

The Position of Women from the Viewpoint of Imam Khomeini (r.a.)

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**The Institute for the Compilation and
Publication of the Works of Imam
Khomeini**

**Translated by
Juliana Shaw, Behrooz Arezoo**

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This text comprehensively outlines the Position of Women from the viewpoint of Imam Khomeini. The compilation of excerpts of his speeches and messages organized in chronological order, starts acknowledging the Great Women of the World, especially Hazrat Fatima Zahra (sa), then it covers the status and rights of women in Islam as well as the role of women in their families, and the Jihad of a woman, giving specific examples from women during the time of the Islamic Revolution.

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Translator(s):

[Juliana Shaw](#) [5]

[Behrooz Arezoo](#) [6]

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Introduction

The history of mankind overflows with instances of tyrannical acts perpetrated against the deprived and meek of the earth by oppressors and men of power. Every so often, it was the oppressed who, heeding the call of a venerable descendant of the family of the prophets and saints, rose up in anger against those practicing injustice and by sacrificing their lives and enduring immense hardships allowed the people of the world to enjoy a breath of the fresh air of justice and equity.

Before very long, however, the stench from the fetid water of pride and arrogance, diffused by riches, power and deceit, once again dispersed the sweet savour of justice, stifling the justice seekers.

Women meanwhile, as half of mankind, have been made to suffer additional injustice – the description of which calls for a book thicker than that needed to record the oppression suffered by mankind in general

– and in their role as ‘spouses of men’, invariably shared their husbands’ sorrow and were their refuge in hard times.

In many instances throughout history when the tyranny of tyrants or the tribulations of the time have caused the death of their husbands, it was the women who, single-handed, had to shoulder the burden of responsibility. In addition to these, women, whether in their role as daughters in their fathers’ house, spouses at the side of their husbands or sisters to their brothers, and women compared to men in general, have never enjoyed their proper station and have usually been regarded as the weaker sex, inferior, unfortunate, pitiful, her greatness ignored.

Even though throughout the different periods of history and in the various cultures and societies this discrimination has experienced varying degrees of severity, still, unfortunately, its perpetuation and pervasiveness are undeniable, with each period of time demonstrating at least one of its many hues.

As we know, among the Arabs in pre-Islamic times, burying girls alive was seen as a way for families to deliver themselves from what was believed to be the misfortune of having a female child. It was only in a short period in the earliest age of Islam that through the teachings and practice of the Prophet and members of his virtuous household, women recovered, to a certain degree, their true worth and station.

With the revival and restoration of the former system, this time masquerading as the Islamic caliphate, women’s standing once again lapsed and gradually with the passage of time fossilised misinterpretations of Islam imposed crippling restrictions and limitations on women, such that even in the last few decades veins of these ossified views expressing disdain for women and belittling their position could still be clearly seen among the contemporary petrified religious traditionalists.

It was in such circumstances that the imperialists and their henchmen, in keeping with their hegemonic tendencies, began to seek suitable ways and means of infiltrating the cultural and political life of Iran, and to this end they availed themselves of the position of women in our society. With the slogans of freedom and equality, they promoted the culture of nakedness and libertinism, in the process making use of the most draconian of despotic measures as seen in Riza Khan’s policy of forcing women to remove their Islamic veils (*kashf-i hijab*).^{[1](#)}

This ambition, which at the time of Riza Khan’s son – a son truly worthy of such a father – took on a more subtle and clever form, was described in the imperial literature as turning women into beguiling creatures. In the Shah’s logic, the modern woman, the woman free of religious restraints, has as her mission beguilement, and all obstacles to the realisation of this mission must be removed.

Thus it was that not only women, but the other half of society too, i.e. the men, fell under the spell of beguilement. We ourselves witnessed how, in addition to the cabarets and dance halls and the formal and informal gatherings, the streets, city squares, parks, recreational centres, swimming pools and beaches, as showplaces of this imperial policy, were in practice changed into something akin to houses of pleasure in the service of degenerating, corrupting and narcotising the young generation.

The model of the beguiling woman is one borrowed from Western society. Unfortunately, in the original model too, woman's true greatness and identity have been sacrificed at the altar of the Western materialist philosophy in worship of the two gods of Western man: the economy and the pursuit of pleasure.

Consequently, in the Western civilisation too, women are to a great extent either used to promote and sell goods or to promote and sell themselves. She is a commodity in the service of the ruling system and plays her part according to the dictates of the 'establishment'.

With the help of the above observations, the greatness of Imam Khomeini's action in reviving the true identity of Muslim women can be seen, and the luminosity of his thought demonstrated.

Imam saw for himself how the fossilised ideas of his generation viewed women as nothing other than the 'weaker sex' and wives imprisoned in the women's quarters of the home. On the other hand, with his special perspicacity he realised that the role the Shah and imperialism had in mind for women as beguilers and playthings would not lead to them enjoying a better position and would result only in the degeneration and corruption of Muslim societies, in Muslims becoming estranged from their own culture and in them losing sight of who they are.

In his position as an enlightened and crusading *marja-i taqlid*², he drew from the limpid waters of the heavenly fount of the teachings of the pure Islam of Muhammad and from his reflections as a *mujtahid*³ on the precious heritage of the traditions of the Prophet and the teachings of the infallible Imams, upon whom be peace, and arrived at such a correct understanding of women's responsibilities and true role in society that we see this manifested in the revival of the Muslim woman's identity in the Islamic republic system.

It was acceptance of his view of women that, despite years of endeavours by imperialism's propaganda organs on one side and the presence of fossilised ideas that appeared in the form of devotion to Islam on the other, brought women onto the scene during the Islamic Revolution in Iran in such a way that it was nicknamed the revolution of the chador⁴—clad by news agencies, observers and analysts.

And it was not only in the demonstrations to overthrow the Shah's regime that the opinions of women were taken as sound and helpful, rather this was the case in all stages of the sanction, endorsement and establishment of the Islamic republic system. Subsequently, despite the backwardness which had arisen from old-fashioned policies and views and which had hampered the legitimate development and blossoming of their talents and capabilities, women now rapidly made up for the past and made great strides along the road to securing their proper position in society.

The composition of the delegation, which presented Imam's historic message to Gorbachev, the former leader of the now defunct Soviet Union, provides a valuable and meaningful example of Imam's views on the role women should play in an Islamic society. In a symbolic move, he appointed a delegation made up of clergymen, academics and a woman to announce the death of communism to the world.

Indeed, perhaps one can even claim that the composition of the delegation itself conveyed a message as correct as that old sage's miraculous prediction forewarning of the fall of the Eastern bloc: that the revival of Islam and the world's future power lay in the capable hands of these three sections of society, and that it would be through their correct understanding and implementation of their true mission that the tree of Islamic revolution would blossom forth and overshadow the ruins of communism and capitalism.

For the generation that ponders on the true position of women, Imam's own attitude towards women, his directives, his unambiguous and enlightening stances and his ground-breaking edicts in this regard, which were formed within the framework of indisputable *shari'a*⁵ laws and were completely loyal to the principles and incontrovertible precepts of the religion, can be used as practical guidelines.

There are those to whom the traditional restrictions and denigration to which, unfortunately, in the name of the *shari'a*, women in many countries which claim to be Islamic are subjected, are an anathema. And yet, at the same time, they also cannot accept the extremist positions taken by those claiming to defend the rights of women – who with phantasmal claims of equal rights even reject the natural and innate differences which exist between men and women, and have in practice set off down a road towards destroying the family and the moral and spiritual centres. For such people the desire to find the happy medium usually ends in frustration.

By referring to this anthology, such people will become acquainted with the opinions of a man who is a descendant of Fatima Zahra,⁶ and who views woman as mankind's educator, as one who helps fulfil mankind's aspirations and as one from whose lap man ascends. His view of women is such that he goes so far as to say: "If nations were deprived of courageous women, of women to rear true human beings, they would decline and collapse."

It was he who with his unique and enlightened way of thinking and without departing from the traditions (*sunna*) of his forefathers and the system of Islamic laws (*fiqh*) saw the solution to the problem or the difficulty of women's right in the matter of divorce – which had been the focus of much malicious propaganda by self-interested elements – to lie in women's right to execute a divorce.

And now we present to those interested this anthology of the valuable precepts and messages of that holy man concerning women. It has been compiled with the help of the centre for cultural study and research of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Women's Cultural Affairs Unit).

The excerpts selected in each section are placed in chronological order except for those taken from books Imam has authored, the source for which is given at the end of each excerpt. Regarding his messages and speeches, only the dates have been given throughout, however complete references appear at the end of the book to facilitate further research.

The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works

^{1.} After the Constitutional Revolution from the middle of 1927, some circles close to Riza Khan began talking about the

forced removal of the women's Islamic veil (kashf-i hijab) and by the New Year of 1928 (1307 AHS), Riza Khan's wife and daughters appeared in public without the Islamic covering. The law calling for the removal of hijab was implemented after Riza Khan's return from Turkey (in 1934) on 7 January 1935 (17 Dey 1341 AHS). On this day, Riza Khan, accompanied by his wife and two daughters, attended the opening ceremonies for a college along with his ministers and their wives who had removed their Islamic covering. At this ceremony, Riza Khan addressed the women saying: "We have broken the prison bars! Now the freed prisoners can make beautiful homes instead of cages."

2. Marja'-i taqlid: a scholar of proven learning and piety whose authoritative rulings one follows in matters of religious practice.

3. Mujtahid: an authority on divine law who is entitled to give an independent judgement on a point of theology or law.

4. Large cloak and veil which envelops the woman's entire body, worn in Iran and elsewhere.

5. – Shari'a: the all-embracing law of Islam derived from the Qur'an, the normative practice and authoritative pronouncements of the Prophet, and a number of secondary sources.

6. – Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet and wife of Imam `Ali, also known as Fatima Zahra.

Great Women of the World

Hazrat Fatima Zahra

Hazrat¹ Fatima Zahra (upon whom be peace)

The anniversary of Hazrat Fatima's birthday and Women's Day

The anniversary of Hazrat Fatima's birthday and Women's Day

Tomorrow is Women's Day. It is the day when (the birth of) a woman is commemorated of whom the world is proud. It is the day commemorating a woman whose daughter stood against tyrannical governments, who recited that sermon and uttered those words, of which you are all aware. (1)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

If a day is to be designated 'Women's Day', what day is more deserving, is prouder, than the day commemorating the joyous birth of Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace, a woman who is the pride of the family of divine revelation, and who, like a sun, shines brightly in the crown of beloved Islam. (2)

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibihisht 1359 AHS)

It is a great day, on which a woman came into the world who compared with all men. A woman came into the world who was an exemplar for mankind. A woman came into the world in whom all traits of a (true) human being were manifest. So today is a great day. It is the day of you women. (3)

17 May 1980 (7 Urdibihisht 1359 AHS)

I convey my best wishes and felicitations to the noble nation of Iran, in particular the respected women, on the immensely happy occasion of the birthday of Fatima Zahra, the most felicitous day to commemorate Women's Day.

This joyous birthday occurred in a place and time when women were not considered to be human beings and their very existence was seen as a source of shame for families among the different tribes of the pre-Islamic times. In such a corrupt and barbaric environment, the great Prophet of Islam took woman's hand and delivered her from the slough of pagan customs. The history of Islam testifies to the limitless respect the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his descendants, showed this noble infant, so as to demonstrate that woman has a special greatness in society, and if she is not superior to man, she is certainly no less than him. So this day is the day of woman's revivification, and the day to establish her honour and the great role she plays in society. (4)

24 April 1981 (4 Urdibihisht 1360 AHS)

Felicitations to the mighty nation of Iran, in particular its great women, on this blessed day of the woman, this illustrious day commemorating a lustrous being who lays the foundations on which mankind's virtues and the exalted values of God's representative in this world are built. And even more blessed and precious is the most felicitous selection of the 20th day of Jumada II (as Women's Day), the proud day of the birth of a woman who is one of history's miracles and who is a source of pride for the world of creation. (5)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

I congratulate all you ladies and women in all Islamic countries on this joyous holiday marking the glorious birth of *Hazrat* Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace. I ask God, the Blessed and Exalted, to guide all the respected women along the path that He has laid down, so that they can achieve lofty Islamic goals. It is a source of great pride for the women that they have designated *Hazrat* Fatima's birthday as Women's Day; it is a source of pride and responsibility. (6)

2 March 1986 (11 Isfand 1364 AHS)

In fact, according to the traditions that have been handed down to us, the Most Noble Messenger (peace be upon him and his descendants) and the Imams (upon whom be peace) existed before the creation of the world in the form of lights² situated beneath the divine throne; they were superior to other men even in the sperm from which they grew and in their physical composition. Their exalted station is limited only by the divine will, as indicated by the saying of Gabriel recorded in the traditions on the *mi'raj*:³ "Were I to draw closer by as much as the breadth of a finger, surely I would burn."⁴

The Prophet himself said: "We have states with God that are beyond the reach of the cherubim and the prophets."⁵ It is part of our belief that the Imams (upon whom be peace) too enjoy similar states, before the question of government even arises. For example, according to the traditions, *Hazrat* Fatima Zahra,

upon whom be peace, also possessed these states, even though she was not a ruler, a judge or a governor. These states are quite distinct from the function of government. So when we say that *Hazrat Fatima Zahra*, upon whom be peace, was neither a judge nor a ruler, this does not mean that she was like you and me, or that she has no spiritual superiority over us.

Islamic Government, pp. 64–65.

What proves our suggested possibility concerning the truth of the ‘Night of Power’ (or Decree) *Lailat al-qadr*⁶ is the lengthy noble *hadith*,⁷ which appears in the exegesis of al-Burhan (*Tafsir al-Burhan*) and is quoted from the book *al-Kafi*,⁸ in which it is said that when a Christian asked Imam Musa ibn Ja‘far⁹ about the hidden meaning of the Qur’anic verse: “*Ha Mim. By the book that makes things clear. We sent it down during a blessed night, for We ever wish to warn against evil. In that night is made distinct every affair of wisdom,*” (Qur’an 44: 1–4),¹⁰ he replied, “As to the meaning of Ha Mim, it is Muhammad, peace be upon him and his descendants. The ‘book that makes things clear’ is Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali, upon whom be peace, and the ‘night’ is Fatima, upon whom be peace.”¹¹

Adab al-Salat, p. 329

Amongst the supererogatory prayers to be performed after the prescribed prayer (*salat*) are the *tasbehat*¹² of Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace, which the Messenger of God, peace be upon him and his descendants, taught her and which are the most preferred of such prayers.¹³ It is in the *hadith* that had there been anything better, the Messenger of God, peace be upon him and his descendants, would have presented Fatima, upon whom be peace, with it.

Adab al-Salat, p. 377

The divine personality of Hazrat Fatima Zahra

The divine personality of *Hazrat Fatima Zahra* (upon whom be peace)

All dimensions that one can imagine exist for a woman and a human being were personified in Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace. She was not an ordinary woman; she was a spiritual woman, a heavenly woman, a human being in the true sense of the word. She was the incarnation of human goodness; she personified the true nature of woman and the true nature of the human being. She was not an ordinary woman, she was a heavenly being who appeared in this world in the form of a human being, she was a divine, celestial being who appeared in the form of a woman. She personified all the very best human and female traits that one can imagine. Tomorrow¹⁴ then is Women’s Day, tomorrow is the day on which such a woman was born.

She was a woman who embodied all the virtues of the prophets, a woman who, had she been a man, would have been a prophet, a woman who, had she been a man, would have been the Messenger of God. Spiritual qualities, heavenly qualities, divine qualities, celestial qualities, human and angelic

qualities all came together in this being. She was a human being in the full sense of the word, a woman in the full sense of the word. Tomorrow then is Women's Day. Tomorrow is the day when woman's dignity and woman's character came into being.

Various dimensions exist for the woman just as they do for a man, for human beings in general. This external, physical side is the lowest stage of a human being's development, be it man or woman, but it is from this inferior stage that the human being moves towards perfection. Man is a moving being, moving from the physical towards the metaphysical stage, towards annihilation in God. In Fatima Zahra's case these stages have been attained. She began from the physical stage and moved on. She proceeded through the stages of a spiritual movement assisted by divine power, by the invisible hand, by the teachings of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his descendants) until she reached the stage that all others could not reach. Tomorrow then is the day on which all aspects of woman were materialised, and woman in all her dimensions was incarnated. Tomorrow is Women's Day. (7)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

It is a great day; a woman came into the world who compared with all men. A woman came into the world who exemplified humanity. A woman came into the world in whom all traits of a (true) human being were manifest. So today is a great day. It is the day of you women. (8)

17 May 1980 (27 Urdibihisht 1359 AHS)

Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace, a woman who is the pride of the family of divine revelation and who like a sun shines brightly in the crown of beloved Islam; a woman whose virtues were on a par with the endless virtues of the Most Noble Messenger and the household of infallibility and purity; a woman for whom everyone, with whatever viewpoint he may hold, has praises, yet none has been able to offer her adequate praise. The *hadiths* [15](#) that have come down to us from the family of divine revelation are such that the listener can easily understand, for one cannot contain a sea in a bottle. And whatever others have said in her praise was according to their own level of understanding not commensurate with her standing. So let us leave this vale of wonder . . . (9)

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibihisht 1359 AHS)

And I hope you will accept and perform those duties you are obliged to carry out, which are to strive both in the area of education, which is an important matter, and in the defence of Islam. These are among the important tasks the performance of which is incumbent on every man and woman, on the young and old alike. (10)

2 March 1986 (11 Isfand 1364 AHS)

I do not consider myself adequate to the task of speaking about *Hazrat* Fatima, upon whom be peace, so I will suffice with reciting a sound tradition [16](#) which can be found in *Usul al-Kafi*. [17](#) This tradition

quotes *Hazrat* Sadiq,¹⁸ upon whom be peace, as saying: “After the death of her father, Fatima, upon whom be peace, lived for seventy-five days. She was in this world and she was overcome with grief. Gabriel, the Trusted Spirit, came to her regularly to console her and tell her of future events.”

So according to this tradition, in these seventy-five days she had contact with Gabriel, he came and went many times. I do not think that such a thing has happened for anyone else other than the great prophets of the highest rank, that in seventy-five days Gabriel, the Trusted Spirit, came and went and spoke of events that would take place in the future, spoke of things that would happen to her offspring in the future.

Hazrat Amir¹⁹ wrote down what Gabriel said, he was the writer of these revelations just as he had been the writer of the revelations the Noble Messenger had received – of course with the death of the Noble Messenger those revelations which brought divine laws ended. He was the writer of the revelations that were made to *Hazrat* Fatima during these seventy-five days.

Gabriel’s appearing to someone should not be taken as a trivial affair. One should not imagine that Gabriel would appear to just anyone. The necessary relationship has to exist between the spirit of that person to whom Gabriel would appear and Gabriel’s station as the paramount spirit. Whether we believe that it is the greatness of the spirit of the saint or prophet that brings Gabriel down to this lower station, or that it is God who sends him to make such revelations, whether we side with the speculatists in their views or those who interpret the literal meaning in theirs, it still remains that unless the necessary relationship exists between the spirit of that person to whom Gabriel would appear and Gabriel, the paramount spirit, then it would be impossible for such a thing to happen.

The relationship existed between Gabriel, the paramount spirit, and the prophets of the highest rank such as the Messenger of God, Moses, Jesus and Abraham. It did not exist with just anyone, and after these prophets it did not exist with anyone else. Indeed, I have not even heard of Gabriel descending to the Imams as he did to the prophets. As far as I know it was only to *Hazrat* Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace, that Gabriel appeared repeatedly during the period of these seventy-five days, revealing future events which would take place for her offspring and which *Hazrat* Amir recorded. Perhaps he spoke to her about the time of her exalted offspring *Hazrat* Sahib,²⁰ upon whom be peace, in which case he may have mentioned events in Iran too; who knows, it is possible.

