Remarks made in the meeting with state officials, ambassadors of Islamic countries, and guests of the Conference on Islamic Unity. - 21 /Sep/ 2024

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful[i]

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon our Master and Prophet, Abu al-Qasim al-Mustafa Muhammad, and upon his most pure, chosen family, his chosen Companions, and those who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

I want to extend a warm welcome to all you dear brothers and sisters, the guests of Unity Week, and the representatives of Islamic countries in Tehran. I offer my congratulations on the birth of the Great Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him). We hope that Allah willing, He will make this day a blessed celebration for the nation of Iran, the entire Islamic Ummah, and Muslims all around the world.

The birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) is an exceptional day in history. This is because the birth of the Noble Prophet is the essential and necessary prelude to the final Prophethood, which is, in fact, the ultimate and complete plan for the happiness and elevation of humanity. Therefore, the day of his birth is extremely important.

I want to say a few words about the general mission of the prophets. Let's compare the general movement of human history to a caravan travelling along a path, with humanity progressing over time. Certainly, the leaders and guides of this caravan are the divine prophets. The divine prophets not only show the path but also strengthen the ability of the individual to discern the right direction. It is not just about showing the way; they enhance the capacity for recognition among all of humanity. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) says, “To make them fulfil the pledge of their innate nature, to remind them of forgotten blessings, and to unveil for them the hidden treasures of the intellect.[ii]” This is how they interact with people. They awaken the innate nature (fitrah) and activate the power of reasoning and thought, enabling it to function. Through this, humanity can move forward. Of course, throughout time, there have been periods where individuals in this caravan of humanity listened to the prophets, followed the path they showed, and witnessed its results. In other periods, however, they stood against the prophets, ignored their guidance, and disregarded their direction, and there, too, they experienced negative consequences. These variations in human history, where some have been guided and others have not, have created the complexities of human history—creating oppositions, conflicts, the struggle between right and wrong and between faith and disbelief. This is the overall picture of human history.

The prophets carried out this guidance, care, assistance to humanity, and invitation through various means. The Qur'an describes all of these methods in different sections. Now, let me mention a few examples. In one place, it says, “Our duty is only to convey the message clearly” (Qur'an 36:17)[iii]. It means the Prophet's duty is to 'deliver' the message; that's all, nothing else, in some situations, it's like this; however, in other circumstances, it says, “We did not send any messenger except that he should be obeyed by the permission of Allah” (Qur'an 4:64)[iv]. This means he must establish a political structure, motivate the society, and the people among other things are obliged to listen and obey. In one place, it says, “Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction and argue with them in a way that is best” (Qur'an 16:125)[v]. This is the method of invitation. In another instance, it is stated: “And how many a prophet fought and along with him fought many godly men until the end, but they were not

disheartened by what afflicted them in the cause of Allah” (Qur'an 3:146)[vi]. In one situation, gentle speech is used, while in another, military power is emphasised; it depends on the circumstances. For instance, it says, 'So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude in speech and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you” (Qur'an 3:159)[vii]. The term “harshness” is used here, “harsh of heart”; if that were the case, you would not have been able to carry out this movement. In another instance, it is said: “Strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be harsh upon them” (Qur'an 9:73)[viii]; it advises the same 'harshness' here. Therefore, the method of invitation is not the same. The approach of the prophets varies according to different conditions, times, and places. When we say that they elevate human intellect and enhance discernment, it means that at any given time, they assess how to spread and advance this invitation.

Well, what we have mentioned is a description. In this grand caravan of human history, we said that the prophets are the leaders of the caravan; among this series of guides and caravan leaders, the true, ultimate, and primary caravan leader is, without a doubt, the sacred presence of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family). As a great mystic said:

“In this path, the prophets are like caravan leaders,

They are the reason and guides of the caravan.

And among them, our master has become the leader,

He is both the first and the last in this journey.[ix]”

He is the 'First' because he stands at the forefront of the ranks of the divine prophets; he is the 'Last' because he presents the most complete and final divine plan to humanity.

Well, the day of the Prophet's birth is naturally the day of the rise of this sun, the day when this unique gem of existence was unveiled; therefore, it is a tremendous and significant day. We should not underestimate the day of the Prophet's birth. We must learn from this; mere description and praise are not enough. The lesson of the Prophet is a complete, comprehensive, and all-encompassing lesson applicable to all aspects of life; every part of it can be explained, elaborated on, and described extensively.

One of the Prophet's lessons about life and his invitation—which may be one of the greatest prophetic lessons for us—is the concept of nation-building, the formation of the Islamic Ummah. Those thirteen years of struggle in Mecca culminated in the Hijrah, which established the Islamic Ummah. The Islamic Ummah began with the Hijrah and continued through the hardships, struggles, and hunger faced by the people of the Suffah[x] and the people of Medina—where the Muhajirun (Emigrants) endured one type of hardship, and the Ansar (Helpers) another. The Islamic Ummah was strengthened through sacrifices and struggles, both during the blessed life of the Prophet and through the selflessness that followed his passing. It is these acts of sacrifice that allowed this Ummah to endure. Certainly, it could have been managed better, but the Islamic Ummah, established by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina with a limited population, had endured. Today, we need this lesson; we currently lack an Islamic Ummah. There are many Islamic countries, with nearly two billion Muslims living in the world, but we cannot label this collection as an 'Ummah' because they are not unified and lack a common direction. An Ummah refers to a collection of individuals moving in one direction towards a common goal with a shared motivation. We are not like that; we are fragmented. The consequence of this fragmentation is the dominance of the enemies of Islam. As a result of this division, certain Islamic countries feel that to maintain themselves, they must rely on the U.S.; if we were united, they would not feel this need. We could have stood back to back, hand in hand, utilising each other's resources, helping one another, and forming a 'unit'; this unit could have been stronger than all the powers in the world today. Just as it once was, despite all the flaws and issues that existed then, they were considered a power because they were united; today, we are not like that. This is our greatest lesson today; we must come closer

together.

