The Leader’s remarks in meeting with thousands of teachers - 7 /May/ 2017

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

(Arabic prayer)

I welcome all of you dear brethren and sisters. The teachers’ community is really a dear and favorite community for anybody who knows the value of education and training.
[The current month] is [the lunar] month of Sha’ban, [which is] the month of recourse [to God] and praying and attention [to spiritual issues]. It is a prelude to the blessed month of Ramadan; [and] it is a month in which, according to reliable prayers that are special to this month, the paths to bliss have been made clear for us. [In the Sha’baniyeh Prayer, which is special to this month, we say:] “O Almighty God, bestow upon me a heart, whose eagerness will get it close to you, and a tongue, whose honesty will get it close to you, and a [kind of] look, whose righteousness will get it close to you … O Almighty God, bestow upon me the ultimate degree of detachment [from the mundane world and closeness] to you.” These are sublime aspirations of the holy personalities, who have taught us in words, so as to guide our mind toward what we must demand, the path that must be taken, [and] the kind of connection that we must have with God. My dear ones, my youths, [and] dear teachers! Appreciate this opportunity, [and] take advantage of this month of Sha’ban. The middle of Sha’ban is the auspicious birth anniversary of Hadhrat Baqiyatollah [the last Shia Imam] (May Our Souls Be Sacrificed for Him). It is a really blessed night and day due to the blessing of this sacred birth. In addition to this, the night of the middle [of Sha’ban] is a very grand one. Some have said that it is the Night of Qadr. Remember the night of the middle of Sha’ban and refresh your souls [in that night] with prayers, with recourse [to God], with mention [of God], [and] with remembering God; put forth your demands with the Almighty God, [and] talk to God.
On the occasion of the [national] Teachers’ Day, we commemorate our honorable martyr, late Ayatollah [Morteza] Motahhari (May God’s Mercy Be Upon Him); he was really a teacher. Both in words, and in deeds, both in lifestyle and the way he dealt with his time and the people of his time, he was a teacher and mentor in the real sense of the word; [but] we lost him. The enemies of humanity, the enemies of the country, [and] the enemies of Islam took him from us. However, praise be to God, his works remain [among us]. I seriously recommend – [and] Mr. minister [of culture and Islamic guidance also] pointed out [and] it is totally correct – that take advantage and avail yourselves of the viewpoints of that great man, both with regard to issues related to education and training and in other fields, as much as you can. His books guide one’s mind, help it thrive [and] fill it with correct and reliable Islamic teachings.
[Today,] I want to talk to you in brief about three topics: one [topic] is about teachers, another one is about the education system [in the country], [and the third topic is] a brief comment about elections that is our current issue, and God willing, I will bring them up.
As for the teachers, he is important in that the entire community of the country’s educated people is in debt to the teacher class; [and] this is a very important issue. Any erudite, informed, scholarly, educated and literate person that you find, is in debt to the teachers; this is the position that the teacher class has. Everybody believes that the power and strength and credit and prestige of a country, depends on that country’s manpower more than anything else. Is that right? Every one of us accepts this. Well, who produces the manpower? Who prepares the manpower? Who makes it active? Teachers [do all that]. Look, these are the real values and signs of [being a] teacher.
.Why I say this? It is because firstly, the teacher community itself would know the respectfulness and the [high] value of this position, [and] of this job; [this is] very important. What Mr. Minister said here was a very good thing to say, [and] I really enjoyed his remarks that being a teacher, is not merely being a civil servant at [a governmental] administration, [but] being a teacher is a status, a position and a [high] post; this must be understood by teachers themselves in the first place. If we know our dignity in any sector, we would not give in to meanness and idleness

and nastiness; this comes in the first place. And then, the society must appreciate the teachers and respect and venerate them; after that, officials must understand this importance. I have frequently said that education and training and spending money on the teachers is [some sort of] investment! Spend money on the teachers. This is one of our duties – [one of] the duties of state officials and duties of the administration.

Another point, which I must mention after that [first point about] praise and veneration of teachers [is] that teachers must make themselves prepared for [fulfilling] this great responsibility. Well, how a teacher must get prepared? [He must get prepared] through those means that the country's establishment makes available to him. Therefore, I emphasize now and here that the teachers' universities must be taken seriously by officials; [and officials] must take the teachers' universities – which train teachers – [quite] seriously, [and] invest as much as they can in these [universities]. From one standpoint, the importance of these universities is much more than all other ones.