Be that as it may, I consider the fact that Gabriel appeared to her when he had appeared to no one other than the prophets, upon whom be peace – and even then not all the prophets, only those of the highest rank – and some of the saints who are of the same rank as them, to demonstrate her nobility and moral excellence better than any other virtue with which she is attributed, even though those virtues too are important. The fact that she had communication with Gabriel in those seventy-five days, and that he has appeared to no one since then, demonstrates an excellence, which is, but one of the characteristics of *Hazrat* Fatima, upon whom be peace. (11)

2 March 1986 (11 Isfand 1364 AHS)

My pen and words are unable to describe adequately the great and extensive resistance of millions of Muslims enamoured of service, self-sacrifice and martyrdom in this country of the Lord of the Age (may our souls be sacrificed for him). Nor can I do justice to the epic events which have taken place, the acts of bravery, the good deeds and the service performed by the spiritual children of Kauthar, *Hazrat* Fatima, upon whom be peace, all of which spring from the knowledge gained from Islam and the family of the Prophet and from the blessings gained by following the path of the Imam of 'Ashura²¹. (12)

5 February 1987 (16 Isfand 1365 AHS)

We are honoured that the vivifying prayers, which are called the 'ascending recitation' come from our Infallible Imams. We are proud that the Sha'ban invocations²² of the Imams, the Prayer of Husayn ibn 'Ali (upon whom be peace) on the Day of 'Arafa,²³ the prayers of the *Sahifa-yi Sajjadiya* ²⁴ known as the 'Psalms of the Family of the Holy Prophet', and the *Sahifa-yi Fatimiya*, which is a book of God's revelations to *Hazrat* Fatima, are from us. (13)

5 June 1990 (15 Khurdad 1368 AHS)

Hazrat Fatima Zahra's home and its blessings

***Hazrat* Fatima Zahra's home and its blessings**

Hazrat Amir (Imam `Ali), upon whom be peace, was the leader of all Muslims with a domain perhaps ten times larger than today's Iran. It extended from the Hijaz to Egypt and even farther into Africa, reaching parts of Europe. Yet when this divine leader sat with a group of people, just as we are sitting here now, even this²⁵ was not beneath him. He possessed one pelisse, which, tradition holds, he and *Hazrat* Fatima would sleep upon at night and during the day he would scatter grass upon for his camel to eat. This was also the kind of lifestyle the Prophet had. This is Islam. (14)

4 July 1979 (13 Tir 1358 AHS)

The ideology was being erased and destroyed by the deviationists remaining from the Age of Ignorance²⁶ and by the calculated plans for the revival of nationalism and Arabism with the slogan 'no message received, no revelation revealed',²⁷ the just Islamic government was being turned into a monarchical regime and Islam and the revelation dragged into obscurity, when suddenly a great figure, who had been nourished by the juice of divine revelation, nurtured in the household of the lord of the messengers, Muhammad Mustafa, and the lord of the Imams, `Ali Murtaza (Imam `Ali), and raised in the care of Siddiqa Tahera (*Hazrat* Fatima), rose up and through his unequalled sacrifice and movement for God created a great incident Wafat, which brought the palaces of the oppressors tumbling down and saved the ideology of Islam. (15)

16 June 1980 (26 Khurdad 1359 AHS)

This small house of Fatima's, upon whom be peace, and these people reared there, who numbered four or five, in reality manifested all the power of God the Exalted. They rendered services at which all of us, all of mankind, marvel. (16)

9 March 1982 (18 Isfand 1360 AHS)

A woman in a small room of a humble home nurtured human beings whose light shone from the vast expanse of the earth to the highest heavens, from this world to the next. May the blessings and peace of God the Exalted be upon this small room, which was the place where the light of divine majesty was made manifest and was the nursery of the elite children of mankind. (17)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

We had a humble dwelling in the early days of Islam and that belonged to Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace. It was even smaller than these rooms here,[28](#) but what blessings it bestowed. The blessings that came from this small hut were such that they filled the world with enlightenment. And man would have to traverse a great distance before he could reach the station of those who bestowed these blessings, for the dwellers of this humble home occupy such a high station in the spiritual realm that even the hands of the angels cannot reach them, and their teachings are such that whatever good one sees in the Muslim lands, especially in our land, comes from their blessings. (18)

21 March 1983 (1 Farvardin 1362 AHS)

In the exegesis of Al-Burhan (*Tafsir al-Burhan*), there is a narrative from *Hazrat* Baqir.[29](#) Being a noble *hadith* referring to several pieces of information and disclosing important secrets, we will, owing to its blessedness, relate it in full: The author of *Tafsir al-Burhan*, may God have mercy on him, quoting a narrative from `Abdullah ibn `Ajlan as-Sakuni who quoted from the men of Shaykh Abu Ja`far at-Tusi who quoted Abu Ja`far himself who said: I heard Abu Ja`far (Imam Baqir), upon whom be peace, say: The house of `Ali and Fatima was the room of the Messenger of God, upon whom be peace, and the roof of their house was the Throne of the Lord of the worlds. At the back of their house there was an opening to the Throne, the curtain before the stairs of revelation having been raised. And the angels would bring down revelation to them in the morning, in the evening and at any hour or any moment. The comings and goings of groups of angels were endless. Verily did God, the Blessed and Exalted, draw back the curtain on the heavens for Abraham till he saw the Throne and He increased his seeing power. And verily did God increase the seeing power of Muhammad, `Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn, upon whom be peace. They would look at the Throne and they found no roof over their home except the Throne. Their home was roofed with the Throne of the Beneficent, and "*therein ascend the angels and the Spirit by God's permission on every affair, in peace,*" (Qur'an 97:4-5). I asked: "For every affair?" He replied: "For every affair." I asked: "Is this what was revealed?" He replied: "Yes."

The way of life of Hazrat Fatima

The way of life of *Hazrat Fatima* (upon whom be peace)

We must take this family as our role model, our women should try to emulate their women, and our men their men. All of us should learn from all of them. They dedicated their lives to the support of the oppressed and to the revival of the divine traditions. We should follow their example and dedicate our lives to them. He who knows the history of Islam, knows that each member of this family was a perfect human being, even more than that, a divine being, a spiritual person who rose up for the people and for the oppressed against those who sought to destroy them. (19)

11 April 1979 (22 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

The exemplar is *Hazrat Fatima Zahra*, upon whom be peace. The exemplar is the Prophet of Islam. We can say that our country is Islamic, that we have an Islamic Republic when all these ideals that are contained in Islam are realised. (20)

29 May 1979 (8 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

The speech of *Fatima Zahra*, upon whom be peace, decrying the government, the uprising of the Commander of the Faithful (Imam `Ali), his forbearance over twenty odd years while helping the government of the time, and later his sacrifice in the way of Islam and the sacrifice made by his two dear sons: Imam Mujtaba,³⁰ who discredited the tyrannical Umayyad government through the great service he rendered; and Imam Mujtaba's dear brother, the Lord of the Martyrs (Imam Husayn), with the great service he rendered, are things about which you are all aware.

We know that despite the fact they were few in number and their weapons were insufficient, the divine spirit and the spirit of belief made them such that they were able to prevail over all the tyrants of their age, revive Islam and set an example for us all, dear brothers, which is that we should stand fast against all the powers that today have risen up in war against us, even though our numbers be few, our weapons insufficient and our readiness incomplete.

And we shall also follow our Imams, upon whom be peace, in the example they set by demonstrating that one must stand against the arrogant ones armed sometimes with words and at others with weapons, and put them in their place. (21)

9 March 1982 (18 Isfand 1360 AHS)

Strive to purify your character and to make your friends do likewise. Strive so that you react to the outrages committed against you. In your attempts to uphold all the qualities that make up the great character of woman, be as that unique woman, *Hazrat Fatima Zahra*, upon whom be peace, was. All of us should take our exemplar from Islam by looking at her and her children, and being as she was. Strive

to acquire learning and godliness, for learning is not the preserve of any one person, learning is for all, godliness is for all, and striving to acquire learning and achieve godliness is the duty of us all. (22)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

Likewise, if you women here, indeed all our women all over the country, have accepted today as Women's Day, that is, have accepted the day which marks the birthday of *Hazrat* Fatima Zahra, with all the perfection it represents and the position it enjoys, as Women's Day, then you have a great task to perform, one which includes struggle, just as she struggled, to the best of her ability, during the short span of her life, addressing the governments of the time and passing judgement on them. To truly accept her birthday as Women's Day, you must imitate her. To truly accept it you must follow her example in her renunciation of the things of this world, in her devotion and piety and in all the virtues she possessed. If you do not do this, then you have not entered into the true spirit of Women's Day. Whoever does not accept these things has not entered into the true spirit of Women's Day and has not recognised its true nature. (23)

2 March 1986 (11 Isfand 1364 AHS)

It is greatly regrettable that yesterday (Saturday 28 January 1989 / 8 Bahman 1368 AHS) the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organisation broadcast a derogatory remark about the role model for women, a remark which one is ashamed to repeat. The person who allowed such a remark to be broadcast will be punished and removed from office, and the others involved in this matter will also be punished. If it is proven that the intention was to insult and disparage, then most certainly the person guilty will be sentenced to death. If an incident of this kind is repeated, then the top officials at the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting will receive a severe reprimand and will be punished. Of course all stages of the investigation will be in the hands of the Judiciary. (24)

29 January 1989 (9 Bahman 1367 AHS)

The Philosophy of Imamate as held by Hazrat Fatima Zahra

The Philosophy of Imamate as held by Hazrat Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace

In order to assure the unity of the Islamic *umma*,³¹ in order to liberate the Islamic homeland from occupation and penetration by the imperialists and their puppet governments, it is imperative that we establish a government. In order to attain the unity and freedom of the Muslim peoples, we must overthrow the oppressive governments installed by the imperialists and bring into existence an Islamic government of justice that will be in the service of the people. The formation of such a government will serve to preserve the order and unity of the Muslims. Just as Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace, said in her address: "The Imamate exists for the sake of preserving order among the Muslims and replacing their disunity with unity."

The complete texts of messages and some speeches given on the occasion of Women's Day Imam Khomeini's Message on Women's Day

**The complete texts of messages and some speeches given on the occasion of Women's Day
Imam Khomeini's Message on Women's Day**

16 May 1979

I seek refuge in God from the accursed Satan

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Tomorrow marks the birthday of Siddiqa Tahera Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace; it is Women's Day. All dimensions that one can imagine exist for a woman and a human being were personified in Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace. She was not an ordinary woman; she was a spiritual woman, a heavenly woman, a human being in the true sense of the word.

She was the incarnation of human goodness; she personified the true nature of woman and the true nature of the human being. She was not an ordinary woman, she was a heavenly being who appeared in this world in the form of a human being, she was a divine, celestial being who appeared in the form of a woman. She personified all the very best human and female traits that one can imagine. Tomorrow³² then is Women's Day, tomorrow is the day on which such a woman was born.

She was a woman who embodied all the virtues of the prophets, a woman who, had she been a man, would have been a prophet, a woman who, had she been a man, would have been the Messenger of God. Spiritual qualities, heavenly qualities, divine qualities, celestial qualities, human and angelic qualities all came together in this being. She was a human being in the full sense of the word, a woman in the full sense of the word. Tomorrow then is Women's Day. Tomorrow is the day when woman's dignity and woman's character came into being.

Various dimensions exist for the woman just as they do for a man, for human beings in general. This external, physical side is the lowest stage of a human being's development, be it man or woman, but it is from this inferior stage that the human being moves towards perfection. Man is a moving being, moving from the physical towards the metaphysical stage, towards annihilation in God. In Fatima Zahra's case these stages have been attained. She began from the physical stage and moved on. She proceeded through the stages of a spiritual movement assisted by divine power, by the invisible hand, by the teachings of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his descendants) until she reached the stage that all others could not reach.

Tomorrow then is the day on which all aspects of woman were materialised, and woman in all her dimensions was incarnated. Tomorrow is Women's Day.

Unfortunately, women have suffered from victimisation in the past, notably in two periods. The first was during the Age of Ignorance, the period before the advent of Islam. During this time, women were oppressed; they were treated like animals, even worse than animals. Then Islam came and bestowed its blessings on mankind, it dragged women out of that state of oppression; it pulled her from that slough of ignorance.

The second period when women have been oppressed occurred in our Iran, during the reigns of the former Shah (Riza Khan) and his son (Muhammad Riza). In the name of wanting to liberate women, they oppressed the women; they committed outrages against them. They dragged them down from that position of honour and esteem that they occupied, from that spiritual position that they enjoyed, making them instead mere objects. In the name of freedom, freedom for women and freedom for men, they deprived men and women of their freedom.

They corrupted our women and our youth. The Shah (Muhammad Riza) believed women should be 'ravishing and beguiling' as he put it. Of course it was because he had allowed the animal aspect of his nature, the base animal aspect with its concern for the physical, for the material, to overcome him that he viewed women as such. Accordingly, he pulled women down from their position as human beings to the level of an animal, and on the plea of wanting to give women status, he dragged her down from the status she enjoyed to a lower one. He turned women into dolls, whereas women are human beings, great human beings.

Women are the educators of society. It is from the laps of women that true human beings originate. The first stage in the development of sound men and women begins in the lap of a woman. Women are the educators of human beings. A country's success or its misfortune depends on women. If they impart sound teachings, they create (sound) human beings and a flourishing country. Good fortune originates from the laps of women, they should be the source of every success and happiness, yet unfortunately this father and son, in particular this son, turned women into playthings. The number of crimes they perpetrated against the women they did not perpetrate against the men.

Women are the source of all blessings. We all saw what role the women played in this movement. History has witnessed great women in the world and what it means to be a woman, but history is remote. We ourselves have witnessed the kind of woman Islam has nurtured. In this recent period, the women who rose up were the veiled women from the south of the city, from Qum and other places where Islam enjoys a strong foothold.

Those who had the type of upbringing that the Aryamehr³³ decreed did not participate in this uprising at all. They were given a training that was depraving and corrupt and were deprived of Islamic teachings, whereas those who were given an Islamic education shed blood, sacrificed lives, poured into the streets

and brought the movement to victory. Our movement is indebted to them. The men poured into the streets after the women; the women encouraged the men; they formed the vanguard.

Women are creatures who can destroy a power that seems everlasting, a demonic power. During their reigns, Riza Khan and Muhammad Riza Khan vulgarised women, dragging them down from that status they once enjoyed, doing the same to the men and youth too. Numerous centres of corruption were created for our youth. In the name of freedom, in the name of progress, in the name of civilisation, they dragged our youth into corruption. In the name of freedom, they deprived us of all freedoms.

Those who lived through the Riza Khan period understand perfectly well what I am talking about, they witnessed for themselves what we were put through and what our respected women were put through, just as those who lived through Muhammad Riza's era saw what went on then. With deceptive words and bombastic terms, they set our country on a course for destruction. And worse than everything else, much worse, was the fact that they corrupted our youth.

Our human resources were put in a state of backwardness because of them. Women during the time of Riza Khan and Muhammad Riza Pahlavi were oppressed creatures and did not know it. It is doubtful that women were subjected to as much oppression during the Age of Ignorance as they were during the reigns of these two men, or as much degradation.

In both periods (the Age of Ignorance and under the Pahlavis), women were oppressed. In the first, Islam came and rescued them from their bondage, and in this period too I hope that Islam will be able to take their hands and save them from the maelstrom of abjectness and oppression.

Oh honourable women, awaken! Be alert; do not let yourselves be deceived by those devils who wish to pull you into this maelstrom. They are alluring and deceitful; they are out to cheat you just as the cursed Shah was. Take refuge in Islam. Islam will bring you happiness. Tomorrow is Women's Day; it is the day when (the birth of) a woman is commemorated of whom the world is proud.

It is the day commemorating a woman whose daughter stood against tyrannical rulers, who recited that sermon and uttered those words, words of which you are all aware---a woman who stood up to a tyrant who would kill anyone who breathed a word against him. She was not afraid; she held her ground and condemned him, condemned Yazid and his leadership. She lambasted him saying he was not fit to be called a human being.

This is what women should be like, and, praise be to God, this is how the women of our day are. They stood against the tyrant with clenched fists carrying their infants in their arms and helped the movement.

May God keep us from the evil of devils.

May God keep our youth from the evil of these human devils.

May God keep our women and our girls from their evil. (25)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

17 May 1979

Imam Khomeini's address to a gathering of women on the occasion of Women's Day

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The day is great, the gathering grand and the place blessed. It is the day commemorating the birth of Fatima Zahra, Women's Day. It is a victorious day for women, the day of the exemplar for women in the world. Women play a very important role in society. The realisation of mankind's hopes lies in her hands. She is the educator of great men and women. It is from the laps of women that man begins his ascent. It is in the laps of women that great men and great women are nurtured. It is a great day; a woman came into the world who compares with all men.

A woman came into the world who is an exemplar for mankind. A woman came into the world in whom all the traits of a (true) human being were manifest. So today is a great day. It is the day of you women.

In our era, women have shown that they stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their menfolk in the struggle; one could even go so far as to say that they lead the way. Iranian women have undertaken both great human and financial endeavours. This respected class of women from the south of Tehran, from Qum and other cities, these veiled ladies, these symbols of virtuousness, took the lead in the movement and in financial sacrifice, donating their jewels and gold to the oppressed. And the most important issue here is that one's intentions are pure.

For the few loaves of bread that *Hazrat* Amir (Imam `Ali), upon whom be peace, and his family gave in charity, God revealed several (Qur'anic) verses. These verses were revealed not because of the loaves of bread, but because the intention was pure, it was an act done for God. The value of an action lies in its spiritual motives.

The actions of those sisters who took part in the movement were more valuable than those of the men; they came out (into the streets) in their veils of modesty and shouting in unison with the men brought about victory. Now, with the purest of intentions, what they had accumulated during their lives they donated to the needy. This is worth much, were the affluent to donate millions it would not match this in value.

So Women's Day is an important day, and today is Women's Day. Today is the day of you veiled ladies. This is a great gathering, a gathering of the different strata of those who (hitherto) could not come together, whom repression prevented from coming together. Today all have come together, men and women have come together in a brotherly and sisterly fashion at a holy place, at Fayziya,^{[34](#)} at the place from which knowledge flows to all regions, the place at which divine laws are elucidated, the place from which knowledge and the knowledge of *jihad* is disseminated. The men and women of Qum are

exemplary in their learning and their willingness to act, as are the men and women of Iran on the whole.

My friends, maintain this community and this unity. The devils seek to cause dissension among you. Preserve this ideological unity; preserve this uprising for God. As long as your uprising is for God, you will be victorious. Those who, using various pretexts, try to create divisions, are betraying the nation, betraying the country and betraying Islam. Be vigilant and neutralise their actions and their machinations.

Those who try to create disturbances and discord among the different segments of the population throughout the country are foreign agents, they are agents of America; they are American mercenaries. They receive money from the other side of the border, which they distribute to the workers to persuade them to down tools. They want them to stop working so the factories won't operate. The farmers are prevented from getting on with their work. Oh honourable workers! Dear farmers!

Continue with your work. Stop indulging in these ideological differences. Now is the time for everyone to be working for Islam and for his country. All of you are duty bound to do so. Those who try to prevent you from working want to open the way for their masters, they want to return us to that abjectness and suffering we once had to endure. May God protect you from their malice.

May He render Islam and the Muslims victorious.

May He give us the power of discernment.

May God grant you health and happiness.

Peace be upon you and also the mercy and blessings of God. (26)

17 May 1979 (27 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

5 May 1980

Imam Khomeini's message for Women's Day

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

If a day is to be designated 'Women's Day', what day is more deserving, is prouder, than the day commemorating the joyous birth of Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace, a woman who is the pride of the family of divine revelation and who like a sun shines brightly in the crown of beloved Islam; a woman whose virtues were on a par with the endless virtues of the Most Noble Messenger and the household of infallibility and purity; a woman for whom everyone, with whatever viewpoint he may hold, has praises, yet none has been able to offer her adequate praise.

The *hadiths* that have come down to us from the family of divine revelation are such that the listener can easily understand, for one cannot contain a sea in a bottle. And whatever others have said in her praise was according to their own level of understanding, not commensurate with her standing. So let us leave this vale of wonder and turn to the virtues of women in general.

During this past half-century of blackness and bondage, this opprobrious Pahlavi era, the poisonous pens of the misguided and the words of benighted speakers sought to give women the status of a commodity, and those women who were vulnerable were drawn to centres that the pen is ashamed to mention. Anyone wishing to know something of these crimes can refer to the newspapers and magazines of the Riza Khan era, to the poems of the blackguards and scoundrels of that period, that corrupt period from the compulsory unveiling of women onwards. One can find out about the social gatherings of those days and the centres of corruption that existed.

