The Goals of Islamic Education

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By the soul, and Him Who perfected it and inspired it to [distinguish between] lewdness and God-fearing.

Prosperous is he who purifies it, and failed has he who seduces it. (91:7-10) The mission of the Holy Prophet (S) marks the beginning of a historical movement for fashioning godly human beings and for founding great human societies on the basis of the sublime criteria of Islam. Though it marks the beginning of this historical movement, it was also a point of climactic end in the history of prophetic missions.

During those days human history had reached a point that it could learn its ultimate lesson from its final teacher, a lesson always as much productive and dynamic, and every day turning a fresh leaf to humanity. This is itself a miraculous quality of Islam and the Quran that in spite of being the ultimate religion it is also ever alive and fresh, capable of not only moving in step with the movement and growth of human societies and the development of culture and civilization, but also infused with the capacity to induce dynamism and movement. It is so resourceful that it can always cater to the needs of changing times and newly arising problems.

The verses of the Quran have been revealed in such a fashion as if there are layers upon layers of meaning: every layer when removed reveals new depths and. profundities of content. This is a miracle of the Quran. The Quran and Islam can best be compared to Nature itself; like nature, the more it is studied, newer dimensions are revealed, and fresher secrets are discovered with new research. Neither this inquiry and investigation come to an end, nor the discoveries and findings are ever exhausted. No matter how much progress and advancement man may make in the field of science he is still confronted with new enigmas posed by nature, which he has to understand and solve.

Knowledge has no limits. The profound book of nature is so rich in content and meaning that if the history of human thought continues for ever, this book is not likely to be read to its end. The Quran, too, is like the rich and profound book of nature, with the difference that the Quran is articulate and eloquent while nature is silent. But its content and resources are equally inexhaustible, and will ever remain as fresh and novel. Every day it conveys a new message to the humanity. The celebration of the days is for the purpose of the renewal of this covenant and is for the sake of giving life to these messages. If this reminiscence is not renewed and

revived often, it is likely to face the danger of receding into oblivion. The yearly commemoration of this day is meant for the purpose of keeping alive those messages, and to remind the people about their covenant, that they may recollect that Islam had stirred various intellectual legal, educational, and cultural movements in human history, and is ever dynamic and alive and that, we, too, are called upon to actively participate in this movement and play our own role in this mission.

I want to discuss the problems associated with the subject of education in this gathering of brothers and sisters, who are all teachers.

We shall have to discuss this problem in the context of the system of the Islamic Republic, not in a traditional context. In our department of education, which was formerly a department with an official and traditional outlook, ordinarily we were used to functioning in an official capacity. The employment in this department was counted as one among different kinds of employment. Someone held a position in the municipality or the ministry of finance, someone else held a post in the ministry of education. One took up the job of a teacher because it was a job among other jobs and one had to work for a salary.

That was all there was to being a teacher. If there was any aim of education, it did not go beyond having to keep millions of our youth confined within four walls, to read aloud to them the contents of the books and to provide them with a diploma at the conclusion of their academic terms, a document that served as a permit to enter some new lucrative trade. In this way, from the first day all that the parents cared about was what his or her child would become after twelve or sixteen or eighteen years of school and college education, what office he would hold and what sort of income he would secure for himself.

Knowledge was not relevant. The diploma and the certificate served as a bridge to cross over to higher salary. Therefore, all that mattered was the diploma. There were, of course, certain hidden objectives also behind this organization of the educational system. The pagan system of the past wanted it that way that education should be no more than a kind of distraction for the people, ultimately ensuring cultural poverty, bankruptcy, dependence, absurdity and sterility. That system of education was designed to breed generations of indifferent, irresponsible and hollow individuals who cannot rely upon themselves.

Sterility was inbuilt in all sections of life through the system of education, which produced persons without any ideals, indifferent and neutral regarding their aims and goals. The result was that they were totally devoid of the goals of self-sufficiency, specialization, and expertise and consequently dependent upon others regarding their industry and agriculture. The weak level of indigenous specialization and expertise necessitated supervision and domination of the

country by foreign political, military, technical, and even educational advisers and administrators. During the course of victory of our Revolution, we have watched how approximately sixty thousand foreign advisers, who were only a part of those engaged in administration and management of our affairs, fled this country.

