Speech during the meeting with officials of the system, representatives of Islamic countries, and various groups of people - 8 /Feb/ 2024

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful (1).

All praise belongs to Allah, the Nurturer of the creatures of intellect, and peace and security be upon our Master and Messenger, Abol-Qassim Al-Mostafa Muhammad, and his untainted, pure, chosen progeny, particularly the last Remainder of Allah on the earth.

Congratulations on the auspicious and noble occasion of Eid Mab'ath, i.e. (the Festive day of the First day of Revelation and prophethood) to the dear and respected people present, the Iranian nation, and all Muslims in the world. Eid Mab'ath commemorates the greatest event in history; one dares to say the most blessed and most extraordinary occurrence for humanity throughout history is the divine appointment of the Holy Prophet of Islam. The same can be said about the birth of this honourable one; that is a blessing of divine appointment. How can one ascribe so much virtue and value to the divine appointment of Prophet Muhammad? Because with this event, the complete and final prescription for mankind's felicity in this world and in the other world was presented: the complete, final, eternal, and permanent instructions for the fulfilment of humankind, whether in this world or the hereafter, were bestowed at this event.

The first miracle and extraordinary event one witness, in this case, is the divine appointment taking place under unfavourable conditions at the time; the divine mission began along with this strange affair. On that day, the world was entire of deviation, perversity, and calamity for humankind. Regarding the Age of Ignorance in which the Prophet (sawas) began his mission, Amir al-Mu'minin [Ali ibn Abi Talib] (as) has said:

وَ الدُّنيا كاسِفَةُ النّور ظاهِرَةُ الغُرور؛

"The World was full of ignorance, and arrogance was widely spread!"

The world was dark, there was no growth, awareness, or insight among the people.

قَد دَرَسَت مَنارُ الهُدىٰ؛ .

"The path of lanterns for guidance are extinguished!"

The guidance the prophets had brought, the beacons and minarets of guidance they had put before and along the path of the people had become worn, manipulated, broken, and distorted.

وَ ظَهَرَت اَعلامُ الرَّدىٰ؛

"And the signs of death (of spirituality) were visible!"

The signs of the decline and fall of humankind were evident. This describes the world:

وَ الدُّنيا كاسِفَةُ النّور

"As the world was overwhelmed with darkness!"

The discussion is not just about the Arabs or the Arab peninsula, or the Iranian, Roman, or other great civilizations that existed in the world on that day; the words of Amir al-Mu'minin encompass all of them. The awakening and this appointment took place, and we and others have spoken extensively about this awakening [3]. The inner awakening of the Prophet (sawas) and then the overflow of that awakening into society are other points of discussion. The awakening took place. What the plan of action was for this mission is what I want to explore. In various verses of the Qur'an, this plan has been defined. One such verse is this noble one from Surah Juma'a:

هُوَ الَّذی بَعَثَ فِی الأُمِّیّینَ رَسولاً مِنهُم یَتلوا عَلَیهِم آیاتِهِ وَ یُزَکّیهِم وَ یُعَلِّمُهُمُ الکِتابَ وَ الحِکمَة.

"He is the One Who has dispatched a messenger from the unlettered [people] among themselves, to recite His verses to them and purify them and teach them the Book and wisdom….."

(4) This is the plan of action.

یَتلوا عَلَیهِم آیاتِهِ؛

"To recite for them the Divine verses!"

The first step on this transformative journey is to open the door to connecting with the unseen and the divine. The material person, confined and trapped in the framework of materialism, is to be taken out of this framework and admitted into the vast space of divine knowledge. This journey begins with faith, a beacon of hope that guides us towards the divine.

Once humankind is removed from the limited, narrow walls of materialism, it is purified«یهذّبهم». To purify means to elevate and improve by removing flaws and defects – to remove blemishes from the object of purification, to give it luster and make it ready to grow, develop, and improve; this is what purification means. So, what needs to be purified? It is not simply a matter of purifying one's morals; this is important. Purifying means removing the ugly, evil, and falseness from the inside of human beings, from our inner morality, from society, and from our beliefs, actions, behavior, and lifestyle; this is the meaning of purification. It is a broad movement to reform the affairs of individuals and society in all dimensions, including politics, economics, and social relations, addressing social and global injustices at the government as well as at the individual level, and closing the gaps between classes. Purification includes all of these.