Shame on those people. May the pens of such intellectuals be broken. Do not think that the crimes perpetrated on the plea of freedom for women and freedom for men had nothing to do with the plans of the world-plunderers and the international criminals. One of their plans was to lure the youth into the centres of vice and fornication, and in this they succeeded. Consequently, our country was deprived of young people who were active members of society. They robbed the youth of their ability to think, and brainwashed them into believing that they should be indifferent to the plundering and pillaging they carried out in this blighted country of xenomaniacs.[35](#)

Today, through the blessings of the Islamic movement, women are effective members of society, and have to a certain degree regained their proper standing. There are still a limited number of women in the upper echelons of society who have inherited the views of the black period of the former vile regime and consider women's proper standing to lie in prinking, in making herself up and participating in bacchanalian revelry.

They have made themselves into an article of trade, they are the followers and agents of the previous regime, the executors of the foreigners' plans and the helpers of the CIA and SAVAK.

Apart from these, the women of Iran today are committed, lion-hearted individuals who shoulder-to-shoulder with our dear men are busy rebuilding their beloved country just as they are busy rebuilding themselves through learning and education. You will not find a town or village without cultural or scientific centres composed of dedicated and honourable Muslim women. Through the blessings of Islam, the Islamic movement has brought about such a change in the spirit of the men and women of our society that they have travelled a road in one night that would have normally taken a hundred years to travel.

You noble people witnessed for yourselves how the respected, committed women of Iran entered the arena ahead of the men to free the country from the trammels of imperial rule. We are all indebted to them for their uprising and their efforts. After defeating the superpowers and eradicating their corrupt roots, we can truly designate a day as Women's Day and tell the world about women and their progress in the Islamic Republic with pride and honour.

Today, women in the Islamic Republic are striving shoulder-to-shoulder with the men to rebuild their country and rebuild themselves. This is the true meaning of free men and free women, not that which

was promulgated during the reign of the deposed Shah, for freedom then meant prison, repression and torture. I advise the women to forget the habits of the *taghut*³⁶ era and rebuild beloved Iran, which belongs to them and their children, such that with the help of all segments of the population it is freed from all aspects of (foreign) dependence.

I offer my best wishes to the committed women on this 20th day of Jumada II, which is a blessed day, and pray to God the Exalted for their health and happiness and for the greatness of Islam and the Muslims. (27)

Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khomeini

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibihisht 1359)

24 April 1981

Imam Khomeini's message on the occasion of Women's Day

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

I convey my best wishes and felicitations to the noble nation of Iran, in particular the respected women, on the immensely happy occasion of the birthday of Fatima Zahra, the most felicitous day to commemorate Women's Day.

This joyous birthday occurred in a place and time when women were not considered to be human beings and their very existence was seen as a source of shame for families among the different tribes of the pre-Islamic times. In such a corrupt and barbaric environment, the great Prophet of Islam took woman's hand and delivered her from the slough of pagan customs.

The history of Islam testifies to the limitless respect the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his descendants, showed this noble infant, so as to demonstrate that woman had a special greatness in society, and if she was not superior to man, she was certainly no less than him. So this day is the day of woman's revivification, and the day to establish her honour and the great role she plays in society.

I am proud of these honourable women of Iran and the change they have wrought in themselves, a change that has brought to naught the devilish plans which the foreign strategists and their dishonourable stooges, from the profligate poets to the venal writers and propaganda organisations, have spent more than fifty years trying to bring to maturity.

They have proved that the worthy Muslim women (of Iran) will not be misled and will not be hurt by the malicious machinations of the West and of those infatuated with the West. Even with all the propaganda which was trumpeted over those propaganda loudspeakers throughout the usurpatory reign of the Pahlavis, apart from a handful of affluent *taghuti* women, agents of SAVAK and people affiliated to them,

millions of committed women from other segments of the population did not fall into the trap of those who had surrendered themselves to the West, and throughout the fifty years of benightment, standing proud before God and mankind, they bravely resisted the onslaught. Consequently, through this recent, divinely inspired change which has taken place, the hopes of the undiscerning, who regard the West as their *qibla*,³⁷ have been dashed forever.

May the Islamic movement of the great women of Iran be victorious and glorious. Glory be to this exalted segment of the population who with their valuable and brave contribution to the defence of the Islamic homeland and the venerable Qur'an brought victory to the revolution, and who today are actively involved in the war effort, either at the front or in other areas, and are prepared to make sacrifices.

May God's mercy be upon those mothers who sent their strong sons to the battlefield to defend Truth and who take pride in their subsequent invaluable martyrdom. Shame on those dolls who live a base animal life in loathsome palaces abroad and at home and who think of nothing save depravation. May they be severed the tongues and hands of those criminals who with their words and writings are striving to destroy the Islamic Republic and drag our dear country into the laps of the Left or Right!

Endless salutations to the committed women who are currently busy all over the country rearing children, teaching the illiterate and educating people in the rich culture of the Qur'an. May God's blessings be upon those women who have attained the high station of martyrdom in this revolution and in defence of their homeland, and upon those who are helping the sick and invalid in the clinics and hospitals. Greetings to those mothers who gave their children (for the cause) with pride and honour. Good wishes to you committed women in Islamic countries on Women's Day.

It is hoped that the community of women will cease being indifferent and will awaken from the unnatural stupor the plunderers have forced them into, and that together, shoulder-to-shoulder, they will help those who have been deceived and guide them to the lofty station which is theirs. It is also hoped that women in the other Islamic countries will take lessons from the miraculous change that has occurred in the Iranian women as a result of the great Islamic revolution, and will strive to reform their society and bring freedom and independence to their countries.

May God's mercy and blessings be upon the honourable women of Islam and beloved Iran. God's peace be upon His servants amongst the men and women believers. (28)

Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khomeini

24 April 1981 (4 Urdibihisht 1360 AHS)

14 April 1982

Imam Khomeini's message on Women's Day

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Felicitations to the mighty nation of Iran, in particular its great women, on this blessed day of the woman, this illustrious day commemorating a lustrous being who lays the foundations on which mankind's virtues and the exalted values of God's representative in this world are built. And even more blessed and precious is the most felicitous selection of the 20th day of Jumada II (as Women's Day), the proud day of the birth of a woman who is one of history's miracles and who is a source of pride for the world of creation.

A woman in a small room of a humble home nurtured human beings whose light shone from the vast expanse of the earth to the highest heavens, from this world to the next. May the blessings and peace of God the Exalted be upon this small room, which was the place where the light of divine majesty was made manifest and was the nursery of the elite children of mankind.

The role of women in the world enjoys certain special characteristics. The rectitude or immorality of a society stems from the rectitude or immorality of the women in that society. Women are the only creatures who can bestow upon society individuals raised in their care whose deeds can be a blessing to communities and can inspire perseverance and lofty human values, or can have the opposite effect.

Without a doubt, what the dear Iranian nation, in particular its oppressed women, went through at the hands of that heinous regime during the past fifty years, which have been the ruin of Iran, was all part of the premeditated plan of the world's super criminals. Riza Khan and his criminal son with their sick notions perpetrated such infernal and far-reaching crimes as were unparalleled or at least have few parallels in the history of this country.

The world's supercriminals believed their continued survival lay in the capture of other nations, particularly the Islamic nations. In recent decades, when the way was open for them to infiltrate the rich, Islamic, oil-producing countries, they realised that it was only the religious class that could impede their plans to colonise and exploit those countries.

They saw that a decree only half a line long issued by a popular *marja'*³⁸ was enough to bring the British government and the powerful Qajar court to their knees. They saw too the key role women played in that movement and observed how in the Constitutional Movement³⁹ and events subsequent to it, it was the women, in particular the deprived, middle-class women, who could, through their uprising, inspire their menfolk to act. They became aware that as long as these elements retained their powerful influence, their plans would come to naught.

And so, in order to gain control over these countries and their abundant resources, they felt it necessary to weaken the pillars of religion, the religious leadership and the religious segments of the population. They laid their plans in those early days and began to act upon them. They had some success, and then they found Riza Khan to perform this service for them. Subsequently, they brought him to power and he embarked on a pertinacious crusade against these three obstacles.

Those who can remember those days know only too well what this criminal traitor did with the aid of his

perfidious agents who had no homeland, and what measures they took to lead the innocent women astray, to turn them into consumers and drag them into corruption in order to expedite the success of their plans. It is enough for the present generation, who did not experience those black days, to look at the books, poems, writings, plays, songs, newspapers and magazines of that period, and the centres of corruption, the gambling houses, liquor stores, and cinemas, which are all vestiges of those times.

Alternatively, they can speak to those who lived through that period and ask them what acts of oppression and betrayal were carried out against women, this segment of the population that nurtures human beings, in the guise of advancing their position. It goes without saying that the majority of religious women especially society's deprived resisted this assault. But among the perfidious imperialists in the affluent and hedonistic echelons of society, their plans found success, and it was these people who created a favourable market for their masters.

Even now that through the providence of God Almighty and the actions of the exalted nation, particularly its lion-hearted ladies, the hands of the oppressors have been severed, still an insignificant minority persist in their foolish ways. It is hoped that, God willing, they too will see the tricks of the devils, both great and small, and will escape their cunning traps.

Today, which is Women's Day in our beloved Iran, we must be especially proud of our women, for what is more deserving of pride than that which our great women did in standing against the former tyrannical regime, and, upon its destruction, against the superpowers and their retainers, in the forefront of the struggle, demonstrating such perseverance, resistance and bravery the likes of which have not been recorded of men in any age.

The resistance demonstrated by these great women in the imposed war and the sacrifices they are making are so astonishing that pens and tongues cannot adequately describe them, indeed they put them to shame. Throughout this war, I have seen the mothers, sisters and wives who have lost their dear ones do things that I don't think could be witnessed anywhere else other than here in this revolution. One event in particular stands out in my mind from all the rest, and that is the marriage of a young girl to a dear revolutionary guard who had lost both his hands in the war and had received injuries to both his eyes.

That brave young girl whose magnanimous spirit overflowed with sincerity and genuineness said: 'Since I cannot go to the war front, let me pay my debt to the revolution and my religion through this marriage.' No writer, poet, speaker, painter, artist, mystic, philosopher or jurisprudent, indeed anyone you care to name, can adequately convey the spiritual magnificence of this event or the human worth and the divine tones contained therein. No one can evaluate this great girl's self-sacrifice, her otherworldliness and devotion to God using current criteria.

This blessed day is the day of women such as her, may God keep them for Islam and Iran. May I offer you young ladies married to men who have been reunited with God (been martyred) a word of

benevolent, fatherly advice. Do not refrain from remarrying, and through your marriages, rear children like yourselves: steadfast and valuable to society.

Do not listen to the devilish insinuations of some people who pay little attention to what is right, preferring instead the path of corruption. I also advise the dear revolutionary guards, the soldiers and the youth to avail themselves of the opportunity to wed these ladies, and, with such a valuable spouse by their sides, continue along the honourable path of life they have chosen.

May God the Exalted be your friend and your strength. Endless greetings to women, these valuable and persevering beings. Blessed for you all be this most precious day of the woman.

May God support this beloved country and be the friend and helper of us all. (29)

Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khomeini

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

12 March 1985

Imam Khomeini's address to a gathering of women on the occasion of the anniversary of the birth of Hazrat Fatima (upon whom be peace) and Women's Day

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to God on this blessed day which is the exalted day of the woman. The ladies of Iran have made great strides along the path of Islam and have freed themselves from the shackles, which bound them. I offer my best wishes to all ladies on this blessed day and especially to those here now.

I hope that just as you ladies were committed in all affairs concerning the advancement of Islam before, during and after this revolution, in the same manner, by God's grace, you will remain committed and will continue to serve this country which was ruined under the tyrannical rule of oppressors who trampled upon our rights, wanted to wipe us off the map, corrupt our youth and pervert the minds of our women, dragging them into a way of life that was contrary to the way they should have been living.

God the Blessed and Exalted has bestowed His favour on us all and has assisted us, so that hitherto we have been successful in our aims, and we attribute much of that success to the service rendered by you ladies, and for that we are deeply indebted to you. You are the ones who, in addition to the activities you yourselves carry out, redouble the activities of the men. You are the ones who suffered psychological torture during the *taghut* era.

Praise be to God, with your strength and your commitment you expunged this devilish force from the pages of history, and stopped the plans they were brewing up from being realised. God knows that if it were not for this movement and the efforts of the Iranian people, women and men, young and old alike, this nation would have lost everything.

God be praised, you worked hard, you suffered and were steadfast in every stage (of the movement). Iranian women were actively involved in all affairs, from the cultural to the economic, and today a large number of them are involved in agriculture, a large number in industry and still others in the educational arena in the areas of literature, science and the arts. All of these efforts are commendable in the eyes of God the Blessed and Exalted, and you are all in God's care. As long as you remain committed, God the Blessed and Exalted will assist you.

Strive to purify your character and to make your friends do likewise. Strive so that you react to the outrages committed against you. In your attempts to uphold all the qualities that make up the great character of woman, be as that unique woman, *Hazrat* Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace, was. All of us should take our exemplar from Islam by looking at her and her children, and being as she was. Strive to acquire learning and godliness, for learning is not the preserve of any one person, learning is for all, godliness is for all, and striving to acquire learning and achieve godliness is the duty of us all.

I hope that the state organs will help you and will meet your needs in all areas, and in your educational activities will adequately provide you with the things you need. I hope that you will be assisted by God and will be successful in everything you do.

The Iranian ladies have brought Islam to the stage it is now at by sacrificing their lives, their youth and their time, and I hope that from now on it will be advanced even further. You can be sure that as long as you remain active and committed to Islam, as long as you are ready to give your young ones for the cause and are willing to train them properly, then Islam will progress and will sever the hands of the enemies of religion from this country, and all Islamic countries, allowing happiness and goodness to follow, God willing.

I hope that Muslim women wherever they may be will imitate you dear ones who are striving to elevate the status of women and to make up for the injustices, which were perpetrated against you in that era.

May God grant you all success and help us all to successfully serve Islam. May He preserve your faith and protect your way of life.

You must remember that the veil, which Islam has prescribed for you is to protect your status. Whatever God has decreed for man or for woman is to keep alive the true values they possess, values that may be destroyed by the devil's insinuations or at the corrupt hands of imperialism and its agents. May God grant us all success in serving Islam and the nation.

Peace be upon you and also the mercy and blessings of God. (30)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

2 March 1985

Imam Khomeini's address on the occasion of the anniversary of the birth of Hazrat Zahra (upon whom be peace) and Women's Day

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

I congratulate all you ladies and women in all Islamic countries on this joyous holiday marking the most glorious birth of *Hazrat* Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace. I ask God, the Blessed and Exalted, to guide all the respected women along the path that He has laid down, so that they can achieve lofty Islamic aims. It is a source of great pride for the women that they have designated *Hazrat* Fatima's birthday as Women's Day; it is a source of pride and responsibility.

I do not consider myself adequate to the task of speaking about *Hazrat* Fatima, upon whom be peace, so I will suffice with reciting a sound tradition⁴⁰ which can be found in *Usul al-Kafi*. This tradition quotes *Hazrat* Sadiq⁴¹, upon whom be peace, as saying: "After the death of her father, Fatima, upon whom be peace, lived for seventy-five days. She was in this world and she was overcome with grief. Gabriel, the Trusted Spirit, came to her regularly to console her and tell her of future events."

So according to this tradition, in these seventy-five days she had contact with Gabriel, he came and went many times. I do not think that such a thing has happened for anyone else other than the great prophets of the highest rank, that in seventy-five days Gabriel, the Trusted Spirit, came and went and spoke of events that would take place in the future, spoke of things that would happen to her offspring in the future.

Hazrat Amir⁴² wrote down what Gabriel said, he was the writer of these revelations just as he had been the writer of the revelations the Noble Messenger had received – of course with the death of the Noble Messenger those revelations which brought divine laws ended. He was the writer of the revelations that were made to *Hazrat* Fatima during these seventy-five days.

Gabriel's appearing to someone should not be taken as a trivial affair. One should not imagine that Gabriel would appear to just anyone. The necessary relationship has to exist between the spirit of that person to whom Gabriel would appear and Gabriel's station as the paramount spirit.

Whether we believe that it is the greatness of the spirit of the saint or prophet that brings Gabriel down to this lower station, or that it is God who sends him to make such revelations, whether we side with the speculatists in their views or those who interpret the literal meaning in theirs, it still remains that unless the necessary relationship exists between the spirit of that person to whom Gabriel would appear and Gabriel, the paramount spirit, then it would be impossible for such a thing to happen.

The relationship existed between Gabriel, the paramount spirit, and the prophets of the highest rank such as the Messenger of God, Moses, Jesus and Abraham. It did not exist with just anyone, and after

these prophets it did not exist with anyone else. Indeed, I have not even heard of Gabriel descending to the Imams as he did to the prophets.

As far as I know it was only to *Hazrat* Fatima Zahra, upon whom be peace, that Gabriel appeared repeatedly during the period of these seventy-five days, revealing future events which would take place for her offspring which *Hazrat* Amir recorded. Perhaps he spoke to her about the time of her exalted offspring *Hazrat* Sahib,⁴³ upon whom be peace, in which case he may have mentioned events in Iran too; who knows, it is possible.

Be that as it may, I consider the fact that Gabriel appeared to her when he had appeared to no one other than the prophets, upon whom be peace – and even then not all the prophets, only those of the highest rank – and some of the saints who are of the same rank as them, to demonstrate her nobility and moral excellence better than any other virtue with which she is attributed, even though those virtues too are important. The fact that she had communication with Gabriel in those seventy-five days, and that he has appeared to no one since then, demonstrates an excellence, which is, but one of the characteristics of *Hazrat* Fatima, upon whom be peace.

You should be proud, as indeed we all should be proud, that this day has been designated Women's Day, and you must accept the responsibilities that come with it. If you have accepted the twentieth day of Jumada II, which is the birthday of *Hazrat* Fatima Zahra, as Women's Day, then you have also undertaken its concomitant responsibilities.

If a nation accepts such and such a day as the day of struggle and endeavour (*jihad*), then on that day they should engage in that struggle, if someone does not, then he has not truly accepted that day as the day of *jihad*. If a nation accepts a day as the day of war but someone declines to take part, then that person has acted against his human responsibilities.

Likewise, if you women here, indeed all our women all over the country, have accepted today as Women's Day, that is have accepted the day which marks the birthday of *Hazrat* Fatima Zahra, with all the perfection she represents and the position she enjoys, as Women's Day, then you have a great task to perform, one which includes struggle, just as she struggled, to the best of her ability, during the short span of her life, addressing the governments of the time and passing judgement on them. To truly accept her birthday as Women's Day, you must imitate her.

To truly accept it you must follow her example in her renunciation of the things of this world, in her devotion and piety and in all the virtues she possessed. If you do not do this, then you have not entered into the true spirit of Women's Day. Whoever does not accept these things has not entered into the true spirit of Women's Day and has not recognised the true nature of this illustrious day.

And I hope you will accept and perform those duties you are obliged to carry out, which are to strive both in the area of education, which is an important matter, and in the defence of Islam. These are among the important tasks the performance of which is incumbent on every man and woman, on the young and old

alike.

Defending Islam, defending the Islamic country, is an indisputable duty of the clerics, of those whose lives are Islam and who are Muslim. That which is disputable is women's role in the lesser *jihad*.⁴⁴ It is not incumbent on women to take part in this *jihad*. However, defending oneself, one's country, one's life, one's property and defending Islam is the duty of us all.

Consequently, if defence is a duty incumbent on us all, then the preparations for this defence must be carried out, and these include military planning and military training for those who are able. For it is not the case that it be our bounden duty to defend ourselves and we have no idea how to do so. We have to know how to defend ourselves. It goes without saying, however, that the environment in which you receive military training must be a sound one, an Islamic one, all aspects of decency and modesty, all Islamic aspects being upheld.

God be praised, just as women have always been in the forefront of every public struggle that has arisen in Iran, for example during the protests against the tobacco concession⁴⁵ and during the Constitutional Movement, so too the women of this Islamic Republic participate to a considerable degree in tackling the problems we face today. In fact I must say their participation is two-fold. If a number of women enter an arena, let us say a war arena, then in addition to the fighting they do, they also act as inspiration for the men, emboldening them.

