

Imam Khomeini's Message to University and Theological Students

The Text of Imam Khomeini's discourse at a meeting with university and theological students on 25th May, 1980.

In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful

I must give you gentlemen an account of the time of Reza Shah which you have not witnessed so that you may realise what hands have been at work. Reza Khan, after his *Coup d'état* and capture of Tehran, introduced himself as a virtuous Islamic servant of the nation.

It was said that he attended even the sessions held in the mourning month of Muharram in a religious centre, and I have myself seen him once taking part in the religious procession of the army in Tehran and attending the gatherings for the narration of the martyrdom of the Imams which were held on his behalf. This went on until his rule was established, and he thus misled the nation and various classes of society to secure a firm footing.

Reza Khan Was An Enemy Of Clericalism

When he became sure of his footing, his first object and what had been planned for him, was to weaken the clergy and make them lose their prestige with the nation, so that he may be able to carry out what the conspirators wished.

The journalists, writers and mass communication media of the time were equipped to act conjointly against clericalism.

They managed to isolate the clergy and did not even allow them to make use of public means of transport. The propaganda was so intense that they misled our youths and even our religious youths. Their first target was the clergy.

In this Feyzieh School, there were, at that time, six or seven hundred resident theological students. In daytime, they dared not attend the school and had to run away to various neighbouring gardens to return there late at night, for, government agents were on the watch to arrest them and remove their turbans. They pursued priests in Tehran and took some of them away, in spite of their being authorized to preach, to the police station where they cut short their clerical dress with a pair of scissors.

What hand was it that overthrew the clergy in those days? And yet in spite of all that pounding, the only group that rose up against Reza Khan was the clergy, once in Tabriz, once in Khorasan, and once in Isfahan which was most extensive of all the others. The learned clergymen of Isfahan emigrated to Qom and were joined by the priests from other places, but all these uprisings were broken up. The uprising in Qom was more radical, but they managed to delude a number of them, and it is said that their leader, the late Haj-Agha Nurollah Isfahani, was poisoned and killed in Qom.

What hand was it that created a disunion between the university and clerics in the time of Reza Khan and is still doing it?

What hand was it that thus pounded the clerics and to what end? What hand was it that separated the clergy from university groups to such an extent that no one dared mention the name of the clergy at the university, nor the name of university to the people in the Feyzieh School? What hand was it that made these two groups hostile to each other? What hand was it that turned the university into an organization which, with the exception of a committed group, produced deviated graduates who followed other schools of thought?

And what hand was it that at this time when the Revolution became victorious, made a military fortress of the university? And what hand is it that is still at work to crush clericalism once more?

What have they seen of the clergy and what do they see now that they intend to repeat, in various places, the deeds they committed in the time of Reza Khan, insulting and offending the clergy? What hand has separated these two groups?

Now that they are separated, I hope God's grace will bring about a reunion. The long acquaintance that these people have had with the people of the Orient, Muslim and Muslim countries through the knowledge gained by experts who went on various missions, has made them realise that the Muslim masses are close to the clerics and the latter have a deep influence on the former.

In every town its priest or congregational prayer leader is in touch with the people and is obeyed by them. Thus, if they intend to split up the nation and dominate it, they must separate the people from the clergy.

By creating differences between the university and the clergy, it was aimed to bring about a situation in which the name of a priest could not be mentioned at the university and no one could pray except in secret, and similarly in theological schools, any mention of the university could not be appreciated. It was

the result of their studies that if they could separate these two groups of intelligent minds of society, they would be able to do what they liked, while if these two groups were linked together, they would fail in their design.

Therefore, the pens, speeches and mass communication media, which were at the service of aliens, began their task of separating and creating hostility, even within each group.

But now they have witnessed the power of Islam, clergy and university, and realized that their union has led to the downfall of the devilish power of the Shah. No one in the world could imagine that Iran would be able to oust this traitor, for, all the foreign powers, including non-Islamic ones like America and Soviet Union, and the diverted governments in Muslim countries supported him.

For example, when we intended to begin an open combat in Iraq against the Shah, Iraq did not allow us to reside there, and when we wanted to emigrate to Kuwait, its government refused us entry.