There was hardly any construction company, corporation, ministry, factory, research centre or any other establishment in this country that was not run by foreign experts and advisers. In almost every industrial contract that was made, there were scores of various aspects of dependence on foreigners. In one atomic energy project alone, and other such projects, there were approximately two hundred military contracts that made us dependent upon two hundred different international power centres. We were happy in our heart of hearts that we had brought such and such a thing to our country, while in reality, with the establishment of such a project we had made our economy dependent upon the two hundred centres of exploitation and domination servile to the desires of bloodthirsty colonialists, who were responsible for exporting consumerist thinking and culture to our country. If they established some colleges in certain specialized fields which, for example, produced good doctors, we were so weak with regard to our goals and ideals vis-a-vis our own people that our doctors were absorbed by American and European hospitals to treat others, as if they deserved their services more than ourselves! If we established one or two specialized faculties in our country and succeeded in producing some experts, they were of benefit only for others. It was a strange thing that some of the prescribed courses of specialization in the medical colleges were about diseases that occurred in America and were not found in our country!

It meant that our student had to pass four, six or ten credits and spend thousands of tu'mans and a great deal of his time only for diagnosing a disease that exists in such and such a part or in such and such a state of the U.S.

What was the reason, and on what grounds much simpler diseases that occurred in our own country were not prescribed in the medical course? It is because our entire system of education was geared to the foreign interests. When 1 say that education also suffered from dependence, it should not be misunderstood. Dependence does not mean translation of foreign texts of physics and chemistry, for instance, into our language. Learning from others is in no way opposed to the ideals of self-reliance. The Muslims were responsible for developing the sciences of physics and chemistry. It were Muslims who first taught these sciences to others and later on other people made expansions in these fields. We should learn from others, complying with the words of the Prophet (S):

Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.

And: Seek knowledge even [if it is to be found in a place as distant as] China.

The question of acquisition of knowledge from others is not a matter of dependence. Man should acquire good ideas, thoughts, knowledge, and skills, from all corners of the world. That is a different thing. The real problem with an educational system not geared to the objective of self-sufficiency is that the people are trained in such a way that instead of fulfilling the needs of their nation and establishing a sympathetic relationship with the deprived masses, instead of the service of the people and the care and treatment of the sick of our motherland, instead of making roads for our deprived villages, all efforts are directed in such a way that every effort undertaken is either for the sake of one's pocket, or in the interests of the pagan oppressors, or for launching such projects as multiply our dependence on foreign powers. The real problem is the culture of dependence, adoption of hollow and empty cultural and intellectual ideals, values, aims and principles, which are devoid of meaning and are bankrupt.

There are 300,000 high school graduates in our country, whose only hope in life is that the universities may open, and that they may get an admission. It is perhaps because they count upon their chances of getting good employment after college education and elevation of their place and position in society. If they are told that the high school diploma bears the same value in the employment market, I think the majority of them would not care for the university education. If you visit any Eastern or Western country, you will find that only eleven to fourteen per cent of high school graduates find way into the university.

The majority, unable to find their way into the university, are absorbed in other jobs and fulfil other needs of the society. What is the reason that our students while deciding upon the choice of their field of study are always after the subjects which offer better chances of entrance into the university or which are more paying. They do not give their mind as to which of the subjects is more congruous to their taste, their capabilities, or is appropriate to the needs of their society. It does not matter to them as to which of the subjects can be more useful for improving the lot of the deprived and the downtrodden, or which is more effective in assisting their societies in achieving self-sufficiency. The only thing that they consider is the market value of any field, or subject with better chances of admission to the university, regardless of whether the subjects opted by them for study are in conformity with their interests or not, whether they are in accordance with the demands of their society. that is absolutely of no concern to them. All this exhibits deterioration of our values, degeneration of ideals, and absence of any sense of responsibility.

Now, I ask my friends if they have sometimes asked themselves as to what purpose the schools serve? For the primary education perhaps it may be said that it serves the purpose of

teaching the children to read, write and to do arithmetical sums, so that they may learn to sign their names and do not remain illiterate. But what is the purpose of secondary education then? Why do our children have to go through the high school?

