Speech given in visit with members of the Assembly of Experts of the Leadership - 7 /Mar/ 2024

In the name of God, the most Compassionate, the All-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.

I welcome each of the honorable gentlemen and ask God Almighty to increase the success of these gentlemen, and I commemorate the brothers and friends who were in this group but have gone to the mercy of God in this past year, the last of whom was the late Mr. Emami (2) (God have mercy on his soul). God, if You so will, include them and us in Your vast mercy.

The statements that Mr. Bushehri (3) quoted from the gentlemen were very excellent and comprehensive. In fact, all or most of the things that are needed for the country, the officials, and for all of us that were mentioned at this summit have been addressed. May God, if He so wills, help us and all who are responsible to act upon these recommendations.

Let me say a few words about the days remaining in the blessed month of Sha'ban. The month of Sha'ban is the month of glad tidings, the month of happiness, the month of cleansing and illuminating the hearts through seeking forgiveness, supplicating, and praying; it is the month of preparing to enter the endless and interminable blessings of the month of Ramadhan. The requests of a person in this month are of a special kind.

هَب لی کَمَالَ اِلانقِطَاعِ اِلَیکَ؛(۴) «هَب لی قَلباً یُدنیهِ مِنکَ شَوقُهُ وَ لِساناً یَرفَعُهُ اَلَیکَ صِدقُه».

These requests are total light, total grace, total spirituality. A big part of this month has passed, and we have to say:

اَللهُمَّ اِن لَم تَکُن غَفَرتَ لَنا فیما مَضی مِن شَهر شَعبانَ فَاغفِر لَنا فیما بَقیَ مِنه» ان‌شاءالله (6)

If He so wills, may God help us to make good use of the remaining days; perhaps, if He so wills, God will favor us.

This year, the months of Bahman and Esfand have been particularly significant, marked by the emergence of signs of Islamic democracy. From the Ten Days of Dawn and the spirited demonstration of 22nd Bahman to the elections in Esfand and the establishment of the Assembly of Experts, these events are all indicative of Islamic democracy and the Islamic Republic. Today, I will provide a concise overview of the Islamic Republic, direct a brief message to the Assembly of Experts, and touch upon the Islamic Consultative Assembly. These are the key points of our discussion today, designed to keep you informed and engaged.

As for the issue of the Islamic Republic, you know, the birth of the Islamic Republic created a global sensation; it made an earthquake. It was an international phenomenon, not just a regional one or one relevant to a single country. The leadership of the Imam (God bless him) and the support, courage, and sacrifice of the Iranian nation throughout the country effectuated an incident that created a double front line of battle in the world: one, a front of democracies affiliated with liberal democracy – I don't want to interpret it as a "school" now. The other was the front line of a republic related to religion and Islam, even originating from religion and Islam. These two front lines came into existence; there were no such two fronts before the formation of the Islamic Republic. This forming of the fronts

has naturally taken a toll on both sides; the incompatibility between the two fronts was a natural occurrence, and this incompatibility began on day one.

It should not be imagined that this conflict is only because of the issue of adherence to religion, that one party is committed to religion, while the other party is indifferent or, for example, lacking commitment to religion; it was not just that. Of course, this appeared to be the case, but the depth of the dissent and incompatibility and possibly the militancy is greater than these. The problem was that the faction of the prevailing Western democracy felt that this new paradigm that had been proposed conflicted with its main interests and perhaps ultimately with its existence thought. Since the first days of the Islamic Republic, this feeling generally arose on the opposite side and is being intensified and strengthened day by day.

This profound hostility and opposition are because in the essence of the liberal democracy system and the regimes and governments based on its logic and approach (7), arrogance exists; invasion and violation exist. Arrogance, as the term is used in the Islamic Revolution, means oppression, violation, and aggression toward nations. In its essence, these traits exist. Those regimes and governments saw and felt their wealth, power, and absolute sovereignty in attacking and violating weak nations and countries. The proof is that at the peak of the popularity of the slogans of that faction, namely the slogans of democracy, the slogan of freedom, and human rights, which occurred in the nineteenth century, simultaneously to these slogans, the most remarkable colonial movement of that faction took place in the same period, that is the colonization of countries in Asia, colonization of many countries in Africa and Latin America. The peak of this movement occurred in the nineteenth century and continued slightly into the twentieth century. The two happened together. The nineteenth century saw both these slogans and the arrogant colonial movement accompanied by oppression and a total disregard for the rights of nations.

Well, naturally, when there is no spirituality, the groundwork is laid for oppression, enmity, and aggression. When one group feels robust and can increase its own wealth, power, and capabilities by pressuring and taking over another country and confiscating its wealth, for example, a country like India, which in those days had riches and industry and was considered a relatively advanced country in that period, then why not? When there is no spirituality, what impediment exists? If one can, one will, and one did. Colonialism took place in an essential part of Asia, in East Asia, in India, in the countries around India, and so on; it happened in Africa and Latin America. Of course, it had also happened in North America before that; with much struggle and effort, they had freed themselves, or it would still be under colonialism. This is the character of this front.

