Statements at the Members of the Assembly of Experts' Meeting: - 7 /Nov/ 2024

In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful**[i]**.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, and blessings and peace be upon our Master and Prophet, Abul-Qasim Al-Mustafa Muhammad, and upon his most pure and virtuous Family, his chosen Companions, and those who follow them in goodness until the Day of Judgment.

I warmly welcome you, esteemed gentlemen, my dear brothers, and active members of the important Assembly of Experts. I also express my gratitude for Mr. Busheri's detailed and comprehensive remarks, which outlined the Assembly's operations and functions in this session. He presented noteworthy points and shared them on behalf of the Assembly of Experts. You raised some critical issues; I hope you can pursue and apply what is required for these matters, and God willing, they will be accomplished.

In summary, the matter I prepared to present to you today is that in terms of its conceptual nature and the title defined in the Constitution and within the system, the Assembly of Experts is one of the most revolutionary institutions of the Islamic Republic. By "most revolutionary," I mean the institution most connected to the Islamic Revolution. In this sense, [the Assembly] is one of the most revolutionary institutions in the system. The reason for this description of the Assembly of Experts as "the most revolutionary" is its crucial role in selecting the leadership. This is a very weighty and unique responsibility, and thankfully, the Assembly is prepared for this role and must continue to be. In this regard, I will share a few points.

In the structure of the Islamic system, the leadership position is primarily meant to preserve the direction towards the goal of the Revolution. This is the central responsibility of the leadership. Revolutions are initiated for a specific purpose, and, of course, all revolutions have fundamental goals based on which they transform and reorganise the lives and systems of society. If we were to summarise it briefly, the goal of the Islamic Revolution is to actualise "Tawhid" (the oneness of God) in the lives of the people of this country. "Tawhid," in its intellectual and conceptual sense, can be expanded according to individuals' varying levels of understanding and knowledge. This concept must be realised in the life of society; that is, Tawhid must be actualised in the community because Tawhid is the essence of the entire religion. The core of religion, indeed of all religions, is Tawhid. This is the goal of the Islamic Revolution, which, of course, requires much discussion, explanation, and clarification, though the time and place for such a discussion are not warranted here.

An Islamic society must strive to approach this goal and establish a Tawhid-based society, and obstacles must be overcome. There are always obstacles that arise on the path towards this goal, and there are tendencies towards hindering this movement; such tendencies do exist. These tendencies aim to prevent the Revolution and the system from moving towards its goal, hindering its progress and trying to stop or even reverse its momentum. Now, even if the goal is to go backward and show that regressive situation we had previously, but in a new form or new clothing, the tendencies for this still exist. In other revolutions, we can observe these tendencies, and they succeeded in hindering them from achieving their goals and reversing the course of revolutions. For example, in the case of the French Revolution—one of the most significant revolutions of modern times—not more than fifteen years had passed since its onset when the previous state of affairs, that is, an autocratic, dictatorial monarchy, was re-established in the country. All the people's efforts, the movements of the well-known French thinkers, the popular struggles, the casualties, the killings, and the clashes—everything was essentially undone, destroyed in less than fifteen years! A similar and even worse situation occurred with the Soviet Revolution, which was also

significant—the Great Soviet Revolution. It was the same there; in less than ten years, the claims and promises of justice, as well as the so-called unique communist democracy they talked about, were all wiped away. A dictator, a strongman like Stalin, took over, and everything ended. This is a danger for all revolutions.

The Quran frequently warns against regression and returning to a previous, negative state, a theme that appears numerous times in various verses. These warnings are directed to both the believers, urging them to stay true to their faith, and the disbelievers, cautioning them against returning to their former ways after being offered guidance and salvation. The concept of "returning to a state of ignorance or sin" is emphasised as a severe risk to those who turn away from the divine path after having been enlightened. In some cases, the Quran warns the disbelievers that they are repeating the same misguided actions as those who came before them. The verse from Surah At-Tawbah (9:69) says, “You too enjoy your portion (of worldly gain) as those before you enjoyed their portion, and you have gossiped in the same way as they did."[ii] This means the repetition and their behaviour that was similar to what had been in the past, are being pointed out to them. They are being told that they are chasing after the same preceding condition. Or in this noble verse, which is from Surah Ibrahim, “And warn the people of the Day when the punishment will come upon them.”[iii] Then it reaches here where it says, “And you dwelt in the homes of those who wronged themselves, and it became clear to you how We dealt with them, and We made for you examples."[iv] In numerous verses of the Quran, there are warnings and threats directed at the believers as well. I have noted two or three verses here. “O you who believe, if you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back on your heels, and you will become losers”[v]. Surah Al-e-Imran says that if you are negligent, if you obey them, 'radda' (apostasy), backward movement, and regression will occur; the Quran warns about this. “O you who believe, if you obey a group among those who were given the Scripture, they will turn you back after your belief into a state of unbelief”[vi]. This is also in Surah Al-e-Imran. In Surah Al-Baqarah, it says, “And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they can.”[vii] Or this other noble verse, which is also in Surah Al-Baqarah, “Many of the People of the Book are eager to turn you into unbelievers after you believed, out of inner envy, after the truth has become clear to them”[viii]. This means that the issues of regression, stagnation, and going backwards are not trivial matters; they are very important, and the Quran addresses them. We also observe such instances in the historical reality of our recent world and have seen them in the past.