You must have an answer for this 'why'. If a few hundred questionnaires be distributed among you asking the very purpose of the higher secondary education, asking you why we send our children to schools, why we want to give our children secondary education, and so on, what shall your answer be? These questions are of great importance for us. I can imagine what the possible answers to these questions may be. Perhaps most of you will say that the purpose is to learn and to make a headway in life, to be able to find a good job with a good pay, or something of this kind.

I think that in the system of the Islamic Republic, no act should be without having an aim to it. There should be a purpose in every act. Moreover, the aims and purposes should be definite. I have already mentioned elsewhere that we have to see whether it is necessary for the children to study all the lessons prescribed in their texts. Are those lessons useful for the child and the future of his society? If they are not useful, we are obliged to announce that such and such a chapter in such and such a book is useless and unnecessary, or such and such a topic or even a subject is struck off from the syllabus. But if any of them are useful, they should not only be retained, but also studied, and learnt well. Sometimes I contemplate about this problem as to why eighty or ninety per cent of the children put aside their books and completely abandon them as soon as their examinations are over. What does this attitude imply? Does it not show that the book was not read or studied for the sake of its subjects, and there did not exist any bond between the student and the book? In other words, the book was studied merely for the sake of marks on the progress report. Once the report reflected the numbers, the whole affair comes to an end. The book becomes irrelevant for the student. This is a kind of loss for the Islamic Republic. We have to see first whether these lessons are essential for the society or not. If they are essential, what is the explanation for this behaviour.

If we really want to march forward in the direction of achieving self-sufficiency, if we do not wish to import any experts and specialists from foreign countries, if we do not wish to rely upon foreign experts and specialists for every small matter, we should firstly make our universities and schools independent of alien elements. We do not lack talent, as our youngsters are full of capacities. By God, Europe and America are not specially favoured regarding their intellectual and natural talents. That intelligence, intellect and potentiality exist in ample amount in this land also. Then why should we need to bring from other lands any experts or managers for setting up and managing our factories or advisers for training our

armed forces? Why should we need to import spare parts from foreign countries? Why should we depend upon others for all kinds of ordinary industrial products?

These children of ours have proved during these two post revolution years that they have initiative, creativity, capacity for working hard and productivity. While I was visiting the war fronts, I noticed this reality. I saw that they had not only made certain important parts of tanks and guns, but also they could manufacture certain parts of Phantom planes. I saw them repair one of the biggest warships, the same ship that if they had wanted to repair three years back, it would have had to be in British waters waiting eleven months for its turn, and which would have cost us an expense of several million dollars also. It was repaired by our own workers. Our children have immense capabilities, why shouldn't they be utilized? Why shouldn't they be allowed to blossom? Why in lieu of this we should be so much dependent on others?

Who is it that can do this work, and lead the country towards self sufficiency? Who? Shouldn't the Department of Education and Training with its budget of more than forty billion tu'mans be able to shoulder this responsibility? Shouldn't our universities accomplish this job with their expenses of eight billion tu'mans per year and bring about self-sufficiency for our country?

Why should a student have to spend precious twelve years of his life and give nine months of every year, and twenty to twenty-five days of each month, working four to five hours a day, in order to obtain a certificate and run after jobs without possessing any skill, any experience or capability whatsoever? May I ask you, gentlemen, with whom does this responsibility of wastage of thousands of invaluable hours of the life of our dear ones lie?

Why on earth should this expenditure of approximately four thousand tu'mans that the Department of Education and Training spends on every student, go down the drain and be all wasted in vain? Why should all these resources be wasted? Is it inevitable that this waste and this loss should occur? Should our Department of Education be nothing more than a factory for production of worthless diplomas? Our student who takes his high school diploma in literature does not have the skills of writing, does not know the art of public speaking, cannot do any kind of artistic work, has no idea of research and cannot even write a simple political analysis. The one with a technical diploma does not know even very simple technological skills and crafts. The one who has completed the commerce and management course, knows nothing about clerical work or keeping of accounts. All of them, what they were after was to get a piece of paper. With this piece of paper in their hands, they go from place to place saying, "Give me some job, wherever you can. Don't consider what I have studied, management or literature. I just want some job, no matter what. Give me one, and give me money." But, what did you study for the satisfaction of the needs of society? What have you done? What for was that money