The opposite front came about through the formation of a religious democracy. Its most important issue is confronting the same problems, i.e., fighting oppression, imperiousness, and invasion. It is like this. In other words, the basis of the work of a government founded on religion and Islam, «لا تَظلِمونَ وَ لا تُظلَمون» (8)

The basis of its work is to confront the oppressor, to fight against the oppressor.

اَلَّذینَ آمَنوا یُقاتِلونَ فی سَبیلِ اللَه. (9)

So naturally, this confrontation, this two-sided militancy, came into existence through necessity. This is a reality that has taken place. Of course, there are many details; much can be said about this, and one of the characteristics of this is colonialism, as I have mentioned.

Endless war and bloodshed for power are among the characteristics of this so-called democracy, and it is remote from spirituality and religion, detached from concepts, religious wisdom, and religious teachings. In Europe, too, many of these bitter events have taken place; however, when confronted by non-Europeans, they are united. When their minds are free, however, they differ among themselves. In the nineteenth century, there were many circumstances of problems, tragedies in Europe, wars, killings, invasions against each other, and cruel overthrows, etc., however, they have nothing to do with our current issues.

So, what is it I want to gain from this discussion? The conclusion of my statement is that first, the Islamic Republic's conflict with those who oppose them is a conflict against oppression, opposition to imperiousness, opposition against aggression. Do not ask why we declare opposition against a particular country. We have no disagreement with governments, countries, or nations per se; we oppose oppression, we oppose imperialism, we oppose aggression, we oppose those calamities that you are witnessing today in Gaza. We disagree with a nation, a landowner, in their own home, in their own land, being subjected to such great oppression; their wives, their children, their families, their homes, their infrastructure, their possessions are ruthlessly and with total hard-heartedness being destroyed, demolished, and other countries just watch. Not only do they not protest, they do not prevent it, rather they even help. The US is helping, England is helping, and some other European countries are helping. Our position is that we oppose it! That which places the Islamic Republic against the opposite front is the very concept that reason, tradition, every legal code and religion, even the human conscience condemns it! We oppose these acts. And the Islamic Republic opposes it. Even the Qur'an mentions the disbelievers and says:

(10) : لا یَنهاکُمُ اللَهُ عَنِ الَّذینَ لَم یُقاتِلوکُم فِی الدّینِ وَ لَم یُخرجوکُم مِن دِیارکُم اَن تَبَرّوهُم وَ تُقسِطوا اِلَیهِم؛

"If there is a disbeliever who will abide by the conditions of Islam in dealings, then there is no problem [in dealing] with him."

When the armies of Islam went and conquered the regions of the Levant and the like, which belonged to Rome, the Jews who were there said to the Muslims, "Welcome! Your justice saved us. The Jews of that time were under pressure by the rule of the Roman Empire. They said, "The justice of you Muslims has saved us. This is how it was; they would enter, and their justice and equity would be witnessed. It was the same with the infidels. The issue is aggression, oppression, and colonialism. The first thing to do is to show the opposition and confrontation of the Islamic Republic, the facing off of the Islamic Republic with republics that have hidden behind the name of democracy, human rights, and liberalism because of the nucleus of their workings, the context of their actions, which is composed of oppression and imperiousness, and so on. This is the first conclusion we want to draw from this thread.

The second conclusion we reach is that we must always hold the flag of resistance to imperialism high. We must be careful that the Islamic Republic never allows this flag of anti-imperialism to be taken away from it at any time. We must pioneer onward, be the leader, and raise this flag higher and more widely every day.

The third and final conclusion is that we must elucidate this truth for each of our new generations. Our youth should know, the youth of this generation and the youth of future generations must know what the position of the Islamic Republic is and what this resistance is. Of course, fortunately, in the past forty and some years that have passed in the life of the Islamic Republic, we have been successful, in both the region and the world, in showing this face, this line of defense, this direction of the Islamic Republic to the world of humanity. This is our first message.

As for the Assembly of Experts, it is my message that the Assembly of Experts is actually responsible for the most important task; "appointing the Supreme Leader" and "taking care of preserving the competence of said leadership" are among the great tasks, perhaps even the greatest task in managing the Iranian society in the Islamic Republic. The Assembly of Experts must take care in their choices for selections and elections not to neglect the set principles of the Islamic Republic. This is very important. In other words, selecting the leadership must be done while observing and obeying the fixed principles which are paramount and constant in the Islamic Republic. We have two kinds of rulings: fixed rulings and modifiable ones. In Islam as well in secondary subjects, we have rulings that can be changed. The same is true in the Islamic Republic: some rulings can be changed under certain provisions. It is mentioned in the Constitution itself; for example, in Asl 44, according to the subarticle of that principle, in some cases, it can be changed. We have many cases of this type; but we also have fixed principles that are not subject to change. These principles can be found in the Constitution and also in the speeches of the Imam (God bless him). They can also be found in Islamic teachings. These should be considered, like in the administration of justice,

fighting corruption, raising the level of Islamic knowledge, and raising the level of Islamic practice in society. These are fixed principles that are unchangeable. This is a reminder and advice (11) from this humble man to those throughout time who are present and responsible in the Assembly of Experts.