After the issue of purification comes the matter of education, not that both issues cannot be addressed at the same time. No, the process is gradual; purifying is gradual, and it is accompanied by education. What is education? When the mind and spirit is ready, when the groundwork is laid by removing the darkness, flaws, imperfections, and falseness, then it is time for the manifestation of the light of divine wisdom and knowledge. Now, the discussion entails divine wisdom and is a long and detailed discussion. In fact, purification cleanses the basis, and education, in terms of spirituality, awareness, and knowledge, enhances a person and enriches society. A person is built on the scale of Islam; a person's training emerges from that which Islam demands of and desires for a person. The current problems of us all and of all humanity lie here.

This awakening, this transformation, this dissemination of goodness, beauty, and light, and the eradication of darkness, misery, etc., is not a one-time event. It is a continuous process, a journey that requires our constant commitment and dedication. We can't say that this awakening happened once and is over, and whatever happens next is a result of that first awakening. No, it is not like that, and this verse does not say that.

This verse says:

هُوَ الَّذی بَعَثَ فِی الأُمِّیّینَ رَسولاً مِنهُم یَتلوا عَلَیهِم آیاتِهِ وَ یُزَکّیهِم وَ یُعَلِّمُهُمُ الکِتابَ وَ الحِکمَةَ وَ اِن کانوا مِن قَبلُ لَفی ضَلالٍ مُبینٍ * وَ

آخَرينَ مِنهُم لَمّا يَلحَقوا بِهِم؛(

“He is the One Who raised for the illiterate ˹people˺ a messenger from among themselves—reciting to them His revelations, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, for indeed they had previously been clearly astray, along with others of them who have not yet joined them ˹in faith˺.”

This awakening is among those people and among the last of them. The word “واو” is in reference to َينِّيِّمُالا. The awakening is among them and the last of them. Who are the "last"? The people who are yet to comeَمَلحَيِ ٱمهِبِ قوَالَ. In other words, until now, we have been spectators of the awakening. The awakening is also among us. In other words, the holy Prophet of Islam is in the process of educating and purifying us; right now, we are spectators of the awakening. Throughout the eternal history of mankind, this is how it will be; humanity will always be the subject of education and purification by the Holy Prophet (sawas).

Just as the Prophet (sawas) in those days invited the people to dissociate from idols and break them, today the same invitation exists. The first idol is within ourselves: the idol of our ego, and according to the Imam (may Allah be pleased with him), that dangerous beast within our being is the first danger; in other words, the first struggle is against that which is the closest enemy to us and is the enemy of our soul. We must fight against our ego. Then come the deviations outside. The first thing to do then is to reform the closest area, our own community. Some will say, “You want to reform the world; first reform yourself!” Of course, we must first reform ourselves; we must first reform our society. This is the dictate of the noble Prophet of Islam (sawas) and the awakening of Islam within ourselves, to first reform ourselves. If we become reformed, if we show humanity a correct version of Islam, it will have its own appeal and attract [people].

Purification and education have two sides: one is the side of the inviter, and the other is that of the invitee. The inviter is [the Prophet]; the Prophet is inviting all of us today. However, if the invitee does not respond, then nothing will happen. What happened in our revolution was that the invitees responded. The honorable Imam spoke the words of the Prophet (sawas) to the people, and he spoke about the arising of the Prophet (sawas). He enjoined the people to struggle for Islam, and the people responded. This great movement occurred; the great event was accomplished. In continuance, our people, through divine fortune and by the grace of God, have persisted in moving along the right path. Successes have been achieved, and sometimes we have fallen short and have failed.

This tradition continues; it is perpetual. As long as we answer the call of the Prophet (sawas), purification will be attained, education will be achieved, and growth and progress will come to pass. The development, too, is not only spiritual, otherworldly growth:

رَبَّنا آتِنا فِی الدُّنیا حَسَنَةً وَ فِی الآخِرَةِ حَسَنَة»

“Oh God, shower us with Your Mercy in this World and in the Hereafter”

It is growth in this world and in the hereafter, happiness in this world and in the hereafter; it is modelling the best lifestyle for the world of mankind, society, and the hereafter. If we are invited and we respond, this will become a reality. There is an inviter; the Prophet (sawas) is inviting us now. We are the last ones who will “catch up with them.” We must respond. On the Eid of al-Mab'ath, the anniversary of the arising, we must be aware that we are also being addressed in the arising of the holy Prophet of Islam (sawas). If we do not answer, then it will be the same as the end of the noble verse says:

مَثَلُ الَّذینَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوراةَ ثُمَّ لَم یَحمِلوها؛

“The example of those who were entrusted with ˹observing˺ the Torah but failed to do so.”

