

Lectures of Martyred Ayatollah Beheshti



Sayyid Muhammad Husayni Beheshti

**Translated by
Majid Nekoodas**

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Ayatollah Beheshti, one of the helping hands of Imam Khomeini in the Iranian Islamic Revolution, has delivered along his life many lectures. The present work is a compilation of Martyr Ayatollah Dr. M. H. Beheshti's lectures, delivered on various occasions and covering different subjects including Islamic unity, Islamic politics, Islamic life, Islamic specialization and so on. Many lessons are to be learned by reading such a great book.

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Dr. Muhammad Husayni Beheshti, the oppressed martyr was born in Isfahan in a cultured and learned family on 24th October. 1428.

At the early age of four, he started learning reading, writing and reciting the Holy Quran. He did not take long to complete primary education. After which he joined the Sadi High School of Isfahan, where he

learnt the English language with the help of his associates. ·

By 30th August 1941, Martyr Beheshti felt a strong urge to enhance his knowledge about Islamic theology and culture. So, in the year 1942, at the age of fourteen, he secured admission in the Sadr Theology School of Isfahan and commenced his study of the religion and philosophy of Islam. Having successfully completed his studies and lessons in Arabic literature, logic, theology, jurisprudence and fundamental principles in that school in 1946, he proceeded to Qum for further studies.

During his period of study at the Theological Center of Qum, he benefitted from the knowledge of such learned authorities and distinguished scholars like the late Ayatollah Boroujerdi, Ayatollah Mohaqqiq Damad, Ayatollah Khonsari, Ayatollah Hojjat KuhKamari, Allamah Tabatabai, Haj Sheikh Murtada Hairi Yazdi, and our beloved Imam Khomeini.

After having obtained a diploma in literature from a modern school in 1948, he secured admission in the Tehran University, from where he was awarded a B.A. degree in Islamic Theology in 1951.

In the years that followed, he was persistently involved in political struggles. He played an important role in the happenings of 22 July 1952. He founded the "Qum's High School of Religion and Science (*Din wa Danesh*)" with the cooperation of a few militant and learned Ulama.

During the years 1956 to 1959, he wrote his thesis and was awarded a Ph. D. degree from the College of Theology. In 1962, when the Islamic Revolution under the leadership of Imam Khomeini was still in its infancy, Martyr Beheshti assumed an active and energetic role in political struggles more than ever before, keeping in close contact with the '*Hey'at e- Mo'talafeh*' (The United Group).

In 1946, on the request of Muslims from Hamburg and on the advice of the leading religious jurisprudent Ayatollah Boroujerdi, he fled to Hamburg. There he took over responsibility for the guidance of Muslims in Hamburg and founded "The Islamic Students' Union".

He visited Syria and Lebanon and also performed Haj pilgrimage to Mecca during these years. In 1969 he travelled to Iraq and met Imam Khomeini.

In 1970, he left Hamburg for Tehran, his native place, where he gave lectures pertaining to the Quran. However in 1979, he was imprisoned by the SAVAK and this brought his classes on the Quran and its commentary to a close.

Once released from prison, Martyr Beheshti organized a series of activities against the Shah's regime and while pursuing these, he left for Paris to meet Imam Khomeini who had migrated from Iraq.

He played an important role in holding public demonstrations against the imperialist regime of the Shah. After the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution, Martyr Beheshti became a member of the Islamic Revolutionary Council, and later, of the "Council of Experts". He played a worthy role in framing the Constitutional laws for the Islamic Republic of Iran. During the same period, with the assistance of some

learned personalities and militant religious leaders (Ulama) he founded the *Hizb-e- Jomhuri-el Islami* "The Islamic Republican Party".

On 23rd February 1979, Martyr Beheshti was nominated Chief Justice of Iran and while holding this position in 1981, on June 28th, at about 9 p.m., two powerful bombs blasted the roof of the central office of the Islamic Republican Party, martyring Beheshti and more than seventy two devoted followers of Imam Khomeini.

They shall forever be honored in our memory and may we ever follow in their footsteps in multitudes. May Allah bless them all.

The present work is a compilation of Martyr Ayatollah Dr. M. H. Beheshti's lectures, delivered on various occasions and covering different subjects. We offer the same to our English readers, hoping that these lectures will bring them a better understanding of the issues discussed.

International Relations Department Islamic Propagation Organization

Imam Khomeini, the Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Leader of the Islamic Revolution sent a message on the occasion of the martyrdom of one of his best disciples, Ayatollah M. Hussein Beheshti, and his colleagues in an explosion that took place at the central headquarters of the Islamic Republic Party on June 28th, 1981. The full text follows:

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

We are from God and to Him we shall return.

A nation that has risen to establish Islamic justice, implement the message of the glorious Quran, expel the criminal superpowers and lead a life of independence and freedom is also prepared to face martyrdom and dedicate martyrs. This nation will never be intimidated by such atrocities perpetrated by the superpowers through mercenary criminals, for massacring the noblest of its children.

Has not our nation, nourishing martyrs, inherited the ideology of martyrdom from our Imams, who viewed life as the expression of belief and jihad, who safeguarded the illustrious Islamic school of thought with their blood and the blood of their progeny? Are honor, dignity and human values not invaluable virtues for the safeguarding of which our impeccable ancestors and their companions had dedicated their lives?

Do we not subscribe to the virtuous who gave up their lives in achieving the divine goal, that our hearts would waver if our loved ones are martyred? Can our enemies divest our martyrs of their virtues and humane values through these criminal moves? Can these anti-human enemies of virtue strip the faithful and lovers of truth of anything but these earthly garments?

Let these beasts, who think of nothing save their own selves and who satiate their appetite like animals liberate the lovers of the path of God from the shackles of this material world, thereby sending them to the unfathomable eternity, to their eternal Beloved.

Shame be on you, O scion of the devil. Shame on you, cabals of international criminals who have cowered back into dens, conspiring on desperate acts of sabotage against a nation which has risen against the superpowers. The problem with you and your adherents is that you are incapable of discerning Islam –or its spiritual power– or the Muslim nation and the driving force behind the people's self-sacrifice. You have not understood a nation which had dedicated the lives of its youth to topple the corrupt Pahlavi regime and free itself from the manacles of the Great Satan (the U.S. government), and which stood unbeaten with unprecedented courage and without the slightest sign of weakness.

You have not understood a nation whose disabled combatants long for martyrdom in hospital beds and call upon their friends to sacrifice their lives. You, with blind-hearts cannot observe that by martyring the great figures (of the Revolution), the ranks of self sacrificers for Islam further solidify and their determination increases, so you still dare to massacre our dear ones in order to isolate our people from the Revolution. You perpetrated injustice against as many devoted Muslims as you could, such as Martyr Beheshti and our beloved martyrs of the Majlis and the members of the cabinet, vilifying and slandering them, thinking you could seclude them from the rest of the nation.

Now, after you have realized that your weapons have lost their sharpness and have incurred the people's blame, you have crawled back into your lair and embarked on idiotic crimes in order to intimidate this martyr-nourishing and self-sacrificing nation. It seems that you have not yet realized there is no room for the word "Fear" in the culture of martyrdom.

Islam takes pride in these martyrs and honorably calls this nation to endurance. We hope to see His visage someday to give back the life which belongs to Him.

Our nation has lost 72 personalities in this calamity, the same number as the martyrs of Karbala. The Iranian nation is proud to have dedicated people who are devoted, to Islam and the Muslims. The enemies of humanity have massacred a group who had assembled to discuss issues that would improve the conditions of the country.

Beloved nation, these blind- hearted people who claim to be crusaders of the masses have murdered the best among the most truthful servants of the masses.

Assuming you were the deep- seated enemy of Martyr Beheshti who was oppressed most of his life and died oppressed and was a thorn in the eyes of the enemies of Islam, what hatred did you have against other innocent people, most of whom had been the best servants of the people and among the most staunch fighters of the enemies of the nation? Disguised as "crusaders of the masses," you actually are the enemies of the masses and are tools paving the way for the exploiters of the West and East. Though we have lost many of our friends and our dear ones each of whom was a stalwart pillar and meritorious

support for the nation; although we have lost many devout brothers who were merciless towards unbelievers, yet were extremely merciful to the faithful and were the unyielding backbone and the great hope of the oppressed nation and revolutionary institutions, the overpowering multitude of the masses of people and the magnificent power of this nation will retrieve all with their unity and trust in the Almighty.

With faith in the absolute authority of the Mighty God, the nation of Iran will move like a surging ocean and will forever remain in solid ranks as steadily as ever before: the super powers and their mercenaries– will send you all into hell, you who cower into holes breathing your last breath; the Almighty Lord backs this nation and will safeguard it.

I extend once more my congratulations and condolences to Imam az-Zaman, Imam Mahdi, the 12th Shi'ite Imam who is in occultation, may our souls be sacrificed for him, and to the oppressed peoples of the world and to the combatant nation of Iran. I share the sorrow and grief of the bereaved families of martyrs. I implore God the Almighty to bless the oppressed nations of the world with His Mercy and bestow patience upon their bereaved families and aggrieved and honorable loved ones.

May the blessings of God and the praises of our people be upon all the martyrs from Khordad 15th (June 5, 1963) to this day Tir 7th (June 28) and upon the oppressed of the world and Iran since history began.

May the Peace and Mercy of God be upon you.

Ruhullah al-Musavi al-Khomeini

June 30, 19

I, Muhammad Husayni Beheshti, was born on October 24th, 1928 in the Lumban district of the city of Isfahan.

My father was an *alem* and used to work in the city a few days each week. He would also spend one day a week serving as a congregational prayer leader in a nearby village and would attend to the welfare and affairs of its people.

I entered the primary school when I was 4 and very quickly learned writing, reading and the recitation of the Quran I became popular in the family as an intelligent lad. Later, I enrolled at the Servat Public School which became known as the 15th of Bahman School. When I took part in the entrance examinations, I qualified for the sixth grade, but because of my young age, it was just not possible. I was finally allowed to enter the fourth grade. My primary schooling was completed in this school. During this time, all sixth grade students took the examinations simultaneously, and I ranked second best in the whole city.

Then I registered at Sa'adi High School. I was there for the first and second year. At the outset of the second year, in September 1941, events took a different turn. Interest and enthusiasm for Islamic

teachings was revived among the adult populace. The Sa'adi High School is located on the Imam Square, formerly known as the Shah Square. Every day we would walk the school's four or five kilometers' distance from our house.

Studying theology had always attracted me. My profound interest in it finally convinced me that I should terminate my secular education. In 1942 I entered the Sadr Theological School of Isfahan as a young '*tallabe*' (theology student.) from 1942 up to 1946. I completed courses in Arabic literature, logic, elementary theology and principles in Isfahan. The speed with which I passed my courses and the swift progress I made won me much respect in theological circles. This was also due to the fact that my mother's father, the late Haj Mir Muhammad Sadiq Mudarres Khatun Abadi had been among the distinguished Ulama.

He died when I was a year old. My professors who were his former pupils strongly believed that I could be the successor of their master. In 1945, I got permission from my parents to spend the nights in school so I could become a full-fledged theological student. This way I would have more time to study. At the end of my introductory courses in theology, I decided to go to Qum to pursue my studies. I would like to mention that during the first and second years of high school, our foreign language course was French while English was a more prevalent foreign language in the country. Therefore, I decided to take a complete course in English. I became acquainted with the language through a relative.

In 1946, I went to Qum. I completed my courses in preliminary theology and other courses in about six months on arrival in Qum. At the beginning of the following years, 1947, we started the advanced courses. For the courses in jurisprudence and Usul (principles) I studied with our dear master, the late Ayatollah Mohaqqiq Damad and also my magnanimous master and great teacher, our leader Imam Khomeini, and other great scholars.

During the six months I was completing my preliminary studies, I also studied other theology courses. Before going to Qum, I was also studying "The Logic and the Word", which was interrupted due to the lack of teachers of philosophy in Isfahan. I pursued my theology subjects and principles and proceeded with various studies and teachings. It was a usual tradition in these centers for capable theology students to teach while studying. I taught in Isfahan as well as Qum. When in Qum, I entered the Hujjatieh Theological School which the late Ayatollah Hujjat had founded.

In 1947, I decided to continue modern education. I was awarded a diploma in literature after successfully passing non-regular examination and joined the faculty of Islamic Theology and Culture of Tehran University. Through thick and thin, working and studying, I received my Bachelor's degree in 1951. Then I returned to Qum to continue my theological studies. At the same time, I also taught English at the Hakim Nizami High School in Qum. From 1951 till 1956 I was engaged in an intensive study of philosophical works and attended Allama Tabataba'i's courses on Ali Sina (Ibn Sina) and the philosophy of Mulla Sadra.

On Thursday and Friday nights, I used to have constructive discourses with Martyr Mutahhari, Ayatollah Montazeri and other brothers. These weekend meetings continued for five years and precipitated the book, "The Method of Realism." During these years, we indulged in educational as well as social activities. With the late Mutahhari, Montazeri and about eighteen other brothers, we arranged a program according to which each one of us would go to the most remote villages to propagate the religion of Islam for two years. We went to these villages at our own expense. We ourselves, of course, did not have money of our own. The late Ayatollah Burujerdi provided us with an amount of 1000 Rials per person in 1947 and 1500 Rials each in 1948 through Imam Khomeini who was with him at that time.

The socio-political struggles of the oil nationalization movement under the leadership of Ayatollah Kashani and the late Dr. Musaddiq approached their peak in the years 1950 and 1951, while I was in Tehran. As a young robed enthusiast, I participated in demonstrations, gatherings and meetings. I went to Isfahan in the summer of 1952 during the Tir 30th (July 21st) events and actively took part in (Tir 26th) general strikes.

After the Mordad 28th coup (1953), we arrived at the conclusion that we lacked a consistent program necessary for a successful movement. We decided to set up a cultural movement based on purely Islamic background.

In 1954, I founded the Din wa Danesh High School (religion and knowledge) with the help of some friends. I was in charge of its affairs until the year 1963. I taught at the Theology Center and was able to form a new cultural movement by establishing ties with university students. This newly founded student theological center relation proved to be a blessed bond.

I spent the years from 1956 till 1959 studying philosophy and received my Ph.D. in the same field at the Faculty of Theology. In 1959, I conducted a series of discussions in Tehran to deliver the message of Islam to the young enthusiasts in a novel manner. The late Ayatollahs Mutahhari and Taleqani and other gentlemen participated in these sessions.

In 1960, we thought of reorganizing the Qum Theological Center. A program was prepared and a new plan for teaching the Islamic sciences in the center was ratified. This laid the groundwork for the establishment of model schools such as the "Montazarieh" school.

The year 1962 was the commencement period of the Islamic Revolution under the leadership of the Imam and the Ulama. I was active in the struggles. During the same years, we founded the Qum Student's Association in order to strengthen the ties between pupils, students and theology students. Our efforts proved to be a threat to the ruling regime and in 1963, the regime forced me to leave Qum. I came to Tehran and continued my work while keeping close contacts with the resistance groups. We established active and systematic relations with the United Groups Association.