Every teacher is a breeder [of humans] – that is, a teacher of ethics – as well; a mathematics teacher, [and] a biology teacher are, at the same time, teachers of ethics as well. Sometimes, a teacher who is at the classroom, assume that in the middle of a geometry lesson or chemistry lesson, says a word about spiritual issues or about the knowledge of God, of course sometimes, one word affects the mind of the student and lingers [in it] more than a [complete] book. A teacher endowed with ethics is the breeder of ethics in students with his moral compass, [and] with his temperament. A perseverant teacher, a patient teacher, a religious teacher, [and] a sober teacher transfers these characteristics and traits to his students through his conducts even if he does not say a word about these issues. This is the role that a teacher plays. Therefore, [the role played by a] teacher is very important. This is why since many years ago I have consistently objected to those people who want to use the teachers' community as a tool in political fields; this is wrong. This [problem] is not limited to the present time; it goes back to the years of the 1980s; [and even then] some people did such things. These [issues] are [indicative of the true] status of teachers; this precious diamond cannot be used in a game of marbles and be played with. Teachers have a [lofty] status, [and] have [a high] position. This is the position of a teacher.

Of course, I have been informed here that in a not-so-far future, a great number of teachers – now, I don't want to give a figure – will be retired and we will need [to hire more] teachers. This is among what [our] education system will need in the near future. Well, what are we supposed to do? Assume that the capacity of the Teachers' University and Shahid Rajaei University [for training new teachers] is not enough. So, what must we do? [Can we] open the way and [let] all people enter the education system without any controls? No, [this is not possible and we] must think [about this problem]. First of all, the capacity of these universities that train teachers must be increased [for admission of new students] as much as possible. This takes priority over other measures. If this proves to be inadequate, then regulations must be set. [I mean,] major [decision-making] centers must hold sessions, [and] determine regulations for [recruitment] of teachers. This is a word about [hiring necessary number of] teachers.

As to the education system, the education system is the main infrastructure of science and research in the country. The country's infrastructures are very important. The country's engineering infrastructure, the country's scientific infrastructure, [and] the country's literary and cultural infrastructures, [all of] these [infrastructures] are very important. When in a country the infrastructure for a sector is provided, production in that sector will be facilitated. Education is the infrastructure for science and research. If the education [system] makes a good move through its policies, through its behaviors, [and] through its correct plans, this infrastructure will become better and stronger on a daily basis. [As a result,] the country will become rich in the field of science and research, which is our main and basic and long-term, and medium-term and short-term need. This is why education is important. If we leave education on its own, [and] do not be as careful as we must be and [as a result of our oversight] education is faced with problems, this infrastructure will be damaged, [and] then, its loss will not be measurable.

Once, when I was a [seminary] student in [the city of] Qom, we had an understanding and sage tailor in Qom, who made clothes for [seminary] students and made cloaks. He had made a cloak for one of the famous clerics of that time; that cleric had apparently found a fault with the cloak; [the tailor] had told him, "Sir, when the tailor does wrong, [only] the cloak goes wrong, but when a cleric becomes corrupt, the entire world becomes corrupt [as well]." [He meant that] "if I do not do my job in the correct manner, there will be, for example, a small fault with this part of your cloak, but if, God forbid, you become problematic, the entire world" will become corrupt. See, now, God forbid "if education system becomes corrupt" just see what will happen to the country.

The duty of the education [system] is to raise a generation. When you look at [this issue] through a medium-term

approach, [you see that] it aims to raise a generation for a future period. How will it bring up [that generation]? What [kind of generation] it will raise? The education system must be able to raise a faithful generation; faith is the pivot [of education]. Careless and libertine children, who do not abide by anything, such [children] will be neither useful for themselves, nor useful for the country, nor useful for the society in the future. Faith is the foremost requisite [for raising the future generations]. A faithful generation, faithful, loyal, responsible, endowed with self-confidence, with initiative, honest, brave, a modest generation, with ideas, given to thinking, given to taking advantage of thinking, in love with the country, in love with the [Islamic] establishment, in love with people, [a generation, which] will love its country, consider expediencies of its country as its own personal expediencies, [and] defend them; such a generation must be raised; a generation [that will be] strong, powerful, resolute, determined, with initiative, pioneering, [and] active. [Raising] such generation [is necessary]; [and] this [is] a task for the education system. [Just] see what an important task this is! I say [this is] a task for the education system, I am not saying that [this is a task] for teachers. Although teachers are the means [to this end], but teachers alone are not the sole factors in raising such a generation. It is the education system that prepares [suitable] environment for teachers, for students, for parents, for planners, [and] for writers of textbooks; all of these [elements] are effective, [and] it is the education system that carries out these tasks.

Pay attention to this. I am being given reports, which show that there is a current – [and] I feel [the existence of this] "current" – in the country, which is trying to make the education system look unimportant [in the eye of people]; [and aims to] do away with the values of the education system and trust in the education system in [people's] hearts; [those behind this current] have certain goals. This [current] is being guided from outside [of the country]. Now, some people become angry; as soon as I say foreign hands [are in work], [and] say, 'you keep attacking foreigners!' No, I see our own weaknesses; if we were strong, those foreigners would not be able to do a damn thing. However, they takes advantage of these very weaknesses that we have, make plans, plots, [and] infiltrate [into the country]; [and] skew right paths.