spent? To what purpose was all that time spent? There is no answer. Even now the system of education is static, lifeless, sluggish, despondent, and decadent. My dear colleagues, I just want to mention something which is related to the nature of our own work. By God, whenever I visit the war fronts-those bustling centres of intense devotion and joyous activity I see a youth working without caring whether it is morning or evening, night or noon, without thinking about his rank, grade, salary or promotion orders. He toils for this country for more than eighteen hours out of his twenty-four hours; whereas, we, dear colleagues, besides a full three-month vacation, enjoy a two-week holiday at the New Year, and many more holidays besides. When the schools reopen on the first of Mehr, it takes some time before the school warms up and the classes get into full swing. Yet despite it all there are many among us who ask if the present twenty -four hours a week cannot be reduced to twenty-two and later on perhaps to eighteen!

Should I be content to teach for a meagre eighteen hours? Let us see how many hours there are in a week. Seven multiplied by twenty-four makes one hundred and sixty-eight. It means that I work for just eighteen hours out of 168 hours of the week, and that, too, not without a lot of grumbling about the hardships of the job, the pressure of the classes and so on. And these eighteen hours a week are without taking into account the other holidays throughout the year on the days of celebration and mourning. Besides, there are various kinds of leave, the sick leave, the contingency leave, and so on. Then there are other factors besides. Someday I may come late to the school. It does not matter, however, because the children are busy anyway. Someday I feel tired and finish the class earlier, or merge two periods into one of seventy minutes, and count these seventy minutes as two hours! But this does not stop us from expecting travelling allowances, overtime, upgrading and promotion: This year's new grades have not come. There are rumours that the remuneration for correcting exam answer sheets is going to be reduced. There is some talk about the payment for setting exam papers too. There are rumours of a summer programme for us this year! What a hassle it has become. Only if Bakhtiyar would have come back! Alas, we shouldn't have struggled, and the previous regime would have remained!. There are, of course, very few who think in these terms.

Dear colleagues, I want to make it clear that we have to change our old ways radically in dealing with the system of the Islamic Republic. We should open a new account for it. Let me give an example from one of the so-called advanced countries of the world. Some years ago we were in Tokyo for a visit. There I enquired about their school vacations. They told me that they have just a forty-day summer vacation, and two other vacations of ten days each, which altogether make two months in the whole year.

Incidentally, that day when we went to visit the schools was their last working day after which their forty-day holidays were to commence. Despite the fact that it was their last working day, in whichever class we went we saw that the class was at work. The teacher was busy teaching lessons while pupils attentively listened to him and answered his questions. On the last working day, and even in the last moments the classes were functioning normally. But here, as soon as we smell vacations even from a distance, we give up everything to do with teaching or learning.

If one tries to compare this situation with the sacrificing spirit of the thousands of youth on the war fronts, he has reasons for disappointment and frustration. If we sometimes pay a visit to their entrenchments, we can draw a lesson from them. In the volley of bullets and rain of fire we see them busy in making roads, erecting bunkers, repairing vehicles, or repairing arms. All are busy with their work. One dares not then ask as to how much they are paid. They do not know what is an appointment order, grade or promotion; they do not get any emoluments; they do not know what these things mean. Are they from a world different from ours? Is their duty obligatory for them and not for us? He is fighting in the defence of his own country; but does this responsibility of defending one's motherland, and the responsibility of its construction lie on the shoulders of a limited group of people? Do we really want to help this revolution in achieving fruition and success? If we do, then for the sake of God let us give more attention to the pupils inside the classroom. Suppose you, mothers and fathers, while on returning home your child comes and asks for your help to understand and solve some problems. Would you tell him that your working hours are over now? Would you tell your child that these are not your office hours and you are not in duty bound to solve his problems? Of course, it is not like that. He is your own child, and you are always ready to help him with your whole heart and in the spirit of generosity and love. There will be no consideration of day and night, or holiday or working day for you then.

In the same way, it is necessary that in this system of the Islamic Republic we should consider these dear children as our own children, the children of the Islamic Republic and the children of the Revolution, and put aside all other considerations of time, timetable, working hours and other such superficialities, and rise above all such things and realize our duty and our mission. We should raise the standards of education and attend to the needs of these children. We should invigorate and animate the schools in order to attain the goal of self-sufficiency. We should try to raise the general standard of scientific knowledge, specialization, and expertise.