Later, the Imam appointed a 5-member council to manage the group's politico-theological affairs, namely Mutahhari, Mulla'i and myself.

In 1964, I was preoccupied with the movement's programs in Tehran. Then came a request for an *alem* to be sent to Hamburg's mosque which was founded by the late Ayatollah Burujerdi. Ayatollah Haeri and Milani convinced me to go there. The situation was getting critical at the time. The regime had executed the members of the military wing of the United Groups Association who had assassinated the proposed premier, Hassan Ali Mansur. My name was included in the dossier; so friends in Qum considered it advisable to send me out of the country.

The Hamburg invitation was a timely one; friends thought it was exactly the right time for me to leave Iran. I most certainly preferred to stay and told my friends that I would face all difficulties which might arise. But in our meetings it was decided that it would be best if I leave the country. Through Ayatollah Khonsari, my friends procured my passport and soon I flew to Hamburg. Upon my arrival at Hamburg, I immediately felt the student's need for an organization. We embarked upon the establishment of a group and with the efforts of a number of Muslim youths we formed the Union of the Persian speaking Students' Association. We also reorganized the Islamic center. I stayed in Hamburg for a span of more than five years. I performed the Hajj pilgrimage and afterwards, I went on a trip to Syria, Lebanon and Turkey with friends and our dear brother Mr. Sadr (Imam Musa Sadr.) In the year 1969, I visited the Imam during a trip to Iraq. I came back to Iran for a visit in 1970 and as expected, the regime prevented my return to Hamburg.

In 1976, we created the nucleus for organizational activities and in the years from 1977–78 the Militant Ulama Association was founded. This was designed as a political group to function as a widespread (or partially) clandestine organization. When the struggles reached their peak in 1979, we concentrated forces, and thanks to God, victory was attained through the all-out participation of the Ulama in their marches and struggles.

There is an important matter I overlooked which I would like to mention. In 1971 I set up some classes on the interpretation of the Quran which was held on Saturdays. The time was ripe for the assembling of active youth. About 400–500 people would attend the sessions. In connection with these activities and my ties with the opposition abroad, the SAVAK (Shah's notorious secret service) arrested me in 1976. I was detained in the central committee for several days and was eventually released. As a result, we could no longer hold those sessions on Quranic commentary.

My second arrest took place in 1978 and I was held for a few days and then freed. I persisted in my political activities until the time the Imam went to Paris. I visited him there and the central cadre of the Revolutionary Council was formed with the Imam's guidance and orders. Mutahhari, Hashemi Rafsanjani, Musavi Ardabili, Bahonar and myself formed the first Revolutionary Council. Mr. Mahdavi Kani, Mr. Khamenei, the late Ayatollah Taleqani, Engineer Bazargan, Dr. Sahabi and some others later joined the Council until the Imam returned to Iran.

A lot has already been written regarding the events from the time Imam Khomeini arrived up to the present, so I feel there is no need for me to talk about them.

To conclude, I would like to add that during my stay in Hamburg the sphere of my activities covered the whole of Germany, Austria and part of Switzerland and the United Kingdom. But we had connections with all countries and their people. I was the founder of the Hamburg Islamic Association and acted as its consultant.

The books I have written so far are as follows:

1. **God from the Viewpoint of the Quran**
2. **Bank and Financing in Islam**
3. **What is Prayer?**
4. **The Triumphant Combatant**
5. **Knowledge of Religion**
6. **A New Class in Our Society**
7. **The Ulama in Islam and among Muslims**
8. **Which Ideology?**
9. **Ownership**

Tonight, I will discuss about nationalism, as opposed to Islamic ideology or adherence to the school of thought of Islam. First, let us discuss nationalism, its meaning and aspects which can be accepted or rejected by a believer who strictly adheres to Islamic ideology. Why does a man committed to the Islamic school of thought oppose national ideology?

The word "*mellat*" (nation) was originally an Arabic word meaning 'religion'. Today, however, unlike the Quran which has preserved its original meaning, it is no longer used in the same context in the Persian language. Since we do not intend to indulge in lengthy literary and lexical discussions at present, we will not bother ourselves with the original meaning of the word.

In today's culture and modern Persian, the word "*mellat*" is a translation of the European term "nation". The same word has been translated as "qowm" in Arabic. Arabs use "*qowmiyat*" for 'nationalism' and "*unsoriyat*" for 'racism'. We (in Iran) however, use a different Arabic word to convey the same meaning: This semantic variation is quite an acceptable practice. People all over the world are free to use different words for the same idea or concept. In Iran, today, the political linguistic equivalent of the word "*mellat*" is 'nation' and (its inflectional conjugate) "*melligerai*" is translated as 'nationalism'. The word actually has a relatively synoptic etymological root which may somehow seem a bit confusing to others.

Now, let us find out what ideology nationalism pursues.

In ancient times, the people of each "qowm" or tribe were always of a common descent. Each member was referred to by others as a fellow tribesman. This same expression is quite commonly used in the Persian language today. We often refer to a relative as a "fellow tribesman". A qowm might be a family, a tribe, or even a dynasty whose descendants are of the same blood, and thus are related to one another by consanguinity and common ancestry. The people related by such ties form a socio-political unit the parts of which cohere to a united principle, relationship and interest. So, by virtue of consanguinity, each tribe will involuntarily defend another against hostilities posed at the unit as a whole.

The formation of the Arab qowm or tribe was based on this type of relationship which was a significant social infrastructure in the olden times. Arab ancestry can be traced back to a certain Ya'rab ibn Qahtan, a man to whom all Arabs attribute their genealogical origins. A glance at their history will show that all Arab tribes trace their pedigree back to the same Ya'rab ibn Qahtan. Through the centuries, the descendants of this ancestral lineage branched into various groups and tribes of Arab people who now number 300 million. But as you may have heard, these co-tribesmen have not always been friendly with one another. They would fight each other, sometimes for years, and at times, for a century or so.

Before the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.), there were two Arab tribes known as the Aws and Khasraj, both of whom descended from the Qahtan dynasty. They were regarded as relatives, yet they fought each other for decades, a conflict which proved tedious and costly to both parties who eventually sought ways to resolve it.

The reason why the fight persisted was simply rooted in the same issue of tribal and nationalistic feelings, the same feelings which had related the Aws, Khasraj, Quraysh and tens of other Arab tribes within the framework of a great entity, i.e., the Arab nation. This same national consciousness which granted Arabs certain de facto privileges over other races, also conferred superiority upon one Arab tribe against another. Thus, every tribe would claim to be of a more pure blood and ascribe more nobility to itself. This chronic tribal consciousness would at times result in clan conflicts that sparked wars lasting for decades. Actually, this enmity between tribes oozed out of the same feeling of affinity, consanguinity and nationalism.

If one asked a member of the Aws clan why he fought against the Khazraj, he would reply that being "a man of the noble Aws tribe", he could never tolerate any Khazraj dominance. The same reply would also be given by a Khazrajite. If they were reminded of their similar (Arab) race and were advised to desist from fighting one another owing to such affinity, they would possibly say, "Yes, it is true. But the Arab race is what we stress on while facing other races. Among ourselves, it is tribalism, and our clan affinity which actually matters. Here, it is Aws nationalism versus that of Khazraj." Even among family groups of each tribe one could sense the existence of the same sort of conflict and rivalry.

Such problems can be observed in our own country, Iran, as well. The Qashqa'i tribesmen (of south

Iran), for instance, challenge the Boyer Ahmadis and Mamasanis, and will unfailingly defend one another when confronted by the latter. Yet, the clans within this big tribe are themselves in rivalry and are not united. Why is there such conflicts among the tribes and clans of Iran and other countries in the world? Probably you, too, have heard that in the United Kingdom there exist recalcitrant nationalistic sentiments which have persisted up to the present time. The Britons nurture their own national tendencies as opposed to Scottish nationalism, etc. Recently, in ceremonies which formally named the present crown prince of England as the heir apparent to the British throne, the Welsh people protested, saying that the prince was from England (the southern part of the British Peninsula) and thus, they, in Wales (center of western region) do not accept him as their king. This opposition is a clear proof of the confrontation of nationalistic feelings: Welsh vis-a-vis English.

A few years ago, similar national sentiments erupted into conflicts in Belgium which is divided into two major national factions. These two groups speak different languages. The country's official language is French. The conflict began when one of these ethnic groups protested against the use of French as the medium of teaching in their universities. They demanded that it should be replaced by their own ethnic and national language. In Germany, too, there are still some rival ethnic groups competing with one another.

These sectarian conflicts can be found everywhere, in and among countries which regard themselves as having superior civilization and culture. Today the language spoken in the south of Germany is German. Austria's official language is also German. The people in the north of Germany also speak German. But when an announcer for Radio broadcasting from South Germany Munich was chosen, I saw in a magazine that the people in that part of the country had protested, requiring the appointed announcer to be replaced. The reason: his accent was disagreeable to them. The announcer spoke with a northern accent unacceptable to the people of the South. This kind of conflict will inevitably arise whenever tribal tendencies and nationalistic feelings become the basis for judgment. Nationalistic sentiments will most likely give rise to rivalry even between members of the same nation.

Today, the world faces a new type of nationalism known as geographical nationalism which cannot be defined or justified in terms of consanguinity. You must be familiar with Switzerland. A small country subscribing to Swiss nationality, its heterogeneous population is divided into three major groups. The people living in the region close to the Italian border speak Italian, while those in areas bordering France speak French and the people living close to Germany and Austria speak German. This small odd million nation which speaks three different languages claim to be the Swiss nation. How can this kind of nationalism be explained?

A great deal of strenuous exertion has already been taken to explain and justify the basis for the Swiss type of nationalism but, so far it has not met with any success. If common genealogy is counted as a basis for affinity and if people are regarded as one great race descending from Adam, then there will be no racial difference and the whole world will be considered as one nation.

But racial homogeneity is not the base on which the Swiss people have built a nation. Nor is it their language which has brought them together because, as was mentioned, there are three languages spoken in the country. It would be quite natural for the French speaking people of Switzerland to form a nation with France. But how come they, along with German and Italian speaking people, comprise the Swiss nation?

It is not then genealogical relation and common language that have brought this people together. Nor is it their religion that made one nation out of them, because the nation also consists of Catholics, Protestants and probably Jews and other sects. What then is held in common by the Swiss people? They will unanimously say it is "common culture" that binds them together. Where did this common culture originate? This is a complicated sociological issue the answer to which has not yet been formulated by analysts and experts.

Swiss customs, manners and traditions vary from region to region. But the people cling to a certain 'common culture' the essence of which is not yet known. It can then be concluded that in recent centuries a certain geographical nationalism has emerged in the world community quite distinct from national consciousness arising from consanguinity. It is based neither on a common ideology, nor a common language, custom or tradition. Even those who advocate and adhere to this 'common culture' are baffled and unable to clearly define it.

Assuming that a vivid explanation has been set forth based on this assumption, we would like to ask the following: Should man, this perfect creature of God, who is to delve into endless depths of divine perfection, confine himself to the constrained framework of nationalism which is limited by consanguinity, common language and culture? How can man, this sublime being, imprison himself in a realm bounded by "national unity and feelings"?

Since we cannot discuss the views of other ideologies on this matter in this short speech, let us now talk about the view held by our own school of thought, Islam. What does the Holy Quran say about the framework in which people can establish a powerful socio-political unity? What sort of human beings can form an integrated base, for unity?

In Surah al-Hujurat, the Holy Quran says:

"O ye mankind! Verily, We created you from one male (Adam), one female (Eve) and grouped you into nations and tribes in order (that you) distinguish yourselves (from each other)..."(49: 13)

We are all Adam's progeny: but of course, only the cultures which consider mankind Adam's offspring can profess such a statement. Cultures which regard man as the evolutionary descendant of the apes (i.e. materialistic ideologies) categorically shun such statements.

So, according to the Quran, we are all children of Adam and Eve and therefore, have the same blood circulating in our veins. If we are divided into groups and tribes, so says the Quran, it is only to provide

us a means to identify each other in our social relations.

In our own rural areas, people are identified by their father's names following their own. The same practice is customary among Arabs who always refer to a man as the "son of so and so." A family name also functions in the same way, that is, to distinguish people from one another. We can then conclude that the Quranic reference to the value of tribal and group relations is meant merely to facilitate a trivial social need, namely individual identification. Sublime values which render one human being superior to another, says the Quran, are achieved only through piety, virtue and fear of God (which keep man from committing sins.)

The Holy Book strictly forbids separation from one another because of tribal and nationalistic tendencies. The Islamic worldview prohibits segregation and enmity resulting from the establishment of sectarian and politico-national entities. According to the Quran:

"And the faithful men and faithful women are guardians one of another: urge they (each other) to good deeds and hold (each other) back from evil...."(9:71)

What then in the Quranic view is the factor that can bring about a great powerful political, economic, social and military union among men? The answer is faith, faith in the school of Islam. From the viewpoint of a Muslim, all Muslims as a whole form the Islamic Ummah which evolves around the axis of Islam.

In the scope of the Islamic worldview and faith, Muslims are all brothers who are bound to each other by common political, social and economic beliefs and must, therefore, function as a coherent entity. Hence, as a Muslim, I cannot draw any distinction between an Arab brother from Khuzistan, or a Persian speaking brother of mine from Tehran. Both are my Muslim brothers and therefore equal in my view. All of us, regardless of origin, dialect or language, whether from Kurdistan or Azerbaijan, Baluchistan, Gilan or Lorestan are Muslim brothers forming one and the same community.

We as a whole constitute an Islamic nation and are citizens of the Islamic Republic. So, the axis around which we can establish military, economic and social unity is our Islamic faith. Can it then be called national unity or is it one based on a common school of thought? It certainly is of the latter type.

Now, I would like to call on our Kurdish and Arab brothers and those in Baluchistan, Azerbaijan, Turkman Sabra and others across the country to hearken to the fact that it is only the enemy who is trying to separate us and is sowing seeds of discord. We are all Muslims and thus, brothers in faith who are inseparable because of our Islamic convictions. We want to be a world community. This fraternity goes beyond our borders. We have Muslim brothers who speak Urdu, Hindi, Indonesian and other languages. To them, too, we are bound by the Islamic faith. While at present we do not have many English, German and French speaking brothers, we still wish there will come a day when they too will become a considerable part of the Islamic Ummah.

All Muslims form one nation and this Islamic Revolution of ours should advance towards the objective crystallization of a powerful Islamic Ummah, one billion strong. This is exactly what the enemy is afraid of. That is why our enemy insists on referring to this Islamic Revolution as purely Iranian in its desperate bid to mar and ignore its universal dimension.

