The Leader’s remarks in meeting with officials of the national congress on the philosophical thoughts of Allameh Ja’afari - 22 /Nov/ 2017

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
I was very delighted when I was informed that tribute was going to be paid to late Allameh [Mohammad Taqi] Ja'afari. The reason is that with regard to this honorable person, who was a very active element in the fields of science and propagation [of Islamic ideas] and religion and arts and the likes of these, no suitable step had been taken commensurate with his personality following his demise. Well, it is common that when it comes to great personalities in a society, their memory, [and] their name is somehow glorified – [and] it is better if this is done when they are still alive, [and] if not, at least, after their demise – so that, others would be able to avail themselves of their scientific identity and real existential nature, which are not perished with death. And this tradition, praise be to God, is common among us as well. I don’t know why with regard to late Allameh Ja'afari (May God’s Mercy Be upon Him), we have not acted upon this usual and common and prevalent habit of ours! Therefore, when I heard that a congress is going to be held about him and [when I was told that] people of Tabriz on one side, scholars from Qom, on the other side, and those who have been scientifically related to him, on the other side, are involved in [holding] this [congress], I was happy; this is really [the] right [thing to do] and this step is [quite] justified.
One of the most prominent characteristics of late Allameh Ja'afari was his comprehensive knowledge. I mean, he was not limited to a specific [scientific] discipline. With regard to what we do as seminary school students, he had worked in the field of both [Islamic] jurisprudence and philosophy. With regard to [Islamic] jurisprudence, he was a pupil of late Amirza Razi Tabrizi in [the Iranian city of] Tabriz. Amirza Razi was a pupil of Akhound. I had met late Amirza Razi; he was the topmost of [Muslim] ulema in Tabriz. At a specific juncture of time, he was number one cleric in Tabriz. Mr. Ja'afari was close to him when he was young, attended his classes and was his pupil [as a result of] which he himself told us stories about his relationship with late Amirza Razi. Then he went to [the Iraqi city of] Najaf. Well, for a number of years in Najaf, he attended classes of Mr. [Ayatollah Abolqasem] Khoei, classes of other [seminary] dignitaries and, apparently, [also attended classes of] late Asheikh Kazem Shirazi. Well, these [classes] turn [a person] into a jurist after all; I mean, after attending this sort of classes, those people who are involved in scientific and religious issues believe that this [person who has attended these classes] is a jurist. He had also worked in the field of philosophical issues and among his characteristics in this sector, which is related to philosophy, was attention to viewpoints of Western philosophers, which since old times, [I mean, since] his youth when I met with him in [the city of] Mashhad, he was well-versed about these issues and discussed them – [including] the viewpoints of [the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich] Hegel and the likes of him [and] such things, which were not yet common at that time and nobody in religious seminaries ever talked about them and did not know them and was not concerned with these issues.
I met him in Mashhad in [the Iranian calendar year 13]33 or [13]34 (1954-55). Well, I was an adolescent [at that time] and he had just arrived [in Mashhad] from Najaf. He had a relative in Mashhad; his paternal uncle was in Mashhad and for some reason – which now there is no need to go into its details – he and his brothers, as they commonly say, secured a foothold in Mashhad, [and] were well-known in Mashhad. For this reason, they went to Mashhad and stayed in Mashhad for a period [of time], which now I do not remember how long. The Navvab Seminary School, where I studied, was a place where he frequently visited, sat down [with students], [and] talked [to them and did it] with that engrossing and sweet way of expression and that beautiful accent; and what he did was [very] attractive. [And there was also] that book of his, which [was titled] Man-World Relationship – [and] he insisted that “do not call it ‘man and the world’, but call it ‘man-world’.” He especially emphasized this. I myself heard from him that said no, it is not “man and the world,” [and he said this when] its first volume had just been printed. He took it to the Navvab Seminary School and some students gathered around him [and] he explained that ‘this is the book, we want to say this, [and] we want to do this’.
Of course, his scientific [way of] expression was not an easy expression [to be understood by everybody], just in the

same way that his scientific written expression is not an easy expression either. Therefore, now, I cannot say anything or make any claims about his philosophical views, [because] those people among our friends, who were more related [to him] are in a better position [to explain his views]. However, well, he was well-versed [about philosophy], [and] was [well] informed. He was [also] very hardworking. In reality, the personality of Mr. Ja'afari (May God's Mercy Be upon Him) [was prominent] in that no part of the humongous scientific and intellectual expanse, made him negligent of the other part. Now, you imagine that he has [written] a book explaining [Mawlavi's] Masnavi and [another] book explaining [Imam Ali (PBUH)'s] Nahj-ul-Balagha at the same time. Well, profound and essential differences exist between Masnavi and Nahj-ul-Balagha. [However, despite these differences,] he has written a detailed commentary on Masnavi [and] then has written a detailed commentary on Nahj-ul-Balagha and made them available to public opinion.

