Leader’s Speech to the Residents of Qom - 8 /Jan/ 2007

What follows is an excerpt from a speech made by the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei in a meeting with thousands of residents of the holy city of Qom from various social strata on January 8, 2007. The meeting was held on the auspicious occasion of the Eid al-Ghadir. In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I congratulate the honorable Iranian nation, the dear guests who are present at this gathering and all the residents of Qom who have a long record of adherence to the principle of velayat - at least for 1100 years - on the auspicious occasion of the Eid al-Ghadir, which has been described as the "Great Feast of Allah" in our traditions.

At the time when many Muslims throughout the vast Islamic world were deprived of the lights of knowledge of the holy Prophet's household (greetings be upon them), the city of Qom at the time of Imam Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi (greetings be upon him) and Imam Hassan ibn Ali al-Askari (greetings be upon him) and in the following era was the center of radiance and dissemination of this knowledge. Many prominent disciples of the holy Prophet's household (greetings be upon them) received knowledge and training in this city.

In the present era also the residents of Qom were in the vanguard of the great event of the Islamic Revolution. Indeed, the continuity of their uprising gradually resulted in a nationwide movement which culminated in the great Islamic Revolution. May Almighty Allah increase His grace and favor on the honorable residents of Qom and bestow on them more of His blessings.

In the post-revolution era the residents of Qom have always followed the genuine and direct path of the Islamic Revolution in all arenas, including the arena of the Sacred Defense, and the perseverance of the residents of Qom and the theology students and instructors at the Islamic seminary of this city has served as a beacon of guidance for the entire Iranian nation at various stages.

The al-Ghadir issue is not a mere historical issue, as it is also indicative of the comprehensiveness of Islam. If the holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him and his household), who changed a primitive society in which prejudice and fanaticism and superstition were rampant into a progressive Islamic community through his great endeavors and with the help of his loyal companions in the course of 10 years, had not thought of the future and had not provided the Muslim Ummah with a blueprint for the future, his mission would have remained incomplete.

The residue of prejudice and fanaticism remaining from the pre-Islamic era was so deep-rooted that many years had to pass before it could be completely obliterated. Therefore, some prudent measures had to be taken to remove this residue from the Islamic community and guide the Muslim Ummah on the right path in the era after the holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his household). Otherwise, the prophetic mission would have remained unfinished.

Almighty Allah states in verse 3 of the chapter al-Maeda of the Holy Qur'an that "this day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favor upon you." This verse refers to the fact that the favor of Islam, the favor of guidance and the favor of showing the right path to humanity was completed only when the blueprint for the era after the holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his household) had been formulated and provided. This is something quite natural.

This is what the holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his household) did at the al-Ghadir. He appointed the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (greetings be upon him), who was prominent and unique in terms of his character and noble qualities, as his successor and called on Muslims to follow him. What was done was in conformity with a divine command, like other words and deeds of the holy Prophet which were all in conformity with divine revelation. The appointment of His Holiness Imam Ali (greetings be upon him) as successor to the holy Prophet was based on an explicit order from Almighty Allah, an order that was carried out by the holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his household).

The al-Ghadir issue indicates the comprehensiveness and foresightedness of Islam and highlights the qualities that are needed for the leadership of the Muslim Ummah, namely the qualities that characterized the Commander of the Faithful. His Holiness Imam Ali (greetings be upon him) was the paragon of piety, absolute adherence to religion, treading the path of truth and obeying Allah, and he was also characterized by knowledge, wisdom, prudence, strong will and firm determination.

The appointment of His Holiness Imam Ali (greetings be upon him) as successor to the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him and his household) also had a symbolic aspect, as it laid the foundations of the leadership of the Islamic Ummah in the era after the holy Prophet. The al-Ghadir reveals this reality.

We, the Shia Muslims and followers of the holy Prophet's household (greetings be upon them), are grateful to Almighty Allah that He made us aware of this reality and enlightened our hearts to accept this truth. These are great divine blessings.

Nevertheless, one point that should be heeded by the followers of the holy Prophet's household (greetings be upon them) and all Muslims is that the significant event of the al-Ghadir, which is a sign of the grandeur and comprehensiveness of Islam, should not be used as a pretext for undermining Islam.

I am duty-bound to warn the Iranian nation and all Muslims throughout the world that the enemies are trying to turn the al-Ghadir issue into a pretext for fomenting a fratricidal conflict and war and bloodshed, while the al-Ghadir event can be a source of solidarity and brotherhood among Muslims and help to promote unity in the Islamic world.

Today, the arrogant powers are making every effort to incite division in the Islamic world. They tried other ways but failed. As you have noticed, the United States has experienced defeat in its several conquests in the Middle East region. It could not achieve its objectives either in Iraq or in Lebanon or in Afghanistan or in Palestine in spite of incurring great expenses and suffered defeat in all these places, and now it is feeling the bitter taste of this defeat.

One day - some three or four years ago - we were talking about this reality. But today it is the American officials themselves who are admitting this reality.