Another issue that needs to be clarified is the question often asked of us: "Should our Kurdish minority and other ethnic group forego the use of their own language and speak Persian because of the Islamic characteristic of the Revolution, and this Republic? Certainly not. When did we ever say any such thing? Islam does not have a particular language. The holy Quran says in surah al-Rum:

"And of His signs is the creation of heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colors. Lo! Here in indeed are portents for men of knowledge. "(30:22)

One is therefore free to speak one's own language. No group should give up its way of dressing and traditional clothes. Nor should anybody be compelled to wear certain clothes because of his Islamic faith. Islam does not have a special costume. Islam simply asks people to dress neatly, modestly and honorably. The styles of dress and the choice of a particular costume or ethnic garments are discretionary factors left to popular judgment. People are free in choosing their apparel, in speaking their languages and observing their local traditions and customs. We are not against nationalistic inclinations as long as they are confined to such issues. But, if one's nationalism and nationalistic feeling urges one to incite every ethnic group to establish an independent socio-political state, separate from other brothers in this country, then it becomes a dangerous thing and we certainly oppose it.

Some Kurdish brothers have asked us whether they can teach the Kurdish language in their schools. The same question has been brought up by Arab brothers and sisters in Khuzistan. They have also asked whether they can have Arabic newspapers and magazines or speak Arabic on the local radio station, etc. I address them here and say: By all means you are absolutely free and have all rights for these things. They are among your natural rights. You are free to recite your local lyrical odes and ballads and promote your own art in conformity with Islamic codes. You have also the right to follow your own traditional architectural designs in building premises. Islam does not impose any particular form of clothing, language, custom, art, etc. on people. Man is totally free in this regard and so are you.

Now, I have a question to ask you. Would you rather be an easy prey for the predatory wolves of the world by disunity in the name of Kurdistan, Baluchistan, Turkman Sahra, etc, or enjoy all freedoms? Do you not wish to unite with your Persian, Turkish, Baluchi, Gilani, Turkman brothers to form a great powerful Ummah that will petrify the enemies? Your power will discourage them from investing any hope in you as tools to aggravate dissension in the Islamic Republic. Which one do you prefer? Choose and give me your answer.

Another point I would like to make reference to, is the hue and cry the opposition group raised on the changing of the name "National Consultative Assembly" to "Islamic Consultative Assembly!" In the first

place, the legislative body must have been named "Islamic" right at the time the constitution was ratified. Why was it not called that was due to a minor mistake on the part of our representatives who simply overlooked the issue. A lot of purposeful hubbub has been made on this. Opposition groups accused us of antagonism towards nationalism, the Iranian culture and language when we changed the assembly's name from 'national' to 'Islamic.' These statements are blatant lies! Who on earth has ever opposed the Persian language? Why are these mendacities about us being disseminated?

We only say that the solidarity of this nation can be best preserved through faith in Allah and His messenger, Hadhrat Muhammad (S), His book (the Quran) and in Islam, His Divine religion. Factors other than the ones mentioned above can only be instrumental in unifying a small number of people within a certain group which also means separation from the other groups. Hence, if the Persian language becomes the basis for unity, the Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis, etc. will have all the right to protest, contending that Persian is not their language. It then becomes clear that the Persian language cannot be a basic criterion for unity. This language may bring together those who speak it but will simultaneously separate them from the Kurds, Turks, Baluchis, Arab, Turkmans and others.

What factor can then bring about world unity? It is faith in Islam, this divine religion which has no boundary. Just look around yourself. There are not even 200 million Persian speaking people in the world, not even 100 or 50 million of them. The same is true with other languages like Kurdish. We will not find 15 or even 10 million people who speak it. But how many Muslims are there in the World? One billion! It is true that three billion out of the world's four billion population are not Muslims and Islam has not yet given birth to a worldwide community. But a unity based on Islamic faith still surpasses other unities in dimension and power. Unities founded on Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, and other ethnic or sectarian bases are inferior.

Why is Islam a more sublime and powerful base for unity? It is because Islam is a religion of "*fitrat*" (Divine nature of man). It is a religion made compatible by God with man's nature. This religion has harnessed common human "*fitrat*", bringing about a great powerful global entity of men with awakened "*fitrat*", rooted in the very being of man. It is then only natural that such a unity is vested with a tremendous potential for worldwide expansion.

Now let us compare adherence to Islamic thought with nationalistic tendencies and find out which is greater and more logical, which is more compatible with man's *fitrat* and nature?

If nationalistic feelings based on consanguinity, common language or a 'common national culture' become the foundation for unity, the most they can bring about is petty unions of small number of people, nothing more. We do not oppose these unions as long as they operate within limits already set, namely common language, traditions, customs, literature, mode of dressing, etc. All nations can by virtue of their natural rights observe and preserve these aspects of nationalism. No one objects to it, neither does Islam.

What Islam categorically opposes is the replacement of a great ideological and faith based unity by nationalism in the creation of political, social, economic, and military institutions. Islam cannot allow nationalistic tendencies to supersede political, military, economic, social, ideological and religious unities. Muslims should form a united world community and anyone who makes a bid to supplant a comprehensive ideological and religious world unity based on Islam, has indeed deviated from Islamic principles.

On my way here (to the south of the country) a question was hurled at me, the answer to which I like to share with you. Someone asked my opinion about the soldiers and military personnel fighting against the (Iraqi) aggressors to defend the Iranian territory. He said that the (Iranian) armed forces fight because of their devotion to their country and not because of Islam and religious faith. They fight defying death because their patriotic zeal does not let them sit still when a foreign enemy has attacked their motherland. The question was whether

I opposed such feelings and nationalistic tendencies. In reply I said that no one ever opposed such sentiments. We certainly prefer such zealous and brave soldiers and officers to those who cowardly refuse to go to the fronts fearing death. We appreciate and admire such people as we attach great value to freedom. But what if a brave officer who fights and defends his country looks at the issue from a more sublime point of view to fight and defend the religion of God? What if he defends Iran because it has become the land of Islam? Is such an officer not fighting for a loftier cause than the one fighting merely for the soil?

The former defends the soil for the sake of its Exalted Creator. Quite convinced, the one who asked the question agreed that a man who fights and gets killed defending Iran as his Islamic native land and the land of the Islamic Revolution is, by all means, much more exalted than the one who fights merely for the country.

We respect both types of fighter the former as a brave and self-sacrificing man who fights for honor and dignity and does not bow down to humiliation and the latter for the same thing plus his love for the most magnificent and excellent cause, Almighty God. The Islamic culture considers an honest, generous and kind non-Muslim a much more respectable individual than another non-Muslim who is a liar and a greedy person and causes all kinds of trouble in the society. The reason is quite obvious, Islam is a religion of values. It attaches value to honest individuals whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

Righteousness, chastity, honor and faithfulness are always considered of great value regardless of one's beliefs or religion. However, a Muslim endowed with such qualities hewed out of his Islamic faith and self-purification along with the loftiest of virtues, namely, servitude to God, is definitely far better than a non-Muslim having the same qualities. I reminded those brothers who asked me that question how we, as Muslims invoke the name of our great Prophet (S) in our daily prayers saying "**I testify that Muhammad is a servant of God and His messenger**".

With this statement we are actually praising Hadhrat Muhammad by recalling his servitude to God. This shows the great value of man's servitude in relation to God when he communes with the Divine Almighty. In our prayers we first praise the Prophet as a servant and then glorify him as His messenger. This is our culture and ideology.

One can conclusively and clearly infer from the above that one's tendency to a school of thought (Islam) never negates human values that may be found among non-Muslims. One who underrates adherence to the Islamic school of thought and makes efforts to de-popularize it, can never say that the tendency of this school is tantamount to negation of sublime humane characteristics that may be found, although rarely, in non-Muslims and also that having faith in Islam means a departure from science and specialization. Who has uttered such a big lie? Where does such baseless statements originate? In this short speech I do not intend to go into details. I hope, however, to present the issue more meticulously in another speech.

My brothers and sisters, tendency to the Islamic school of thought never negates the value of specialization. We want you to know that Islam and our Islamic Revolution aims at training faithful specialists and experts. This is not a crime, nor is it a defect nor a sin on our part. If we stress on Islam as our school of thought, it is only to say that the very foundation of our revolutionary society is based on Islam, and evolves out of Islam alone.

I hope that the issue concerning nationalism is now clarified. I also hope that it is now quite clear what you brothers and sisters of the Muslim Iranian nation say in your slogans regarding these two kinds of tendencies.

May Allah's Blessings and Grace be upon you all.

Greetings and blessings of God be upon the cleaned souls of all martyrs in the path of Truth and Justice, Islam and our glorious Islamic Revolution.

I am deeply honored by the great kindness you faithful sisters and brothers have shown, you who are lovers of God and His Path, the Revolution, the Imam of the Ummah and Leader of the Revolution.

In this gathering, which abounds with compassion and enthusiasm, I hope to be able to reciprocate all this warm reception, zeal and sincerity which act as catalysts that augment our commitment and responsibility. Our lives have been spent committed to the cause of God and His people and we hope to be able to spend the rest of it with the same bonds of commitment in many dimensions.

Post-revolution Iran requires vigilance and conviction on our part. It obliges us and the Muslim Ummah to recognize the exigencies of the day and act upon them as dictated by the Islamic faith. We should endeavor to promote the understanding and awareness of our people to a still higher level, making way

for the development of a pure Islamic mentality in this society.

Today, I want to take up an issue that has been a popular topic of discussion nowadays. The issue is Liberalism, a subject which is frequently discussed by people holding different ideas and opinions in our society. Liberalism is a school of thought based on the freedom of the individual. In essence this school believes that man as an individual, is a free being who can identify his needs and wants and endeavors to meet them. In other words this school holds that given the absolute freedom and will to act the way he wishes man can improve his personality, culture and behavior, and advance economically and socially.

On this basis, we can then say that Liberalism is then a branch and an offshoot of Rationalism which is founded on the belief that man can absolutely rely upon reason to identify his needs and upon his wisdom as his guide. According to this view man's mental faculty is absolute and sufficient, and that man need not abide by the rules of religion or any other laws except those he discovers and makes through reason.

Rationalism does not believe that Divine revelation can be an independent source of knowledge. It opines that it is solely man's intellect and wisdom that is capable of understanding life. Hence, man alone can advance, gain knowledge of the world around him and lead a better and prosperous life through reason. Among rationalists, different views exist as to the magnitude of the individual's role in building his life, his self, environment and culture. Some of them hold the idea that man's wisdom is absolute and that it is man's individual identity that determines his personality. This group believes that man can gain knowledge, advance and attain prosperity through forces inherent in every individual that is, as given to him by creation.

This type of thinking is binary: one aspect grants superiority to the individual over the society whereas the other believes that society must dominate. The former caters to the individualistic concept that the individual is free and not subject to fatalism of predestination. It holds that one can move freely in the arena of being in such a way that neither the rule of social determinism nor that of any other antecedents can change man's path or subdue his will. The individual enjoys such great freedom of action that he is able to choose any path he deems right to traverse. In this view social order and environment are by no means barriers to man and the individual because he is not bound by any predetermined course.

In contrast to this there is another type of Liberalism called collective Liberalism which attunes itself with a sort of Socialism and collective rule. Through a gradual process of realization, this school has arrived at the conclusion that man cannot be totally free from the domination of the environment in which he lives. Realizing that social or economic factors restrain the individual and debar him from advancing the way he wishes, Liberalism then has more or less accepted a kind of an independent identity for the collective order (existent in society), thus emerging as another type of Socialism.

In the twentieth century, we now observe how in the seat of Liberalism (the Western communities) socialistic doctrines gradually finding a strong base and are moving along with Liberalism, mutually

interacting in a sort of a compromise and coalition. Today, it is plain to see that Liberalism has very well attuned itself with Socialism in those societies.

Liberalism may then be defined as follows:

1. Liberalism is based mainly upon Rationalism. It rejects all kinds of knowledge except that which is acquired through man's own faculty of reason.
2. In today's Western culture and civilization. Liberalism has primarily emerged as a doctrine resting on the concept of Individualism and negated any established order and social determinism.
3. Although Liberalism has evolved as a school rejecting social and other types of determinism, it is gradually tending to appreciate the societal identity to the some extent, and is now emerging as a sort of a "Liberal Socialism" or "Socialistic Liberalism."

In an interview last week, I pointed out that Liberalism almost always goes with a negation of Divine laws and religious edicts. This does not mean, however that Liberalism requires one to refute religion. What it aims at is for man to employ his own wisdom and scientific knowledge in establishing laws that suit him best. This school believes that in order to make social laws, man need not refer to religious scriptures and revelations sent down to messengers of God.

Liberalism asks man to depend solely on scientific knowledge in the discoveries and establishment of laws and regulations without a holy scripture and prophetic traditions, so says Liberalism, man, gifted with scientific dexterity, can individually or collectively make laws to ensure his prosperity. This doctrines dictates, "any law derived purely as a result of man's own wisdom and reasoning, i.e., free from any external influence, must be obeyed. However, due to the dynamism of man's life, he may not abide by a certain law forever. He can always devise new laws whenever the need arises or circumstances demand."

Liberalism cannot preserve its doctrine and at the same time accept Divine laws. Revealed (prophetic) laws require unconditional obeisance and acceptance regardless of whether one understands their philosophy and reason or not. This is a precise point of difference that should not go unheeded.

Before coming here I saw a newspaper article on my recent interview dealing with Liberalism. I had mentioned (in that interview) that one of the characteristics of Liberalism is urging man to be unrestrained in making use of wisdom when devising laws for social, economic, political and other purposes. This doctrine also argues that no holy scriptures such as the Quran, Bible and Torah can serve man's interests.

The writer of that article asked what the basis of my argument had been. I think the writer did not even bother to consult one of these encyclopedias which include a concise explanation of social schools. I advise the writer to refer to the German Bruskhus encyclopedia and see for himself how it has

mentioned "a free attitude towards religious decrees" as one of the characteristics of Liberalism. The recently revised edition of this 20 volume encyclopedia compiled over a decade ago includes the latest information on any subject. I will enumerate the various features of Liberalism as they appeared in the above mentioned encyclopedia and see what conclusion we can derive therefrom:

1. The main foundation of Liberalism is Rationalism that is, only reason can provide man with a reliable source of knowledge. Rationalism in itself is a negation of Divine Revelation as an independent fountain of knowledge.
2. Liberalism is also based on man's individual liberty. That is, man wields absolute autonomy over his affairs and is free from any sort of determinism, social or environmental. In this regard, Liberalism is attuned with Individualism.
3. Since schools (of thought) are subject to change, the Liberalist doctrine too, in spite of its staunch individualistic stance and the fact that the society affects individuals one way or another, undergoes change; thus, emerging as a sort of "Socialistic Liberalism."