And [he] was also like this from literary and artistic viewpoints. He was an artist by spirit and was art savvy. I remember that in early [years of] the revolution, there was a small session, which was held once a week or once every two weeks, and despite many difficulties that I had [at that time], I tried to take part in it. He was a regular participant in that session in Tehran; some poems were read out [in that session], [and] sometimes difficult poems were read out, [but] he had such a good command in terms of understanding poems and comprehending poems and knowing poems and the likes of these that [it totally] surprised me!

It is well known that people who have a good memory lack intellectual depth; [and] those people who have intellectual depth, do not have a good memory. They say that these two [characteristics] do not go hand in hand. Mr. Ja'afari had proved falsehood of this notion; I mean, he was given to deep thinking, was a thinker and [at the same time,] had an extraordinary memory [as well]. I mean, his memory was really and truly among wonders! When in Mashhad, I used to take a country walk along with late Mr. Ja'afari and three other friends, which [on the whole] we were five people; one of those friends is still alive and the other three, including [Mr. Ja'afari] himself, have passed away. We walked in Mashhad countryside over these mountains and talked; Mr. Ja'afari did not allow you to feel how long the distance was as he was a good talker and warm-blooded and had good command [of subjects he talked about] and was well-prepared in all discussions. Then among [his top features was] his memory [which was really strange]. It was enough for you to refer to a poem [and he read out the rest by heart]. I remember that on one occasion, we were talking about [Iranian poet] Manouchehri, [and] I made a reference [to him]. [While reading a poem by Manouchehri] I said, "Yes, 'now where is my light-footed camel'?" [I read out] half a line of an ode. He started to read out that [long] ode from the beginning to the end, [and he did it] by heart! I mean, he was like that; [his] memory [was] an extraordinary memory and was ready for [discussing] everything.

Among his characteristics, was the feeling of responsibility about propagating the teachings of Islam. He [was] a speaker and, well, had a sweet accent and was assertive. I remember that he was invited [to various sessions] before [the victory of] the revolution. At that time, I was in Mashhad. In Mashhad, he was sometimes invited to some special sessions and he came from Tehran. In Tehran itself, [and] in other places, he held many sessions after the revolution for the youth, for students, for university teachers, for clerics, [and] for the general public and [in those sessions he] promoted and propagated religious teachings. I mean, his scientific standing as well as his intellectual and scientific position did not bar him from descending to the intellectual level of his audience and discuss [various matters with them].

One of his characteristics, which the number of positive characteristics in him was really very high, was that religious zeal. He was extremely zealous about and committed to religious issues and was sensitive about deviations that emerged in the words and thoughts of some people, and dealt with them head-on. Well, he had many enemies and [some people] even insulted him, but at the same time, he stood fast in [the middle of] this arena. And truly and fairly speaking, Mr. Ja'afari (May God's Mercy Be upon Him) was a prominent element and personality.

He was a patient person [as well]. Despite all these spiritual characteristics and subtleties in him, he was a patient person. He went through difficult times, [including when] his sister died, [in addition to] his wife. I mean, he went through such hardships in his life as well, but at the same time, he was unfaltering and steadfast; [and] was a strong man and a patient and highly resistant man.

I hope, God willing, the Almighty God would help you be able to work on his thoughts. I mean, we must learn this from people in the West, who [never] let go of their intellectual personalities and their prominent figures. Now,

[their efforts] are not limited to recounting biography [of those prominent figures], but they also pay attention to expounding their thoughts and various aspects of their thoughts. [To do this,] they write many and numerous books about them, [and] criticize them [as well]; some people oppose them, some support them, [and] some argue [in their favor]. Such steps must be taken with respect to our intellectual figures, including late Mr. Ja'afari, which I hope that, God willing, [through] this commemoration [conference] that you have organized, you would be able to do this [and] trigger this movement and bring Mr. Ja'afari himself and his thoughts out of [the current state of] negligence. At any rate, I thank all of you esteemed gentlemen who have been involved [in organizing this event], both the people of Tabriz, and scholars from Qom and scholars from Tehran. I thank all people who are involved in doing this job.

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