

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

"So when you have performed your devotions, then laud Allah as you lauded your fathers, rather a greater lauding" (2: 200)

Dear Muslim brothers and sisters:

The Hajj season is an occasion for hope and good tidings. On the one hand, the magnificence of solidarity among the travelers of the House of Unity raises hope in the hearts, and on the other, the refreshing of the souls through the blessing of the divine lauding gives the good tiding of the unbolting of gates of mercy.

After the pilgrims have performed the rituals of Hajj, which are full of secrets and are brimful of lauding and humbleness, once again they are called to laud Allah. The reason for this stress is that lauding of Allah illuminates the saddened hearts, raising hope and granting light of faith to them. Once the heart is hopeful and faithful, it enables man to properly go through the slippery and challenging bottlenecks of life to reach the summits of material and spiritual perfection.

The spirituality of Hajj lies in this very celebration of the praise of Allah which has been incorporated in each and every Hajj ritual. This auspicious spring must continue to simmer after the Hajj season and this accomplishment should go on.

In different fields of life man is a victim of his own negligence. Where there is negligence there is also ethical degeneration, intellectual distortion and spiritual decline. And it is this very degeneration that on its turn can cause the defeat of the nations and disintegration of the civilizations besides the destruction of the personality of individual human beings. Hajj is one of the best means of Islam for the elimination of negligence. As if the universality of this ritual imparts the message that the Muslim Ummah in their collective identity, besides the individual duty of every Muslim, are duty-bound to remove negligence from themselves.

The rites and rituals of Hajj provide us with an opportunity to temporarily give up servitude to and neglectful dependence on hedonism, caprice and comfort. The ihram (pilgrim's garb), tawaf (circumambulation), prayers, sa'i and woquf fill us with the celebration of the praise of Allah and bring us closer to the Divine sanctorum, embedding the joy of acquaintance with Allah in our hearts.

On the other hand, the glory and grandeur of this unique congregation acquaints us with the reality of the great Islamic Ummah, which transcends the nations, races, colors and languages. This intertwined and harmonic congregation, these tongues all chanting a single word, these bodies and hearts all marching towards a single Qibla and these human beings representing tens of countries and nations all belong to a great unit and collection, that is, the Islamic Ummah. As a matter of fact the Islamic Ummah has lived in negligence for a long time. Today's scientific and practical backwardness and inferiority in the fields of politics, industry and economy are the bitter fruits of the said negligence. Now, in the light of astonishing developments that have emerged or are emerging in the world, the Islamic Ummah must make up for the past negligence. Fortunately, some of the phenomena of the contemporary era point to the beginning of this compensating move.

There should be no doubt that the world of arrogance considers the awakening of the Muslims, Islamic unity, and progress of our nations in the fields of science, politics and innovation the greatest obstacle in the way of its international domination and hegemony and will confront them by all means. Our Muslim nations have the experience of colonialism and neocolonialism in front of them. Now, during the period of postmodern colonialism we should take lessons from those experiences and should not once again allow the enemy to dominate our destiny for a long time. During those bitter, black periods, the dominant Western powers employed all cultural, economic, political and military means to weaken the Muslim nations and countries and imposed disunity, poverty and ignorance on them. The negligence, laziness and indolence of many of our political figures and the irresponsibility of many cultural elites helped them and the result was the plunder of our wealth, humiliation and even denial of our identity and obliteration of our independence. We, the Muslim nations, grew weaker day by day while the expansionist, hegemonic plunderers became stronger and stronger day by day.

Thanks to the devotion of courageous strugglers and sincerity of the leaders in some parts of the

Islamic world the waves of Islamic awakening are now spreading and the youth, elite and masses of many Islamic countries have been brought to the scene, exposing the bullying face of the domineering powers for many Muslim politicians and rulers. Hence once again the imperialist leaders are after new ploys to perpetuate and consolidate their domination over the Islamic world.

The slogan of advocacy of human rights and democracy is one of those ploys.

Today, the Great Satan – the embodiment of evil and cruelty against mankind – has hoisted the banner of advocacy of human rights and invites the Middle Eastern nations to democracy. The democracy the US advocates for these countries means the installation of some timid, obedient lackeys through plot, bribery, and deceptive propaganda in an apparently popular, but inherently, American election, who will be the US agents in the realization of the nasty imperialistic objectives.

Top on the agenda of these objectives is the suppression of Islamist wave and isolation of Islamic values. All the propaganda and political means of the United States and other hegemonic powers are at work today to postpone and if possible suppress the Islamic awakening movement. The Muslim nations must be completely wakeful and vigilant today. The ulema, religious leaders, intellectuals, academics, writers, poets, artists, the youth and the elite all through wakeful and timely action must not allow the world-devouring US to begin a new period of colonial domination over the Islamic World.

The slogan of democratization is not accepted from the hegemonic powers that for many years have been the supporters of dictatorial regimes in Asia, Africa and the Americas. The claim of campaign against terrorism and violence is abominating when made by the promoters of Zionist terrorism and perpetrators of harshest kinds of violence in Iraq and Afghanistan. The claim of advocacy of civil rights by the devils, who have always praised and encouraged the crimes of a bloodsucking terrorist like Sharon against the oppressed Palestinians, is merely a blameworthy deception. The perpetrators of crimes in Guantanamo, Abu Ghuraib and clandestine prisons in Europe, the humiliators of the Iraqi and Palestinian nations and the promoters of the groups that in the name of Islam consider it permissible to shed the blood of Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan do not have any right to speak of human rights. The American and British governments that permit the torture and even shedding of the blood of the accused on the streets and the eavesdropping of the telephone calls of the citizens without a judicial verdict do not have any right to introduce themselves as advocates of civil rights. The governments that have tarnished their contemporary history by production and employment of nuclear and chemical weapons do not have any right to consider themselves the custodians of nuclear non-proliferation.

Dear Muslim brothers and sisters:

Today, the world, particularly the Islamic World, is going through a crucial juncture. On the one hand, the waves of awakening have permeated the entire Islamic World, and on the other, the bullying face of the United States and other arrogant powers has been unveiled. At the same time the move towards restoration of identity and sovereignty has begun in some parts of the Islamic World and in a country as magnificent as Iran the saplings of indigenous knowledge and technology have yielded fruit and the self-confidence that had transformed the social and political atmosphere in Iran has now spilled over to the environment of science and reconstruction. On the other hand the cracks of weakness and decline have appeared in the edifice of political and military permutation of the enemies. Today, Iraq on the one hand and Palestine and Lebanon on the other are an exhibition of weakness and helplessness of the US and Zionist false power. The US Middle Eastern policy has faced great obstacles in its primary steps and the failure of this policy has been turned into a tool against its planners.

Today is the day the Muslim governments and nations take the initiative and a great measure. Assisting the oppressed Palestinian nation, supporting the wakeful nation of Iraq and safeguarding the stability and independence of Lebanon, Syria and other countries of the region is a general duty, while the responsibility of the political, religious, and cultural elites as well as that of the national figures, the youth and the academics is heavier than others. Unity and sympathy among the followers of the Islamic schools of thought and avoidance of sectarian and

ethnic differences should be the boldest slogan of these elites. Scientific endeavor, political liveliness, cultural effort and mobilization of all forces in these main arenas should be top on the anvil of their call.

The Islamic World does not need the flawed and frequently violated prescription of the West for democracy and human rights; democracy is inherent in the Islamic teachings and human rights is among the most outstanding themes of Islam. Knowledge should be learnt from anywhere and anybody, but the Islamic World should try not to remain a disciple for ever, rather must rely on its own talents and efforts for innovation and production of knowledge.

The Western values that have led to the collapse of ethics and spread of revelry, violence, legalization of homosexuality and other such fiascos in their countries, can not be followed. Islam with its sublime values is the highest source of salvation for human beings. The elites of the nations shoulder the responsibility of rereading and promotion of these values.

The blind, savage terrorism, which is a pretext for the occupiers of Iraq to attack Islam and the Muslims and an excuse for the perpetuation of the military occupation of this Islamic country is rejected and condemned according to the Islamic teachings. The prime accused of these criminal events are the US army and its intelligence services and Israel whose immediate nasty objective is to influence the trend of formation of government in Iraq.

Dear Muslim brothers and sisters:

Trust in God, belief in the definite promise of the Quran and consolidation of Islamic unity guarantee the accomplishment of all great objectives of the Islamic Ummah and the Hajj, with its rich, effective essence of celebration of the praise of Allah, and the great congregation of the Muslims during the Hajj rituals can be the starting point and the launching pad to march towards this comprehensive movement. And deliverance from the polytheist and arrogant leaders in saying and action during this worship should become a model for action and the first step in this line.

I beseech the Almighty God that He may grant success to the pilgrims and may the Imam of Time pray for all the Muslims.

Wassalam-u-Alykum Wa Rahmatullah

Seyed Ali Khamenei