For where women are concerned men are very sensitive. It is not the case that if the women embark on a defence (of their country), they do so alone, no, they defend, but they also inspire others to take part in that defence. Men are sensitive where women are concerned. If a man sees a hundred men being killed, he may not be moved, but if he sees one woman, even a woman who is a stranger to him, being treated disrespectfully, his sensitivity will force him to react. Thus your spearheading role in all affairs, including matters of defence, *jihad* and assisting in the war effort, will encourage the men to do more, it will embolden them.

Today we are in such an arena, we are facing the world's propaganda against us and this war which has been imposed on us, and, God be praised, we are achieving victory on both fronts. May God help these youths of ours who are laying their lives on the line for the cause. I should thank them for being united, for coming together and acting as one hand.

Currently, there is no talk of being in the army, the revolutionary guards, the volunteer forces, the police or any other unit, all are united in driving back these depraved forces ranged against us. God be praised, as you have heard, these groups have hitherto been victorious on every front. Saddam, on the other hand, has had to try to hide his humiliation by giving medals of bravery to his defeated soldiers.

In Khorramshahr, if you recall, even though his troops were driven out, nevertheless he awarded them medals. And now too, in the case of Fao,⁴⁶ I have heard that he has conferred medals of bravery on his troops even though the world – despite the fact that its propaganda organs will not admit this directly –

has recognised their defeat there. These days he must be handing out a lot of medals for bravery, for every day his troops are being defeated! Every day he must hand out such medals.

You ladies must bear in mind that just as it is necessary for the men at the fronts to push forward and spearhead the battle, so too it is necessary for you to help on the home front and to prepare yourselves so that if, God forbid, there comes a time when national defence is obligatory for everyone, for every able-bodied person without exception, you are ready to fulfil this obligation. Education is, of course, also a bastion, a bastion of the Islamic culture.

You know that throughout these past centuries, from the period after the demise of the Prophet, upon whom be peace and blessings, to the present, the Islamic culture has been trampled underfoot, the laws of Islam falling into abeyance. This culture must be brought alive again. You ladies must be active on the educational and cultural fronts just as the men are.

I hope that God will grant you all success and you will make advances on these fronts too. Pray that those who are at the war front defending their country and Islam will also be successful, God willing. May you all be healthy and successful.

Peace be upon you and also the mercy and blessings of God. (31)

2 March 1985 (11 Isfand 1364 AHS)

Hazrat Khadija

***Hazrat Khadija*⁴⁷ (upon whom be peace)**

When the Most Noble Messenger (upon whom be peace and blessings) was given his prophetic mission and began to propagate his message, an eight-year-old child (the Commander of the Faithful, upon whom be peace) and a forty-year-old woman (his wife Khadija) were the only people who believed in him; he had no one else.

Everyone knows of the vexations that plagued the Prophet, the obstacles that were placed in his way, and the opposition that he faced. Yet he never despaired or said, "I am all alone." He persisted and, with his spiritual power and firm resolve, was able to advance his cause from nothing to the point it has reached today, where seven hundred million people are gathered under his banner.

Islamic Government, p. 135.

When the Most Noble Messenger (upon whom be peace and blessings) was given his mission, he was given it to perform alone: "*Arise and deliver thy call*," (Qur'an 73:2). The call began with the Prophet. The day he announced his prophethood, only a woman and a child believed in him, but the perseverance required of all the honourable prophets for leadership was present in him to the point of perfection.

"*Stand firm (in the straight path) as thou art commanded*," (Qur'an 11:112). (32)

19 November 1978 (28 Aban 1357 AHS)

As we are all aware, the prices of goods these days are sky-high and some people are suffering because of this. However, their suffering is nothing compared to what the Prophet and his great, dearly beloved wife *Hazrat* Khadija had to endure during those years. Tradition has it that they would put a goatskin used to make butter into water and let it soak then suck the skin in the hope of getting some of the fat or something nutritious from it. When they did such things for Islam, when they stood fast before the enemies of Islam, you who are the people of that great man must not complain about shortages. There is no scarcity of foodstuffs, what there is a shortage of is that prinking, that making-up which one group wanted. God willing, it no longer exists, and if it does, it should be done away with. (33)

4 June 1983 (14 Khurdad 1362 AHS)

Hazrat Zaynab

Hazrat Zaynab [48](#)(upon whom be peace)

Tomorrow is Women's Day; it is the day when (the birth of) a woman is commemorated of whom the world is proud. It is the day commemorating a woman whose daughter stood against tyrannical rulers, who recited that sermon and uttered those words, words of which you are all aware---a woman who stood up to a tyrant who would kill anyone who breathed a word against him. She was not afraid; she held her ground and condemned him, condemned Yazid and his leadership. She lambasted him saying he was not fit to be called a human being.

This is what women should be like, and, praise be to God, this is how the women of our day are. They stood against the tyrant with clenched fists carrying their infants in their arms and helped the movement. (34)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

The Lord of the Martyrs, his followers and the members of his household taught us our duty: sacrifice on the field of battle, propagation off it. The sacrifice made by Imam Husayn, upon whom be peace, was of great value before God the Blessed and Exalted and helped advance his movement. So too, almost to the same degree, the sermons delivered by *Hazrat* Sajjad[49](#) and *Hazrat* Zaynab were just as effective.

They taught us that women and men should not be afraid before a tyrant or a tyrannical government. *Hazrat* Zaynab, upon whom be peace, stood up to Yazid and humiliated him in a way that his tribe, the Bani Umayyads, had never before experienced.

They both made it clear, along the way to Kufa, in Kufa itself, in Damascus and in the address *Hazrat* Sajjad delivered from the pulpit, that they had been misrepresented, that the battle was not one of right against wrong, but that was what the regime wanted people to think it was. It wanted to make it seem

that the Lord of the Martyrs had risen up against the ruler of the time, against the successor of the Messenger of God. This both *Hazrat Sajjad* and *Hazrat Zaynab* revealed in public. (35)

17 October 1982 (25 Mehr 1361 AHS)

The manner of the struggle, how a struggle between a small number of people and a large group should be waged, how an uprising against a tyrannical regime with wide-reaching control should be carried out with only a limited number of people, are things which the Lord of the Martyrs has taught the nation. And after that tragic event took place, his noble household and his greatly esteemed son demonstrated what must be done.

Should there be surrender? Should there be a letup in the struggle? Or should one act as Zaynab, upon whom be peace, or *Hazrat `Ali ibn Husayn*, upon whom be peace, did? Following that great tragedy, beside which others pale, *Hazrat Zaynab* persevered and spoke out against atheism and freethinking, she spoke out at every opportunity, throwing light on the issue. And *Hazrat `Ali ibn Husayn*, though still convalescing, spoke out whenever appropriate, informing people of the facts. (36)

17 October 1982 (25 Mehr 1361 AHS)

Observe that the best of God's creatures of his age His Holiness the Lord of the Martyrs, upon whom be peace, and the finest youth of the Bani Hashem tribe and his followers left this world as martyrs. Yet in that abominable court ceremony before Yazid, *Hazrat Zaynab*, upon whom be peace, swore that what she had witnessed at Karbala was nothing other than a beautiful event. The death of a perfect being, the martyrdom of a perfect being, is beautiful in the eyes of the friends (*awliya*[50](#)) of God, not because he fought and was killed but because he fought for God, he rose up for God, and was killed. (37)

10 February 1987 (21 Bahman 1365 AHS)

We have repeatedly seen great Zaynab-like women cry out that they have lost their children and sacrificed everything they have in the way of God the Exalted and beloved Islam, and are proud to have done so. They realise that what they have achieved instead is higher even than the gardens of paradise, let alone the unimportant chattels of this world. (38)

5 June 1989 (15 Khurdad 1368 AHS)

Hazrat Maryam

Hazrat Maryam[51](#) (upon whom be peace)

In the Most Noble Qur'an there are verses, which indicate that persons other than the prophets have seen angels, have seen Gabriel even, and they have spoken to them. We will recite some examples here: "*Behold, the angels said: Oh Mary! God hath chosen thee and purified thee, chosen thee above*

the women of all nations,” (Qur’an 3:42).

Then the angels related for Mary many of the circumstances of Jesus Christ’s life and the miracles he would perform. They revealed to her knowledge of the unseen. In Sura Maryam, Verse 17, we read: *“Then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects.”* The visits made by the angels and Gabriel to Mary are mentioned in many verses of the Qur’an, and the knowledge of the unseen God revealed to her.

Kashf al-Asrar, p. 126.

Almighty God’s blessings and peace upon *Hazrat* Jesus, the son of Maryam, the spirit of God and exalted prophet who raised the dead and awakened the slumberers. Almighty God’s blessings and peace upon his exalted mother the Virgin Mary, the veracious into whose womb God blew life and who delivered a great son to those thirsty for divine mercy. (39)

23 December 1978 (2 Dey 1357 AHS)

Hazrat Jesus (upon whom be peace) – whom these people follow and whom they believe spoke only of spiritual matters – was just the same. From the beginning he had to struggle. When he was born, only a short time after his birth, he spoke saying he had brought a book (of revelation).

This is what the Qur’an says of him, that when he was born, he spoke to his mother, who was upset by the accusations levelled against her (by the Jews), telling her to grieve not, that if anyone came to speak to her to say she was fasting – as probably she was – and for them to go and ask the child.

Her people came to her just after the birth and began to speak to her in an impertinent manner. *Hazrat* Mary pointed to the child for them to go and speak to him. They asked: “How can we converse with him?” Then Jesus spoke telling them that God had given him a book (of revelation). (40)

10 November 1987 (8 Aban 1366 AHS)

[1.](#) The word *Hazrat* is used as a respectful form of address.

[2.](#) *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 25, pp. 1–103.

[3.](#) The archangel Gabriel accompanied the Most Noble Messenger on his *mi’raj* (ascension to the Divine Presence), but being of lowlier station than the Messenger, he was unable to endure the splendour of the Divine Presence.

[4.](#) *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 18, p. 382, ‘History of the Prophet’, Chapter ‘Proof of the Ascension’, Narrative 85.

[5.](#) *Al Arba’in*, Allama Majlisi, p. 177, description of tradition 15.

[6.](#) *Lailat al-Qadr*: The Night of Power (or Decree), has a very special significance in the Muslim calendar because it is the anniversary of that night when the Qur’an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. This night has been described as ‘better than a thousand months’, and tradition holds that requests made to God during *Lailat al-Qadr* will be granted.

[7.](#) This Arabic word has a large number of meanings including ‘speech’, ‘report’ and ‘narrative’. It also has the very important specialist sense of ‘tradition’, i.e. a record of the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad and his descendants, and as such is regarded by Muslims as a source of Islamic law, dogma and ritual second only in importance to the Qur’an itself.

[8.](#) *Al-Kafi*: one of the most important collections of Shi’ite hadith compiled by Shaykh `Abu Ja’far Muhammad ibn-i Yaqub

ibn Ishaq Kulayni (d. 941 AD). Al-Kafi includes 16,199 traditions that can be traced back to the Prophet and his family by an unbroken chain of transmission. The traditions in this book cover ideological, ethical and jurisprudential matters to name but a few. Kulayni lived relatively close in time to the period of the Prophet and the twelve Imams, this, along with the method of gathering, classifying and specifying the chain of transmission, has given al-Kafi a special importance amongst the collections of traditions and puts it alongside three other books as the most important collections of Shi'ite traditions collectively famous as the Kutub al-Arba'a (The Four Books). Al-Kafi is divided into three sections: Usul al-Kafi; Furu' al-Kafi and Rauda al-Kafi. Usul al-Kafi covers ideological and ethical matters and consists of the books of: Reason and Ignorance; the Excellence of Knowledge; Divine Unity; Divine Proof; Belief; Unbelief; Qur'an and Supplicatory Prayer. Furu' al-Kafi, on the other hand, consists of books and sections on jurisprudence and is one of the authoritative reference books for deduction and independent reasoning (ijtihad) from Islamic law for the Shi'ite jurists. Rauda al-Kafi comprises different traditions on numerous matters. This book, also known as Sharif al-Kafi, has for centuries been used by the Shi'ite 'ulama and jurists as a reference book. Muslim scholars have written extensive expositions on al-Kafi, amongst them Mullah Sadra Shirazi and Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi.

[9.](#) – Imam Abu 'l-Hasan Musa, son of Ja'far: seventh of the Twelve Imams, and generally known as Imam Musa al-Kazim. He was born in Medina in 744 AD and died in prison in Baghdad in 799 AD.

[10.](#) – Tafsir al-Burhan, Vol. 4, p. 158.

[11.](#) – Usul al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 326. Kitab al-Hujjat, section on the birth of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his descendants, Hadith 4.

[12.](#) – Tasbihat = words uttered in praise of God.

[13.](#) – Furu' al-Kafi, Vol. 3, p. 343, Kitab al-Salat, the section on supererogatory prayers performed after the prescribed prayer, and supplications. Hadith 14.

[14.](#) – 27 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS corresponding with 17 May 1979 and 20 Jumada II 1399 AH.

[15.](#) – Refer to footnote 16.

[16.](#) – Hadiths and their isnads, or chain of authorities, have been subjected to a wide range of types of categorisation. A basic one is to classify the hadith under one of several major categories of trustworthiness. The term 'sahih' or sound indicates the highest level of trustworthiness in a tradition.

[17.](#) – See footnote 17.

[18.](#) – Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, the sixth Shi'ite Imam. He was born, lived and taught in Medina and was buried there when he died. He was a notable scholar of hadith and in his own life gained a massive reputation for his knowledge and holiness.

[19.](#) – 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, cousin and husband of Hazrat Fatima and first of the Twelve Imams of Shi'ite belief. He exercised rule from 656 until his martyrdom in 661.

[20.](#) – Referring to the twelfth and last Imam of Shi'ite belief Imam Mahdi, also known as the Imam of the Age or Lord of the Age, who is now in occultation. According to Shi'ite belief, he made an appearance as a young boy at the funeral of his father after which he entered the state of occultation. It is believed he will emerge from his occultation at a time when injustice fills the earth and his return will herald the approach of the end of time.

[21.](#) – Referring to Imam Husayn, grandson of the Prophet, and also known as the Lord of the Martyrs. In 680, Imam Husayn refused to swear allegiance to Yazid, son of Mu'awiya and second caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, since Yazid did not possess legitimate authority and had succeeded to the caliphate by hereditary succession. The ensuing death of the Imam in battle at Karbala has always been commemorated by Shi'ite Muslims as the supreme example of martyrdom in the face of tyranny. It served as an important point of both ideological and emotive reference throughout the Islamic Revolution in Iran. 'Ashura, the tenth day of Muharram, is the day on which he was martyred in Karbala.

[22.](#) – A litany that was recited by all the Imams, something true of no other prayer or invocation, during the month of Sha'ban.

[23.](#) – Day of 'Arafa: the ninth day of the month of Dhu 'l-Hijja, when all the pilgrims participating in the hajj must be present at the plain of 'Arafa outside Mecca. For a translation of the text of the prayer that Imam Husayn recited on this day, see 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, A Shi'ite Anthology, trans. William C. Chittick, pp. 93–113.

[24.](#) – The book of fifty-seven prayers known as the Sahifa-yi Sajjadiya, which is one of the major Shi'ite manuals of prayer, was composed by Imam Zayn al-'Abidin Sajjad, the fourth of the Twelve Imams and the only son of Imam Husayn to

survive the massacre at Karbala.

[25.](#) – Imam is referring to the simple mat on which he was sitting in his home in Qum.

[26.](#) – Referring to the pagan times before the rise of Islam.

[27.](#) – A line from a poem attributed to Yazid ibn Mu'awiya, which denies the revelation and the basis of the prophet's mission.

[28.](#) – Referring to his own humble home.

[29.](#) – The fifth Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir.

[30.](#) – Imam Hasan: son of Imam `Ali and the second Imam from the Prophet's Progeny.

[31.](#) – Umma: the entire Islamic community without territorial or ethnic distinction.

[32.](#) – 27 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS corresponding with 17 May 1979 and 20 Jumada II 1399 AH.

[33.](#) – The title Aryamehr, which means 'the sun and light of the Aryan race', was created by Riza Zadeh Shafaq, a senator from the province of Azerbaijan. Asadullah `Alam, who had asked the writers and other literary personalities of the time to think of an honorific title for the Shah, chose Aryamehr. In 1967, the National Consultative Assembly bestowed this title upon the Shah. It reflected the nationalist ideology of the regime and demonstrated its rejection of Islamic ideology. R.K. Karanjia, in the book *The Mind of a Monarch*, p. 236, reports the Shah as one who hoped for a revival of the great Aryan civilisation as seen in the days of the Emperor Cyrus.

[34.](#) – The theological school situated in the vicinity of the shrine of Hazrat Ma'suma, upon whom be peace, in the city of Qum.

[35.](#) – Xenomaniacs: those infatuated with foreign and especially Western models of culture. This is a translation of a Persian term, gharbzadeha, popularised by Jalal Al-i Ahmad (d. 1969) in his book *Gharbzadegi* (Xenomania). He was a writer of great influence and Imam Khomeini was acquainted with his work.

[36.](#) – Taghut: one who surpasses all bounds in his despotism and tyranny and claims the prerogatives of divinity for himself, whether explicitly or implicitly. The illegitimate ruling power.

[37.](#) – Qibla: Muslim direction of prayer towards the Ka'ba in Mecca.

[38.](#) – Refer to footnote 2.

[39.](#) – The Iranian Constitutional Movement of 1905–1911.

[40.](#) – Refer to footnote 25.

[41.](#) – Refer to footnote 27.

[42.](#) – Refer to footnote 28.

[43.](#) – Refer to footnote 29.

[44.](#) – The lesser jihad is the struggle against the visible enemy in the battlefield, and the greater or supreme jihad is the ceaseless war man is called upon to wage against his lower self.

[45.](#) – In 1891, Nasir al-Din Shah granted yet another in a long line of concessions he had already given to foreigners in return for money to satisfy court consumption and to finance his tours of Europe. This time, in return for a personal gift of twenty-five thousand pounds, an annual rent of fifteen thousand pounds to the state and a twenty-five percent share of the profits for Iran, one Major Gerald Talbot acquired a fifty-year monopoly over the distribution and exportation of tobacco. Akhtar (Star), a liberal Persian paper published in Istanbul at the time, expressed the general concern of Iranian merchants: "It is clear enough that the concessionaire will commence the work with a small capital and will purchase the tobacco from the cultivators and sell it to the merchants and manufacturers for higher prices, and all the profits will remain in the purse of the English. As the Persian merchants have no right to export tobacco from Persia, those who were formerly engaged in this trade will be obliged to give up their business and find some other work. The concessionaire does not take into consideration how many merchants who were engaged in this business will be left without employment and will suffer loss in finding other occupations." The clergymen and maraji' of the time immediately opposed the concession and demanded its cancellation. Ayatullah Mirza Hasan Shirazi, the maraji'-i taqlid at the time, determined the destiny of this struggle. He issued a religious fatwa stating that the use of tobacco in whatever form was haram (forbidden) and was tantamount to declaring war with Imam az-Zaman (the Twelfth Imam). The bazaar in Shiraz, the main tobacco-growing region, shut down and a general strike of the leading bazaars particularly Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Mashhad, Qazvin, Yazd and Kermanshah ensued which spread into a state-wide consumer's boycott. Ayatullah Shirazi's representative in Tehran, Mirza Hasan

Ashtiyani, led the protest there. Hookahs were smashed and tobacco was set on fire as the consumer's boycott received support from practically all classes of Iranian society, even members of the royal harem. Consequently, Nasir al-Din Shah, seeing his position threatened by this rebellion was forced to annul the concession and pay the penalty. See Nikki Keddie, Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891-92.

[46.](#) – During the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran (1980-88), the Iranians launched a big assault in February 1986 in the south which resulted in the capture of 310 sq. miles / 800 sq. kms in the Fao Peninsula. A determined effort by Iraq, which mounted 18,648 air missions between 9 February and 25 March 1986 (compared with 20,011 missions in the whole of 1985) to regain Fao met with failure. During this operation the Iraqis also deployed chemical weapons.