We should pursue establishing an Islamic ummah today. Who can help in this matter? Governments can have an impact. However, their motivation is often not very strong. Those who can strengthen this motivation are the elites of the Islamic world, meaning people like you: politicians, scholars, intellectuals, academics, influential and thoughtful individuals, poets, writers, and political and social analysts. These people can make an impact. Imagine if, for ten years, all the media in the Islamic world focused on Muslim unity—writing articles, poets composing poems, analysts providing insights, university professors explaining it, and religious scholars issuing rulings. Without a doubt, the situation would completely change in the course of that ten years. When nations become aware and interested, their governments will be compelled to move in that direction. Influential figures can make this happen; this is our duty.

Of course, what I am saying is that creating this unity and forming an Islamic Ummah—has enemies, the enemies of Islam. Focus and reflect on the term, 'enemies of Islam'; it is not just about enemies of a particular country. Some may appear to align with part of the Muslim world to destroy another part, but in reality, they are enemies of Islam. They don't want this Islamic Ummah to be formed; they don't want this unity to arise, so they activate religious schisms within the Islamic world.

One of the most problematic fault lines between societies is the ideological and religious fault line, similar to the fault lines associated with earthquakes. If this fault line becomes active, deactivating it will not be easy. The Crusades lasted for two hundred years and were genuinely religious wars fought based on religious fanaticism. They will not allow it, and they do not want it to happen. We must overcome the enemy's will. The reason our great Imam, even before the victory of the Revolution, emphasised the unity of the Islamic world and the unity of Shia and Sunni so much is because the strength of the Islamic world comes from unity, while the enemy wants the opposite and acts accordingly. This is our lesson today from the Prophet.

Of course, we and the people of our own country must also realise that if we want our message of unity to be sincerely received in the world, we must create this unity among ourselves. Differences in taste, opinion, politics, and the like should not affect the unity, cooperation, and harmony of the nation; we must pursue actual goals. If this happens, then the enemy will no longer be able to allow a vile, corrupt entity like the Zionist regime to commit such atrocities in this region. Just look at what the Zionist regime is doing today! The crimes they commit are shameless and without any attempt at concealment; in Gaza, they do it in one way, in the West Bank in another, in Lebanon in another, and in Syria in another way; they commit crimes in the truest sense of the word. Their opponents are not warriors; they are ordinary people. They could not strike at the warriors in Palestine, so they unleashed their ignorant and malicious rage on small children, on hospital patients, and upon the schools of innocent children. This is because we are not utilising our inner strength, which we must do. This internal strength can uproot the Zionist regime, this vile cancerous tumour from the heart of the Islamic community, which is Palestine and eliminate and remove the influence, dominance, and coercive intervention of the United States in this region; we can do this.

Today, the first step and the initial action in the unity of the Islamic world against this criminal gang and terrorist group that rules Palestine and reduced the land of Palestine to rubble is for Islamic countries to cut off their economic relations with this criminal gang completely; this is the least they can do; this action has to be taken. They should cut economic relations, weaken political connections, strengthen media and press attacks, and explicitly express and demonstrate that they stand by the oppressed Palestinian people. We hope that God willing, the Almighty will guide all of us—governments, nations, the influential, and active groups—so we can fulfil this duty.

And may peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.

[i] At the beginning of this meeting, Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian (the President) made some remarks.

[ii] Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 1: 'So that they may seek the covenant of God-consciousness which was inherent in human nature and remind themselves of the forgotten blessing and bring forth the hidden treasures of knowledge.'

[iii] Surah Ya-Sin, Verse 17: 'And there is nothing upon us except to convey the clear message.'

[iv] Surah An-Nisa, part of Verse 64: 'And We did not send any messenger except that he should be obeyed by permission of Allah.'

[v] Surah An-Nahl, part of Verse 125: 'Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best...'

[vi] Surah Al-Imran, part of Verse 146: 'And how many a prophet fought with [his] lord, and with him fought a large band of worshipers; they did not weaken in faith because of what afflicted them in the cause of Allah, nor did they weaken or submit...'

[vii] Surah Aal-E-Imran, part of Verse 159: 'So by the mercy of Allah, you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude in speech and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...'

[viii] Surah At-Tawbah, Verse 73: 'O Prophet! Strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be harsh upon them...'

[ix] Sheikh Mahmoud Shabestari. Gulshan-e-Raz

[x] A group of the Prophet's companions who, after the migration from Mecca to Medina, still did not have a home or residence and were settled on the platform of the mosque, which was called 'Suffah,' living there.