There are, however, some positive points for Liberalism which we should not neglect:

1. Opposed to autocratic rule, Liberalism urges masses to confront dictators. Liberalists foster the idea that man should not succumb to totalitarian rule. In this respect this school is commendable.
2. Liberalism also negates collective and class dictatorship as advocated by Marxism. It rejects the dissolution of individual human identity in society as well as the concept that the human being advances in an involuntary mechanical manner. This aspect of Liberalism is quite laudable too.

This negation of class dictatorship and the absolute rule of society over the individual, and the fact that Liberalism provides man with freedom of action and choice while urging him to advance and develop his world by relying on his own wisdom without surrendering to existing situations, induces the growth of man's hidden talents. These characteristics compel one to praise this doctrine as far as such qualities are concerned.

Another commendable aspect of the Liberalistic doctrine is the liberty it grants man in the realm of economy. With emphasis laid on individual ownership, Liberalism urges man to engage in unrestrained production and sell the fruit of his labor. It further endorses the idea that freedom in production, distribution, supply and demand will contribute to the society's economic growth and prepare the ground for man's increased role in boosting the economy.

Now, let us look into the negative aspects of this doctrine which, like its merits, deserve attention. As I have said, Liberalism believes in man's power of reasoning as the only means to attain knowledge. Revelation, it says, cannot be another source. We as the faithful who believe in Divine Revelation, cannot pay any tribute to this doctrine. We consider it a dangerous school of thought because it deprives

man of one of the most exalted fountains of God's grace and bounty, the Divine revelation, and the prophetic traditions and knowledge.

Because of its overemphasis on individual liberty, liberalism has failed to take note of the visible and invisible limitations imposed by atheistic and secular social orders on man which restrain his actions. A liberal economic order urges men to work, produce, consume, engage in trade and live the way he wishes. A liberalist propagates that this will lead to a flourishing economy. Superficially, it is a meritorious concept but it loses its luster once we take a closer look. We call upon all the advocates of a "liberal" economic system to note how the world's capitalistic economy has hindered small groups and individuals from participating in a truly free enterprise due to the un-equal distribution of wealth.

Today's prevailing system aims at nothing but the preservation of the welfare of a handful of rich tycoons who toy with the world's wealth and are inconsiderate of the deprived masses who have no access to such provision. While this affluent minority grows stronger and wealthier day by day, the bulk of the people suffer more and more from destitution and poverty resulting in their estrangement from pleasure and happiness. What opportunity for growth and advancement can an individual born in to such families have? Very little and sometimes none.

In other words, the freedom a liberalist speaks of benefits nobody but himself since common people can have no share in it. The concept of liberty as endorsed by Liberalism is one-dimensional and will only result in the bifurcation of people into two categories: An affluent minority unrestrained in the enjoyment of a pleasure-seeking life and the application of their various self-granted liberties; and a deprived, starving and depressed majority with meagre possibilities to enjoy and enact their so-called "freedom".

We would like to ask the liberals if they truly believe that the masses who are tackling immense difficulties have any "freedom". Does this oppressed majority really enjoy the right to exercise their freedom as the affluent minority does? You (liberals) want freedom, but for only five percent of the people while the rest (95 percent) are deprived of it. If freedom is good, it should be good for everybody and not for a chosen class of society.

By advocating this sort of freedom you only seek to deny the fact that "poverty breeds disbelief". You want to deny the fact that poverty and destitution can push man into doubting God's grace and justice. Do not deprived people ask God why they are engulfed in misery? Is poverty not a fertile ground to grow cynical about God's justice?

Upon hearing a poor man complaining of his inability to stand in worship due to his wretched state, a liberal may sneer and say that he grudged because of his illiteracy and ignorance and that he would not have made such remarks had he been a man of knowledge. It is true that "lack of knowledge" may give rise to such complaints, but the question is would the same man adopt such a lackadaisical attitude in face of imposed poverty if he had attained a higher level of knowledge or would he launch a battle against such express injustice and inequality?

If we discredit Liberalism, we do not intend to strip it bare of its merits. We, too, believe in the expediency and supremacy of human liberty in facilitating the growth of the human being. However, this liberty should not be exclusive to a special group. Everybody, not a certain class, should be given the opportunity to explore his talents and advance. In short, we can endorse freedom as advocated by Liberalism only if it applies to all and does not transgress the limits set by Islamic laws. The reason is because Divine Decrees require absolute obedience, that is not withstanding whether we know their philosophy and reasons or not.

We believe that God's commandments should be obeyed unquestionably and that an Islamic community cannot turn a blind eye to the violation of even the least significant of God's laws.

A point of vital importance should be noted here, namely, Divine Laws are not imposed upon us. From the Islamic point of view, man is free to accept or reject religion and faith. The Holy Quran says:

"There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error..." (2:256)

But accepting Islam also entails absolute subscription to its laws and codes. One cannot say, "I believe in Islam, but what if I do not say the morning prayers or do not fast if Ramadhan falls in summer time. Or what if I sometimes watch obscene movies, etc." This type of person may further ask "what freedom then does Islam endorse? Why should one not be allowed to watch scabrous shows? One should be permitted to show such films ad-libitum. Likewise, one should also be free to watch them or not."

For these people freedom is having fun in mixed swimming pools. As for the religious, they are free not to go to such places. They say, "Men and women should be free to appear in public or places of work in suggestive and indecent apparel just as a pious woman should be free to dress otherwise. Women must be given the liberty to mix with men in society, with make-up. Men, too, are free not to look at such women." Definitely, we oppose this type of freedom. It is not on the word "freedom" that we differ from liberals. The bone of our contention is something substantial.

What we want to put across is that in the very center of liberalism i.e. Europe, every nook and corner we visited bore marks of such "liberal" practices. So, if we now express our concern about the liberals coming to power in the Islamic Republic, it is because we have seen and still observe the crystallization of liberalistic doctrines in the place which gave birth to it. In those countries, the path leads man toward corruption and not to where he can rectify his talents and enjoy the fruit of maturing humane values. Can man be truly free where he is constantly exposed to the lewdness explicit or implicit of a permissive society?

It is not in the word where our dispute lies. We are not the least concerned whether one calls oneself a liberal or non-liberal as long as one abides by God's commands. Proclaiming our faith in Islamic laws and principles orally or in writing will not suffice. It is one's deeds which count. If the head of an office, for instance, reacts against discrimination, oppression, corruption and enjoins piety, justice, righteousness, decency and adherence to God's words, upon his subordinates, he has truly earned our profound

respect irrespective of the political beliefs he holds.

We earnestly believe in the necessity of a number of social limitations and rules in human community. Such laws in our view, should rest on the following:

1. Faith in Divine religion. This is the main factor that affects man's conviction in observing religious decrees and laws.
2. The law and its execution by the government and social institutions. It will be too naive to assume that everybody obeys the law because of his conscience and faith. If people violate the law, they must be stopped by law enforcing authorities.

Islamic doctrines say that law enforcement is the exclusive right of the government. In this regard I would like to speak of a loophole unknowingly created by lovers and advocates of the Revolution through which critics attack our Islamic Revolution accusing it of "suppression of freedom in the country." This is when they (supporters of the Revolution) meddle in the performance of government duties and do things which should be done by government organs. I call upon such people to let the responsible organs perform their job as they should.

If an individual violates Islamic rules, we as Muslims are duty bound to make efforts to prevent him. In doing so, however, we must comply with the conditions as stipulated in our Islamic jurisprudential treatises on applying the principle of *Amr b'il Ma'ruf wa Nahi an Al-Munkar* (efforts to enjoin good and forbid evil). This principle, however, has various stages which include the following:

A. That one should enjoin the Ma'ruf (good and decent) and detest the Munkar (evil and obscene) deep in one's heart (this is in cases when one is unable to do anything against the offender.)

B. One's pleasure and happiness upon encountering the good and displeasure when witnessing a case of evil should be reflected on one's face (e.g. an encouraging smile of approval for good actions and a frown of indignation for wicked deeds.)

C. One should engage in a vocal encouragement of the good. In a similar manner, one must openly criticize and reproach the evil-doers.

D. In this stage one should take action to some extent and directly warn the person committing evil.

E. The fifth stage refers to occasions when force becomes expedient in implementing justice and the good and in preventing tyranny and evil. In this case, Islamic laws should be put into practice by the organs concerned and it is imperative that individuals and groups refrain from embarking on any irrelevant intrusion. If affairs are handled by non-governmental individual and group. The critic (of the revolution) will be emboldened into fabricating and use accusations that the country has been plunged into chaos, anarchy and lack of Islamic order and discipline. In cases like these, such statements will not seem entirely baseless.

Brothers and sisters! Safeguard the laws of Allah with all your might, awareness and vigilance. Let us all consider it our duty to enjoin good, prevent evil, support truth and justice and fight corruption, tyranny and falsehood. In carrying out this duty we must abide by our noble Islamic heritage to divest the opposition of any excuse to propagate against our glorious Islamic Revolution.

Summing up, I would like to touch once more on these major points:

1. Islam considers man's liberty as the most exalted aspect of his being. Man is the glittering diamond of creation because he has been gifted (by God) with freedom and wisdom.
2. Islam, to a great extent, believes that the free and erudite human being is well capable of determining the path that will lead to his growth and development of his talents. Islam urged man to traverse the path to perfection by means of his inner guide i.e. wisdom.
3. Aided by his analytical mind, man discovers another great fountain of knowledge in the Divine revelation, prophet hood, book of God and the traditions of His messengers. Thus, man's knowledge does not exclusively emanate from what he perceives through reason; it also includes knowledge inspired by the Divine Revelation.
4. Once man perceives the Divine Will and Purpose of creation, then he will not depend on his own wisdom alone in making the laws of life. While wisdom plays its role in legislation, it is nevertheless Divine Revelation that serves man as a foundation of all his rational thoughts and pursuits. In an Islamic order, therefore all laws and ordinances stem from the Divine Revelation. The role of human reason as mentioned earlier, will be the interpretation and regulation of the laws.
5. Islam considers man a free being. This is why it urges man not to bow before corruption under any circumstances. Islam deems it incumbent upon man to destroy the nucleus of corruption or die fighting it; or at least immigrate from where corrupt practices are prevalent. This, however, does not mean that Islam is indifferent and insensitive toward the effects a corrupt and oppressive social order may impose on individuals in the society.
6. From the Islamic point of view, man, though conceptualized as free, is subject to certain social limitations. He is free, but within the framework and jurisdiction of Divine Laws.
7. In the Islamic Republic, corrupt, oppressive and aggressive practices will be prevented and duly punished by jurisprudent authorities; their prevention is not confined to mere gestures of piety and conscience.
8. The law and order in the Islamic Republic is primarily founded upon faith and religious and human conscience; and secondarily on a powerful government.
9. A Muslim brought up in an Islamic environment is repulsive toward all tyranny and corruption; he will never be indifferent to such issues. It is a community consisting of faithful and militant men who always

react against corruption and this is the kind of society we endeavor to establish.

10. The task of interpreting God's ordinances is a duty laid on the shoulders of a Marja' at-Taqlid (top jurisprudent whose religious decrees are honored and followed by the people) who is brave, just and abreast of current issues. Such a task cannot be handled by an ordinary person who may interpret Islamic laws arbitrarily. While freedom of expression is the right of every individual, the final verdict and criterion are to be decided by a Marja' at-Taqlid who is a savant and authority in Islamic jurisprudence, pious, just, brave and well-informed of current events. In the interpretation of Divine Laws. Our Islamic community follows the views of such a religious leader and not any individual or group. In this way, our community has always a clear-cut policy. Whether one calls it a liberal or non-liberal society, is not a matter of our concern. What counts is the essence, not the name.

Brothers and sisters! We should meet in gatherings like this more often and discuss the essence of Islamic issues on a concrete, clear and decisive basis, lest we should be caught in confusion over trivial issues like names, with the inventors of falsehood. Names are immaterial and undaunted by names, we should pay attention to the essence in order to preserve the totality of the genuine and non-eclectic essence of our Islamic Revolution.

Societies vary in terms of objectives. A society may aim merely at scientific, industrial and economic growth; in which case its leaders place prime significance on the concentration of all energies for the attainment of a more luxurious and prosperous life, deriving the utmost benefit from every possibility to cater for added pleasure and prosperity.

Such a community should therefore, place the highest value on the sciences, and skills, which boost the people's efforts to achieve this objective in the shortest time possible. For this type of society other issues besides the above goal will then be considered secondary and marginal. The main overriding factor will, thus, be economy in general.

Today's global economic structure is of two kinds: first, a capitalistic economic order which grants a certain class access to a luxurious and prosperous life. Second, a socialistic economic system which allegedly aims at equally dividing provisions and wealth among all.

One will notice that these orders are both actually geared to a similar objective that is attaining material welfare and prosperity. The only difference is that the capitalist system exclusively assigns affluence to a certain class while Socialism allegedly tries to distribute wealth among all social classes. Thus, the greatest value is placed on technical, industrial, managerial, commercial, agricultural, and other specialized fields which can turn the economic wheels of a society to meet the requirements of a prosperous material life.

Moreover, even individual artistic creativity will be employed for the advancement of technology and

industry. In such societies the specialists in various field, rule over all other walks of life; and social posts are given to people according to their skill and expertise in a particular field. Thus, the moral character of a specialist chosen to handle a certain task in such an environment becomes immaterial and unimportant. It will not be the society's concern to interfere in the affairs of specialists running a bank, farm, factory, or hospital as long as they perform their duties to suit the employer or society. It is not important then whether a specialist is morally degenerated, corrupt, or irreligious.

The logic offered by the advocates of such a policy is that specialists are indispensable to run factories, to boost the economy, to promote agriculture, etc. As long as they are capable of handling their jobs, one need not bother with their moral and private lives; whether they pray or go to nightclubs, is none of any body's business. Such a reasoning demands that every wise man whose prime objective is economic and material growth should accept and defend this policy. To them, specialization is the only criterion by which people are assigned certain jobs.

According to the advocates of this idea if the technocrat who runs an industrial firm and performs his work better with a nice looking secretary in his office, the latter has to be brought in so as to boost production and increase his efficiency. This was the kind of society which disgusted us before the revolution. Those who suffered from such predominantly economic and material values (or rather anti-values) that ruled our community in the past, will see no more of such a life. What is then the kind of society we are after?

In our ideal society, although a prosperous material life is encouraged and considered essential for man's growth, it is not regarded as the ultimate objective of the society. From this (Islamic) view, a progressive and prosperous material life is merely a means of improvement; it is a means of helping man to develop his capabilities and talents and is not, therefore a goal in itself. Once free from economic pressure man can truly work in a spiritual sphere to assume the exalted position as "*God's vicegerent on earth*" as stated in the Holy Quran.

In such a society, man will actually fall in love with God and not with worldly values. It is only because of one's spiritual values and piety that one will be loved, praised and respected by other members of the society, In such a society, people's hearts will smolder with feelings of elation upon hearing the names of Imam Husain (the third Shi'ite Imam) and his companions because they had sacrificed their lives for the sake of the divine values of Islam. The name of Hussain will remind people of God, His path and *Jihad* (holy war) to defend Truth.