We should realize our duties with earnestness and awaken to the sense of responsibility. I do not say that we should not think about grade and designation. Of course not, we do not

mean that all these things should be annulled. But as some used to say about the pulpit (minbar) that if other things have drawn you to the pulpit, at least think of God when you step upon the pulpit; in the same way, I would like to remind you that if salary and grade or something else is required to draw you to the classroom, at least as soon as you step into the class enter for the sake of God, for the sake of your revolutionary duty, and teach the children with devotion and dedication. Therefore, I would like to suggest that the working hours be increased in order to assist the children properly. We should have more extra classes. We should not accept the idea of sitting idle for three long months. Instead we should organize camps, coaching classes, and classes for giving training in first aid, social work, art work and military training. For our own benefit we should organize refresher courses, ideology classes and other study programmes. We should chart out programmes for participation in the activities of the Reconstruction Jihad, Baseej (volunteer forces), the war fronts and social work. The thought that we are idle today, or that we shall be idle this week should be distressing to us. Basically, the thought of idleness should be disagreeable in the system of the Islamic Republic. We should keep ourselves busy in one or some other constructive activity.

A programme for the summer vacations has already been drafted. Some of the schools that are sufficiently equipped with respect to the physical training equipment and have ample space shall be kept open to children. They may come for half a day or twice a week and participate in the programmed activities. How easily in a short period of time a group of high school girl students can be trained in first aid, nursing care of the sick, and in looking after the wounded of the war fronts. Boy students may be given a short term technical training so that they may become useful for their society. Their physical training curriculum may be adapted to the goals of military education. Islamic ideology classes for strengthening their thinking may also be organized. Programmes for learning political analysis, research and collection of political material from newspapers, writing, and art techniques can also be arranged. For students who have failed in certain courses special classes for coaching and for others classes for teaching of languages like Arabic, English, etc. may also be conducted.

The thought that the children's energy is wasted in playing monotonous games in their homes and in the lanes, removed from any education and training, is of course a painful one. Why shouldn't we, teachers organize some programmes? Why shouldn't we have such programmes for ourselves too? We may hold certain sessions of group discussions for discussing Islamic and ideological problems. Some people may immediately demand, "Sir, please send some qualified teachers from Tehran so that we may conduct ideology classes."

But from where can we bring such a large number of teachers who are more qualified and extraordinary? What is wrong if ten or twenty persons sit together and hold a meeting among themselves? Any of Martyr Mutahhari's or, Allamah Tabataba'i's or any other philosophical or Islamic book may be taken as the topic of study and discussion. They may study that book, do some research on the subject and analyse the problems. Once the discussion is started, the work can advance forward and they may reach a certain conclusion. It is not necessary that someone should be brought from some other place to teach at a higher level. However, in the Department of Education, we are taking steps to provide video cassettes and prepare a series of films about comparatively elementary subjects and present them in different cities. There should be at least ten or fifteen of them, so that some good programmes may be within every in every city, body's reach. But in any case, in my view, everything should effervesce from within. This is true of our nation which brought about this revolution. All the people had a share in bringing about this revolution. Actually the revolution itself is a kind of effervescence from within the people.

The zeal and ardour for constructive work and guidance should also come from within. There are at least some people among you who may be more qualified than others. Well, let them come forward to lecture about the same subjects that they know better than others. It is important that we advance our work through discussions, debates, studies, and through proper distribution of work among ourselves. As you know, there are already extension training courses for teachers, but this year their coverage was not so wide as to cover all the members of the teaching community. However, a section of the teachers would be covered anyhow. In this connection, I have a request for the brothers and sisters who are working in different revolutionary institutions, like the Reconstruction Jihad, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (I.R.G.C.), and other such organizations, who sincerely want to render some cultural service. It is important that these organizations should work in coordination with the Department of Education so far as cultural programmes are concerned. It is not right that the I.R.G.C. should have a camp of its own, the Jihad of its own, and the Education Department another camp of its own. Of course, there is nothing wrong in all of them organizing a separate camp, but to coordinate them with one another will make them more efficient and useful. Because it is possible that a good student, an able teacher and a good headmaster may be simultaneously invited to participate in two camps. In such a condition, the lack of coordination may harm the cultural programme of each of those organizations. By coordination and distribution of work among themselves, they may be able to raise the general standards, and hence their efficiency and effectiveness. The second point is that the Department of Education and Training has to

comprehend its role. It should really be interested in educating people, in fashioning them and in making them useful individuals.