[47.](#) The wife of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his descendants).

[48.](#) The daughter of Fatima, upon whom be peace.

[49.](#) – The fourth Imam from the Holy Prophet's Progeny, `ites, `Ali, known as Zayn al-`Abidin and al-Sajjad (658-712 C.E.). The son of Imam Husayn by the daughter of Yazdigird, the last Sassanid king of Iran, he was not able to carry arms at Karbala because of illness, and thus he was saved the fate of his three brothers. For most of his life he lived in seclusion in Medina, having contact with only a few select followers. His piety – which is reflected in his collected prayers, Sahifah as-Sajjadiya – is proverbial. He is buried in the Baqi' cemetery in Medina.

[50.](#) – The word awliya – like the cognate wilayat – has numerous different meanings. It is used here in the general sense that can be deduced from Qur'an 10:62-63: "Verily the friends (awliya) of God – those who believe and guard against evil – shall suffer no fear nor shall they grieve."

[51.](#) The Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, upon whom be peace.

The status and rights of women in the Islamic system

The status of and esteem for women in Islam

The status of and esteem for women in Islam

Islam wants men and women to develop. Islam freed women from those circumstances, which existed for them during the age of ignorance of pre-Islamic times. Islam did not serve men to the extent that it did women. You cannot imagine what circumstances were like for women during pre-Islamic times and to what degree their situation improved with the advent of Islam. (41)

9 November 1978 (18 Aban 1357 AHS)

Islam did a service for women, which has no precedent in history. Islam raised women up out of that slough and gave her back her identity. (42)

9 November 1978 (18 Aban 1357 AHS)

Question: In the eyes of Western countries, Shi'ism is seen as being a conservative element hindering progress. We have heard Shi'ite calls for the exclusion of women from active roles in society and a

return to Shi`ite laws, which envisage religious tradition as the basis of state laws, something stipulated in the Constitution but later and unlawfully dropped. We have also heard that Shi`ism rejects the Western lifestyle because it does not conform to religious customs. Would you please give us your view on this on the basis of the Shi`ite faith?

Reply: Shi`ism is a revolutionary school of thought and is a continuation of the true Islam of the Prophet. Just like the Shi`ites themselves, their faith has always been the target of craven attacks from dictators and imperialists. Not only does Shi`ism not exclude women from society, it gives them their elevated status in society. We accept the developments of the Western world, but not the West's corruption of which Westerners themselves complain. (43)

15 November 1978 (24 Aban 1357 AHS)

Islam took women by the hand and made them equal with men, whereas before the Prophet came, women had no standing. Islam gave women strength. (44)

11 December 1978 (20 Azar 1357 AHS)

We want women to attain the high rank of true humanity. Women must have a share in determining their destiny. (45)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

If nations were deprived of courageous women to rear true human beings, they would decline and collapse. (46)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Islam holds you in higher esteem than it does men. Islam wants to save you; it wants to save you from becoming this plaything they want to turn you into. Islam wants to train you to become a perfect human being. (47)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Unfortunately, women have suffered from victimisation in the past, notably in two periods. The first was during the Age of Ignorance, the period before the advent of Islam. During this time, women were oppressed; they were treated like animals, even worse than animals. Then Islam came and bestowed its blessings on mankind, it dragged women out of that state of oppression, [and] it pulled her from that slough of ignorance. (48)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

. . . Women are human beings, great human beings. Women are the educators of society. It is from the laps of women that true human beings originate. The first stage in the development of sound men and

women begins in the lap of a woman. Women are the educators of human beings. A country's success or its misfortune depends on women. If they impart sound teachings, they create (sound) human beings and a flourishing country. Good fortune originates from the laps of women; they should be the source of every success and happiness . . . (49)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Mothers are the source of all blessings, but if, God forbid, they bring their children up badly, they become the source of all evil. (50)

17 July 1979 (26 Tir 1358 AHS)

The realisation of mankind's hopes lies in the hands of women. She is the educator of great men and women. It is from the laps of women that man begins his ascent. It is in the laps of women that great men and great women are nurtured. (51)

17 May 1979 (27 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Women raise brave men in their care. Like the Noble Qur'an itself, women have the function of rearing and training true human beings. Indeed, it is their duty to do so. If nations were deprived of women to rear true human beings, they would decline and collapse. (52)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

The position of women is a high one. Women in Islam enjoy a high rank. (53)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

We want women to enjoy the high rank of true humanity, which is theirs, not to be a plaything in the hands of men, in the hands of depraved men. (54)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Islam grants woman a say in all affairs, just as it grants man a say. Just as men should avoid corruption, so too should women. Women should not allow themselves to be playthings in the hands of dissolute youths, they should not lower their station and, God forbid, come out into the streets dressed up and made up, placing themselves in full view of depraved men. Women must act like true human beings; they must be pious. Women enjoy a dignified position; they have free will, just as men have. God created you free beings and gave you dignity. (55)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Islam has particular regard for women. Islam appeared in the Arabian Peninsula at a time when women had lost their dignity, and it raised them up and gave them back their pride. Islam made women equal

with men; in fact, it shows a concern for women that it does not show for men. (56)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

One of the benefits of the Islamic movement obvious today is that women, these effective members of society, have to some extent regained their standing. (57)

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibihisht 1359 AHS)

Women's rights in Islam

Women's rights in Islam

As regards the issue of the right of the woman to execute a divorce, if, at the time of marriage, she stipulates that she would possess this right either conditionally or unconditionally, the question has been raised: What about those women who have already entered into matrimony?

They oppose this legal power of the faqih even when they don't know what his powers are. If a man mistreats his wife, this is one of the concerns of the faqih who will first of all counsel him then secondly punish him, and if he sees that none of this has worked, he will grant the divorce. Support this guardianship of the faqih, it is a gift from God the Blessed and Exalted to the Muslims.

Among the concerns the faqih deals with are matters relating to the question you have just posed: what must those women do who already have a husband and are experiencing difficulties in their marriage? They must refer the matter to a faqih, either at a court or elsewhere, and he will deal with it. If the complaint is valid, he will punish the husband, he will try to compel him to behave properly, and if this fails, the faqih will grant the woman a divorce. He has the legal power to do so if he sees that it would be damaging to the people involved if the marriage were to continue.

Even though divorce is the prerogative of the man, in situations where the faqih believes it to be in the interests of Islam, in the interests of the Muslims, and when he realises there can be no other course of action, he will grant the woman a divorce. This is what the guardianship of the faqih is about. It is a divine gift to you. (58)

31 October 1978 (9 Aban 1357 AHS)

Islam put women on a par with men, and made them equal with men. Of course, there are certain Islamic precepts, which apply only to men, and others which apply only to women, but this does not mean that Islam discriminates between men and women. (59)

11 December 1978 (20 Azar 1357 AHS)

Question: Women make up a large section of the Muslim population, what role and what rights do you

foresee for them in the Islamic system?

Reply: The Muslim women of Iran are currently participating in the political struggle and the demonstrations against the Shah. I have been told that in some Iranian cities they hold political meetings. In the Islamic system, women will have the same rights as men: the right to education, the right to work, the right to own property, the right to vote, the right to stand for election.

In all aspects that men have rights, women have the same rights. However, there are some things unlawful for men, because of the corruption they create in men, and others unlawful for women because of their tendency to corrupt women. Islam wants the human dignity of both men and women to be safeguarded. It doesn't want women to be playthings in the hands of men. The image they have portrayed abroad of women being treated harshly under Islam is not a correct one.

This is false propaganda emanating from elements motivated by self-interest. In Islam both men and women enjoy free will, any differences, which exist, do so for both of them and concern their different natures. (60)

7 December 1978 (16 Azar 1357 AHS)

The laws of Islam are all for the benefit of both man and woman. (61)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Just as the rights of men are propounded in Islam, so too are those of women. Indeed, Islam shows a concern for women that it does not show for men. It pays a greater regard to their rights than those of men. Women have the right to vote; indeed they enjoy more rights than women in the West. They have the right to vote, the right to elect or be elected. They control their finances; they are free, free to choose their profession. In the East certain restrictions are placed on men for their own good.

Consequently Islam prevents gambling, drinking and the use of heroin because these are a cause of corruption. Restrictions exist for everyone. Religion imposes restrictions for the benefit of society, it is not the case that something is beneficial to society and Islam places restrictions on it. (62)

29 March 1979 (9 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

The rights of all segments of the population have also been observed in the law. The rights of the religious minorities, women and other segments of society have all been taken into consideration. Islam does not discriminate between the various groups (in society), the only difference between them stems from their piety and fear of God the Exalted. (63)

1 April 1979 (12 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

Because Islam has laid down special rights for women, show moderation in their case if it is not proved

that they are spies. Likewise the black Americans, for they have been subject to oppression and suffering for an age and those there may have been forced to come to Iran. Dear Students! [1](#)

Hand over those African Americans and women whom you do not believe to be spies to the Foreign Ministry so their immediate departure can be arranged. The noble nation of Iran does not give permission for the others to be freed, consequently they will be detained until the American government acts on the (Iranian) nation's demands. (64)

17 November 1979 (26 Aban 1358 AHS)

When women wish to marry, there are certain prerogatives they can stipulate for themselves that are contrary neither to the *shari'a* nor to their own self-respect. For example, a woman can stipulate that if her future husband turns out to be of corrupt moral character or if he mistreats her, she would possess the right to execute a divorce.

This is a right that Islam has granted to women. If Islam has imposed certain restrictions on both women and men, it is for the benefit of both. All Islamic laws, be they those which permit or those which prohibit, are for the benefit of all. Similarly, just as Islam has granted man the right to divorce, it has also granted it to woman, on condition that the parties stipulate at the time of the marriage that if the husband behaves in a certain manner, the wife will have the right to execute a divorce.

Once the man has accepted such a stipulation, he can never repudiate it. Apart from making it possible to include such a stipulation in the marriage contract, Islam forbids the husband to mistreat his wife; if he habitually mistreats her, he is to be punished, lashed even, and if he still persists, the *mujtahid* will grant the wife a divorce. (65)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Just as God has laid down laws for men imposing restrictions to prevent them from becoming corrupt, so too He has laid down laws for women. These are for your benefit; all Islamic laws are for the good of society. (66)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Question: What exactly are the rights of women in an Islamic republic? What will become of coeducational schools? And how will such issues as birth control and abortion be dealt with?

Reply: In an Islamic republic, from a human rights point of view, there is no difference between men and women for both are human beings, and women have as much right as men to determine their destiny. In some areas, however, differences exist between men and women, which have nothing to do with their status as human beings. Anything that is not incompatible with the high social standing and dignity of women is allowed. Abortion is prohibited in Islam. (67)

5 November 1980 (16 Aban 1359 AHS)

Question: The issue of divorce being a man's prerogative is something that has upset and worried a group of militant Iranian women who believe that under no circumstances do they have the right to execute a divorce. Some people have and still are exploiting this issue. What is your opinion?

Reply: The law has prescribed an easy way for the respected women to be able to execute a divorce, and that is when she enters into marriage she must stipulate her conditions. If she stipulates that she can execute a divorce whenever she wants or under certain conditions, such as if the husband were to mistreat her or get another wife, then she will have no problem in getting a divorce. I ask God Almighty to grant the honourable women success. It is hoped that you will not fall under the influence of those who oppose Islam and the Islamic revolution, for Islam is beneficial to all. (68)

29 October 1980 (7 Aban 1359 AHS)

Question: Please tell us how married women should practise *taqlid*.² Can she follow the rulings of a different *mujtahid*?³ from the one her husband follows, and if so would that contradict the requirement of a woman to obey her husband?

Reply: Women are independent in matters relating to *taqlid*, but must obey their husbands in marital affairs. They should not leave their homes without their husbands' consent.

Istifta'at, Vol. 1, p. 13.

Question: During the *taghut* period, when the so-called courts for family protection finalised a divorce, they would collect a sum of money from the husband as 'rent' on the bride's dower, if it were cash, because of the period which had elapsed since the marriage, in addition to the main dower to be paid to the woman. If the dower is cash and the time for collecting it has not been legally stipulated, is it permissible to put rent on the original dower?

Reply: Rent cannot be put on money and taking an additional sum is prohibited.

Istifta'at, Vol. 1, p. 210.

Question: If, when the marriage vows are exchanged, the woman stipulates that she reserves the right to execute a divorce, can this right be taken from her?

Reply: If she stipulates this condition at the time of the marriage, it cannot be taken from her later.⁴

Istifta'at, Vol. 2, p. 319.

Women's role in the establishment of an Islamic society

Women's role in the establishment of an Islamic society

Question: What does a return to Qur'anic laws mean for women? To what extent will entertainment (alcohol, films, etc.) be available to the people?

Reply: In an Islamic system, women, in their role as human beings, can work alongside men to establish the Islamic society, but not if they wish to act as mere objects. Women do not have the right to lower themselves to such a level, nor do men have the right to think of them as such. As to those things known as entertainment, Islam opposes anything that tends to lead human beings towards acquiring a frivolous nature or towards self-estrangement. The consumption of alcohol is forbidden in Islam, as are films, which pervert the exalted nature of the human being. (69)

9 November 1978 (18 Aban 1357 AHS)

Question: In Islam, to what extent are women permitted to participate in the establishment of an Islamic government?

Reply: In Islam, women have a sensitive role to play in the establishment of the Islamic society. Islam elevates women to the extent that they can regain their human status in society and leave that woman-as-object level. In proportion with such growth, she can assume responsibilities in an Islamic government. (70)

10 November 1978 (19 Aban 1357 AHS)

Women like men have a part to play in building the Islamic society of tomorrow. They enjoy the right to vote and be voted for. Iranian women participate in Iran's current struggle just as the men do. (71)

23 January 1979 (3 Bahman 1357 AHS)

Islam grants woman a say in all affairs just as it grants man a say. All the people of Iran, men and women alike, must repair the ruins that the previous regime has left us; the hands of men alone will not suffice to accomplish the task. Men and women must collaborate in this respect. (72)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Women must have a say in the fundamental destiny of the country. Just as you have participated in our revolutionary movement, indeed played a basic role in it, now you must also participate in its triumph, and must not fail to rise up again whenever it is necessary. The country belongs to you and, God willing, you will rebuild it. (73)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

You and we together, the government and nation together, must right this chaos, for neither can do it alone. If the ladies think they can leave it up to the men to do, who in turn think they can leave it up to the ladies, or both think the government can do it or all three think the clergymen can do it, then they are all sadly mistaken. For the situation is so chaotic, the problems so many that it is up to each individual to do his duty and rebuild wherever he is to the best of his ability. (74)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

Women have the right to participate in politics; indeed it is their duty to do so. The clergymen too have a right to concern themselves with politics, and it is their duty to do so. The Islamic religion is a political religion; everything in it has a political dimension, even its acts of worship. (75)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

Greetings to you great women who through your counsel wish to lead us to the right path. (76)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

It is hoped that the community of women will cease being indifferent and will awaken from the unnatural stupor the plunderers have forced them into, and that together, shoulder-to-shoulder, they will help those who have been deceived and guide them to the lofty station which is theirs.

It is also hoped that women in the other Islamic countries will take lessons from the miraculous change that has occurred in the Iranian women as a result of the great Islamic revolution, and will strive to reform their society and bring freedom and independence to their countries. (77)

24 April 1981 (4 Urdibihisht 1360 AHS)

The role of women in the world enjoys certain special characteristics. The rectitude or immorality of a society stems from the rectitude or immorality of the women in that society. Women are the only creatures who can bestow upon society individuals raised in their care whose deeds can be a blessing to communities and can inspire perseverance and lofty human values, or can have the opposite effect. (78)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

Women's activities in the social and political arenas

Women's activities in the social and political arenas

All of you must cast your vote, a vote for an Islamic republic, not a word less (in this designation) nor a word more.⁵ You too must vote, you are no different from others, indeed you lead the men. (79)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

It is necessary for me to reiterate that the crusading and brave women all over Iran must participate in the referendum. The women who played a sensitive role in the victory of the Islamic revolution at the side of men, indeed who led the men, should realise that by actively participating they will ensure the further victory of the Iranian nation. Participation in this referendum is one of the national and Islamic duties of the men and women. (80)

24 March 1979 (4 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

Women have the right to vote; indeed they enjoy more rights than women in the West. They have the right to vote, the right to elect or be elected. (81)

29 March 1979 (9 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

I ask Almighty God to grant you health and happiness and I hope that side by side with the men you will vote for the Constituent Assembly⁶ and the National Consultative Assembly so that an Islamic republic, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic and the Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic can be founded and we can attain that which we want. (82)

10 April 1979 (21 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

Of course there is no objection to women taking up employment, sound employment, but we do not want a repeat of the way it was during the Pahlavi era. Then they did not have employment in mind for women, rather their aim was to degrade both men and women, pulling them down from that position they occupy. They did not want a natural growth for either sex. (83)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibehisht 1358 AHS)

It is one of the blessings of the movement that you ladies from the coastal regions, and indeed the other respected ladies of Iran, are now involved with the issues of the day and political issues. The criminal hands, which were manifested in the form of the hands of Muhammad Riza and his father, had excluded all segments of the population from involvement in social and political affairs.

Political matters were never presented for the consideration of the ladies, nor for that matter the brothers either. And if a political issue was put forward for the people to decide on, it was still based on their (the West's) plundering policy. If some classes of the population, the so-called political classes, became involved in the political issues of the day, they were simply involving themselves in policies dictated by the West and aimed at plundering the East. (84)

3 July 1979 (12 Tir 1358 AHS)

It is today when all segments of society have a say in their own affairs, in the affairs of the country and the political affairs of state. It is today when all people of the nation, whether the esteemed ladies or the brothers, have a say in determining their own destiny. (85)

3 July 1979 (12 Tir 1358 AHS)

The respected women and dear ladies have gone into the villages to help with the harvest and other things. Of course they are not reapers in the same sense as the farmers are, but by their action, small as it may seem, they enable the reaper to work twice as much of his land and thus double his harvest.

For when the men who reap the land see that these ladies, who normally sit in the shade and have nothing to do with such work, are prepared to come out into the sun and harvest the barley, it breathes new life into their spirit. So the action of these ladies is also valuable in that it gives renewed vigour to the farmers and they work even harder. (86)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

We all voted for an Islamic republic, you too voted, but voting alone is not enough. Our votes mean only that the country of Iran is now officially an Islamic republic. But it will be a true Islamic republic only when you ladies, along with these gentlemen, undertake your responsibilities and we all see ourselves as having a duty to perform. (87)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

It is important that each of us sees ourselves as having a duty to perform. So, for example, I, as a theological student, consider it my duty to serve (the nation) to the best of my ability, while you sisters must consider it your duty to help rebuild this country which they (the Pahlavis) ruined and destroyed, beginning in the area where you live, and through your efforts put it right. (88)

20 September 1979 (29 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

The sisters who hitherto have not been involved in the issues of the day must now involve themselves. (89)

20 September 1979 (29 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

Women must have a say in determining their destiny. Women in the Islamic Republic must vote. Just as men have the right to vote, women too have that right. (90)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Today, women in the Islamic Republic shoulder-to-shoulder with the men are striving to rebuild themselves and their country. (91)

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibihisht 1359 AHS)

I return once again to you sisters and dear ones and remind you that you must attend to the matter of observing Islamic rules in your environment. The country is an Islamic one, it is an Islamic republic, [and]

there must be a change in all aspects of its character. (92)

13 May 1980 (23 Urdibehisht 1359 AHS)

Who has mobilised these women to involve themselves, and quite rightly so, in all the country's affairs? God has called them to this task and they are obeying His call. (93)

12 July 1980 (21 Tir 1359 AHS)

Today, the ladies must act on their social and religious duties and protect public morality, and in so doing carry out their social and political activities. (94)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

I hope that this movement will end in victory and you will all be successful, God willing. May you expand your gatherings everywhere in an even more splendid manner so that women will awaken and reject those things of the past, reject that former role of being a plaything, of having to dress up and make up. You yourselves know how much damage that attitude did to our economy and how much harm it did to public morality. Today's women, like the men, must be properly educated and concern themselves with the issues (of the day), they too must exercise sound judgement in their involvement in the (country's) affairs, and God willing, they will be successful. (95)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

All the women and all the men must involve themselves in social and political affairs. They must be supervisors, supervising the work of the Parliament and the government; they must express their opinions. (96)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

Guiding a nation is a momentous task to undertake, and guiding half of that nation – the women – is even more so. This task⁷ is fraught with difficulties; indeed the decision to take it on is itself an important undertaking. But now that you have resolved to do such a thing, let nothing weaken or shake that resolve. (97)

7 February 1981 (18 Bahman 1359 AHS)

You ladies who are occupied with this humanitarian and Islamic task can be absolutely certain that because you are doing this work for God, you will be successful. (98)

7 February 1981 (18 Bahman 1359 AHS)

Today we see that the respected ladies of Iran throughout the country are useful members (of our society) and form a committed and devout community serving their country. They are the mainstay of

this country. I hope that, mindful of Islamic precepts and armed with the weapon of faith and devotion to Islam, they will carry this victory forward and will be the mainstay of this revolution too. (99)

23 May 1981 (2 Khurdad 1360 AHS)

It is the duty of every man and woman of legal voting age to go to the polling stations and cast their vote for a president. If you waver in this regard, then those who wish to see this country destroyed may be victorious. All of you, all of us, men and women together, are bound by duty to determine our destiny just as we are bound by duty to perform our *namaz* (the ritual prayer). (100)

4 July 1981 (13 Tir 1360 AHS)

I advise both men and women who are of legal voting age to take part in these elections and vote for any of the candidates they wish. Participate they must. (101)

27 November 1982 (6 Azar 1361 AHS)

Wherever one looks in Iran, one sees women pursuing Islamic activities, religious and even political activities, while at the same time preserving their modesty and their dignity. Whereas those women who freely mingled with men in society produced nothing other than corruption throughout the whole of the *taghut* period, these women (today), in this short span of time, have been so active that the results of their endeavours are already beginning to show in Qum and other cities. (102)

13 March 1983 (22 Isfand 1361 AHS)

If those people⁸ who wish to sabotage the activities of these ladies – this great service they are performing which before God is a worthy service – are Muslim, then they are committing a cardinal sin, and if they are not Muslim and by their actions merely seek a return to the dissoluteness which once existed, then they should know that the season of wantonness is over, and the ladies of Iran will no longer give them permission to return to the way they used to act.