Now, is it possible for a people who are given to inferior desires and worldly affairs instead of sublime religious values, to feel the ecstasy experienced by the pious lovers of true heroes such as Imam Husain? So, in a pious society where culture is based upon divine values, the economy, education, artistic talents, etc are all employed to help man in the process of acquiring higher sublime values. In the same society, a factory manager will be chosen, firstly for his moral competence and then, his specialization, because where values rule, man is given preference over machine and not vice versa.

We, as Muslims, cannot aim at a better economy or a better community at the expense of degeneration and human deterioration. A corrupt manager will pose a great danger to the employees in a factory or institution where he will certainly have a corrupting influence. The leaders of a society, even at low managerial or executive level in factories and offices greatly influence people.

Why do you think there is so much emphasis set on the issue of Imamatus (leadership) in the Shi'ite school of thought? Why do we, Shi'ites; believe that only those endowed with the sublime qualities of piety be chosen as leaders? It is simply because the leader's behavior will be exemplary for the people. Thus, every leader, at any level of leadership, is a practical model to be copied by people around him. Therefore the economy, education, art, industry, and all aspects of life must be in harmony with principles of our school of thought so as to enable man to attain material as well as spiritual perfection.

In a society, whose prime target is to assist man in traversing new horizons of exalted values, man's path to perfection should not be obstructed by economic problems. Economy then, is not a goal, but rather a means to open the way for man's complete growth in the realm of spiritual values and morality. Specialization and expertise is of great value, but it is only secondary to man's commitment to Islamic principles.

In an Islamic society, we cannot leave social matters and management in the hands of irreligious people who are subject to base worldly affairs and desires. Religious feelings and commitment to Islamic values are the prerequisites in appointing someone to a certain post in an office, factory, and educational centers of business enterprise. In present governmental institutions, certain questionnaires are distributed among job applicants, according to which one's religious attitude will be evaluated. Some have referred to this process as reminiscent of the age of Inquisitions. Is it really so?

I stress that it is only out of sheer ignorance and a resort to blatant sophistry to accuse our Islamic government of applying inquisitive measures while employing people. How can a Muslim government dedicated to Islamic values, employ non-believers, for instance, to teach in its schools? Those questions were geared mainly to assess religious tendencies and not one's sectarian inclinations.

It is not subscribing to "Medieval" modes of investigation to evaluate an applicant's piety and religious tendencies. Inquisition subjected one to persecution for the mere possession of ideas opposed to those of the ruling class. The word "Inquisition" refers to an era at the inception of Protestantism, when the Catholics, in places where they formed the majority, would torture and persecute people only because their ideas were contradictory to those of the Catholic Church.

Such a persecution is indeed inhuman and we severely condemn it. But it is not inquisition if in our Islamic society we wish to assign social responsibilities to pious and faithful people instead to the corrupt and the irreligious. It is true that in lackadaisical societies where religion and state are separate entities, and the former is considered an individual issue aloof from social, industrial and economic affairs, one is not questioned about his religious tendency.

But the point is, we do not wish to copy such societies, like Hitler of West Germany for example, in their mode of living. We want to lead an Islamic life in this Islamic Republic and must adhere to our own criteria and values. Our people must not surrender to this baseless sophistry. This process of assessing religious competence and tendencies must be backed by all those who desire to live in an Islamic society and those who wish for the Islamization of the social order in this country.

Once again, I would like to point out that it is values we are concerned about and not one's individual and sectarian tendencies. It is one's values, insight, and proper Islamic views, behavior and ethics which determine one's Islamic piety. Should I, myself, within the realm of my responsibility, have invited and will do so in the future, (to work with the government) those who are endowed with a proper Islamic insight and faith even if they do not like my person or talk behind my back. I do so because it is not me and my person who should be the criteria of what is right or wrong.

Once, I investigated about a person who disliked me for some reason. After I was sure of his Islamic faith and piety, I invited him to work and even assigned to him important jobs. Later, he gradually realized that I was not the type of person he thought I was, and now he has become a good friend of mine. However, it would not matter if he would not be kind and friendly to me as long as he was capable of performing the job assigned to him.

Therefore, as I said, it is not personal and political tendencies which count in our evaluation of persons. Rather, it is one's piety, faithfulness, and capabilities which concern us. We however will not allow such criteria to be overshadowed merely because of pressures coming from those who accuse us of employing 'inquisition methods' and sectarian interests and those who label and vilify us by way of sophistry. We are determined not to let westernized and eastern (pro-Russia) elements who are totally alien to Islam and the Islamic Republic to reign over the fate of our Muslim people. We are therefore, endeavoring to establish our school of thought and ideology, Islam, for rule in this country. In our ideal society, it is Islam that will be the infrastructure from which all other superstructure institutions will rise. Economy is then not the basic social structure to us, it is merely a superstructure.

Thus, in a society the structure of which is founded on Islam and Islamic values, the first question asked of those who are supposed to shoulder a particular government responsibility, would be about their knowledge of Islam, their piety, and virtues within the context of Islamic values. It is only after such interrogation that one's expertise and technical competence for the job should be assessed. So, one's religious convictions and adherence to Islamic precepts are prerequisites in assigning one to offices and posts. Indubitably, it will be ideal if we can find a sufficient number of competent and pious people having satisfactory technical knowledge for a certain job to fill in all gaps in this connection.

But the fact is, owing to the materialistic and alien to Islamic culture that ruled our society in the last few decades during the reign of the former corrupt regime, our noble youths had been deviated from the Islamic path. In spite of the fact that they are good physicians, engineers, managers, economists, etc. they are either totally alienated from Islam and are virtually non-Muslims or if they are, they are very

weak in faith. What can we do then?

There are a few points to be considered:

Firstly, in the revolutionary society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we must endeavor to create a powerfully constructive Islamic current, capable of absorbing men and bringing about a deep change in them, a current that can obliterate people's negative characteristics to make room for the creation of positive and Islamic qualities.

To achieve this, our society should adopt a policy that can attract and absorb men and their talents to join this grand Islamic movement: Simultaneous with this, the society should reject and repulse those who cannot be guided and corrected. The quality of absorption must certainly come first in order to draw and attract the majority of the people. Repulsion and rejection, of course, exist side by side with absorption. There will always be a certain group repulsive to the divine Laws of Islam and will therefore be rejected. This is of no importance as long as we take efforts to absorb and attract the majority to tread on the constructive Islamic track.

Secondly, to make this current prevail in the society, priority should be given to the assignment of pious and competent persons to jobs and posts. It will be ridiculous if we let educated and pious young Muslims be jobless while an impious educated man occupies a certain post. The society must undergo a great change in this respect. Pious, virtuous and qualified persons whether young, old, men, or women should be given priority in all sorts of assignments. This must be established as a rule in our society that privilege and priority are given to piety and that a pious specialist is more valuable in this community. If we fail to establish such a trend in our country, the society shall lose its power to absorb virtuous people and cannot be constructively effective in making virtue and piety prevail.

When in a society, priority is accorded to a specialist who is also pious, others will be encouraged to strengthen their faith and religious convictions. Thus, the management of the society will eventually be in the hands of educated and faithful people. "Educated" here does not necessarily mean those who have graduated from university.

In general, all religious and pious people who are capable of performing a certain job that requires expertise, even if he is a construction worker, must be given preference when assigning people to jobs over those who possess the same technical competence but are not pious. Yes, for the establishment of such values and trends in "Our society, we boldly declare our views and do not care for the hue and cry raised on the issue by Western or Eastern (pro Russia) elements.

The fact is, our people in the past, up to 50 years ago, would practically place preference on the pious and faithful when they assigned people to any job, whether it was a significant or a trivial one. For instance, if they wanted to hire a construction worker for repairs in their houses, they would never give the job to an irreligious person as long as a pious worker was available. But regretfully, this commendable tradition of our ancestors was eventually replaced by nonchalance and indifference and

gradually was brushed aside in the name of modernism and un-civilization

Today, however, we explicitly declare that our return to traditional norms such as placing value on piety, will be indicative of our seriousness and sincerity in our Islamic beliefs. It means that we will never forego our principles even if we are labelled narrow minded by those inclined to alien ideologies.

Thirdly, we must adopt a principle of relativism in assigning people to posts; that is, if there are not enough pious and educated experts around, we should still look for those whose moral and religious convictions are relatively more commendable than those of the others. In other words, we must not relinquish this principle only because there is not an adequate number of fully competent pious specialists. In any case, we should abide by this principle according to the relative degree of the individual's piousness, moral allegiance and commitments. We, therefore, should strictly observe the principle of giving priority to the faithful and pious while assigning people to jobs to the extent of preferring those with the least degree of piousness over people with no faith at all.

Certainly, it would be ideal if we could have an adequate number of pious educated people and specialists. But now that we do not have enough of those people around, we should still observe this precept as much as possible even on a relative basis and must never adopt an "open-door policy" in this connection. That is we should never let faithless and impious specialists assume positions just because the society is at present suffering from a lack of pious and faithful specialists.

Fourthly, if because of expediency we are compelled to temporarily employ non-Muslim specialists and experts, we should only do so within the framework of the existing requirements and needs. Measures must also be taken to safeguard the places where they work from the plight of .their impiety and faithlessness. It should be noted that according to the Divine Laws of Islam it is absolutely forbidden to eat the flesh of the dead or carrion.

But still if one is compelled out of necessity to eat it to survive, instead of dying of hunger, there will be no sin in eating that flesh. The places where such experts work should be then safeguarded against probable dangers that might be posed to the Muslim environment as a result of the impiety of the foreign experts and specialists.

Regarding the employment of experts from religious minorities such as Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and Sabeans, it is permissible as it has been prescribed in our Islamic constitution law, as long as they do not openly offend Islamic laws and principles. Moreover, the Muslim employees working with these people should never look at them as models and note that they have different religion's convictions.

Non-Muslim experts, as has always been in practice in the past, can work freely in the Muslim community; and as lawful citizens of the Islamic state their vocations and honor are preserved and protected by Islamic laws. The Muslim society has never shown any willingness or tendency to discriminate against Jewish, Zoroastrian or Christian physicians as long as they do not openly violate Islamic rules and laws. If such non – Muslim experts can be described religious, according to their own

faith, then they will pose no danger to the Islamic community.

Now, it should be noted that what I have discussed so far concerns social positions. In other words, when it comes to individual posts no one can prevent any citizen of the Islamic Republic from establishing his own industrial workshop in co-operation with a group of his co-thinkers. The discussion presented thus concerns the assignment of people to governmental offices, organizations and private institutions established by committed Muslims. So, if other groups and persons establish their own manufacturing units and work competently to produce useful goods, the outcome of their efforts and their commodities will be utilized by the Muslim community in an ordinary and natural manner.

Fifth, in order to make our society advance towards an ideal community comprising committed Muslims endowed with an adequate amount of expertise and specialization in various fields, efforts must be taken to ensure that all schools, educational and technological institutions and other centers of learning in the country are kept attuned with Islamic tenets. In other words, all organs involved in educational and training activities, should exert unsparing efforts in bringing up students who are not only strong in their Islamic faith but are also technically capable and qualified.

It is of vital importance that the first principle be given priority over the other four and that is, a constructive and powerful current and trend should be formed in the Islamic Republic so as to absorb all technically qualified and specialized persons towards the Islamic faith and its sublime values– a current that can bring about a revolution within the inner self of every individual. One should never argue that a particular person has not been a good Muslim in the past and should, therefore not be absorbed into the Muslim rank, such a person may not have been a faithful man, say, until this very yesterday.

But today he, too, should be given a chance to build himself up under the aegis of this constructive and powerful Islamic current that has swept across our revolutionary community. You should all behave in such a manner that the glitter akin to Islamic order and management attracts all eyes and attention. It is in this way, you can rest assured, that our society will be able to draw and absorb more and more of such elements day by day.

Now, a question has been brought up as to whether or not a committed Muslim should ever accept a job for which he lacks the required expertise and qualifications. The person who has asked this has concluded that our discussion on specialization and the school of thought (ideology) has been fruitless and absurd because a true faithful man will accept a job only when he has the capability and sufficient amount of knowledge to do it. It is out of question that a faithful Muslim will never undertake a job which he is not capable of doing; but the gist of the problem lies somewhere else.

In spite of the fact that such issues (like the matter brought up in this question) carry substance in their essence, it is still obvious that they are being mentioned only in a bid to serve a false cause. I would like to ask the questioner what conclusion he wants to derive through this question. Did anyone who insisted on faithfulness and commitment to Islam, ever say that a good Muslim should accept a job even if he is

incapable of handling it? What we simply want to say is that in assigning people to jobs, a good Muslim whose degree of expertise in a certain field is seventy percent should be given priority over a faithless one or a Muslim who is not committed to faith but whose degree of expertise in the same field is eighty five percent. We explicitly declare here that the former is unreservedly preferred over the latter when assigning people to jobs in the Islamic Republic.

Why is it so? It is simply because we are certain that as a result of our great Islamic movement, any insufficiency in technical fields will soon be eliminated from the ranks of committed Muslim technicians and specialists in the future. On the other hand, those whose degree of expertise is 90 or 85 percent but have no faith in Islam or, if they have their own brand of Islam and do not believe in this Islamic Republic, Revolution and its line of thought, these will never lay their expertise at the disposal of this revolution and its line of thought. They only want to interfere in our affairs and infiltrate every organ.

However, the Muslims and the Ulama who worked for this revolution and offered sacrifices in its path, will not allow this and will never be deceived. Regarding these anti-revolutionary sophistries, we will discuss and expose them to the people. I, as a brother of yours and as an individual will continue to bring to light ambiguous issues as long as I am alive. With your help, we will clarify these matters and analyze them.

You, brothers and sisters who hear my utterances, analyze the ideas and when you realize that you sincerely believe in them, strive and endeavor to spread and support them and enlighten people and youths. We never said we were against specialization and expertise. Nor did we ever say we opposed knowledge and science. These are baseless accusations against us and our cause.

I, along with others who have been assigned to this or that office, have spent a lifetime promoting education and training. A great part of our lives has been spent in establishing educational institutions while simultaneously observing the limits set by religion and piety: What are these accusations being raised against us today?

This Mr Raja'i, whom you call a product of the Islamic school of thought, meaning that he is a Muslim, militant, revolutionary and a committed prime minister, is a competent and prominent teacher of mathematics. How can one accuse us of not attaching enough value to specialization and say that religion is indifferent towards expertise? People (like Raja'i) cannot be labelled with such accusations.

Who are these rumor-mongers fabricating such false accusations? What do they say? One of their objections regarding the present cabinet is that its members are old. Is it that these officials just appeared out of nowhere in this society today and are thus unknown to the people? It is true that Mr Raja'i was not known nationwide until two years ago. But a sufficient number of people know him well enough and recommended him to the nation, which now trust him. His cabinet is indeed a cabinet of experts and specialists. Its energy Minister, Dr. Abbaspour, was a prominent engineering professor before becoming a minister. How can then one claim that specialization has been ignored in this

cabinet?