The teachers' attitude should change from one of having to carry an uninteresting burden and the students' atmosphere should be one of real interest in acquiring knowledge and learning various subjects. We must never forget that ours is an Islamic Republic, and our aim should be simultaneously to create both an independent as well as an Islamic culture in character. Independence and richness of content are indeed among the characteristics of the Islamic culture. Our system is an ideological system. Our Revolution is not simply a political, or plainly an economic revolution, that we may say that previously we had a government with different pawns in the key positions, the name of the former government was 'monarchy' and that of the present is 'republic,' or that, formerly there were two houses of the parliament and presently there is only one, or that, formerly the prime minister was appointed in such and such a manner, and now he is appointed in some other way, or that a political system of one type has been replaced by a political system of another type.

Our Revolution is an ideological revolution, a revolution of values, norms, social affiliations, social rights and duties, ideals, points of view, outlooks, tendencies, etc. That is, there has been a revolution in the cultural, intellectual, and social essence of this nation and its value system. It is not a change of the political system alone. The whole ways of thinking, the points of view, the ideals, the hopes and the aims have been transformed; the whole cultural pattern of the nation has changed. Now, such being the case, can we reopen the schools with the same spirit of the past, with the same goals and the same ideals? Can the teachers take up the same lessons with the same outlook, with the same kind of approach and attitude as they had in the past?

We hope to create a new generation of human beings, a new generation with new values quite different from those of the previous generation. For example, ten years back, when someone had asked a twelve-year-old boy as to his aspirations, or as to how he wished his country to be, or what he would like to become in the future, his answers would have been quite different from the answers of a youngster of today. If today we go to a school and ask the same questions, the children will answer in a completely different tone, as today new meanings have significance for them, new concepts, new values have become relevant for them. They want to work for the benefit of the deprived and the oppressed. They want their country to march ahead in dignity and honour, that it may be a free and independent nation. They want this Revolution to be exported to the other regions of the world.

They wish that this enthusiasm, this ardour, this dynamism, and this search should pervade

every corner of our society. They aspire to be truthful and sincere. They are averse to corruption and bribery. They hate the idea that this country should sign agreements to the benefit of colonial and oppressive powers. They dislike to be merely in the service of their pockets, but desire to serve humanity in general. They want to live in such a manner that their eyes may not be dazzled by the East or the West. They do not want to lose their identity when confronted with foreign cultures. They want to bargain their dignity and honour. They want to preserve their personal identity, and retain their sense of dignity. They want to be at the sending end not the receiving end of the message. They want to be exporters of thought and cultural values and not importers.

In this system of our Islamic Republic, we want to replace the old values with the new ones. During the past ten years, if a little girl was asked as to what good life meant to her, and what she desired her future to be like, most probably she would have said that good life meant for her plenty of cosmetics, variety of dresses, colourful curtains, more luxury and more fun and recreation in life and above all a higher income. But today, when the same question is put, it is definitely answered in a completely different way. Today she says that she wants to serve, to struggle and to endeavour, to be more humane, to preserve her identity and independence, to be more self-reliant, effective, sincere and truthful. Self-sacrifice and generosity, love of freedom, the resolve for resistance and headstrong perseverance, the courage to welcome martyrdom-all these are the new values of the new generation. Ten years ago such values were completely dead or non-existent in this country, but today they have been revived again and are a matter of pride and honour for our people, contrary to the decadence of the past years, when dainty dresses, dandyism, knowing a few foreign phrases, familiarity with films and film stars were regarded as an accomplishment as a thing which conferred 'personality' on one. Such was the kind of things our youth were after. Today the same youth think in the terms of self-sacrifice, service, effort, struggle, movement, resistance, etc.