I must thank all of you. Praise God, you are busy doing religious activities and you also have political insight. Iranian women today enjoy both religious and political acumen. The obstacles that once prevented you from carrying out religious and political activities have now been removed. I hope that very soon each one of you will reach the point where you will be able to educate others. (103)

13 March 1983 (22 Isfand 1361 AHS)

You must involve yourselves in all aspects of the country's life to the extent that Islam has allowed, such as taking part in elections. The elections are one of the most talked about issues in Iran at the moment, and participation in them today is something that must be done. The ladies must be active in the elections just as the men are, for when it comes to their destiny, there is no difference between them and others.

The destiny of Iran is the destiny of all. Islam has served you ladies more than it has the men. Islam protected you, so now you reciprocate by protecting Islam. This means taking part in these elections, for they will determine the formation of the second parliamentary assembly. Elections play a very important role in your destiny and ours, a primary role. It is elections that must lay down the path the country follows in all its affairs, whether domestic or foreign.

Therefore, you ladies must play a very active role so that the parliament does not become one that is, God forbid, infiltrated by some unscrupulous elements and is gradually drawn towards the East or the West, becoming the kind of parliament that existed in the previous era and imposing on us policies which parliaments of that time imposed on the people. (104)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardin 1363 AHS)

Just as men should concern themselves with political matters and safeguard their society, so too should women. Women should take part in social and political activities shoulder-to-shoulder with men, while, of course, at the same time complying with Islamic principles. God be praised, this is happening today. (105)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardin 1363 AHS)

We are proud that the ladies, both young and old, are present in the cultural, economic and military arenas, and that they are active shoulder-to-shoulder with the men or even more so than they are – in the area of elevating Islam and advancing the goals of the Most Noble Qur'an. (106)

5 June 1989 (15 Khurdad 1368 AHS)

Women and Education

Women and Education

Question: Can women attain the position of *mujtahid*?⁹ Would you please elaborate.

Reply: It is possible for a woman to become a *mujtahid*, however she cannot become a *marja' -i taqlid*¹⁰ for others.

Istifta'at Vol. 1, p. 21.

The men and women of Qum are exemplary in their learning and their willingness to act, as are the men and women of Iran on the whole. (107)

17 May 1979 (27 Urdibehisht 1358 AHS)

If you are in a position that requires you to educate small girls, educate them well. If you are in a place

where your position is to propagate, then do so well. All segments of the population in whatever post they may occupy must carry out their duties well. (108)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

One of the most significant effects of this movement is the change brought about in all of you, in the ladies, in the brothers and sisters alike. That change is the sense of duty that we all now feel, a duty to our country, a duty to educate, to educate people in those things that will be useful to them in religious and worldly affairs. (109)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

All those who are illiterate should rise up and embark on a campaign to learn, and all the literate brothers and sisters should rise up to teach them. The Ministry of Education, with all the facilities it has at its disposal, should also take action in this regard, not allowing bureaucracy and administrative formalities to get in its way.

Brothers and sisters in faith! You must mobilise yourselves in order to eradicate this painful shortcoming. Teaching and learning are forms of worship which God the Blessed and Exalted has called on us to perform. The congregational prayer leaders in the provincial towns and villages should invite the people to this task.

Those who are literate should teach reading and writing to the brothers and sisters who are not in the mosques, in other religious centres and even in their homes. They should not wait for the authorities to take action. For their part, the illiterate people should not shrink from this task. (110)

28 December 1979 (7 Dey 1358 AHS)

The women of Iran today are committed, lion-hearted individuals, who shoulder-to-shoulder with our dear men are busy rebuilding their beloved country, just as they are busy rebuilding themselves through learning and education. You will not find a town or village without cultural or scientific centres composed of dedicated and honourable Muslim women. (111)

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibehisht 1359 AHS)

I hope that the teachers, the brothers and sisters, wherever they may be, in whatever capacity they may be teaching, whether as trained teachers, as students or simply as scholars with a knowledge to pass on, consider themselves to be both teachers and students. Teachers to call the people to the straight path of guidance of the prophets, and students as they themselves tread that path. (112)

30 August 1980 (8 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

Elderly men and women too can learn. They too can receive an education. They should not give up on

themselves. (113)

27 December 1980 (6 Dey 1359 AHS)

I hope that the sisters and brothers busy with their studies and propaganda activities at the Shahid Mutahhari (may God grant him peace) school of higher education are mindful of the fact that this school was named after a martyr who was very beneficial to Islam and whose teachings serve as instruction for our youth, as well they should.

You sisters and brothers who attend this school should arrange your daily programme in such a way that other Mutahharis or another Mutahhari will emerge from your midst. Resolve to see this happen, direct your attention to God and let everything you do be for God the Blessed and Exalted alone. Strive to pursue your studies well at the school, and even more importantly, strive to achieve moral edification.

Be Islamic, and as you complete your Islamic studies, so too perfect an Islamic spirit in yourselves. Alongside your studies be serious about observing Islamic decrees and striving to purify yourselves Islamically. (114)

1 March 1981 (10 Isfand 1359 AHS)

Endless greetings to the committed women who are presently busy throughout the country educating children and illiterate people and teaching the rich culture of the Qur'an. (115)

24 April 1981 (4 Urdibihisht 1360 AHS)

Women who in the past were deprived of an active involvement in society, have, over these past few years, praise God, entered the arena. And they have done so in a fitting manner, with *shari'a* rules being adhered to. They are now active in the areas of education and propagation. (116)

13 January 1982 (23 Dey 1360 AHS)

Praise God, those shackles that once bound our beliefs have today been cast off. Today, all segments of the nation are engaged in education, including the ladies. Today, ladies are among the theological students in Qum and other places; wherever they are in the country, they are busy with education. And this is something that has materialised in this revolution.

Previously, the ladies were confined to such an extent that they did not even have the right to join a group of ten people and discuss scientific or religious matters. Today, however, while observing Islamic precepts, they can go and speak anywhere in the country, even abroad. In these matters we were very backward, today we must make up for that, we must redress the failings. (117)

6 September 1983 (15 Shahrivar 1362 AHS)

I ask God, the Blessed and Exalted, to grant you ladies and sisters success both in your educational

endeavours and in your ability to take action and to purify yourselves morally. For just as knowledge alone is to no avail, so too is blind purification. It is knowledge and purification together that will take man to the stage of the true human being.

I ask God the Blessed and Exalted to grant you ladies, indeed all the sisters throughout the country and the brothers, success in advancing these two aspects, which are learning and action, together with Islamic morals, so that Islam can be put into practice in Iran in a way that pleases God the Blessed and Exalted. (118)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardin 1363 AHS)

Now the situation is such that the women, shoulder-to-shoulder with the brothers, are studying mysticism, philosophy, all branches of science, and, God willing, of industry too. At that time they used to say that the half of Iran's population in veils could not do anything, not that they wanted them to be able to do anything for they prevented the men too from being productive. No, they simply wanted to get them to enter society adopting the style that they, their friends and adherents had adopted, and thus drag society into corruption.

God, however, did not want them to succeed. Today, you ladies are a source of pride, for along with your brothers in the theological schools you are busy studying and teaching or pursuing other Islamic activities; and I hope you will prove to be even more active than they are. Still you must be careful and act contrary to what was expected under the former regime. They wanted to destroy Islamic values and put European values in their place. Act contrary to this so that some of those who were deceived, and are still to be found in Iran, may be influenced by you and adopt your style instead. (119)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardin 1363 AHS)

Sciences without exception, and particularly Islamic sciences, are not the preserve of any one section of society. The respected women of Iran have proved throughout the revolution that shoulder-to-shoulder with the men, they can render valuable services to Islam and the Muslims in political and social activities, and be the spearhead of the movement to educate the great community of women (in Iran).

Praise God, currently an institute is in the process of being built in the holy city of Qum, the city of learning and struggle (*jihad*), for the education of the respected ladies. It is hoped that through the efforts of the learned *`ulama* and the teachers at Qum's theological schools, may their blessings continue, this Islamic goal is achieved and proves to be an effective step towards the intellectual development of women and the blossoming of Islamic learning among them.

Therefore, I appoint their excellencies the Hujjat-ul Islams Hajj Shaykh Ali Meshkini, Musawi Ardabili, Hajj Shaykh Ahmad Jannati, Hajj Shaykh Muhammad Fazel, Hajj Shaykh Muhammad Ali Shar'ei, Hajj Shaykh Muhammad Riza Tavassoli and Hajj Shaykh Hassan Sane'i, may their blessings continue, as the organising committee for this institute so that they can take the appropriate steps to appoint the

managerial board, prepare the articles of association, determine its name and see to its other affairs.

It is hoped that with the assistance of Almighty God and the prayers of *Hazrat* Mahdi, may our souls be sacrificed for his coming, this institute will render a valuable service to the community of revolutionary Muslim women of Iran. (120)

22 August 1984 (31 Mordad 1363 AHS)

God be praised, you worked hard, you suffered and were steadfast in every stage (of the movement). Iranian women were actively involved in all affairs, from the cultural to the economic, and today a large number of them are involved in agriculture, a large number in industry and still others in the educational arena in the areas of literature, science and the arts.

All of these efforts are commendable in the eyes of God the Blessed and Exalted, and you are all in God's care; as long as you remain committed, God the Blessed and Exalted will assist you. (121)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

Strive to acquire learning and godliness, for learning is not the preserve of any one person, learning is for all, godliness is for all, and striving to acquire learning and achieve godliness is the duty of us all.

I hope that the state organs will help you and will meet your needs in all areas, and in your educational activities will adequately provide you with the things you need. I hope that you will be assisted by God and will be successful in everything you do.

The Iranian ladies have brought Islam to the stage it is now at by sacrificing their lives, their youth and their time, and I hope that from now on it will be advanced even further. You can be sure that as long as you remain active and committed to Islam, as long as you are ready to give your young ones for the cause and are willing to train them properly, then Islam will progress and will sever the hands of the enemies of religion from this country, and all Islamic countries, allowing happiness and goodness to follow, God willing.

I hope that Muslim women wherever they may be will imitate you dear ones who are striving to elevate the status of women and to make up for the injustices, which were perpetrated against you in that era. (122)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

Freedom of women in the Islamic system

Freedom of women in the Islamic system

Question: You have been accused of being against civilisation and you have turned the accusation

against the Shah. That is not necessarily convincing. How do you stand on specific issues like agrarian reform, industrialisation and the status of women?

Reply: . . . As for women, Islam has never been against their freedom. It is, to the contrary, opposed to the idea of woman-as-object and it gives her back her dignity. A woman is a man's equal; she and he are both free to determine their destiny and choose their occupations.

But the Shah's regime is trying to prevent women from becoming free by plunging them into immorality. It is to this that Islam raises objections. This regime has destroyed the freedom of women as well as men. Women as well as men swell the population of Iranian prisons, and this is where freedom is threatened. We want to free them from the corruption menacing them. (123)

6 May 1978 (16 Urdibihisht 1357 AHS)

Question: Regarding social issues, what is the view of His Holiness the Ayatullah on the presence of women in universities or the workplace? Will there be restrictions placed upon them that do not exist in society today? What is His Holiness's opinion on birth control and coeducation in universities?

Reply: Women are free in the Islamic society and will, under no condition, be barred from universities, offices or Parliament. What will be checked equally among both men and women is moral corruption which is prohibited for both sexes. As far as birth control is concerned, that depends on what decision the government will take on the matter. (124)

7 December 1978 (16 Azar 1357 AHS)

Both women and men are free to attend university, both are free to vote and stand as parliamentary representatives, that which is objectionable is the way these people (the Shah and his regime) want women to be: a plaything in the hands of men. To quote the Shah "a woman should be beguiling." We want to get rid of this mistaken idea. We want a woman to be a person like other people, a human being like any other human being, to be free as others are free. (125)

11 December 1978 (20 Azar 1357 AHS)

Question: In the event of your movement's triumph and the establishment of an Islamic government, what will your approach to social development and progress be, particularly with regard to women? Will you permit polygamy?

Reply: Women are free, just as men are. We will act in accordance with Islamic law. (126)

12 December 1978 (21 Azar 1357 AHS)

These people you call lawyers have always misguided our women. Today, the Shah's prisons are filled with our 'free' women, yet these lawyers have consistently endorsed the Shah's crimes. Which of the

two is free? (127)

28 December 1978 (7 Dey 1357 AHS)

Question: What changes do you feel are needed regarding the position of women in Iranian society? How, in your opinion, will an Islamic government change the status of women, for example as regards employment in the civil service and working in different professions such as medicine, engineering etc., and in other areas such as divorce, abortion, the right to travel and compulsory wearing of the chador?

Reply: The Shah's malicious propaganda, along with that of people bought with his money, has obscured the issue of women's freedom for the people, so that they think Islam has come just to make women stay at home. Why should we oppose women's education? Why should we oppose them working?

Why shouldn't women be able to work in the civil service? Why should we oppose women being able to travel? Women, like men, are free in all these things, women are in no way different from men. Yes, in Islam women must dress modestly and wear a veil (i.e. have *hijab*), but that does not necessarily mean she has to wear a chador. Women can choose any kind of attire they like so long as it covers them properly and they have *hijab*.

Islam does not want women to be an object, to be a doll in our hands. Islam wants to safeguard women's nobility, it wishes to make her a serious and efficient human being. We shall never allow women to be merely men's sex objects. Islam has prohibited abortion. Women can gain the right to execute a divorce if she adds this condition to her marriage contract. The respect Islam shows woman and the freedom it grants her is equalled by no other system of laws or school of thought. (128)

28 December 1978 (7 Dey 1357 AHS)

Question: A good many women who have reached a level of freedom and education in Iran are afraid that they will be forced to return to a reactionary religious regime. What have you to say to put their minds at ease?

Reply: Islam has given women freedom. It is this government and this Shah that have deprived them of freedom and have restricted them in every aspect. (129)

5 January 1979 (15 Dey 1357 AHS)

Question: Is an Islamic government a retrogressive one? The Shah wants to create a modern country, the Arab countries too seek progress, but Islam opposes reform and social change such as freedom for women. What is your view on this?

Reply: The Shah's government opposed our social development and gave away the freedom and independence of our country. An Islamic government is not a retrogressive one. It sanctions all the

manifestations of civilisation apart from those that disrupt the nation's peace of mind and are incompatible with the nation's view of public decency. Islam not only sanctions freedom for women, it is actually the founder of freedom for women in all the dimensions, which exist for a woman. (130)

10 January 1979 (20 Dey 1357 AHS)

Question: What will be the policy of the government of an Islamic republic on women's freedom, the fight against illiteracy and the cinema?

Reply: The Shah has not done anything positive in Iran, trying to mend the damage he has done will take quite a while. The Shah has given freedom neither to women nor to men, we, however, will give freedom to all. Cinemas under the Shah's regime have been in the service of corruption, in an Islamic republic they will have to serve the good of the nation. We will fight illiteracy in the best way possible. (131)

11 January 1979 (21 Dey 1357 AHS)

Question: What will the role of women be in a future Islamic government?

Reply: Women are free to participate in many affairs, free in the true sense of the word, not in the sense that the Shah wanted. Some of our women are in prison, and of those who are not, a great number take part in the demonstrations and the struggles. An insignificant number are 'free', free in the sense that the Shah wants them to be free. We are most definitely opposed to that kind of freedom. (132)

15 January 1979 (25 Dey 1357 AHS)

Question: What will be the status of women in your future government?

Reply: They will have the status of a true human being and a free individual, contrary to these past periods we have lived through when neither our women were free nor our men. The nation whose men and women were not free [and] were repressed, has now thrown off the yoke and from now on men and women are free. However, if they wish to act immodestly or contrary to the interests of the country, then naturally they will be prevented from doing so. (133)

15 January 1979 (25 Dey 1357 AHS)

Question: What will be the role of women in the Islamic government? For example, will they be able to get involved in the affairs of state by becoming, say, members of parliament or ministers? That being, of course, if they demonstrate that they are suitable for and sufficiently competent to hold such a post.

Reply: The Islamic government will determine the course to be taken in such matters. Now is not the time for me to comment on such things. Women, like men, are participating in building the Islamic society of tomorrow; they can vote and be voted for in elections. Women have taken part in the recent

struggles in Iran to the same degree as the men. We will give women every kind of freedom, but we will prevent corruption, and where this is concerned, there is no difference between men and women. (134)

23 January 1979 (3 Bahman 1357 AHS)

Question from one of the female reporters: The fact that I have been accepted as a woman shows that our movement is a progressive one, even though some have tried to portray it as retrograde. Do you think women must necessarily wear Islamic dress (*hijab*)? Must they cover their hair or not?

Reply: To say I have accepted you means nothing. I have not personally accepted you; you came here without my knowledge. This is not proof that Islam is progressive. Islam did not become progressive the minute you walked in here. Progress is not what some of our women or our men think it is.

Progress is determined in terms of human and spiritual perfections and by how useful a person is for the nation and the country, not by whether people go to the cinema or dances.

These are things they made you think were progressive so they could drive you into a backward state. Later we must remedy this. In salutary activities, you are free; you are free to go to university and to do any kind of respectable job. The whole nation is free in this respect. However, if anyone wants to do something immodest or harmful to the nation, he or she will be prevented. This is a sign of being progressive. (135)

23 January 1979 (3 Bahman 1357 AHS)

There is no suppression in Islam. In Islam there is liberty for all strata of society, for women, men, for whites and blacks, for everyone. From now on men should be afraid of themselves, not of the government, they should be afraid lest they do wrong. (136)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Islam has set you free. Islam has declared men and women free; all are free. (137)

6 April 1979 (17 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

Today you are free, all the brothers and sisters are today free, free to criticise the government, free to criticise anything that goes against the path of the nation and Islam, free to make fundamental demands of the government. This movement has made you free, has liberated you from the bonds, which bound the nation.