The Post and Telegraph Minister, Dr. Qandi, has a doctorate in Electronics. You are well aware that today's mass media and telecommunication is a complex electronic conglomeration. He is then quite specialized for his post. His sole defect too, is that he is a Muslim and not a Westernized gigolo, which if he had been, some would have certainly considered him a 'specialized' minister.

Its Oil Minister is engineer Tundgouyan whom may God bless and release from the clutches of the Ba'athist enemy (Tundgouyan was taken captive while inspecting oil pipelines in the war stricken province of Khuzistan). He is an engineer, an oil specialist and has been appointed oil minister. His only fault (in the eyes of opponents) is that he comes from a deprived class and not from among the 'elite'.

Regarding the Economy Minister, Dr. Nourbakhsh too has a doctorate in economics which he obtained from a U.S. university. His defect (according to his opponents) is that he is not inclined to any ideological line other than Islam. The Health Minister is Dr. Manafi, a committed and reputable specialist whose only crime, as those of other members of this cabinet, is his Islamic convictions. He is a man whose appearance and inner characteristics depict him as a Muslim.

Dr. Bahonar who was recently appointed Minister of Education and Training by Mr. Raja'i and who has been approved for this job by the president is an expert in education in which field he has toiled for about 20 years. He is a thinker, writer and a teacher. His fault if at all is that he is an *alim*, a man committed to Islam and not a nationalist.

The Science Minister, Dr. Arefi, is a university professor and a physician. He was the chancellor of Tehran University for some time and has now been appointed to the post of Science Minister. How can then one ever argue that these ministers are not experts and that this cabinet has paid no heed to specialization? I truly do not understand such remarks.

How can it be construed that this cabinet is tending towards a revival of the age of the incompatibility of religion and science? It is exactly the opposite. The lives and behavior of the members of this cabinet have crystallized into the inseparable relation between religion and scientific specialization.

Oh, youths and intellectuals! Note that we declare these social realities to you sincerely and explicitly. We stress these points again and again and are humbly at your service. Bring in all seriousness any objection you might have on any of the issues I have discussed. If we find that it is we who are making mistakes, we will amend them. And if you are in error then we will explain the issues further until you grasp their meaning correctly.

We constantly advocate growth and sublimity. We wish our industry, economy, agriculture, animal husbandry, commerce and everything progress, but in a way conforming to our school of thought, Islam. This is the only condition (conformity with Islamic tenets) which we demand. We do not want progress, welfare, economy, industry, and agriculture if they do not attune with Islam. Commerce, for instance,

should advance but not at the expense of more deprivation of the oppressed.

No, we wish that an artisan's talent be utilized to improve welfare, bring about prosperity and solve the problems of this nation and community but not in selfish pursuits of stuffing his own pockets. The commercial talent of such a man can be used against Islam if he thinks only of his own interest. Yet, the same man will be serving Islam and Muslims if he thinks of the interests of the society as well. The same is true with engineers, physicians, managers and all other specialists and experts.

Today, we have meticulously and clearly discussed the principles regarding the issues of our (Islam) and specialization from theoretical and ideological points of view. On the basis of such an insight our cabinet members are practically looking for people both pious and specialized to assume administrative positions. I should like to stress again that it is not only university graduates or other special groups who can be refined to as specialists.

To us an academic degree can only serve as a proof of one's training and education in a certain field. But if we come across a person who is endowed with knowledge, experience, skill, practical specialization and intellect but is not a university degree holder, we will consider him a specialist and will certainly invite him to work.

Brothers and sisters! I hope to always remain a friend and a humble brother of yours and all the people of Iran. I wish to employ my competence and efficiency solely in the service of God and his people if Allah grants me such virtues. I hope none of such qualities ever give way to the slightest amount of pride and arrogance on my part. May I remain a humble Muslim servant endeavoring to win God's grace and satisfaction.

I hope, by God's help and our great love for men of God, and under the aegis of our affection for God and the glimmer of such a sublime love. We all ever remain in the path of salvation.

One of the men of God whose love we have cherished in a most sincere way with all our hearts throughout history is the Third Imam Hadhrat Hussain Ibn Ali (peace be upon him). We hold him in highest esteem as a lofty example of a true man of God. Each year, particularly during the first ten days of Muharram, culminating on Ashura (the anniversary of Imam Hussain's martyrdom) our society commemorates his martyrdom. Thus, our community becomes elated with the memory of Hussain, and is transformed into a Hussainite society, everywhere you go now you see slogans and mottos written in his name.

May God grant us success to help this Islamic Revolution advance in a path decreed by God, a path which serves the interests of our nation (Ummah).

We hope God will help us overcome flaws in ourselves which may contradict the objectives of our Islamic ideal and path. May He cleanse us of all impurities. May God help us all to assist our leader, Imam Khomeini, in the cause of this revolution. I myself would like before any other thing, to always refer

to the Imam as a master (professor) and teacher. He has been and is both a master and a teacher to us.

In any talk I hold with him and on all occasions, I feel his erudite characteristics and realize how a sublime insight and lofty stature which are characteristics of a man of God, crystallize in him at all times of hardship and moments of crisis. Such a teacher–student relation between the Imam and myself has always had a constructive and positive effect on me. I have always loved him more as a teacher. I hope his teachings will leave indelible effects on all of us and our society. The Imam is indeed an exemplary leader committed to the school of Islam. He is an example of an Islamic leader with strong Islamic commitments and a sublime Islamic insight.

May God preserve this exemplary personality for us, and may our society, even after the Imam, remain in the line of the Imam and on the path of Imamatus. May it always benefit from such leaders.

May we always have in mind the presence of our 12th Imam in occultation, Hadhrat Mahdi, whose successors are Muslim jurisprudents such as Imam Khomeini. May we always look upon the twelfth Imam as a criterion in choosing our leaders.

I hope that these living Ashura ceremonies will prevail in these divine centers established in the name of Imam Hussain, with the same simplicity, sincerity, and purity.

May our society never lose the essence of the divine culture which it has found in Alavite and Hussainite culture. Amen.

There are so many fabulous and wonderful phenomena found everywhere around the globe. In each chunk of earth we explore, we encounter a magnificent order that compels us to humbly submit to its grandeur. In our own time, man has discovered such a marvelous order in even the tiniest organ of the human body that has distracted his mind from the majesty of the cosmos.

Our world overflows with sensational phenomena, some of which have constantly puzzled but enthused man. One of these phenomena is life. For centuries man has engaged his mind in quest for the origin and essence of life. He has spared no effort to determine the answer to this question which has haunted him for ages. Voluminous works have been written on this matter and man's investigation of the phenomenon has led to the birth of various sciences that are devoted to finding the answer to the riddle of life.

When was the first time man took note of life itself? There have been times when man was not aware of facts which seem axiomatic to us today. It will not then be surprising to learn that at a juncture in human history man was not aware of life at all. It is certain, however, that it took man centuries to heed what seems self–evident to us in modern times. It would then not be illogical to investigate about the time when man first took notice of life. What event led to his discovery of this mysterious and wonderful

phenomenon called life?

Looking at religious literature, one can easily say that the divine prophets were the first who brought the issue of life and spirit to man. They were the ones who first posed the question of life, its origin and end, death and the Hereafter.

An attempt to find the answer to this question in sources other than the prophetic teachings would avail us of no substantial conclusion. We may only be confronted with a series of vague hypotheses almost impossible to prove. With this in mind, we may then opine that eras passed without man recognizing any of his privileges over other animals in his surroundings. It was probably because a particular cause or motivation was needed to awaken his senses to many issues and such a motivation had then not yet occurred in him.

Knowledge through comparison of opposites is a proven scientific method of thinking. In acquiring knowledge of his environment, man needed to note the contradiction existing in nature. A typical example is light and darkness, without knowing the latter, no clear understanding of the former would be gained. So, it is likely that men, unaware of life, came across the lifeless corpse of an animal or man. Examining it, he found no signs of life such as breathing, movement, speech and sound. He might have thought what had caused the immobility of the creature which was moving about until the day before. He probably examined the limbs and parts of the body and found to his surprise that every organ was still in its place.

Why then such immobility? The more he reflected on the issue, the more he sank into confusion. In the next few days he probably forgot about the whole thing. But he kept on observing the same phenomena of death repeatedly. He, thus, gradually developed the idea that there must be another factor which, though invisible, caused movement in those bodies before. It must then be, he thought that an unseen and indescribably intangible factor had caused all the motion, motives and activities of the now immobile creature.

Man called this invisible mysterious thing "spirit" or in philosophical term, "the soul". Through experience and observation man realized that some beings are imbued with an invisible element the soul which is the nucleus of all their activities. Our Islamic scholars also support it.

In his book *Al-Asfar*, Sadrul Mutaallihin (Mulla Sadra) defines soul as "a source of power with which a human body is infused, enabling it to act and employ its various parts to perform activities necessary for sustaining life"

Judging from the aforementioned philosophical and scientific definition, the soul is the fountain of power that drives man to perform his daily activities. In other words, the main characteristic of life is activity, endeavor and struggle. A being which ceases to function and struggle cannot then be considered a living being. Furthermore, scientists have also discovered that evidences of life are not limited to mere movement and struggle.

A grain of wheat (if kept in a vacuum) will never evolve into a seedling. But once it is sown and watered, it grows. Evidences of life are soon manifested when its roots reach out to get nutrition necessary for growth. Such movements result in the sprouting of the grain which later develops leaves and finally bears dense spikes of wheat grains. The various stages of development and reproduction are manifestations of plant life. When a wheat grain reproduces, it completes its evolutionary cycle. This type of evolution which is mainly characterized by an increase in number through reproduction can be called quantitative evolution.

A higher form of life is animal life. Although very similar to plant life in many ways, the range of animal activities and struggle for survival is more extensive. A wheat grain cannot travel or move in space and it withers when it fails to acquire nutrition or the farmer neglects to irrigate the wheat field.

In other words, lack of food and water is enough to block its development. An animal, on the contrary, is capable of employing various techniques on a wider scale for ingestion and survival. It can look for and choose the environment that suits itself. It utilizes multifarious means of defense or offence against its enemies and can develop a more complete method of reproduction. This wide range of activity and struggle is due to the animal's employment of a different means necessary for a more complete life, and i.e., feeling and understanding.

Although animal life, like plant life, pursues the same objective (reproduction and survival), it is still different in the sense that its range of activity is much wider. The highest form of life is that of a human being who leads a much more complicated life with a broader range of activity. Moreover, man pursues a lofty and sublime objective in the process of human evolution to attain perfection.

Life is generally categorized as follows: plant life, animal life and human life. But today, I wish to discuss another kind of life, namely the life of a society. Just like plants, animals and men, the human society, too, is a living thing. According to sociologists, the society goes through evolution, childhood, puberty, adolescence, perfection, old age, decline and death. The society they observe, possesses a certain understanding of its individual members. Its life, they hold, is superior to that of a human being as evidenced by the struggle a society launches in the course of its evolution. The society, however, may resemble a living being or a lifeless thing.

With this sublime concept in mind, let us now study verse 24 of Surah Al-Anfal of the Holy Quran:

"Oh You who believe, reply to the call of Allah and His messenger who call you to that which enlivens you and know that Allah intervenes between man and his heart and it is If.; Him you shall return." The holy Quran (8:24)

Now what do you, gentlemen, understand by the "thing which enlivens you." Let us first scrutinize the views held by Quranic exegetists who believe the verse to bear four different meanings. Some have interpreted it as the "life and its revival" as eternal life in the Hereafter. Another group says "life" in this verse refers to science and knowledge of the Quran. A third party of interpreters hold the belief that the

verse is calling people to faith as the heart of the faithful is filled with hope and alacrity while the unbeliever's heart is smitten with grief and sorrow. A fourth interpretation is that the verse invites people to jihad in the way of God. This latter group of exegetists so contend because the Holy Quran says in another verse that those who are killed defending the cause of God should not be reckoned as dead. "They are but alive in the presence of God and are given nourishment."

These interpreters argue that "God had His messenger call people to jihad in His path so that they dedicate their lives to His cause and thus join the rank of martyrs who are eternally alive. A subgroup of this latter category hold the view that "revivification" in the verse refers to the life of the society.

The society can survive they say, only through jihad (against corruption) for the preservation of the sanctuaries and rights of the society. Islam is then inviting the people toward the most essential aspect of human life for their own sake (and salvation) and society; it is jihad which grants them eternal life.

Now, which one of these various interpretations do you consider most appropriate for this holy verse? I would like to remind you of the fact that the verses preceding and following this verse mostly concern jihad. There are also evidences that the verse was revealed after the Battle of *Badr*. In that battle, the Muslims emerged victorious and were jubilant. It was then time for them to further solidify their ranks and take measures to promote the Islamic cause through concerted efforts. The aforementioned factual account indicate that these verses had been sent to encourage the Muslims and prepare them for greater battles and struggles ahead.

I personally believe that this verse has a truly comprehensive meaning. The reference, I think, is made to revivification of the people by Islam which brings up aware and dynamic followers, thus forming a living society.

By living society, I mean a thriving society which is progressive and marked with struggle, mobility and dynamism, one that never ceases to endeavor to establish ideal social conditions and encourage a community that fosters and boosts virtue, piety and decency as it repels corruption and profanity. This is the kind of society Islam aims to establish.

Did Islam practically succeed in setting up such a society? Yes. Islamic history shows that the divine teachings of Islam could establish a dynamic nation 'Ummah' out of a moribund society of the Arab people in only 23 years (after the initial prophetic revelation). A glance at Islamic history reveals accounts full of life, struggle, endeavor and progress in the early Muslim society.

The Islamic community did attract people of alien cultures just as it repelled elements of corruption. It did absorb and make use of the knowledge of other nations while encompassing them with rich Islamic culture and science. Islam has had a glorious past indeed. But regrettably, today's Muslim community is characterized by regression and extreme sluggishness. It is now centuries that Muslims are enwrapped in neglectful slumber, a state totally contrary to that of the early centuries of Islam.

Recently, I have read the book, 'Murujul Dhahab' by Mas'udi, who elucidated on points that struck my interest. As you know, one of the characteristics of modern European thought, i.e. of the post-Renaissance era which swept the Western society was the urge to replace the inductive and analogical approach to natural phenomenon with a deductive and empirical method. I was quite surprised to see Mas'udi endorse such a need (replacing the inductive with the deductive) in many instances in his book.

On one occasion, he has quoted Ja'hidh to have written in his book, 'Ajaibul Buldan' that the Sind River of India was connected to the Nile of Egypt. Mas'udi marveled at such an impudent statement by Ja'hidh who, he said, sat in a corner of his library and thought about geographical phenomena that required empirical observation, not pure imagination and induction. "Ja'hidh," wrote Mas'udi, "reasoned out that since the two rivers were inhabited by crocodiles, they must then be convergent.