Another problem with our education system is the ailment of [excessive] willingness to enter university. The willingness to enter university exists in our student environment. I mean, if somebody wants to go to school, but does not enter the university, it is as if he has not studied at all. This is a mistake, this is wrong, [and] this is not necessary. We have so many immediate, urgent, necessary and important requirements in the country, for which there is no need to academic studies; [and] do not need doctoral and master's degrees and so forth [to meet those requirements]. [The fact] that for many long years – numerous times up to the present time – I have put emphasis on vocational schools and technical schools, is for this reason. These sectors, which are related to technical [schools], must be bolstered, [and their number] must be increased. There are many people, who have worked on education related to vocational schools, have spent time in technical schools, have learned [many things], have learned what to do, [and] have started to work [in this field]. [You see that] both their material life is well-off, and are happy in psychological terms, and are also serving the society. Is this better, or that [other person], who has taken [a lot of] trouble and obtained a doctoral degree, [but] is unemployed [because] he cannot find a job? Or even if he finds a job, it is a superficial [and] low-value job at that given [governmental] organization or in that given bureau [where he would be told] to go and sit there as an advisor or the likes of that! [In that case,] what is the benefit of so much studying and taking so much trouble? [Therefore, excessive] willingness to enter university is wrong.

Yes, we need science, [and] we need research. To whatever extent we progress in the field of science, it would not be adequate. I have been saying this for years and, praise be to God, we have progressed [in the field of science], but it does not mean that anybody who steps in a primary school or a high school, must consider university as his [ultimate] goal. No, there are thousands of jobs, which do not need university [studies], do not need that hefty cost [of academic education], [and] do not need that necessary enthusiasm and talent [for university studies]. We must not forget these [jobs], [because] these are among our riches, and are our wealth. This young person, who can work in technical fields and become somebody – in any field, [including] in [various] fields of art, in industrial fields, in technical fields and so forth – he is a national wealth, he belongs to the country, [and] must be taken advantage of.

Another important issue is the issue of [the country's] development document. Well, experienced and seasoned friends and officials have held sessions, taken trouble, [and] drawn up the development document; very well, [and] it has been notified as well. It was supposed to become operational, [and] five [or] six years have gone by [since its approval] up to the present time, [but] it has not [entered into force]. Why? Till when must we remain idle until

these bylaws, which are said must be realized under the development document, be drawn up? This task must be done sooner. It is clear that there is not necessary enthusiasm [for doing this job, and] there is not necessary motivation [to do this]. I seriously ask the esteemed minister [of education] and [other] esteemed officials to take the issue of [implementing] the development [document] seriously. Our education system needs development. This development document shows that we need development. Development is not limited to changing the appearance of the job [that we do], [but] it means that an in-depth step must be taken. As experts in this field say – because I do not have this expertise – this development documents is apparently able [to do this]; it supports and is sufficient for this [purpose]; [therefore,] it must be followed up.

There is another issue that I must mention here: this 2030 [development] document [drawn up by] United Nations and UNESCO and the likes of these [international bodies], these [kinds of documents] are not among those things, which the Islamic Republic would be able to shoulder responsibility for and submit to them. On what grounds a so-called international organ – which is certainly under the influence of world's big powers – should have the right to dictate its wills to various countries, to various nations with different civilizations, [and] with different historical and cultural backgrounds [and tell them] that you must act in this way? This step is wrong from its outset. If you cannot oppose it at the outset, at least, [you can] stand [against it and] say that the Islamic Republic has its own policy, [and] has its own line of work [in this field]. We have large-scale documents, [and] know what to do in the fields of education, training, ethics, and lifestyle; [therefore,] there is no need to [implement] this document [in Iran].

That we [simply] go and sign this document and then return [to the country and] start implementing it in silence, no, this is absolutely not authorized. I have said this to responsible [state] organs. I have also a complaint about the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. They must have been careful, [and] must not have allowed this step to progress this far, so that, I would have to block it and I [would have to] enter this case. This is the Islamic Republic; here, the base is Islam, [and] the base is the Quran. This is not a place where the faulty, destructive, [and] corrupt lifestyle of the West could exert its influence in this way. Of course, they are, unfortunately, exerting their influence and enter [the country] through various means, but [the fact] that they would officially give us a document [and tell us] that "you must do this [and] do this for the next 15 years," [and expect] us to say 'yes', this step has no meaning.

Well, our meeting has dragged on. I have many things to say to you dear ones [in the] education system. Several times more than I said, there is to tell you, but there is not enough time now to say all of them; [my speech] has taken rather long, but let me briefly talk about elections.