They will be able to suppress the Islamic awakening, which has been caused by the hoisting of the flag of the Islamic Republic in Iran, in several ways. One of them is to portray the Islamic Republic of Iran as a Shia republic and try to set it against the great Sunni community. This is a very dangerous plot which their politicians are currently trying to carry out.

We should do our utmost to thwart the arrogant powers in their goal. All Muslims should be aware and vigilant. Our nation, our elite and scholars and our dedicated and diligent clergymen should all be careful not to say or do anything that would be conducive to the enemies' plot.

The Shia community should tread its path with poise and dignity. We would not renounce our motto of "All praise is due to Allah, Who created us among those holding to the velayat of the Commander of the Faithful." We will hold fast to the velayat of His Holiness Imam Ali ibn Abitaleb (greetings be upon him) - which is a great divine blessing. But we will not quarrel with those not clinging to this strong rope. This is the duty of the Shia community. What the enemies want is that we wrangle with each other.

The Sunni community also has a similar duty. Our Sunni brethren should be aware of the fact that the enemies are seeking to foment discord and a fratricidal conflict and would not settle for anything less than this. You can see what the enemies are presently doing in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities! They cause explosions in the Shia mosques and other holy sites and kill innocent people.

This is what the enemies want. The intelligence services of the United States and Israel are behind these extremist and excommunicatory groups. The heads of these groups are well aware of this, although their pawns may not know this. Therefore, our Sunni brethren should remain vigilant and be alert to the enemies' exploiting religious inclinations and sentiments.

Today the Islamic awakening and movement on the path to the attainment of noble Islamic values has received a fresh impetus. Throughout the Islamic world the inclination of the ordinary people, especially youngsters and educated class and academics and students, toward Islam and the establishment of Islamic values cannot be

compared with some three or four decades ago. The Islamic awakening is rising. This is what the enemies are afraid of.

They want to suppress this Islamic awakening. The enemies seek to neutralize this general movement in the Islamic world by setting the Shia against the Sunni. Muslim ulema and intellectuals should try to foil the enemies in their plots and machinations. Also, Muslim statesmen and heads of Islamic governments should know that the grandeur and dignity of Islam is their strong point, and that the power of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to their benefit and helpful to them as well.

Ever since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the enemies have been disseminating negative political propaganda against Iran with the intention of making the nations in the region and Arab governments afraid of the Islamic Republic. However, they have seen for more than the past two decades that the Islamic Republic of Iran has waged no aggression against any neighboring or non-neighboring countries. If there was an aggression, it was waged by an Arab country against Iran. It was the ill-fated Saddam Hussein that attacked our country first and then invaded Kuwait. He would have attacked other Arab countries as well if he had found an opportunity to do so. But there has been no aggression on the part of Iran against any of these countries. They have seen this.

They should know that the grandeur and dignity of Islam and the power of the Islamic Republic of Iran are to their benefit as well. The United States is taking advantage of the weakness of Islamic countries and is bullying and intimidating their governments. The United States, while being submissive to the usurper Zionist regime at all times, is bullying and blackmailing certain Arab governments. But if those governments rely on a great power, they will never be forced to submit to the United States.

Recently, there have been certain analyses to the effect that the United States is seeking to forge an alliance with Britain and some Arab countries against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Arab governments should be very careful. They should remain quite vigilant.

This alliance involves cooperation with two evil and iniquitous governments, which are opposed to the interests of Muslims, against an Islamic nation that has greatly contributed to the grandeur of Islam and whose youngsters have made every sacrifice to keep the flag of Islam hoisted.

But even if this alliance is formed, it will be of no use. One day a greater and more powerful alliance had been formed by the United States and Britain and the former Soviet Union and the entire Europe and most of these Arab countries during the Iraqi imposed war on the Islamic Republic, and the objective that they pursued was to occupy a part of Iran through the agency of the wicked and ill-fated Saddam Hussein in order to bring dishonor to the Islamic Republic. They made every effort for some eight years and left no stone unturned to achieve their goal, but ultimately they could not do anything.

It is also the same case today, and their plot against the Islamic system will get them nowhere. However, the Arab governments should be vigilant, and they should be careful not to get caught in the enemies' trap.

The achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in various fields, including the fields of science and technology, belong to the Islamic world. The utilization of nuclear energy, a national achievement of the Iranian people, is a source of honor for the Islamic world.

Now if certain Arab and Islamic governments are assuming that by forming an alliance with the United States and Britain and enforcing sanctions they can please the Zionist regime and impart peace of mind to this usurper regime, they are making a political mistake. Islamic governments should feel proud of Iran's utilization of nuclear energy. They should realize that this achievement belongs to them as well.

Undoubtedly the Iranian people would not forego their right, and the Iranian officials also are not entitled to renounce this great achievement and relinquish the Iranian nation's right to the utilization of nuclear energy.

May Almighty Allah make the auspicious occasion of the Eid al-Ghadir blessed for all of you and for our great nation and for the entire Islamic Ummah. I also pray to Almighty Allah to bestow His favor and blessings on our nation on this great occasion and make His Holiness Imam of the Age - may our souls be sacrificed for his sake - happy and pleased with us.

Greetings be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings.