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Imam Khomeini's Message with Student Teachers Training Courses

The Text of Imam Khomeini 's discourse at a meeting with the students teachers Training Courses of the towns of Shiraz, Isfahan, Yazd and Arak on 8th January 1981.

In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful

I wish to say a few words on teachers and teacher education to you gentlemen and student teachers who have come here from different parts of the country.

The world is a school and Prophets and Saints are its teachers. The educator of these teachers is God Almighty who has sent them to educate and teach all people. This is their mission after they receive divine teachings.

The Qur'an speaks in a verse of the reason for the ordainment of the Prophet by God, and says that God has sent the Prophet from among illiterate people and those lacking divine teachings in order to read to them God's verses and thereby transmit to them the divine teachings he has received, and purify them and instruct them the Book and Wisdom.

In this verse, there are many points about the importance of teacher education and teaching and learning, showing that it is He who has done this. The Prophet's mission was not only to teach the illiterate but also those who have apparently been taught some subjects and crafts and have some acquaintance with various matters, for, they are in fact illiterate in the subjects that the prophets have been told by God to teach them. The only way of education is through revelation and through the teacher of all the world, that is, the purification and divine education presented to people by prophets, resulting in ideal perfection.

There are two groups of people, one group comprises the believers who have been educated by the prophets and have come out of all darkness by their teachings and entered light in absolute perfection.

The Qur'anic Verse describes the criteria of a believer and faith, and separates the opponents of faith from true believers. Believers are those whose defects have been removed through God's teachings and the Prophets' education, and have come out of darkness into perfect light.

Believers are few, but opponents of faith are many. Those who are infidels are the reverse of believers, and their lord is not God but the Devil who takes them out of light into darkness and all kinds of darkness. This is then the criterion of a believer and unbeliever. A true believer follows the prophets so sincerely and is influenced by their teachings to darkness's and desires, and comes out into light. His teacher and guardian is God through the prophets who are taught by Him and have come to teach us and all mankind.

If we receive their instruction and benefit from the knowledge they have offered mankind, then we will be on the right path to reach light and be guided towards God who is absolute light.

The question of education is higher than instruction and in that Qur'anic Verse, the question of purification comes before teaching the Book and Wisdom, a fact which is a sign of its importance. It means that after purification of the mind and spirit, it would be easy for the Qur'an and Wisdom to influence the mind in their true sense, leading it to ideal.

In another verse, it is stated that knowledge alone is of no worth, if it is not combined with education. This is compared to a donkey with a load of books, no matter what they are, which would be useless since the donkey cannot benefit from them. Similarly those who possess all types of knowledge and specialization but lack education and purification, have gathered something useless or often harmful. Their knowledge may become a means of destroying mankind. Such learned men are worse than the ignorant, and such experts who cause destruction are worse and more harmful than the illiterate.

You and others who have risen up to train teachers should know firstly that this is a Godly task, as God is the teacher of prophets. Secondly purification and education have priority over instruction. Our universities and training colleges, whether they teach Islamic or non-Islamic branches of knowledge, can render great services and offer the gift of happiness to mankind if their teaching is combined with refinement and true education.

Man or an animal called man, is a harmful creature with the exception of one group, namely that which believes in God and performs the good deeds enjoined by Him. Therefore, education should have priority over teaching and learning; and prior to instruction and reading the verses of the Qur'an.

You should train teachers so that in addition to their knowledge which is needed by mankind, they should also have refined minds and spirit. All the damage done in this world is caused by learned specialists who lack true education.

Had we possessed refinement and Islamic education, God would have been our guardian, not the Devil. Then none of these deficiencies around the world, and these differences would have existed, except the

difference between right and wrong. We are our own arch-enemy, and without education we are led to darkness, the greatest darkness of which is hell.

Our difficulty lies in the fact that we lack a godly education and that we have not put ourselves under the banner of Islam. That is the cause of all the tussles and dissensions in our nation. If knowledge is light, then that light should illuminate our hearts, and if it turns into a veil, then it is no longer knowledge. These youths have an aptitude for learning. They are mirrors which reflect the light directed on them.

If a teacher invites them towards light, towards Islam, good deeds, and human values, then he is doing what the prophets did, that is, bringing human beings out of darkness into light. And that is the profession of prophets. But if, God forbid, a teacher or teachers move contrary to the way of God and straight path, and lack education, then they and our youths will be diverted to the East or West.

Our Islamic Republic and our nation and all nations need the refinement and education which have been presented by the prophets.

The mere claim of having an Islamic republic is not acceptable. It will become a real Islamic republic and attain perfection when God Almighty rules over this nation and country from the beginning to the end, and when all the leaders are Godly, and do not have a regard for themselves alone, for, they are nothing before God and everything is from Him. If we realise that we are from God and return unto Him and whatever we have is from Him, and we will be called to account for our deeds, then we will treat God's creatures in the way He has ordered and to His satisfaction.

If these two points are remembered and acted on everywhere, in governmental organs, in Islamic markets, in streets, school, parliament and everywhere else, then we realise that God will treat us justly.

Those who think that only knowledge is enough for schools are simpletons. Only a simpleton thinks we can have a teacher who is diverted to the East or West, and let him influence the clean minds of our youth, and make them pro-East or pro-West. It is being a simpleton to suppose that only specialisation or knowledge is an adequate criterion. Even theology, knowledge of monotheism, jurisprudence and philosophy are not criteria. The only knowledge that offers happiness to mankind is based on education, and is infused by a teacher having divine education.

If this point is attended to in all schools, whether Islamic or otherwise, and if there is no diversion from it, very soon all our youths who are the hopes of this country, will be reformed without being pro-West or pro-East, and will follow only the straight path. It is pure simplicity to suppose that to possess learned men is enough. They must have both knowledge and education, or at least they should not be diverted to the left or right, or not have had their training in Moscow or Washington.

A simpleton believes that a specialist, no matter what he is, must come and serve and we must benefit from him. We cannot benefit if a specialist cures our external disease but creates an internal one, replacing a small problem with a big one.

We must pay attention to all problems. This Ba'athist party which has caused our country as well as the Muslim country of Iraq so many difficulties, consists mainly of specialists and university men who lacked education and purification. Without the last two assets, we, too, would have the old regime or Saddam's regime, and our country would be dragged to where Saddam is dragged.

If we get educated especially in view of the transformation that our nation has undergone, we will act with humanity even towards our opponents. You see that our army and revolutionary guards are treating the prisoners of war humanely, and they should be even more humane. I advise all those in charge of these prisoners to treat them well, for, they are, in a way, our guests, and have laid aside their arms. I declare that whoever of our people lay aside their arms and join the nation, they will be protected by Islam.

But we are not such simpletons to allow armed and equipped individuals to come amongst us to find jobs as teachers or civil servants. Keeping arms is a treason and a plot, and Islam punishes traitors and plotters and expels them from the world. But those who repent and lay down their weapons will not be rejected by us. If any Iraqi soldiers who have fought us, lay down their arms and take refuge with our country, they will be received as our guests.

Similarly, if any of the internal splinter groups, who have been engaged in malicious acts cease to do so and lay down their arms and join the nation. they will be well received.

But those who keep their arms will be considered Saddam's army. Although we treat Iraqi prisoners humanely, Iraqi propaganda, with its daily lies accuses us of ill treatment of the prisoners. This is obviously false, for, we treat the prisoners kindly and in an Islamic manner, and anyone who doubts this can come and see for himself.

This is all wicked propaganda, and we should avoid such things. Our policemen, revolutionary guards, soldiers, gendarmes and all employees of governmental organs are duty-bound to settle matters in an Islamic way.

We wish our country to be Islamic and anyone who claims that I have given any order contrary to Islamic injunctions is committing falsehood, for, I am innocent of any and every such act as agreeing to the usurpation of private land and property, or blackmail, confiscation, and illegal trial or whipping, and God is a witness to this innocence.

I pray God for the health and happiness of all human beings and of our nation and country, as well as for your success in training good teachers to attain that happiness.

Greetings to you and God's blessings and mercy upon you.

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