You have gathered here freely, and freely you are propounding political and social issues vital to the nation, you are not the ladies of a few years ago. Today you are having a say in your destiny. You are propounding political issues and are making demands of the government. This is the meaning of freedom. (138)

3 July 1979 (12 Tir 1358 AHS)

This freedom that our nation now enjoys, which the women, men, writers and so on, now enjoy, this freedom is in all affairs, which are beneficial to you. You are free to go out and say what you have to say, to criticise the government, criticise anyone who puts a foot wrong, no one is going to ask you why you are doing so.

You are free to join the Construction Crusade (*Jihad-i Sazandeghi*) and help your countrymen. Anything that is involved with the growth of man, the growth of the sisters, brothers and these dear children, is free for you. That which is not free, indeed which Islam prevents, is gambling which corrupts the nation, drinking which corrupts the nation, and all types of obscenities which were made available during the time of that criminal (the Shah). Islam forbids such things. (139)

30 September 1979 (8 Mehr 1358 AHS)

Question: In the future government, what will freedom for women be like? Will they have to cease attending schools and remain at home or will it be possible for them to continue with their education?

Reply: The things you have heard said about women and other issues are all simply propaganda put about by the Shah and people guided by self-interests. Women are free (in Islam), free to study, free in other areas too, just as the men are. It is at the present time that neither women are free nor men. (140)

13 November 1978 (22 Aban 1357 AHS)

Question: Your Holiness, what do you expect the American government to do in exchange for the release of the female and black hostages that you have ordered?

Reply: We released the women and the blacks because women are shown a special regard in Islam and the blacks have been subject to pressure and oppression in America. We do not consider them totally culpable, for perhaps they were pressurised into coming here.

We did this out of obedience to the command of Islam and God, we don't expect anything from Mr. Carter¹¹ and we do not want any reward for what we have done. The issue here is that Mr. Carter must hand this criminal (the Shah) back to us. A criminal who has committed crimes against a people in a country must, according to all international laws, be returned to that country. Yet he (Carter) goes against all the rules of reason. (141)

18 November 1979 (27 Aban 1358 AHS)

Question: Your Holiness, in Neauphle-le-Chateau¹² you promised that not only would freedoms be protected but that they would reach all, whereas after the victory of the revolution we witnessed demonstrations against women, pressure being brought to bear on tribal minorities such as the Kurds and the banning of certain newspapers and political groups. Could you please explain these apparent

contradictions?

Reply: The women who demonstrated are the remnants of former problems, women whom the Shah brought into the arena as “free women” and whom he led to corruption. They prefer the former situation, which that corruption had brought about, those freedoms that the former regime wanted: freedom for the youth to do anything they wanted, to embrace vice and to act indecently.

But they saw that Islam does not consent to indecency and to actions, which drag the country into corruption and drive the nation into a state of backwardness. It was these women who came out onto the streets, with faces made up as everyone observed, and demonstrated. Otherwise freedom most certainly has not been and will not be curtailed. The people are free, but not to create corruption and drive the nation into backwardness. (142)

26 November 1979 (5 Azar 1358 AHS)

Today, women in the Islamic Republic are striving shoulder-to-shoulder with the men to rebuild their country and rebuild themselves. This is the true meaning of free men and free women, not that which was promulgated during the reign of the deposed Shah, for freedom then meant prison, repression, persecution and torture. (143)

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibihisht 1359 AHS)

I ask the youth, the girls and boys, not to sacrifice their independence, freedom and human values, regardless of the trouble and suffering this may cause them, for a life of luxury, pleasure, indulgence and frequenting the centres of corruption which the West and its agents, men without a country, open to you. (144)

5 June 1989 (3 Khurdad 1368 AHS)

Islamic dress (hijab)

Islamic dress (*hijab*)

Question 1: If a lady does her daily prayers (*namaz*) dressed in modest attire such as a baggy manteau, trousers and a large scarf or *miqna'a*, [13](#) is this permissible or not?

Question 2: If a lady doing her prayers at home wears a thick, long chador while underneath she has on a sleeveless top or dress and wears no socks, are her prayers invalid?

Reply 1: There is no problem.

Reply 2: Her prayers are not invalid.

Istifta'at Vol. 1, p. 137.

Question: What are the rules governing the viewing of TV films which sometimes show unveiled women, and listening to a musical instrument being played?

Reply: There is no problem concerning the viewing of foreign films in which the actresses are not known and which do not have a corrupting influence. Dance music is forbidden, but there is no problem with other types of music.

Istifta'at Vol. 2, p. 17.

Question: I am a woman working as a hairdresser for Muslim women who observe the Islamic cover (*hijab*). I work in an environment closed off to men. Could you please state your esteemed opinion of income earned in this way?

Reply: Based on the conditions set out in the question there is no problem, and income earned in this way is religiously legal.

Istifta'at Vol. 2, p. 32.

Women are free to choose their activities, their destiny and also their manner of dress, providing it complies with the rules. Present-day experience in the action against the Shah's regime shows that women have found more freedom than ever before in the mode of dress which Islam stipulates for them. (145)

1 November 1978 (10 Aban 1357 AHS)

Question: For a long time now Your Holiness has been criticising the Shah's policies, to what extent will your policies, with regard to the following, differ from those of the Shah: Social issues, will Islamic laws be put into effect and what difference will they make to daily life in comparison with the present laws?

'Beneath the banner of Islamic government', could Your Holiness explain more precisely what this means? Will women have the right to freely choose between the veil and Western dress? Will cinemas continue to exist? If so, what kind of films will be selected for viewing? Will alcoholic beverages be banned? Finally, will Iran become another Saudi Arabia or Libya?

Reply: The implementation of penal laws in Islam depends on many conditions first being fulfilled and involves many preliminaries. Many aspects must first be justly considered and Islam must be implemented fully. If these conditions exist, it will be seen that Islamic laws are not as harsh as others. Women are free to choose their activities, their destiny and also their manner of dress, while complying with the rules.

Present-day experience in the action against the Shah's regime shows that women have found more

freedom than ever before in the mode of dress which Islam stipulates for them. We are opposed to cinemas whose programmes corrupt our youth morally and subvert Islamic culture, but we approve of programmes which educate society and which contribute to its healthy, scientific and moral development.

Alcoholic beverages, alcoholism and other narcotics, which are harmful to society, will be banned. The Islamic republic government that we have in mind will not be like any of the regimes mentioned (i.e. Saudi Arabia and Libya). (146)

1 November 1978 (10 Aban 1357 AHS)

Question: Some of the Islamic customs, such as the mandatory veil, have been abandoned. Will the veil be once again enforced in the Islamic republic?

Reply: The veil, in the form we commonly understand it to take and which goes by the name Islamic *hijab*, is not opposed to freedom. Islam is against indecency. We invite the women to accept the Islamic *hijab*. Indeed, our brave women are tired of the calamities that the West, in the name of civilisation, has brought upon them, and they have turned to Islam. (147)

28 December 1978 (7 Dey 1357 AHS)

In Islam women must dress modestly and wear a veil (i.e. have *hijab*), but that does not necessarily mean she has to wear a chador. Women can choose any kind of attire they like so long as it covers them properly and they have *hijab*. (148)

28 December 1978 (7 Dey 1357 AHS)

Women must not enter the Islamic ministries improperly dressed. They can work there, but they must have *hijab* and must observe *shari'a* principles. (149)

6 March 1978 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Question: This chador, is it right that these women hide themselves under a chador? These women took part in the revolution, they gave lives, they were imprisoned, [and] they fought. This chador is an old custom, the world has changed, is it right that they should have to hide themselves in this way?

Reply: First of all, this is something that is their choice, and they have chosen it for themselves. What right do you have to deprive them of their choice? If we tell the people to come out and demonstrate their approval for Islamic dress, whether the chador or some other form, out of our population of 35 million, 33 million would come out. What right do you have to stop them?

What kind of dictatorship is this you want to impose on the women? Secondly, we do not say a woman has to wear a specific type of dress, particularly in cases of women your age¹⁴ there are no

specifications. We are concerned mainly with the younger women who when they make up and dress up draw hordes of young men after them. It is these women we are stopping. They don't need your sympathy. (150)

12 September 1979 (21 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

Imam Khomeini, the Leader of the Revolution and Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in reply to a question about the attacks by a number of ignorant and possibly anti-revolutionary elements on women not properly observing the Islamic dress code, issued this edict:

It is possible that the attacks on women in the streets, alleys and market places are being carried out by perverse elements opposed to the revolution. No one has the right to perpetrate such an attack and this kind of behaviour is unlawful (*haram*) for Muslims. The police and revolutionary committees must prevent such incidents. (151)

4 July 1980 (13 Tir 1359 AHS)

Whereas under the former regime one's consequence and standing were measured by obnoxious make-up, by what one wore and in what kind of house one lived, the values found today in Islamic countries, particularly in Iran, are human, moral values. These values have come about because of the change that has taken place in the ladies.

Those who once liked to show off amongst the female community with their costly clothes and pernicious make-up are now condemned and stand shamefaced. In those days, our Muslim ladies were embarrassed wearing Islamic dress, and the deprived classes who observed the Islamic dress code felt ashamed of the way they dressed before the affluent, but corrupt, classes. Today the opposite is true, and now one of those people who once put on such corrupt displays of make-up and dress would be ashamed in your midst. (152)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

You must remember that the veil, which Islam has prescribed for you is to protect your status. Whatever God has decreed for man or for woman is to keep alive the true values they possess, values that may be destroyed by the devil's insinuations or at the corrupt hands of imperialism and its agents.

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

Questions put to Imam about television programmes by the managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) organisation and member of the IRIB's supervisory board:

1. On the airing of TV programmes in which the woman's role requires her not to observe fully the rules of the Islamic dress code concerning the face, neck and hair.

2. On the airing of sports programmes such as wrestling and football in which some parts of the sportsmen's bodies are uncovered.
3. On watching such programmes when broadcast on TV.

Reply: There is no problem from the point of view of the *shari'a* to watching these kinds of films and plays, indeed many of them are educational and it is perfectly permissible to broadcast them. The same goes for sports programmes and music, most of them present no problem. On rare occasions transgressions do occur and greater care must be taken to avoid them.

Two points, however, must be heeded. Firstly, the person who does the actor's make-up must be *mahram*¹⁵ for the person being made up. It is forbidden for anyone else to perform this task. Secondly, people watching the programmes mentioned above must not do so in a lustful manner. (154)

21 December 1987 (30 Azar 1366 AHS)

Most probably the struggle against the wearing of the veil by Muslim women in educational institutions is a perverse attempt to undermine this great manifestation of the Islamic world's defence of the Most Noble Messenger, peace be upon him and his descendants. The issue is one which vexes the Islamic nations: why in the so-called free world forcing women and girls to remove their veils is considered pure democracy, yet when we simply state that anyone who insults the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his descendants, should be sentenced to death, and the council of Islamic jurists issues an edict to this effect, this is considered undemocratic!

Why does the world sit back and remain silent in the face of people who do not allow Muslim girls who have chosen to wear Islamic dress into universities to attend classes or teach? Is it not that the interpretation of freedom and how it is used lies in the hands of people who are opposed to the fundamentals of a freedom which is sacrosanct. Today God has made us responsible, we must not be negligent. Today, we must struggle against apathy, inaction and silence and the enthusiasm and momentum of the revolution must be maintained. (155)

22 March 1989 (2 Farvardin 1368 AHS)

Advice for safeguarding and perpetuating the Islamic movement

Advice for safeguarding and perpetuating the Islamic movement

Today, the movement is in greater need of the nation of Iran, of ideological unity, of the honourable ladies, of Chahar Mardan¹⁶ than it ever was before its victory and at its climax. It is today that the hands of the criminals and traitors, those who see their interests endangered, are working to try to stop this movement from flourishing. It is today that these treacherous hands must be severed. It is today that the hands of those who spread dissension and create excuses to cause division in the ranks of the Muslims

must be severed. Our honourable women must sever the hands of these traitors, our powerful men must sever the hands of these traitors, the clergymen, wherever they are, must be vigilant and must sever the hands of these traitors and frustrate their machinations. (156)

25 April 1979 (5 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

You ladies, you brothers and sisters alike, must be vigilant, the Iranian nation must be vigilant and not let the blood of our martyrs be in vain, not let the spilt blood of our youth be meaningless, not let it be trampled underfoot by personal interests. Rid yourselves of personal interests. Do not let treacherous hands create different groups. (157)

25 April 1979 (5 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

In this period of history, at this juncture we now find ourselves, where one road leads to ultimate victory and the other, God forbid, to defeat and a return to the former state of affairs, it is the duty of all of us, whether you respected ladies or the rest of the nation, all of us, the brothers and sisters alike, to safeguard that ideological unity, that unity of purpose which was Islam – everyone shouting out together for Islam – and which brought this movement to victory. Hold gatherings, fill the mosques and remember your aim, which is to put all Islamic laws into effect in Iran. (158)

2 July 1979 (11 Tir 1358 AHS)

All of these respected sisters and you brothers, all the people of Iran, all of us must now be mindful of this path that our movement is following. This movement must be kept alive so that these problems are overcome. (159)

8 July 1979 (17 Tir 1358 AHS)

Now, it is the bounden duty of us all, whether the law enforcement officers or the people, the ladies or the brothers, to protect this trust which is in our care and which is from God. This trust is Islam; it is the Qur'an. (160)

2 September 1979 (11 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

We must all join hands together, not only the men but the women also, all segments of society are one, they must join hands together to repair this ruin they have been left with, and to get their lives back together. (161)

9 January 1980 (19 Dey 1358 AHS)

My brothers! My sisters! Be alert, for today we are faced with great responsibilities. If we lose this movement that has reached this stage, this revolution that has reached this stage and this Islamic Republic that has been made a reality in our country, we will all be responsible. (162)

19 January 1981 (29 Dey 1359 AHS)

Complete Texts of some of Imam's Speeches Concerning the Position and Rights of Women in the Islamic System

Complete Texts of some of Imam's Speeches Concerning the Position and Rights of Women in the Islamic System

Address to a group of women in Qum

Address to a group of women in Qum

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Incessant greetings to the women of Iran! Peace be upon you, respected ladies. May the mercy of God be upon you, lion-hearted women, whose noble efforts have delivered Islam from the fetters of enslavement to foreigners. The peace of God the Blessed and Exalted be upon the nation of Iran, upon the ladies and the men.

Courageous sisters, you fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the men and ensured the victory of Islam. I thank you, women of Iran and women of Qum. May God and the Imam of the Age be pleased with you. Carrying your infants in your arms, you came into the streets and supported Islam with your ardent demonstrations.

I have heard what happened in Qum and other cities; I have heard what happened in Chahar Mardan. I take pride in all the courageous deeds accomplished by the women of Iran, in Qum and other cities for you have been in the vanguard of our triumph and have encouraged the men. Our men are indebted to your courage, lion-hearted women; I am indebted to both the honourable men and women.

Islam has particular regard for women. Islam appeared in the Arabian Peninsula at a time when women had lost their dignity, and it raised them up and gave them back their pride. Islam made women equal with men; in fact, it shows a concern for women that it does not show for men. In our revolutionary movement, women have likewise earned more credit than men, for it was the women who not only displayed courage themselves, but also reared men of courage. Like the Noble Qur'an itself, women have the function of rearing and training true human beings. If nations were deprived of courageous women to rear true human beings, they would decline and collapse. It is the women who strengthen the nations, who make them brave.

In the earliest age of Islam, the women participated in wars together with the men. The position of women is a high one. Women in Islam enjoy a high rank. We saw how in this movement the women, the honourable ladies, stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the men, in front of them even, in the line of battle. They lost their infants and youth, but still they bravely resisted the enemy.

We want our women to attain the high rank of true humanity, not to be a plaything in the hands of men, in the hands of depraved men. Women must have a share in determining their destiny. Women in the Islamic Republic must vote. Just as men have the right to vote, women too have that right. In this recent period, the women were degraded. One of the great acts of treachery committed against our nation (by the former regime) was that they robbed us of our human resources, they reined in the power of our youth and that of our women, they degraded our women, betrayed our nation.

They turned our women into playthings, into something akin to dolls. Our women were warrior-like, but they wanted them to be profligate pleasure-seekers. They insulted woman's dignity; they wanted women to become mere objects, a possession to pass from one hand to another. God, however, determined otherwise.

Islam grants woman a say in all affairs, just as it grants man a say. Just as men should avoid corruption, so too should women. Women should not allow themselves to be playthings in the hands of dissolute youths, they should not degrade themselves and, God forbid, come out into the streets dressed up and made up, placing themselves in full view of depraved men. Women must act like true human beings; they must be pious.

Women enjoy a dignified position; they have free will just as men have. God created you free beings and gave you dignity. Just as God has laid down laws for men imposing restrictions to prevent them from becoming corrupt, so too He has laid down laws for women. These are for your benefit; all Islamic laws are for the good of society. Those who want to see women as playthings in the hands of dissolute men are traitors.

Women should not be tricked, they shouldn't imagine their station in life calls for them to come out into the streets dressed up and made up, with no veil and scantily dressed. This is not the role of women; this is the role of a doll. Women must be brave, they must involve themselves in the fundamental destiny of the country, [and] they are the makers of true human beings, the educators of mankind.

May God protect you women of Iran, you women of Qum, from the dangers presented by corrupt people, people who in reality are animals (not human beings). Just as hitherto you have always participated in our country's movements, just as you partook in this movement and played a role in its victory, so too now you must continue to participate and rise up again whenever the need arises. The country belongs to you.

God willing, the hands of foreigners, of venal elements and plunderers have been severed, they have left and the country is yours, yours to rebuild. All the people of Iran, men and women alike, must repair the ruins that the previous regime has bequeathed to us; the hands of men alone will not suffice to accomplish the task. Men and women must collaborate in this respect.

There is one particular point concerning women to which attention should be paid. When women wish to marry, there are certain prerogatives they can stipulate for themselves that are contrary neither to the

shari'a nor to their own self-respect. For example, a woman can stipulate that if her future husband turns out to be of corrupt moral character or if he mistreats her, she would possess the right to execute a divorce.

This is a right that Islam has granted to women. If Islam has imposed certain restrictions on both women and men, it is for the benefit of both. All Islamic laws, be they those which permit or those which prohibit, are for the benefit of all. Similarly, just as Islam has granted man the right to divorce, it has also granted it to woman, on condition that the parties stipulate at the time of the marriage that if the husband behaves in a certain manner, the wife will have the right to execute a divorce.

Once the man has accepted such a stipulation, he can never repudiate it. Apart from making it possible to include such a stipulation in the marriage contract, Islam forbids the husband to mistreat his wife; if he habitually mistreats her, he is to be punished and the *mujtahid* will grant the wife a divorce.

May God adorn all of you with dignity, health, happiness and perfect faith and character.
Peace be upon you, beloved and respected ladies. (163)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Imam's address to a group of ladies from Qum

Imam's address to a group of ladies from Qum

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

When I left Qum you ladies and gentlemen of this city were afflicted with troubles, but you had your youth at your side. When I returned, they were gone. Their loss brought grief not only to the hearts of the mothers and fathers, but to my heart also. I saw the pictures of these brave youth on the walls of the Fayziya theological school. [17](#) I offer my condolences to the people of Qum, to the bereaved mothers, on their loss.

When I left, the whole of our country was afflicted with such troubles; indeed the whole of our country for the past fifty odd years has been in a state of affliction, hardship, repression and dependence on foreigners. God only knows what this father and son [18](#) have done to this country of ours. Throughout its history Iran has not witnessed the likes of such acts of treason.

All the monarchs throughout the 2,500 years or more of monarchical rule in Iran were traitors; even those who were reputed to be good were traitors, yet their treachery did not reach the bounds, which that of these two did. Indeed, no one really knows to what bounds Riza Shah and his son's treachery did in fact reach, the extent of their crimes was huge, but the extent of their treachery was even greater.

What scenes we witnessed during the reign of Riza Khan, a reign that perhaps most of you cannot remember. In Qum and indeed in all the towns and cities in accordance with the wishes of those who

instructed him and in the name of *kashf-i hijab*, he violated that which is inviolable in Islam; he violated that which is sacrosanct to the believers and to our respected women. What his agents did to our veiled ladies! How they treated them! They tore off their chadors and scarves and confiscated them. I myself witnessed these scenes, and you witnessed what this son did to this country on the plea of creating a 'great civilisation'.