I realized that we would come across same treatment in every Muslim land. God willed a better alternative, and we found a place which was not under Iran's influence, even though there was, at first, some opposition to us, but it gradually abated.

The enemy is more frightened than in the time of Reza Khan. Today they are more worried than in the time of Reza Khan. His time was the occasion of investigating this idea that if the clergy and university join together and if the clergy secures its spiritual power, they would not let Iran be misused by anyone. This was a true idea, but it was subjective at that time. But today the idea has become objective, and you noticed that the movement was pioneered by the clergy, and the loyal groups of the university joined them, while those who felt no obligation were compelled be consonant with them, and this became true of all classes and the whole nation.

They were aware of the clergy's influence, but not to this extent.

When the Shah (who was deposed later) resorted to apology and asked Sharif Imami to form a government, these people said they were wrong in supposing the clergy to have little influence, and now they intended to make up for their mistake by serving the clergy.

But such statements were all nonsense, and were meant to mislead the people, but no one listened to them anymore. Today they have witnessed the power of Islam and seen that of a population of 35 million, 20 or 18 or 15 million active young people managed, without any equipment and military training, to overcome all powers with their bare fists, and the enemy could not keep their protégé in power at all.

The power of Islam was revealed to them. Now, they intend more and more to check Islam.

What were the fortifications in the university for? Who was behind it? Was it those who on seeing the university as an artificial West or a Westernized unit, inclined to turn it into an Islamic university the product of which would be true and loyal Muslims? Were those people who had entrenched themselves

or those who, in the time of Reza Khan, wanted to break Islam and its power with their pens and acts?

When we speak of cultural revolution and an overall revolution, we should not mix things up. Those I have heard speaking of cultural revolution mix matters up, thus making its attainment remoter.

The university and Feyzieh School only begin their task with university matters, and have nothing to do with national economy. If the university starts with economics in order to build up an Islamic culture, it will fail in the latter task.

Similarly if those who can effect a cultural revolution in the army, try to carry it out in the university, they will fail in their original task.

Each group should confine its activities to its proper organization and institution. Neither those connected with economic revolution should interfere with university matters, nor should you, as university people, deal with economic revolution.

I do not say that mixing up such matters is caused by treason, but such people are deluded. Those who suggest that everything should be put right at the same time, and do not divide the tasks for each organisation to act separately with the aid of its experts, are, in all probability, being misled. In re-building the university and affecting an educational revolution, we should not mix things together. Everything should be put right, but each in its own place.

The market should be put in order, but an academician should have nothing to do with it.

Different qualified groups should carry out the tasks in each of them.

There should also take place a revolution within the army; the time is ripe for it, but the army has nothing to do with the university. These organisations are connected together, but each one has its own task to perform.

In the passion plays of former times, they used to say that a proper Shimr (the wicked assassin of Imam Hossein) must be a real Shimr in action. If he speaks or recites like Imam Hossein, he is no longer a Shimr. As the performers were a single unit, each of the members had to play his own proper part in order to produce a good scene, and interference with others would only have harmful results and no one can perform his own task properly.

I remind you that all pens, acts, speeches and devilries seek to hinder you in your tasks. They want to prevent the union of the university with the clergy. You are only at the beginning of your task.

My guess is that they may approach those in the Feyzieh School and other centres of learning and whisper things in their ears in order to separate them from you, or do the same to you to separate you from them. They have suffered losses at the union of this nation. They fear Islam and have witnessed the events elsewhere.

They observe your demonstrations and gatherings and hear your Islamic outcries, and are thereby worried.

A few days ago I saw this phrase written somewhere: "Why do you fear the word 'national'? Why don't you say 'the national consultative assembly'?" I ask the writer: "Why do you fear the word 'Islamic'?" This national consultative assembly has had a life of over 50 years, and we have got nothing good out of it.

Whenever there appeared an honest man, fifty servants of colonisation rose to crush him.

What I tell these people is that we are dependent on these people and this nation, and want to see what these 35 million people desire. We realised that the whole of the 35 million people aspired for Islam. During all that time there was no talk of being national. Nationalism is contrary to Islam which has come to have an equal regard for all men and societies. Nationalism is what we see in America between the whites and blacks. Carter, who is an advocate of humanitarianism, hurts and kills the blacks so cruelly.