Such ambiguities came to be expressed because Ja'hidh and people like him would rely on fictitious analogies unsupported by factual observations and investigation of issues they wanted to discuss." Mas'udi wrote his book in the year 332 of the Hijra calendar in the fourth century after the advent of Islam.

Yet, one cannot but wonder at his sharp insight and scientific understanding. A scholar devoted to Islam, Mas'udi loved and respected the Household of the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali and his descendants. He was a typical example of men who gave shape to a dynamic society based on Islam, a society which was by far ahead of the West in establishing a scientific outlook of the world.

But it is a pity that Muslim communities, especially that of Iran have actually been dormant and asleep for centuries. Sleeping in one sense, connotes death. A sleeping man may be alive with blood circulating in his body, but he is bereft of all movements that reflect the virility and activity of a living man. Today our Muslim societies are petrified in a rigid state of negligence and ignorance. Can our communities still recover from such stagnating inactivity? You, gentlemen, should note that this phlegmatic temperament has dominated over Muslim societies since ten centuries ago.

In describing Constantinople and the Black Sea of Turkey in the same book (*Muruj al Dhahab*) that dealt with history and geography, Mas'udi wrote: *"Not far from Constantinople, there lies the Gulf of Constantinople. At one end where the Gulf tapers the Romans (Byzantine Empire) have built a fortification to repel Muslim warships which would frequent the region to conquer the empire and its remnants in the Mediterranean Sea. But unfortunately, such a glory has ended; those expectations have come to a halt and the Muslims have retreated to their own borders. The Romans do not fight them in Constantinople; they now fight the Muslims in the Muslim territories instead."*

From Mas'udi's words, we may draw the conclusion that the decline of the Muslims has actually began around the fourth century after the Hijra that is, it has been ten centuries that Muslim societies have become stagnant. Is it still possible to revivify such a society and cure its ailments? During this long period there came forth certain opportunities to awaken the society but Muslims ignored the chance.

There was a good opportunity for Muslims to quell this sluggish attitude during the last 50–60 years when the Western culture and so-called civilization plagued Islamic lands. Had they taken advantage of it, they could have led an honorable life that they deserved. In my view, it was a very great opportunity to awaken and enliven our vigilance, but we lost it. Even then, there were clear sighted intellectuals who called Muslims to action and struggle but which, unfortunately proved of no avail.

Last summer, I was reading the book of late Ayatollah Naini called "*Tanbih al-Ummah wa tanzib al-Millah*." I observed vividly how this great contemporary religious leader expressed his views on social matters in a bid to awaken his society. For obvious reasons, the late Ayatollah endangered his own position by publishing this book.

However, the book, although written by a prominent religious leader, did not prove as effective in awakening the people as expected. It failed due to the fact that there were not many such reformist thinkers in those days. A glance at the pages of history proves there were very few elements who were both clear sighted and at the same time religious at that time. This was why our society derived but little benefit from such an auspicious occasion. But in spite of the poor response, the assiduity of the Muslim thinkers in a way motivated Muslims in general to think of improvement.

Today, the more we advance in time the more the number of Muslim intellectuals increases. I think we can confidently claim that in our own time, the reformist, intellectual Muslims have now formed a special new class in our society. They are not few anymore and one can find them in many parts of the country. I myself have come to know a considerable number of these people in Tehran, Mashhad, Shiraz, Qum, Isfahan and other cities.

Efforts must be taken to establish close ties and understanding among the members of this group so that they join hands in waking up the nation from this 10 century long slumber.

The Holy Prophet of Islam (S) said: "*There are different kinds of God-sent breezes that blow at certain times; expose yourself to such.*"

The "breezes" of course refer to Divine occasions. There have been several valuable opportunities for a nationwide vigilance but we regretfully let them slip from our hands. Presently, however, we still have a chance and should not let it go wasted. The faithful intellectuals who want to improve their society are now forming a big group and can easily, certainly, render great services in both spiritual (religious) and material (worldly affairs) spheres. But they can serve only upon certain conditions which form the gist of my speech tonight.

One should take lessons from bitter experience of the past and avoid committing the same mistakes. The Constitutional Movement that provided the Muslim nation great chance to rise and eradicate their afflictions and misfortunes and restore their Islamic dignity, was not void of certain pitfalls, the consideration of which will be beneficial to our cause today. A group of intellectual reformists chose to concentrate on the then existing differences in views rather than unite with other faithful people. How can

one justify antagonism adopted by a group of believers towards another merely because of their divergent opinions.

Why should Muslims ever use their pens against one another and defame each other for the sake of difference in views? Thus, we can say the efforts for the constitutional movement were more destructive than constructive in nature. One group aimed at denigrating the other and vice versa. Endeavors were then more diffusive rather than harmonious. While a group would negate modern education in a bid to have the support of the newly freed Muslim people, the other would mock at religion thinking it retarded the advent of modern culture and civilization. God forbids that we commit the same mistake and let it strike us again. Such a mistake may only be avoided if the faithful from different walks of life and social state establish more contact, and thus develop a strong mutual understanding.

Recently a group of university students have come to Qum to attend the commemoration ceremony at the 40th day of the demise of the late religious leader, Ayatollah Burujerdi. Numbering about 200, they joined another group of religious intellectuals from the Qum Theological Center in a certain gathering.

In my address to them. I recommended the establishment of such ties between the Theological Center, which is the Muslims' great scientific institution and the university which is a great educational center of the young generation. Such relations, I said, would certainly lead to a further and better understanding between the two. However this is not enough. All of us must strive to promote such relations to a still higher level. We, as I mentioned earlier, should take all possible efforts to know one another fully. The more extensive and diverse such gatherings are, the more they will contribute to our cause.

We, as Muslims, can fully bridge many gaps and settle our differences through peaceful discourses in a friendly and unbiased atmosphere. In this process, as the first step towards a wide scale unity, we should also be careful not to discuss issues of which we do not possess thorough knowledge. No educated person who is specialized in a certain scientific field should permit himself to reject or support any Islamic concept without having sufficient knowledge of the matter. Nor should a theologian versed in Islamic jurisprudence allow himself to express improper views on non-jurisprudential issues. Each should confine his judgment to his area of specialization in which he is most qualified.

Regarding fields of expertise in which we still lack, we should take measures to train people and refrain from making uncalculated and pointless statements in the absence of qualified persons; statements made without thorough understanding of the subject may only serve to widen the gap and create grounds for discord.

In addition to aspects aimed at the negation of the ruling order we also deem it necessary to take positive reformistic measures. Indubitably certain reforms (changes) will require an all-out and multi-dimensional struggle through the negation of the existing order. Just as we disinfect our hands when contaminated, some social reforms simulate the action of a disinfectant; and no improvement can be expected without such disinfecting-moves, i.e., the negation of the whole system. But still we must not

neglect positive modes of struggle in the course of an all– persuasive jihad.

We must, by launching positive activities, augment our force and meet the demands of our Islamic community. How can one ever oppose those who take beneficial steps to improve social affairs in various realms by establishing sound and decent educational centers, for instance, or other socio– political institutions in accordance with Islamic teachings.

A society cannot be regarded as living unless it turns into a correct, orderly and active organization. I call your attention to the fact that should we not embark on extensive, constructive activities, all our pleas for improvements will go unanswered. Such pleas may serve to spread the message of Truth and imbibe it in the minds of the people, but they will never be enough to transform the society into a progressive Muslim society.

It is most proper that all Muslim brothers, from any social stratum they may be, allocate a part of their physical, mental, financial and social potentials to the improvement of the constructive reforms that can serve the society both at present and in the future.

Haste should be avoided. We must not expect to derive immense benefits from small effort made in a short time. Haste is a sort of popular ailment among us. We hasten even in our daily chores. This same social illness applies to us when personal growth and perfection is concerned. We delude ourselves expecting great benefits from minor efforts we make in this realm, too. It is like wishing to rear crops before their harvest season.

We, as Muslims, endeavoring to improve our social conditions, should get over this defect, and achieve our goal through implementation of long–term plans. We should also make reservations for the future generations if we can. Even if we know that the succeeding generation will reap the fruit of our present efforts, we should not stagger in performing our duties. We as Muslims, believe that efforts taken in promoting Islam are all registered in a clear record with God. We ourselves, are today, enjoying the fruits of the efforts taken by early Muslims about 1400 years ago.

Let us all live again the epic of Karbala where our third holy Imam, Hadhrat Hussein (Peace be upon him) and his companions, family members and relatives dedicated everything they had, including their lives in order to defend Islam. Could they achieve their Divine objective at the time they took stand against the then corrupt ruler, Yazid, of the Ummayyad Dynasty? Certainly not. They endured all sorts of hardships and ultimately chose martyrdom in order to guard Islam against evil. But their holy goal was achieved by the Shi'ite community several centuries later.

Brothers, gentlemen, let us not forget that we are followers of noble leaders such as Imam Hussein. We must undergo all kinds of hardships for the sake of Islam and the welfare of our Muslim brethren. May God Almighty grant us success in our efforts to follow at the heels of the faithful fighter of the Dawn of Islam.

If you can still remember, some five months ago, I discussed the dynamic aspects of Islam in this place. That night, we arrived at the conclusion that Islamic faith revives and mobilizes man and society, severely opposes immobility, stagnation, apathy and indifference. Wherever such sluggish attitudes prevail, either Islam is non-existent in those societies or it has been divested of its noble and lofty spirit.

Early Islam succeeded in molding men and women among its followers who will eternally be revered in the annals of human history. Islam could give birth to such illustrious figures from the then withering moribund and disunited society of Arabia. One can never find their peers among the great personalities of the world.

On that occasion, I also discussed in detail the evidences of life which include growth, struggle, mobility and activity. As living things and animals proceed through various stages of the process of evolution, they employ various modes of movement which are manifested in different ways.

However, empirical observation has proved that certain beings; in spite of their diverse characteristics and multifarious stages in their lives, retain a certain organization and a well-regulated mental faculty which enable them to achieve their ultimate objective. Such a variety of action and movement once observed will lead us to the conclusion that these particular beings differ from other creatures in nature and that they are invested with a special faculty, i.e., the soul or spirit. It is this spirit that inspires movement and life in these beings.

The number of parts of a living being or animal plays a significant role in its activity; and the more orderly and regulated its morphological organization is, the more subtle and wider its range of movement will be. The more extensive and complicated the interrelationship between parts and functions is, the higher its possibility for survival will be. A simple plant or unicellular animal has a very simple structure as the number of parts is very limited. Thus, its structural organization is very weak and the objective it can attain during its life span is insignificant. In more complex (multicellular) plants and animals, the number of parts is more. Hence, their anatomic organization and relationship are much more complicated.

This complexity assigns the being to a higher objective enabling it to play a greater role in life. The honeybee, for instance, in spite of its puny body, enjoys a wide range of activity due to diversity of its parts. As for the human being, one is simply awed at the wonders embedded in such a small frame by God, the Best of Creators. Each year brings us fresh scientific discoveries of more and more parts and of the human body and thus their corresponding functions. The number of nerves which form the nervous tissue in the spinal cord exceeds millions. Numerous nerves connect each organ of the human body to the nervous system. This complicated and wonderful organization and order makes man superior to all other living animals.

Regarding human society, one cannot help but appreciate the extent to which the same (morphological) principle applies. In a society too, the more complicated the organizational factors and their functions are

the more organized that society will be. This organization results in more extensive and enduring relations between people and social institutions. And the loftier the objective of a society is, the more exalted and dynamic life its members will lead. This is the reason why Islam considers social relations immensely significant and places great importance on all the factors contributing to the organization of the members of the community the factors that unite individuals who form a society to achieve one and the same goal.

I pointed out in my previous speech that according to sociologists, the human society is in itself an independent entity. An individual, in spite of his various components possesses an identity independent of the parts. An external being, having unity within himself, functions and moves as dictated by his wisdom, will and power. The society, too, being a real entity, has wisdom, will and power of its own, independent of and superior to the wisdom, will and power of its individual members. It is a body whose parts are made up of individuals. This body has intellect, knowledge, movement, life and death.

Sociologists say that what exists externally is the society, not the individual, who, in spite of his social identity and status, is in fact unreal and corporeally non-existent. This is, however, their view, and at present I will not endorse or refute its plausibility. What should be noted is that a society too, like an individual, is born, goes through a life of childhood, puberty, adolescence, youth and old age and is finally transformed after its death. It also experiences and is subject to physical changes; it is sometime, powerful and at time weak. When a society is weak, the bonds that join its members become brittle, resulting in general weakness. In such a state, remedy should be effected to destroy the cause of affliction. Otherwise, the society will perish.

In philosophical language, social affairs are nominal issues not objective. However, their practical effects are real and objective issues subject to the law of cause- and- effect as formulated by contemporary natural scientists.

Islam lays great emphasis on social affairs. To lend strength to social relations, it has devised excellent means that will ward off elements detrimental to the unity of the society. Foremost' would be the strengthening of factors instrumental ill social organization for creation of a better and more effective order and relations in the society. Secondly, prophylactic measures to eliminate social ills that harm social relations; organization and order, must be taken.

Islam came down, to a people who were bereft of any progressive social order and organization, a belligerent people who would spare nothing to find excuses to fight even over the least significant and at times ridiculous controversies. Islam ended such hostilities, cleansed the hearts of those people, brought them together and formed a powerful body made up of those people, brought them together and formed a powerful body made up of the same belligerent people. The Quran says:

"And (as for the believers) God hath attuned their hearts. If thou had spent all that is in the earth thou could not have attuned their hearts, but Allah hath attuned them." (8:63)

It was Islam that dissolved the enmity between members of the Aws and Khazraj tribes, staunch enemies for decades in pre-Islamic Arabia, who fraternized after embracing the faith. It was Islam that brought together the unlettered Bedouins and the urban people (of Arabia) each of whom had been entirely lost in their own vanities.

These two types of people brushed aside selfishness and vain glorious feuds, emancipated themselves from the rancor and hatred that gripped their hearts and joined in Islamic fraternity, thus forming a divine brotherly union. For embracing Islam was an assurance of a lasting cooperation and fraternity between Muslim co-believers. Verse 103 of Surah Alay-Imran of the Holy Quran testifies to this brotherhood:

"And hold fast, all of you together to the cable of Allah, and do not separate and remember the favor of Allah upon you. You were enemies but He united your hearts: so by His grace you became brethren..."(3: 103)

In the early days of the *Hijra*, the Holy Prophet publicly declared the fraternal relation of the emigrants (*Muhajirun*) and the helpers (*Ansar*). Since then, Muslims became brethren. Verse 10 of Surah Al-Hujurat confirms this fraternity:

"The believers are unto one another like brothers. Therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah that haply ye may obtain mercy. (49: 10)

Islam urged Muslims to associate with each other and establish close social ties. Furthermore, it considered seclusion, aloofness and isolation indecorous, and enjoined upon the Muslims to regularly visit each other and be informed of the welfare and affairs of their brothers-in-faith. In Al-Kafi, the Book of "Belief and Unbelief," the chapter on "Visiting Brothers", Imam Baqir (peace be on him) has been narrated to have said:

"God Almighty has a special garden reserved for three types of people in the other world, namely a man who rules in favor of the Truth despite the cost of his own interest; a man who calls on his Muslim brothers for the sake of God: and a man who placed the interests of his Muslim brothers above his own (Self-sacrifice)."