An essential factor to prevent this [regression] in the Islamic system is needed; this is the 'position of leadership.' Deviation must be prevented through leadership; this is very important! Therefore, the importance of the Assembly of Experts lies in the fact that it is responsible for appointing someone for this very important mission; [that is] it is responsible for appointing the Leader; this is why the importance of this assembly is so great.

Thus, we say that [the Assembly of Experts] is one of the most revolutionary institutions. Now, conceptually, its position is like this. Of course, in terms of application, it might vary; sometimes, it is implemented, and sometimes, it is not. Just as in the case of leadership, it may sometimes be possible and sometimes not. Of course, regarding leadership, 'not wanting' is not conceivable; the issue is one of ability and inability.

Another essential point in this issue of the responsibility of the Assembly of Experts is that the existence and establishment of the Assembly of Experts mean that the movement of the Islamic system does not stop; that is, no halting occurs, that does not happen; an Assembly of Experts exists to determine the next leader. This means this procedure will continue with strength, power, and full ability. This readiness of the Assembly of Experts, the presence of the Assembly of Experts, carries such a meaning and concept. If the current person is no longer there, the Assembly of Experts will immediately act and determine the next person; this is how it works.

There is also a significant secondary meaning here, which is very important. These transitions show that the Islamic system and the Islamic Revolution are not dependent on a single person. Individuals have roles, missions, and important responsibilities they must fulfil. However, the system is not dependent on them and can continue on its path, even if the designated person is not among them.

This is what the Almighty God has said regarding the greatest and most important figure in the world of existence, the Prophet, “If he dies or is slain, will you turn back on your heels?”[ix] Imagine this: this noble verse relates to the Battle of Uhud, which took place in the third year of the Hijra. God Almighty revealed this noble verse: it is a warning to the people; the language of this verse is one of reproach and reprimand. It says to them: 'You who were disturbed by the rumour of the Prophet’s death and made certain statements, if the Prophet were no longer there, would you turn back on your heels? This is a Qur'anic reprimand. Now imagine if the Prophet were absent in the third year, and the Islamic system, which had not yet stabilised and lacked the necessary capabilities, were without the Prophet. In such a condition, God Almighty does not countenance that the people would turn back. Would you turn back on your heels? This is how important the issue of not being dependent on a person and the possibility of turning back is.

These are vital duties of the Assembly of Experts; that is, the significance of the position of the Assembly of Experts is clear from what we briefly mentioned. Naturally, this importance places a great responsibility on the Assembly of Experts, which is that it must exercise the utmost care and attention in its selection process. The utmost care and attention must be applied. The Constitution mentions conditions for leadership which are well known. One of the most important of these conditions is a firm, heartfelt belief in the path and goal of the Revolution; this belief must exist. The readiness for continuous, tireless movement along this path must be present in a person for them to be worthy of this responsibility. These qualities must be recognised in individuals before they are chosen. This was the point I wanted to make regarding the Assembly of Experts.

These days coincide with the 40th day of the martyrdom of a great man of struggle of our time—the truly tireless and heroic figure, the late Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah (may Allah grant him peace, elevate his status, and magnify his reward). We honour his memory and that of the martyrs of the Resistance, including Martyr Haniyeh, Martyr Safi-ud-Din, Martyr Yahya Sinwar, Martyr Nilfroushan, and others. In my opening remarks, I wanted to mention that we also honour the memory of the martyrs of this assembly: Martyr Raisi (may God bless him) and Martyr Al-e-Hashim (may God bless him). We pray for the highest divine ranks for all these noble martyrs.

The noble individuals I mentioned, including the late Mr Nasrallah and other martyrs of these recent days, have truly and justly honoured Islam. They have also honoured the Resistance Front, granting it dignity and enhanced strength and capability. Each of these individuals, in their own way, has contributed immensely to these efforts. Our dear Sayyid has ascended to the highest ranks of the martyrs and has reached what he had always desired. However, he has also left behind an enduring legacy here: Hezbollah. Hezbollah’s growth and development have been extraordinary thanks to the Sayyid’s courage, wisdom, patience, and remarkable reliance on God. It indeed became an organisation that the enemy, despite being equipped with a variety of material, narrative, media, and other weapons, has not been able to overcome and, God willing, will not be able to overcome. The late Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah transformed Hezbollah into a powerful and significant phenomenon.

The clear and overt involvement of the United States is well-known; indeed, the hands of the U.S. government are stained with blood due to the atrocities committed in Gaza and Lebanon. The U.S. is a direct accomplice in these actions, a fact that is now universally acknowledged. What was once an analysis is now evident for everyone to see. Likewise, some European countries are also involved. I emphasise that these struggles, which thankfully continue with strength and determination today—both in Lebanon and in Gaza and Palestine—will undoubtedly bring with them the victory of truth, the victory of the front of truth, and the victory of the Resistance Front. This is what we hope for, and based on what we can understand from the totality of events and divine promises, this outcome seems certain.