The Torah was given to them. In the Torah, there was light, divine wisdom, the divine invitation. The Torah was a collection of divine orders. They did not act upon them. If we, too, do not act upon them, it will be just like that:

مَثَلُ الَّذينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوراةَ ثُمَّ لَم يَحمِلوها

“The example of those who were entrusted with ˹observing˺ the Torah but failed to do so.”

This is the topic of the awakening that I have presented.

Today, the world needs this invitation. The world needs this awakening. Today, the lives of people in the world are not good. There are good aspects in some parts of the world, [but] these aspects are not indications of the happiness of those societies; in those societies, as in all others, there is poverty, misery, oppression, and injustice. Today, humankind is caught up in the framework of materialism. They urgently need the Prophet’s purification, education, and awakening. We have a responsibility. It is our responsibility to build ourselves and show the world how an Islamic country, an Islamic society, can be governed and act in the true sense of the word, as we have done in some cases. And thank God, it has had its effects on the world. We do have shortcomings, but thank God we also have successes.

Let me briefly talk about Gaza. Unfortunately, the Gaza tragedy continues. This is a tragedy for the Islamic world, and even greater than that, it is a tragedy for all of humanity. It is an indication of how the present world order is a futile one; that is, an important part of the world powers are behind the criminal and blood-stained hands of the Zionist regime, whose adversaries are not fighters but children, women, the infirm, hospitals, and people's homes. America stands behind this regime, as does Britain and many European countries and their colonies and their underlings, i.e., countries that are subordinate to them and follow them. You see, the invalidity of this world order can be understood from this Gaza calamity, and this is not sustainable. It cannot be sustained, and it will collapse.

The incident in Gaza has exposed Western civilization and Western culture to the world; it has revealed their civilization to be one in which cruelty is so prevalent and acceptable that we see before our very eyes that they bomb hospitals and kill hundreds of people in one night. In a three-to-four-month period, they have murdered at least 30,000 people, most of whom were women and children, in only one region! And behind the Zionist regime is America; the Zionists themselves say this – they admit it! They say that if it were not for American weapons, the Zionist regime could not have continued and pursued this war even for one day. From the first day, America sent them weapons, money, weapons, political aid, and so on. America, too, is guilty and responsible for this bitter calamity. The only solution is for the big world powers to stand aside. Pro-Zionist powers must withdraw from this issue, and the Palestinian resistance fighters know how to manage the battlefield themselves, just as they have managed to date. So far, praise be to God; they have not suffered a significant or severe blow. The Zionists’ opponents are the oppressed and defenseless people who are there. What governments must do is cut off political, propagandistic, and military aid as well as the delivery of consumer goods to the Zionist regime; this is the duty of governments. What nations’ citizens must do is pressure their governments to perform this great task. This must be done, and God willing, with divine grace, day by day the victory of the people of Palestine will be manifested.

We hope that the oppressed people of Palestine, Gaza, and other areas of Palestine will witness victory and be able to bring their enemy to their knees, God willing. Peace be upon you, and Allah’s mercy and blessings be with you.

References:

At the beginning of the meeting, Hojjatoleslam Seyyid Ibrahim Raisi (president) spoke. Nahjul-Balaqa, Sermon 89 Including speeches given in meetings with government officials and ambassadors from Islamic countries (16/2/1395). Surah Jum’ah, part of verse 2. Surah Jum’ah, verse 2 and part of verse 3: “It is He Who has sent amongst the unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to recite to them these signs, to purify them, and to

instruct them in scripture and wisdom, even though they had previously been in manifest error, and (to confer all these benefits upon) others of them, who have not already joined them …" Surah Baqareh, part of verses 201: "Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter …" Suran Jum'ah, part of verse 5: "The similitude of those who were charged with the (obligations of) Mosaic law, but who subsequently failed in those (obligations) …"