Let me say a word about the Parliament. Each new Parliament (12) carries new hopes and new dreams. When a new parliament is convened, along with it, come new hopes and new perspectives. New representatives enter the new Parliament, and alongside them are experienced representatives from previous periods; this is a very good combination, a very good group. There is innovation in it, renovation in it, and experience in it. They use their experience with previous successes; new initiatives are coming as well. This is a valuable asset.

Every new Parliament is a valuable and worthwhile asset for the country; this should be appreciated. It is like new blood flowing through the veins of the political and social network of the country, and if God will, it will be effective. It's a sweet event, but this sweet event can be made bitter, like all the sweet truths in the world. Some factors exist, some agents, that can destroy this sweetness. I have noted some things that can destroy the sweetness of the new Parliament: discordant speeches, quarrelling, and confrontational behaviour the enemy would like; these are things that can destroy the sweetness of the new Parliament. You have to be careful; you have to be very careful.

Brothers and sisters who will be present in the new Parliament which will convene a short while later must take care not to let the sweetness of the new assembly be destroyed and the taste become bitter. If they do not watch out for these things, the first sign will be that the nation's palate becomes bitter, and the political atmosphere of the country will become a bitter one. While the elections and, the formation of a new parliament and the arrival of new people and so on will create a new and fresh atmosphere, this will destroy it. This is the first effect.

The next effect is that the Parliament will fail to function; that is, when the Islamic Consultative Assembly is stricken with fights, confrontations, oppositions, and various front lines, it naturally gets bogged down in its primary task: forming groups and conflicts prevent them from getting to work.

And I would like to say that now, we do have an Islamic democracy; the term "Islamic" is very important. It is not just applicable in political environments. That is, Islamic-ness and the Islamic Republic are not simply a political model that we have presented; yes, that, too, is one of the most important parts of the work, but it is not the only part.

A major indicator of the Islamic Republic is that those involved in the Islamic Republic should be versed in religious jurisprudence and adhere [to rules] on prohibited and sanctioned, lying, gossiping, slander, etc. Just as we must be careful and pious in our private affairs and avoid forbidden things, the same is true in the political environment and in political work; forbidden things must be avoided.

This must be a priority over all else. Imam Ali (a.s.) says:

لَو َلا التُّقیٰ لَکُنتُ اَدهَی العَرَب (13)

"Piety will prevent many of a person’s acts." In the letters and rulings in Nahj al-Balaqa that Amir Al-Mo’minin (as) sent to his governors, many of them – I can’t say most, but many of them –begin with:

کتابی الی فلان، اَمَرَهُ بِتَقوَی اللّٰه (14)

The first advice is:

اَمَرَهُ بِتَقوَی اللّٰه

Advised him to follow the path of God-wariness!

In the famous ruling and decree, he gave to Malik Ashtar, he says:

(15) اَمَرَهُ بِتَقوَی اللّهِ وَ اِیثار طاعَتِه

This is how Imam Ali (as) emphasizes this or

(16) «اِنطَلِق عَلی تَقوَی اللَه»

Divine righteousness is recommended. Therefore, in political affairs, encounters, and groupings—and naturally, certain types of groupings will occur because of differences in predilection, and there is no problem with that—one must maintain piety. A person must strictly avoid religiously forbidden things. If one does, God willing, the results will be good, and Almighty God will bless them.

We hope that, if He so wills, Almighty God will make this humble speaker an agent of these words, and if He so wills, God give the hearer success in allowing these words to affect their hearts and enable us to hear the Word of God, and we will be able to perform our jobs and fulfill our responsibilities according to our religious duty.

Peace and the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

References:

1. At the beginning of this meeting that took place at the end of the 13th summit of the 5th session of the Assembly of Experts of Leadership, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati (Chairmain of the Assembly of Experts) and Hojjatoleslam wal-muslimeen Seyyed Hashem Hosseini Bushehri (member of the Board of Directors of the Assembly of Experts of Leadership) presented discussions.

2. Ayatollah Mohammad Amami Kashani, on 12 Esfand 1402, submitted his soul to divine mercy.

3. Head of the Secretariat of the Assembly of Experts of Leadership

4. Supplications and Deeds, vol. 2, p. 687; “Oh God! Grant me complete detachment toward You.”

5. Supplications and Deeds, vol 2, p. 687; “Oh God! Grant me a heart that is eager to be near you and a tongue whose words of truth rise to You.”

6. Supplications and Deeds, vol. 1, p. 9

7. Style, behavior

8. Surah Baqara, part of verse 279: “ … Deal not unjustly, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly.”

9. Surah An-Nisa, part of verse 76: “Those who have believed, fight in the cause of Allah …”

10. Surah Mumtahina, part of verse 8: “God does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes …”

11. Counsel, advice

12. 12th elections for Islamic Consultative Assembly which took place on 11th Esfand.

13. Kafi, vol. 8, p. 24; “If piety allowed it, I would be the most cunning and cleverest of Arabs.”

14. Nahj al-Balaqa, letter 26 (among others)

15. Nahj al-Balaqa, letter 53

16. Nahj al-Balaqa, letter 25 (among others)