First, due to the divine promise, the complete manifestation of this verse applies to recent events: "Those who are fought against are permitted to fight because they have been wronged, and indeed, Allah is able to grant them victory. [They are] those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly—only because they said, 'Our Lord is Allah.' And had not Allah repulsed the people from one another, ruin would have befallen the monasteries, churches,

synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned**[x]**." They strike churches, hospitals, mosques—this truly exemplifies the verse. First, due to the divine promise, the complete manifestation of this verse applies to recent events. This "repelling of some people by means of others" exists, and what is its outcome? The continuation of the verse clarifies this. The continuation of the verse explains the result, "And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might." Well, this is a divine promise — a statement from Allah Himself — so it is not permissible to doubt it. This is the promise that the Almighty has declared. So far, things have been unfolding in this way.

On one hand, these are Qur'anic verses and God's promise, and on the other hand, our own experience. For several decades, nearly forty years, Hezbollah has consistently demonstrated its growing power and effectiveness. It compelled the Israeli regime to retreat multiple times: first from Beirut, then from Sidon, later from Tyre, and finally succeeded in completely clearing southern Lebanon, including its cities, villages, and highlands, of the oppressive presence of the Zionist regime. This continuous strengthening of Hezbollah's capabilities has been evident over time.

Hezbollah has transformed from a small group of fighters for the cause of Allah into a massive organisation with immense power. It now possesses the capability to force the retreat of its enemies who are armed with military, political, economic, and media weapons and despite being backed by global powers, such as the corrupt and sinful leaders of the world, including U.S. Presidents and the like. Through perseverance, Hezbollah has demonstrated its strength by defeating these formidable forces in various instances. This is the experience that we have witnessed. The same experience has occurred with the Palestinian Resistance. From 2009 (1388 in the Iranian calendar) until today, they have had nine confrontations with the Zionist regime, and in all these nine instances, they have emerged victorious. From 2009 until today, the Palestinian resistance has had nine confrontations with the Zionist regime, and in all of these nine encounters, they have emerged victorious.

Even today, contrary to what may appear at first glance, the Palestinian Resistance has overcome the Zionist regime. The objective was to eradicate Hamas, but this goal has not been achieved. It has massacred so many people, has shown its ugly face to the world, has confirmed its wickedness to all, it has condemned itself, isolated itself, and martyred the leaders of the Resistance and the leaders of Hamas in the hope that Hamas would be eradicated. However, Hamas continues to fight and resist. This means the defeat of the Zionist regime. Similarly, Hezbollah is in the same situation: it is powerful. Now, some people in Lebanon and elsewhere, mistakenly thinking that Hezbollah has weakened, have begun to criticise its actions. This is mere vilification[xi]; they are so wrong that they must be deluded. Hezbollah is powerful and continues to fight. Prominent figures like Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, Sayyid Hashem Safi al-Din, and others may no longer be among them. Still, with its members, spiritual strength, and morale, the organisation remains standing, and the enemy has been unable to overcome it. And, God willing, it will not be able to. We hope that one day, the world and the region will witness the defeat of the Zionist regime by these fighters in the path of God, and we pray that all of you will witness that day, God willing.

Peace be upon you, and mercy of Allah and His blessings.

[i] At the beginning of the meeting — which was held at the conclusion of the second session of the sixth term of the Assembly of Experts on Leadership — Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Mohammadi Karami (the Chairman of the Assembly of Experts on Leadership) and Hujjat al-Islam wa al-Muslimin Seyed Hashem Hosseini Bushehri (the First Deputy Chairman of the Assembly of Experts on Leadership) made statements.

[ii] Surah At-Tawbah (9:69) "... And you [too] have benefited from your share just as those before you benefited from their share; and you [too] have plunged into falsehood just as they plunged into it."

[iii] Surah Ibrahim (14:44) "... And warn the people of the Day when the punishment will come upon them..."

[iv] Surah Ibrahim (14:45) "And you lived in the dwellings of those who wronged themselves, and it became clear to you how We dealt with them, and We presented examples for you."

[v] Surah Al-Imran (3:149) "O you who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back on your heels, and you will become losers."

[vi] Surah Al-Imran (3:100) "O you who believe! If you obey a group among those who were given the Scripture, they will turn you back on your heels after your belief to a state of disbelief."

[vii] Surah Al-Baqarah (2:217) "... And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they can..."

[viii] Surah Al-Baqarah (2:109) "Many of the People of the Book are eager to turn you into unbelievers after you have believed out of their inner envy..."

[ix] Surah Al-Imran, part of verse 144, "... If he dies or is slain, would you turn back on your heels?..."

[x] Surah Al-Hajj, verses 39-40: "Those who are fought against are permitted to fight because they have been wronged, and indeed, Allah is able to grant them victory. [They are] those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly—only because they said, 'Our Lord is Allah.' And had not Allah repulsed the people from one another, ruin would have befallen the monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. And indeed, Allah will help those who help Him. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might, Invincible."

[xi] Qadh: To speak ill of, to criticise or reproach.