [because] their number is too many. This is the same motivation, which will save the country, [and] this [motivation] must be strengthened. Well, you, who want to sacrifice [your life] why not sacrifice it for Islam? [Why] sacrifice it for the Leader; who is the Leader? Sacrifice [your life] for Islam, for this path, [and] for the goals [of Islam].

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