Dear brethren and sisters and the entire Iranian nation, who would hear this! Know that elections are vital; not just these specific elections [that lie ahead], [but] all elections [that are held] in the country, especially the presidential election, which is the most important of all, are really vital for the country in all terms. The mere holding of elections is important – and this is a very important issue, [because] well, [our government] is the Islamic Republic; [I mean, it is a] republic, [and] we are a republic. [Therefore,] our posts and our officials arise from the entirety of the nation, [and arise] from people. We must preserve [this condition] with utmost care, [because] this is very valuable. If this [election phenomenon] did not exist in the Islamic Republic establishment today, there would be no sign of that establishment, which came into being with the revolution; [therefore,] this is very important. This concept is derived and understood from the core of Islam. It is not like that we have adopted the republic [system] and annexed it to Islam. No, Islam itself teaches us this. Now, this is an [independent] issue, but in addition to this, what is immediately and urgently necessary for the management of the country and maintenance of the country and [for meeting] the interests of the nation, is people's participation [in elections]; people's participation is [very important]. People's participation is a problem solver, [and it is] people's participation [in elections] that makes enemies fearful of the might of the Islamic Republic. This is a reality, [and you must] know this.

The Islamic Republic is considered with awe by its enemies; where does this awesomeness come from? Does it emanate from the likes of this humble one and the likes of these? Not at all; this [awesomeness] comes from people, comes from this huge presence of people, comes from these sentiments and emotions, which show themselves in all arenas and in all scenes; I am saying this [quite clearly, therefore,] they should not turn and twist what I have clearly said and say, "No, he means that people's participation [in elections], for example, brings an administration to office, which creates awe in the eyes of enemies;" no sir, administrations have no effect [in this regard]. [Have you] forgotten that during the 1990s, one of the European governments accused our president and summoned him to court? [They dared to summon] the president of Iran! [This happened] despite [the fact] that [our summoned]

president had very close relations with that [European] government; they continuously exchanged messages, exchanged delegates, [and] exchanged letters. Perhaps, sometimes they [even] spoke on phone – now, I do not recollect this phone call, but [they kept] regularly writing letters and [I remember] the letter writing – and he expressed [his friendship toward Iran]. The same government, despite the expression of friendship and respect and interest [in having relations with Iran], summoned our president to the country's courts as an accused person! We punched it in the mouth, which [caused that European government to] backtrack; if it had not been punched in the mouth, they would have gone further [than that]. The enemy is the enemy; [and] it makes no difference whether [the enemy is] this government or that government.

If it can show animosity [and] if it can spit its venom at us, it will do that, [and] will not take anybody into consideration. It will also not take into account [any form of] rhetoric and lip service and political position and the likes of these at all; it is the enemy after all. The factor, which prevents the enemy from exercising its enmity, is the fear of people's presence [in the arena]. It sees that if it shows hostility, it will backfire, because an 80-million-strong nation will stand against it. Is this a joke? We are a population of eighty million [people]; [we are] a grand country with vigilant and smart people, with strong manpower, [and] with all these young people. This is [the main factor], which creates awesomeness in the eyes of the enemies, [and] creates grandeur for the Islamic Republic establishment. [You must] pay attention to this [fact].

If you want this feeling [of awesomeness], this grandeur [and] this immunity [against enemies] continue for us, you must take part in elections. If you want the Islamic Republic establishment maintain its might in the eyes of the world – both enemies and friends – you must take part in elections. Participation in elections [is conducive to] maintaining might of the country, maintaining awesomeness of the country, [and] maintaining immunity of the country; this is [a reality]. In case of any oversight with regard to elections, [and if certain] elements get to work to dissuade, [and] disappoint people and [in case of] any shortcomings with regard to elections, the country will be damaged, [and] will be harmed; [and] anybody who will be a party to [incurring] this damage [to the country], will be held accountable before the Almighty God. Everybody must take part in elections. Of course, there are different [political] affiliations, there are different viewpoints, [and] there are different political tastes; you may like one given candidate, [and] another one [may] like another given candidate; [therefore,] you may vote for [your own] given candidate, [and] the other person may vote for the other given candidate. There is no problem with that, [because] these [differences] are not important. The important point is that everybody [must] come, everybody [must] be [there], [and] everybody must show that they are ready to support [and] defend Islam, the Islamic establishment and the Islamic Republic; [and are ready] to maintain immunity of their country. And know this! If this determination, [and] this willpower, through the divine power and assistance, continues among our people with this very intensity and awesomeness that is currently present, the enemy will never be able to do a damn thing against the country.

O Almighty God! Make whatever we said and heard [dedicated] to yourself and in your path. O Almighty God! Cover by your mercy and favor the purified souls of martyrs, the soul of [our] honorable Imam [Khomeini], [and] the purified souls of the dignitaries of Islam.

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