Nationalism means what certain Arab governments' claim, that is, Arabism and nothing else. Pan-Iranism is similar to Pan-Arabism. This is contrary to both God's command and the Qur'an. When we speak of Islamic Republic and Islamic

Consultative Assembly, it is because the former system produced no miracles. We were driven back for 50 years and hindered for 50 years. During all that time when the national consultative assembly existed, not even once could the people vote freely. Before the times of Reza Khan and Muhammad Reza Khan, in the Ghajar period, there were the chieftains and princes who forcibly took groups of people to the ballot box to vote for them. The people were of no consequence and were ignorant of what all these things meant. Each one was given a ballot paper to cast into the box. When Reza Khan and Muhammad Reza came to power, they had no contact with the people.

Muhammad Reza had once said that the list of parliamentary candidates used to be sent to him by foreign embassies and he was compelled to approve it. This confession is made by a person who had usurped the government in this country and was well-informed of various matters. This shows what kinds of people found their way into the two Houses of Parliament. They were imposed with lists sent from the U.S. or Soviet embassies.

This is what Muhammad Reza himself declared, by which he intended to say that he was a different man, and thereby he weakened his father's position to exalt himself and turn people's attention to himself.

This confession showed the form of a national assembly, not an Islamic assembly, that was composed of servants of foreign powers who were forced by the big servant into the Parliament. During the whole history of Iranian Constitution you cannot find a case in which the whole country could have voted freely, even in the early Parliaments, except in Tehran where the chieftains had no influence, and the votes were cast by people themselves. But in other towns and villages, the Khans and nobles forced their

dependents to go and vote for whom they nominated.

This is the first time ever that you have this year an Islamic assembly desired by the nation, and even if there is something wrong, no one has been forced to vote. Even if there has been some fraud and trickery, it was very trifling. The people, men and women, old and young, went freely to cast their votes.

You have been a witness in Tehran, Qom and other places, and have heard of other centres. They have no wish to see an assembly belonging to the nation and Islam whose members are mostly Islamic except where they have faked. They do not desire to see the university and clergy gathered under one roof and mingled.

I warn you that they are busy creating dissension among you. You are now like young saplings with fresh relationships, and their object is to prevent every positive step taken at the university. They use every means such as guns or entrenchment or devilry to attain their ends. What hand writes those slogans on the university walls? What does it want to do? What is the aim of gathering people and speaking against Islam? They are really the individuals who consider the university and clergy harmful to the nation and wish to get rid of them. Well, they are the groups which aim their guns at the nation, and are armed, and their weapons are stored somewhere waiting for the opportunity to use them.

They are those who wish Kurdistan to remain rebellious. But thanks be to Allah that province is purged and is being cleared. They possess guns with both Soviet and Israeli markings. They see Islam standing against them. Those adults who lead the youngsters realise that if the clergy and university join together as two active minds, other people will naturally join them too, and they fail to attain their designs. They know well that no coup d'état can be successful in Iran now, and no one can even think of it. And no outside element can come in and last here.

They have learnt a lesson from the example of Afghanistan where all types of modern weapons, helicopters and planes as well as trained soldiers were brought in, but they could not force the Afghan nation into submission and are every day facing defeat in a country whose government and employees support those foreigners. In Iran there is no longer any duality between government and nation; all are together and united and do not allow anyone to come in and interfere.

Moreover, God Almighty is with us. It is for God's sake that we want to drive these foreigners out of our country, and dismiss those who are against Islam, or guide them to the straight path, if possible. When we intend to do this for God Almighty, He will assist us but on condition that we follow the same way we took at the beginning and peak of the Revolution when various aims were set aside for a single goal of establishing the Islamic Republic and Islam, without caring about our meals or our ranks in the office.

You should not imagine that the task is over and we could return to our normal life. No if you desire a life of honour and dignity, you should pay no attention to what they infuse in you and the nation, saying that the Islamic Republic, too, has failed in its purpose. All that is to discourage you from the Islamic Republic, so that you keep aloof and they crush the Islamic Republic.