These are the new values which are to be established firmly in our country. But whose job is it to nurture them and bring to fruition, and where? Are the schools exempted from the responsibility of this work? If the schools remain indifferent to this responsibility, where are these human beings to be moulded? And where are these values and virtues to grow and flourish? Where are these children of ours to learn about Islam, and to be enfused with the spirit of revolution and resistance?

Accordingly, our teachers are the apostles of today, encharged with a cultural and intellectual mission and responsibility. Therefore, permit us to strongly resist all deviate and corrupt intrigues in our schools, and not to let our children fall prey to the foreign plots, to be corrupted

by the venom of poisonous ideas and values. We shall have to catch up with those unholy, treacherous hands which corrupt our children in the schools, and cast them away. And at the same time, it is essential that we warmly clasp those hands that are sincere in serving Islam and the Revolution and their motherland. I do not say that we must be loyal to some individual, or to a certain group; but I certainly emphasize the necessity of loyalty to Islam and to the blood of the martyrs; or at least, there should not be any intention to sabotage the achievements of the blood of the martyrs. We do not expect every teacher to be exceptionally self-sacrificing, self-effacing, totally committed and a hundred per cent man of faith. But we require that the teacher, should not at least be hostile to commitment, hostile to the Islamic Republic and Islam and opposed to the Islamic training and education. If he himself confesses that he has no commitment at all, that he is merely concerned with the teaching of physics or mathematics, we shall accept him with open arms if he is not a saboteur or a traitor. The schools are open to all of them. When did we intend to set aside any educated person who is not hostile to the morality, thinking, and ideology of our Islamic system and revolutionary movement of our children? Never. But first we have to stop intrigues and corrupt and treacherous practices and then strive to provide opportunities for the development of all our sincere colleagues in the Department of Education and Training.

Society is like a pyramid, and not everyone is at the apex of the pyramid, be it from the viewpoint of commitment, faith, self-sacrifice, power, qualifications or any other factor. However, there are persons who are more resistant, more self-sacrificing, men of greater faith, greater sincerity, more aware and more conscientious than others. The nearer we approach the apex, the narrower it is. As a rule the pyramid is wider at the base, and there have to be people in the lower parts of the pyramid also. However, what is more important is that we should be a part of this pyramid, a part of the main stream of the ummah which is led at its head by the Imam. The schools are in the service of those who have comprehended this Revolution and have accepted it. God willing, we hope that in the future we shall be able to introduce more committed faithful, and sincere forces into the Department of Education and Training and shall be able to make greater use of the sincere and committed individuals in this department. We hope to utilize the active forces for developing the Islamic and education potential of the Department of Education and Training, and to provide them with more opportunities, encouragement and support so that they may play a more effective and active role. The forces which are not dynamic and which have shown little or no movement, as I have already mentioned, if they are not harmful and disturbing, they shall also be utilized. At the same time we have to be very careful regarding offensive and detrimental elements in our

schools.

The doors of the school should always be kept open for the sake of Islam, for the sake of the Muslim Ummah and for the sake of the Islamic revolutionary path of the Iranian nation, so that the Islamic cultural and intellectual activities may be accelerated and enhanced. These schools are the centres for modelling human beings. Human beings are not modelled in the electricity department or some other department. They are of course to be fashioned in the schools. Why shouldn't we then educate and train others and ourselves? Why shouldn't we speed up the movement of Islamic, ideological, intellectual, and educational training- Therefore, I request you, brothers and sisters, that we should serve Islam and our Revolution with hope, with enthusiasm and spiritual fervour without any anxiety and doubt about the future. In this way, we can contribute our share and fulfil our duty by making the schools, these revolutionary institutions, more fruitful. I hope, God willing, that our work, our behaviour, morality, and our mutual relations and dealings shall conform to the Islamic standards.

Our aim is that our teachers and schools should advance on the above-mentioned guidelines, raising the general standards of education and enhancing the levels of the Islamic commitment, and social and revolutionary activity.

I hope that those brothers and sisters, who have recently joined this profession, and those who are going to join it in the future, will continue their work in an atmosphere of cooperation, harmony, devotion, ardour, and sincerity. I hope that our confrontation with problems would not be disappointing or discouraging. I hope that our attitude is one of hope for the fruition of our Revolution, and of effort for increasing the productivity and fruitfulness of the Department of Education and Training. Wassalamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.