Islam forbids Muslims from keeping themselves aloof from public affairs. It urges them to think of the welfare of the Muslim people. In the same book, the chapter on "Efforts to improve Muslims affairs," the first narration quotes Imam Sadiq who quoted the Holy Prophet (God's peace be upon him and his family) as having said: *"The one who gets up in the morning without striving to improve the affairs of Muslims, is not a Muslim."*

That is, he who leaves his bed in the mornings just thinking of his own personal interests without giving the slightest thought to social affairs and expedencies of the Islamic Ummah and he who believes that God created man to think merely of his selfish ends, is not a member of the Muslim community. Such a person is like a parasite who feeds on and benefits from the resources of the Islamic society, but who

does not contribute to the improvement of its affairs. He might be a Muslim and his property, life and honor are protected by the Muslim law, but one whose existence is useless to the Islamic anything.

Islam not only considers it a duty of a Muslim to attend to social and public affairs but also to the needs of his brothers– in faith, which tantamount to a great act of worship that deserves a divine reward.

In the same book, (Al-Kafi), in the chapter entitled, "Attending to the needs of the faithful", the second narration quotes Imam Abul-Hassan (peace be upon him) as saying: *"God has certain servants on the earth who are divinely inspired to attend to the affairs of others and strive to improve their conditions and meet their needs. Such persons will be saved from fear and punishment on the Day of Judgment"*.

Regrettably, today, the Muslims situation has taken on hues almost repulsive to what the divine teachings of Islam preach. Muslims today are heedless of social issues. Very few people are aware of their society's interests and needs. A great majority of Muslims of our time know no expediency but their own and think only of their interests, instead of the Ummah's.

There are many people who actually consider social interests unworthy of their time. Even those who are aware are so shortsighted that they give preference to their own superficial interests over the most sublime expediciencies of the Ummah. There is another type of narrow minded people branching from the last group whose concern does not go beyond the borders of a certain region or country. Such people easily prefer national interests over those of the Islamic nation (Ummah).

Unfortunately those whose lives are dedicated to the achievement of the Islamic Ummah's sublime interests are very few. The shortage of such elements should be considered a critical case. The dangers it forebode have been greatly stressed. The Muslims have been repeatedly warned against the evil consequences should such a state prevail over their community.

By letting such a distressing state afflict their societies today, the Muslims have not only neglected a great divine order but also have impaired the social order, thus aggravating the already grave problems.

It should be noted by all that if Muslims fail to allocate a portion of their time, wealth and property to the improvement of social affairs, they will eventually be deprived of enjoying the outcome of their own pursuits. A father who makes use of all possible means to procure wealth for himself and his family by making more money may in the end find the same wealth detrimental to both him and his children in a corrupt environment and society.

His attention should be called to the moral degeneration he and his family may be exposed to. In a corrupt environment, one's provisions and property will be employed in a corrupt way; human talents and efforts and energies will be vitiated by retrogressive and indecorous practices. If the members of a society fail to be, as the Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him and his family), put it, "a subject as well as a leader thus feeling responsible for other subjects," no one can be certain of a lasting and bright future. In a corrupt society, there is always the fear that a social storm may suddenly break out and

utterly destroy all the people's possessions as well as their hope for a better future. Should such a typhoon rage, no one, whether good or bad, will be saved. The content of verse 25 of Surah Al-Anfal should be noted in this connection:

"And guard yourselves against a chastisement which cannot fall exclusively on those of you who are wrong doers, and hark, God shall severely punish those who refrain from launching Jihad (In His path)."(8:25)

In an environment where social responsibilities are neglected and people are heedless of their commitments in preserving the interests of the community, opportunity of reformistic pursuits will be very limited resulting in a failure to effect any reforms.

In today's environment, one's energy is spent partly on the eradication of elements that obstruct reforms. A great part of one's endeavors is also wasted on unproductive activities. The remaining small fraction of about 5 to 10 percent of the entire manpower is consumed in the application of reforms and development projects. Obstacles may prove discouraging to one intending to conduct a reform.

This frustrating situation can be observed in developmental, cultural, social and even commercial fields, Muslims have, time and again, been warned against such a danger in narrations concerning the principle of guidance regarding the values of good and bad i.e *Amr-i Bil- Ma'aruf wa Nahi-an al-Munkar*.

In volume 5 of Forou'a Al-Kafi, the chapter on *Amr-i bil Ma'aruf wa Nahi-an al-Munkar*, the third narration says that Imam Abu Hassan (Peace be upon him) has been quoted as having said: *"O Muslims, fulfill your duty in propagating the good and decent and preventing evil and indecent lest the government be placed at the hands of wrong-doers, and if it so happens, the good among you will not be able to improve your affairs. God will not heed their supplications nor will their cries be heard by the people. They will then face countless problems in taking steps to reform and improve social affairs."*

Islamic ethics also enjoin upon the faithful to pay close attention to outward appearance in a manner that will improve his personality. A Muslim should be clean and keep all his belongings tidy as well. In Islam "cleanliness is part of faith." It is imperative that a Muslim take care of his appearance and use perfume to be pleasing to people with whom he associates.

In Forou'a al-Kafi, Volume 6, the Book of Decoration, the chapter on "Cleanliness," narration four, Imam Abu Hassan (peace be upon him) is quoted to have said: *"It ill-becomes a Muslim to use perfume less than once a day. Should he find himself unable to, he then ought to put on perfume every other day or at least every Friday. He should enhance his appearance. He should trim his beard and style his hair properly and decently. He should check his appearance in a mirror before leaving home and go out only with a neat, smart and clean appearance and clothing".*

Behavior-wise, Muslims are ordered to be cheerful and sociable. A man once asked the Holy Prophet for advice on how he should behave. The messenger of God advised him to "meet your Muslim brother

with a cheerful and pleasant face." Imam Sadiq was asked what "good morals" meant. The Imam replied, "Be humble before people". You should use pleasant language and should never meet your brother (in faith) without a smile on your face.

In "Al-Kafi", the Book of Faith and Unbelief, the chapter on "Pleasing Appearance," in narrations three and four, we read that *"pleasant and honest words are outstanding signs of one's faith in Islam."* Lying undermines the very foundation of social relations, preventing people from trusting one another. This is what has afflicted present day Muslim societies and has shaken their pillars.

A Muslim should not be suspicious of others: one should be considered innocent unless proven otherwise. We must be aware of the content of Verse 12 of Surah Al-Hujurat:

"O, ye who believe, Shun much suspicion; for lo, some type of suspicion is a crime...."(49: 12)

Man's thoughts, words and deeds should be governed by self-restraint. He cannot follow just any line of thought that may occur in his mind. He should not, for instance; judge a certain person to be against him just because he had not received him warmly on an occasion; or for instance he had ignored him during a gathering, etc. Islam enjoins upon the believers to: "always judge the deeds of your Muslim brother most favorably and refrain from being suspicious of him." A Muslim should not talk behind people's back. He should not make remarks in the absence of his Muslim brother that will make the latter resentful. Verse 12 Surah Al-Hujurat says:

"And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother?" (49: 12)

One had better solve his problems with his brothers– in faith in direct encounters rather than talk ill behind their backs which will provide the ill-willed persons with a pretext to foment enmity between people. Once one speaks ill of others, one actually provides excuses for malevolent people to magnify the issue and relay it to the concerned person. Thus a big problem will be created. As stated in the Quran:

"...persecution is worse than slaughter...." (2: 191)

Besides, Islam advises the faithful never to cast away their family and personal dignity and reputation nor to treat others arrogantly:

"And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exulting overmuch; surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster"(31: 18)

These are but a few evidences of the significance that Islam places on the unity of Muslims and their cohesive relation. Islam wants its followers to "be like one soul in various bodies." In the words of Rumi:

The faithful are numerous, but their faith is one,

Numerous in body are the believers but one in soul,

The souls of the wolves and dogs are asunder but united are the souls of the lions of God.

I perceive their souls as one

Since a soul is a hundred compared to the body

It is like the sun in the sky

whose light scatters as a hundred rays, upon yards of houses,

But these hundred rays come from one in heavens.

When from among houses walls are removed,

And their foundations demolished.

The souls of the faithful will merge into one.

However, this spiritual union as discussed by Rumi differs slightly from what I am driving at. What he has said concerns a gnostic understanding of the unity of cleansed souls. But what I mean refers to the social union of Muslims; how they relate to form one whole unit just as limbs and organs function as a unit to make up the human body; or as the foundation and pillars give rise to a building.

The book. "Kunuzu-1-Haqqa'iq" (p.136) has quoted the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) as having said: *"Muslims are related to one another as the parts of a building are. Each part is a support for another contributing to its solidification."*

Muslim relations should resemble the coherence of the parts of a building which may collapse if a part of its base is removed. To meet their internal needs, Muslims should establish very close ties with each other. It ill-becomes Muslim communities to stretch their hands towards non-Muslims, like they do today. The Muslims should be strong, military wise, to be able to defend themselves against invasion and should never succumb to humiliation and defeat. Let us all note the message of Verse 29, Surah Al Muhammad:

"Verily, Muhammad is the messenger of God and those with him are firm against unbelievers and compassionate among themselves; thou seest them bowing down, prostrating, and seeking Allah's blessings and satisfaction; mark of prostration is seen in their faces, such is their description in the Torah and the Gospel - as sown corn that sendeth forth its sprout then strengthens and becomes stout and stands firm upon its stern, delighting the sowers, that He may enrage the disbelievers at the sight of them."(48:29)

Islam wants the faithful to destroy the causes of corruption and disruption that may lead to disintegration

of the society. It urges Muslims to set up an organized and powerful community. Islamic codes have also been made in such a way as to guard the society against differences, conflicts and dualism. This is a valuable principle to which close attention must be paid in studying Islamic laws and ethics.

Islam wants the Muslims to form a solidified and organized community as expressed in Verse 4 of surah AlSaff:

"Allah loves those who, In His cause, fight in ranks as if they were a solid structure."(61: 4)

The believers should be united in ranks when performing prayers and other acts of worship, social activities as well as when engaged in battles. Verse 43 of Surah al-Baqarah (2) enjoins upon the faithful to perform their prayers in ranks with those who bow in worship in congregational prayers.

There are some significant points in this regard that have escaped popular attention, on which Islam's view should be clarified. One of them concerns factors that contribute to Muslim disunity such as class differences. What does Islam propose for the eradication of such problems?

Differences of views are also among the basic factors which impede social coordination and cooperation. Assuming that all are invested with enough perceptive 'clairvoyance' and good attention in a reforming environment, is it possible that all share one and the same view and attitude towards social issues? Certainly not.

A group of concerned Muslims who wish to improve social affairs may sit together, discuss a certain issue and yet fail to arrive at a conclusive decision and consensus. It is natural that an issue face opposition; one cannot prevent it. What solution then does Islam propose to eliminate differences in popular views and choices? There are also other issues of secondary significance the solution of which depends on the solution of the points previously discussed. Indubitably, nations and communities have been confronted with such problems, found solutions and have succeeded in removing obstacles to a great extent. Actually, the main factor that will precipitate progress and superiority lies in their struggle to solve such social problems.

Now, if our Muslim society wishes to advance, it also has to tackle those problems and strive to remove them in accordance with Islamic principles. We can never make any achievement if our people turn to corruption and debauchery and exceed all bounds of piety and continence.

I once again stress that the key to advancement of living nations of the world lies in their efforts to solve these basic social problems, problems which we, as the Muslim Iranian nation, have not only failed to solve, but which we have not even thought of solving.

There is not much time left for us to discuss these two issues further tonight but I hope to talk about them more in detail some other time. However, some of my colleagues and perhaps some writers interested in Islam have dealt with these two major problems. I, myself, have considered these issues

within limits set by Islamic principles and will discuss my views at an appropriate time.

But I would like to mention here as I have already said before that, thanks to God, cognizant and concerned faithful Muslims interested in social reforms have increased in number. Distinct from the rest of the society, many of them have somehow established strong relations with each other, forming a "new class in our society."

To the members of this new class I have this message: "You defenders of the Islamic cause, you who are gifted with profound devotion, pure insight, it is truly deplorable that not everybody who professes Islam practice it in their daily lives. But nevertheless, I call upon you on whom our society has pinned its hope for a brighter future to practice these lofty teachings. Be truthful, refrain from backbiting, establish sincere and strong friendly ties among yourselves, eschew arrogance and selfishness and cooperate with one another in social affairs. Can you say prayers and fast in Ramadhan (which strengthens one's faith and purifies one's soul) and at the same time attend to ethical and social issues? Can we, who are committed to a common cause, talk less and act more?

Would it not be better if we take efforts to know each other more? Would it not be better if we shun pomposity and ceremonial ambiguities when communicating and socializing? Would it not be better if we abide by the Islamic teachings and laws in our business transactions, contracts and dealings and thereby practically display our Islamic tendency. We should never fail to reflect on the merits that obedience generates just because not all people abide by the Islamic orders.

When Hadhrat Ali was lying on his deathbed after receiving his assassin's fatal blow, he enjoined upon members of his household and others *"to never deflect from Islamic ethics and teachings even if all people did so."* He also urged them to be kind and close to one another and never to be disunited. During his last moments the Imam asked his family members and others to *"support each other in social dilemmas. Employ all means; do not spare even your lives and property in defending one another."*

Even in this declining society of ours, if a group of people endeavor to become excellent examples of Islam, they can certainly pave the way toward the crystallization of their goal in spite of the unfavorable social conditions.

A competent young man who studies and was trained under me and some of my friends in Qum for a while has been sent to Europe for further studies. His behavior in a Western environment has been such that his father thanked us saying that his son has made himself quite a reputation through his right conduct; and that he both studies and propagates Islamic teachings. This young man is invested with truthfulness, Islamic faith, perseverance and competence. Self-confident and determined, he has launched a battle against the present corrupt environment lest it should affect him.

Should we, like members of a certain social group, not take efforts to put reins on our environment by seriously abiding by the supreme teachings of Islam?

I implore God, the Almighty to help us succeed in becoming better men of action. May we gain a more complete understanding of Islam and be able to abide by its laws. May we be granted the capability to take steps to know and cooperate with one another, and never shun our social responsibilities.

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