This Republic has been established only a year ago, and yet it has, in spite of all hindrance, from every quarter, managed to render as much service to villagers, who had nothing, as was done during the whole long reigns of the two traitors deprived everyone of everything. Now in many places, all kinds of services are being provided with the cooperation of the people themselves and governmental and national organisations.

In such matters the nation should pay no heed to those who write anti—Islamic slogans nor should it listen to their accusation that nothing has been done.

You and I can now sit here and talk freely. Is there any freedom better than this? We have cut foreign hand from our country, even though some of its roots are still there. Is that nothing to be reckoned with? Should we not regard the expulsion of Muhammad Reza with all, his power as something significant? Did the Islamic Republic do nothing? What is all this, then? Is Muhammad Reza still reigning here, and is the SAVAK still engaged in its ignoble deeds?

They are trying to deceive the young, but luckily our young are alert and are not to be easily misled. The miscreants try to discourage you by saying that nothing has been done.

What do you expect to have been done. In the space of a year and a few months, all the organisations essential for an Islamic country have been set up – something that is unrivalled in the whole world. In other lands 20 or 30 or 50 years after their revolution they were still without a constitutional law. Several people have come together to rule that country by force. But in Iran as all the ardour belonged to people and society, and since the Revolution and people were Islamic, everything that is fundamental for the country has been achieved, and there remains nothing to delay us.

Then the task of reconstruction must be undertaken which has already started and with the grace of Allah will continue. Do not let these poisonous pens and these journals and newspapers which are allowed to be published though they serve others, play with you, and delude you every day. Do not listen to the words which they whisper to you at the university or Feyzieh School. Your union has become a target now for those who are opposed to Islam, university and Feyzieh School.

It is more important to continue a task than to start it. You spent three days in Qom and, God be praised, you came to an understanding and became closer to each other, but what is more important is to continue this. You should chalk plans to get together once every few days or months to retain unanimity. I hope that this alliance will be a good omen to enable you to transform the university and centres of learning into Islamic ones.

The products of the university show us its nature as it produces men like Sharif Imami. We know a factory by its products. By the sugar produced in a factory we can see what kind of a sugar factory it is, or by cloth what type of a textile factory it is. The product of the university should show us its nature. Let us see what these people who claim progress for the university have done during this year. In the last fifty years one million university people should have been trained to serve our people, not others.

Has the university trained individuals to work for the nation and have no other attachment? Where have these Communists come from? Where have these Marxists come from? We know what has been going on at the university by its teachers and products. Of course, some of them are loyal as they ought to be, but a university population of several million must have trained over a hundred million in 50 years. Had its products been desirable, our country would have been a garden. We would not have needed to wage war, or movement or to stage revolution.

But its products were undesirable, for, as soon as they got employed, they worked for foreigners, not for the nation. They obtained top posts in various ministries and served foreigners. If they had served Iran, and if the university had served Iran, would we have to fight? Would the university become a battlefield? Would our government offices stay idle and shirk their duties?

The university has not been able to render its proper service to the nation, and has only served others. They made our youths what they are, and even now they hinder the university from serving the nation. When we speak of an Islamic university we want it to be based on the needs of the nation and for the nation. Its work has not been to educate, but to promote opposition. Its work has been verbal, not education. It has given instruction, not training.

Its instruction has been to incline our youths to the East and West, and its training has been to bring them up into careless youths. I advise you to preserve your unity which they want to snatch away from you. Your aim must be to keep your country independent and yourselves free beings.

Follow this goal and get your two groups together, and prepare your plans through the cooperation of the teachers at university and theological centres of learning in order to have an education based on the country's needs, not something useless. There are many things in it unrelated to the country now.

We need a proper training so that our graduates become independent in thought and action, and are not influenced by eastern and western tendencies. They should serve their own country, not others. This is the meaning of a university revolution. We judge a university by its product.

If after a few years, God willing, its product is human and Islamic and serviceable for the country, we can call it a transformation. But if it remains what it was, producing Communists and throwing out Muslims, then we will remain eternally crippled and must wait for something even worse.

But we hope that God Almighty will aid us and the country will be reformed, by His will, through the efforts of you learned men.

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

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