We cannot imagine the true extent of what they did to this country. We cannot know the volume of their crimes and their treachery. We don't know where they have bank accounts or the exact amount they have in them. We don't know for sure that the amount, which has been revealed, is the true amount. It's not known how much they have in Swiss, American, British or other banks. It is said that recently \$3 billion has been taken, but we have no idea how much was taken previously.

At the time of the father, when he entered the war and the Allies sent him into exile, he collected together the crown jewels, filled his suitcases with them and took them with him. As I was told, once out at sea a ship used for transporting livestock drew up alongside the ship on which he was travelling, and he was told (by the British) to board it. That wicked man, who himself was worse than an animal, asked what he should do with his suitcases, he was told they would be brought for him later. But the British took them and kept them for themselves.

In the reign of this son too everything we had, all our self-respect, all our resources, has been taken. Our material strength was damaged, but not to the extent that our human resources were. The people were not allowed to develop, centres of corruption were made, gambling houses and houses of ill repute built and placed at the disposal of our youth. They were made to be unmindful of their destinies. So many of our youth became addicted to drugs during his reign, they were stupefied through addiction so they wouldn't bother about their destinies or where their true destiny lay.

However, God, the Blessed and Exalted, wanted otherwise; He helped you and during these past two years the movement – which originated in the 15th Khurdad movement^{[19](#)} – blossomed. You ladies have proved that you are in the vanguard of the movement; you have proved that you lead the men; men get their inspiration from you. The men of Iran have learnt lessons from the ladies of Iran and the men of Qum have learnt lessons from you dear ladies. You are in the vanguard of the movement.

Islam holds you in higher esteem than it does men. Islam wants to save you, it wants to save you from becoming this plaything they want to turn you into. Islam wants to train you to become an integrated and virtuous human being, so that in your care suchlike human beings may be raised.

I thank you all for participating in this movement. I thank all the mothers who took part in this movement and lost their loved ones. I am deeply sorry for their loss. May God have mercy upon the souls of their martyrs. May He grant you all mercy, happiness and help you attain perfection. All of you must cast your vote, a vote for an Islamic republic, not a word less (in this designation) nor a word more.^{[20](#)}

You too must vote, you are no different from others; indeed you lead the men. Men are raised in your

care, you are the educators of men, recognise your own worth, just as Islam does. All of you take part in this upcoming referendum and vote for an Islamic republic.

I hope that an Islamic republic will be established and Islamic justice and a just government will emerge to save our country from these problems, stop the hands of foreigners from ever again having free rein in this land and ensure freedom and independence for you all. May God's mercy be upon you all.

Peace be upon you, and also the blessings and mercy of God. (164)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

- [1.](#) – Addressing the students following Imam's line who seized the American Embassy on 3rd November 1979.
- [2.](#) – The adoption of the authoritative rulings of a scholar of proven learning and piety in matters of religious practice.
- [3.](#) – Refer to footnote 3.
- [4.](#) – If when exchanging the marriage vows the woman stipulates that she will become the man's wife only if he accepts her condition that she has the irrevocable right to execute a divorce, and the man accepts this condition, then that right of the wife cannot be taken away from her.
- [5.](#) – The reference here is to arguments advanced before the referendum of 29–30 March 1979 by various non-Islamic elements who said it would be enough to have a republic, that to speak of Islam in this connection was unnecessary, or others who said they wanted a 'democratic republic' not an Islamic one, or those who said they wanted a 'democratic Islamic republic.' For more of Imam's views on this matter refer to p. 337 of the book *Islam and Revolution*, translated by Hamid Algar (Mizan Press).
- [6.](#) – As it turned out, the plan to form a Constituent Assembly that would draw up the definitive text for a new constitution was abandoned in favour of convening a numerically more limited Assembly of Experts, for which an election was held on 3 August 1979.
- [7.](#) – Referring to the publication of an informative magazine for women.
- [8.](#) – Referring to those people who for various reasons opposed women's social activities.
- [9.](#) – Refer to footnote 3.
- [10.](#) – Refer to footnote 2.
- [11.](#) – James Earl Carter, the former American president.
- [12.](#) – A hamlet near Paris where Imam took up residence in early October 1978 during his period in exile.
- [13.](#) – A scarf sewn at the front under the chin and covering the chest.
- [14.](#) – Addressing Oriana Fallaci, a famous Italian journalist.
- [15.](#) – Either someone of the same sex or who shares a degree of consanguinity with the person being made up, if of the opposite sex, thus precluding marriage.
- [16.](#) – Chahar Mardan: a district in the city of Qum the people of which played a very significant role in the struggle against the Shah's regime.
- [17.](#) – The seminary situated in Qum next to the shrine of Hazrat Fatima, the Immaculate One (upon whom be peace), the sister of Imam Riza, the eighth Imam from the Holy Prophet's Progeny. Her tomb in Qum is the centre of the shrine complex.
- [18.](#) – Meaning Riza Khan and his son Muhammad Riza Pahlavi.
- [19.](#) – On 3 June 1963, Imam Khomeini delivered a historic speech in Qum, repeating former denunciations of the Shah's regime and warning the Shah not to behave in such a way that the people would rejoice when he should ultimately be forced to leave the country. Two days later, he was arrested at his residence and taken to confinement in Tehran. His arrest prompted a major uprising in many Iranian cities, which resulted in the deaths of not less than 15,000 people in the span of a few days when the Shah's troops opened fire on unarmed demonstrators. The date on which this uprising began was 5th June or 15th Khurdad according to the solar calendar used in Iran and became known as the uprising or movement of 15th Khurdad.

The Role of the Family and Women in Nurturing Human Being

The serious attention accorded all dimensions of family life by Islam

The serious attention accorded all dimensions of family life by Islam

. . . The laws of the *shari‘a* embrace a diverse body of laws and regulations, which amounts to a complete social system. In this system of laws, all the needs of man have been met: his dealings with his neighbours, fellow citizens, and clan, as well as children and relatives; the concerns of private and marital life; regulations concerning war and peace and intercourse with other nations; penal and commercial law; and regulations pertaining to trade and agriculture.

Islamic law contains provisions relating to the preliminaries of marriage and the form in which it should be contracted, and others relating to the development of the embryo in the womb and even what food the parents should eat at the time of conception. It further stipulates the duties that are incumbent upon them while the infant is being suckled, and specifies how the child should be reared, and how the husband and the wife should relate to each other and to their children. Islam provides laws and instructions for all of these matters, aiming, as it does, to produce integrated and virtuous human beings.

Islamic Government, pp. 43–44.

One of the things that creates different human behavioural patterns is how the rules for marriage, sexual intercourse and the times it can take place, for the gestation period and when the woman is breastfeeding, for selecting a husband and a woman who will be the one to breastfeed the child, and other instructions are observed.

These rules influence fully the physical and spiritual health of the child in the same manner as his learning environment, his teachers, friends, associates and kind of knowledge imparted to him do, along with other things that are too many to be mentioned here. All these things can have strange effects on a child’s development, some of which are noticeable.

At-Talab wal-Iradah, p. 148

Islam has laid the foundations of man's life from before his birth. It has established the social foundations of the family and has laid down injunctions for man covering the period he lives with his family, the time that he enters into education, the time he enters society, and the time that he has relations with other countries, with other governments, with other nations. All of these have a programme; the holy laws contain provisions for all of these things. (165)

14 November 1965 (23 Aban 1344 AHS)

Islam has moral teachings and it has rules that govern man's social relations, his relationship with himself, his wife, his children, his neighbours, his friends, his fellow countrymen, his co-religionists, and people of a different religion. Islam has rules for men, which extend from before his birth until after his death. It contains provisions relating to the preliminaries of marriage and the form in which it should be contracted, and others relating to the development of the embryo in the womb until birth. It specifies how the child should be reared, it has rules for him at puberty, in his youth, in old age, when he dies and is laid in his grave and even after that . . . (166)

28 September 1977 (6 Mehr 1356 AHS)

. . . There are rules for other relationships concerning man. There are rules to ensure man's well-being even before he is born, to ensure that a sound, healthy, refined individual comes into the world. Islamic law contains provisions relating to the preliminaries of marriage, the choice of spouse, and the form in which a marriage should be contracted, there are laws for when intimate relations take place between a man and his wife, for when a child is conceived and when being suckled. There are rules for the child for the time he is being reared by his mother and when he is being trained by his first teachers. Islam has rules for all of these things, and laws to train man. (167)

9 November 1978 (18 Aban 1357 AHS)

One facet of Islam deals with government and governmental and political affairs, and another deals with man's spiritual development which concerns man himself alone: What should he be in terms of beliefs, ethics and social behaviour? What must a man be? In this regard, Islam encompasses every aspect of human life, whereas other governments and societies are impassive towards the same. That is, no government will ever approach an individual and reprimand him for whatever (immoral) activities he may engage in at home.

Whatever misdeed takes place in an individual's home is of no concern to other governments. Islam, however, is concerned with the individual even if he is alone at home; that is, it tells him what he is supposed to do, how to behave and what ethics and intellectual perceptions he should adopt. It tells him how a father should treat his children, how a child should behave towards his father, a mother to her child, a child to his mother, a brother to a brother, how families should behave among themselves or a family towards another. All of these have rules to follow in Islam, which takes everything into consideration. (168)

11 November 1978 (20 Aban 1357 AHS)

Islam is a religion that belongs to all. It was revealed to build up a human being in a way that it proposes; to mould him into an equitable man in such a way that one human being cannot commit one grain or pinhead of injustice against another; that a human being cannot be unjust to his own child or to his wife, or a wife to a husband, or two brothers to one another or these to their friends. Islam wants to mould man into a just being in the fullest sense of the word "human being," one whose intellect is humane, whose essence and appearance are human and one who respects human behaviour and conduct. Islam wants to materialise these goals. (169)

11 November 1978 (20 Aban 1357 AHS)

We want such an ideology, one that when it first starts to train the people directs them towards the development of the excellence of the human being. You look around yourselves in the world; can you find an ideology like Islam, which has laws aimed at making man a true human being even before he has been born, before his parents have married?

All of the world's ideologies deal with people who have reached puberty and who are active members of society. Islam, however, aims to perfect man even before he is born, before his parents marry, by stating what kind of spouse a man and a woman should choose. Why does it do this? Because the husband and wife are the origin of an individual or individuals and Islam wants these individuals, who are to be handed over to society, to be righteous individuals.

So before a couple marry, Islam stipulates what kind of a woman the man's prospective wife should be and what kind of a man the woman's prospective husband should be, what kind of personalities they should have, how they should behave and in what kind of family they should have been brought up.

After marriage too, Islam stipulates how the husband and wife should treat each other. Islam has laid down rules that pertain to the period when the woman is with child, and to the delivery of the child. It also specifies how a child should be reared. Islam provides laws and instructions for all of these matters so that this child that is produced from these two people will be a virtuous individual in the society and righteousness will reign throughout the world.

This is Islam. Islam seeks to create true human beings and it sets out to do this even before the child is born, before his parents have even married. It begins there and has laid down laws that cover this period and the period after the child has come into the world: it stipulates the duties that are incumbent upon the parents while the child is being suckled; it specifies how the child should be reared by the parents, how he should be treated later in the elementary and high schools and what the teachers there should be like.

Then when the child reaches the age of independence, the age at which he must make his own decisions, Islam tells him what kind of a person he should be, what he should and shouldn't do. Islam

does this because it wants the people in society to be righteous, sound individuals. (170)

31 December 1978 (10 Dey 1357 AHS)

If you examine Islam closely, you will see that it has laws and programmes for all the dimensions man possesses. It has regulations for man for even before he is born, before his parents marry. It has procedures to ensure the embryo develops well. Islam stipulates what kind of woman you should choose for a wife, what kind of man you should choose for a husband, what circumstances should prevail at the time of marriage, what rules exist and what the procedure should be.

It has rules governing the time the child is conceived and the period of gestation, like a farmer who sows a seed taking care to choose fecund soil in which to plant it, irrigating it with pure water, at the proper times, and tending to it so that it grows properly. In order to train true human beings, Islam begins even before the parents have married; it wants the basis to be strong and good, the spouse to be a healthy, sound person of human qualities.

Islam contains further provisions relating to the child's birth, to the period the infant is being suckled, it specifies how the parents should rear the child and the kind of instruction he should receive from them and others. No other system of laws covers such things; this is something peculiar only to those laws brought by the prophets. (171)

2 February 1979 (14 Bahman 1357 AHS)

Know that Islam covers everything; it contains laws relating to before marriage takes place between a man and woman to the time of interment. All its laws are progressive instructions necessary for man's happiness whether in this world or the next. (172)

19 February 1979 (30 Bahman 1357 AHS)

Islam is a system, a political system, however, whereas other systems disregard many things, Islam overlooks nothing. It trains man in all the dimensions he possesses, in both his material and spiritual aspects; it concerns itself with both. Islam has rules aimed at creating a true human being even before he is born, before the marriage between his parents takes place, by stipulating, among other things, what kind of spouse a man and woman should choose, what kind of disposition they should have and how pious they should be.

When a farmer wants to plant a seed he must consider the type of soil there is in the area in which he intends to plant it and the things needed for its growth, which are useful and which are not. He must take care of the seed from the time it sprouts to when it bears its fruit. Islam treats humans in the same manner that is in the manner of a farmer who wants to produce a good harvest.

From before the seed is planted Islam has rules stipulating what kind of mother and father the child should have, and prescribes the form in which the marriage should be contracted. This is because Islam

is concerned with the child's future life, for if the father or mother is of corrupt moral nature, [and] their actions that of an inhuman being, their offspring will be affected by these traits, they will inherit them. Therefore, like a very conscientious and compassionate farmer, Islam takes care of mankind.

It has rules for man, which extend from before his birth to the time he marries. It has many rules relating to the time of conception, the gestation period, the time the infant is being suckled; it specifies how the child should be cared for in the mother's lap and later under the protection of the father. It has rules for him when he enters school, then later when he joins society. From before he is born Islam cares for the child, so that he can achieve the high station man can attain. Islam has rules covering all these things.

Other systems in the world, other forms of government in the world, do not concern themselves with such matters, they are only bothered about making sure this society serves their interests and that the peace is kept so they can plunder the people. Even the best and most equitable of them cares only for rectifying its own society a little.

Otherwise, how a child should be reared, what rules exist covering the period the child is in the womb and is being suckled are of no consequence to other systems. Islam, to the contrary, does care about such things, and when the child grows into a man, it stipulates how he should behave towards his brother, towards his mother and father, how the mother and father should treat their son, how they should treat their neighbours, their fellow citizens, their co-religionists and foreigners. Islam concerns itself with all of these.

One facet of Islam deals with government and governmental and political affairs, and another deals with man's spiritual development. For man is a two-dimensional being, there are two sides to him: one the physical, for every aspect of which Islam has rules; and the other the spiritual, which no other system even broaches. No other system is concerned about giving man spiritual training or moral refinement so that he can reach the stage that none, save God, knows of. Islam even stretches to that stage, it takes man's hands and leads him to the highest heaven. No other system does this. (173)

19 February 1979 (30 Bahman 1357 AHS)

Religions concern themselves with all the dimensions man possesses. There are rules to ensure man's well-being even before he is born, instructions relating to how a marriage should be contracted, what conditions should be met, what kind of woman the man should choose for a wife and what kind of man the woman should choose so that the marriage is a good one. For marriage is like cultivated land used for producing human beings. Before the marriage even takes place, precautions are taken to ensure that a sound, spiritually healthy individual comes into the world.

Thus attention is paid to the preliminaries of marriage, the conditions that should be met, and following the marriage there are rules governing the intimate relations between a man and his wife and for when a child is conceived. The mother is advised what food she should eat when she is carrying the child and what she should avoid, what her life should be like and how she should behave. Instructions are

provided stating what kind of woman should suckle the child after he is born – that is if the parents wish to employ a wet nurse – how the child should be suckled, at what times, under what conditions, how the mother should treat the child when he is in her care, and later, when he has left the lap of his mother, how the father should treat him.

There are rules governing how the child should be reared in the family, what his teachers should be like, and when he enters society, how he should act. This is all to make sure that upright, morally correct individuals enter society. (174)

14 May 1979 (24 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Islam is concerned with everything. It plans for the child you will bring into the world even before you marry. It stipulates what kind of woman the man's prospective wife should be, what kind of man the woman's prospective husband. For a human being is like a plant that must grow and blossom, and just as a farmer must take care when planting his seeds, selecting the right soil in which to plant them, good fertiliser and the right amount of water to nourish them, so too much the same applies in the case of a human being.

Islam stipulates what conditions must prevail from before man is conceived, in what kind of seedbed the seed must be planted, what kind of person the man should be who will plant the seed. Then later, after marriage, Islam has rules for when the child is conceived. Islam seeks to put right all aspects of man's life, aiming, as it does, to produce integrated and virtuous human beings. (175)

21 May 1979 (31 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Islamic law contains provisions for the period before marriage takes place, because it is through marriage that human beings are created. When you want to get married, no other system of laws in the world is concerned with how you should go about this. As far as other laws are concerned, you need only register your marriage at the registry office, the rest is up to you. Islam, however, pays attention to the period before marriage, for it is from marriage that a child springs, and he must have sound beginnings.

Like an extremely caring and affectionate farmer who, to ensure that his crop turns out well, selects only seeds of the best kind, planting them in fertile soil and nourishing them with only pure water, Islam seeks to produce true human beings, and it sets out to do this even before the child's parents have married by telling the woman what kind of man she should choose for a husband and the man what kind of woman he should choose for a wife, it gives them the rules for this. It has rules covering the marriage and afterwards when the woman is with child, then following that for the period of the child's upbringing.

For Islam seeks to create a true human being, and it begins at the very beginning when the foundations of a child's life are first laid. So it pays attention to such affairs, whereas all other laws in the world ignore them.

Other laws pay scant regard to how a man acts in the privacy of his own home, they adopt the attitude that as long as the person remains indoors and does not disturb the peace and order in society, he can do what he likes. Islam is not this way. Islam seeks to create upright human beings so that even at home they do nothing illegal or immoral. Islam wants man to behave at home as he would in the street, as he would in public. It seeks to make man a true human being in all circumstances. (176)

10 June 1979 (20 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

No teachings other than those of the prophets are concerned with who you choose as a wife or who the woman chooses as a husband. They consider it none of their concern. Not one of their laws covers this area or what duties are incumbent on the mother when she is with child, when she is breastfeeding and when raising the child, or what the father must do in rearing his child. Corporeal laws, and systems other than those of the prophets, are not concerned with such matters.

They are concerned only with preventing the individual from committing corrupt acts when he enters society, and even then they only make it their business when such acts are likely to cause disorder. Otherwise, they do not consider indulging in corrupt acts of the bacchanalian type as wrong; indeed they encourage such behaviour. They are not concerned with man's moral refinement or with creating a true human being. In their view, the only difference between humans and animals is that man has progressed more, he can make aeroplanes whereas animals cannot, he can become a physician, an animal cannot. The limits for such laws exist in the physical realm.

Islam, however, is concerned with everything. It concerns itself even with the period before a couple marry so that their offspring will become morally sound, upright human beings. So it has instructions stipulating what kind of person you should choose for your spouse. Why does it do this? Well, we can compare it with a farmer who wants to produce a good crop. First, he must consider the land, making sure it is fertile land, then the seeds he is to plant, they too must be of fine quality, and then what the seeds need to grow. All these things he must take into account to ensure as far as possible that his crop will be a good one and he will profit from it.

Islam does the same, only with regard to human beings. So it stipulates what kind of person you should choose for a spouse so that a virtuous human being is produced. It has instructions covering the marriage and what conditions should be fulfilled, there are also instructions pertaining to the time a child is conceived, to the period when the woman is with child and when the infant is being suckled.

This is because the monotheistic schools of thought, of which Islam is the most comprehensive, have come to produce true human beings. They haven't come to produce a creature with human intelligence but whose limits and aims are those of an animal. No, they have come to produce human beings in the true sense of the word. (177)

4 July 1979 (13 Tir 1358 AHS)

Let them come and see what Islam says, how it is with an individual from the time he/she wishes to marry to ensure that the child this union produces is a good child. How later it has rules for how the infant should be reared by his mother, how he should be treated at school and for all stages of his life until the end. Islam seeks to guide you along a straight path. (178)

6 July 1980 (15 Tir 1359 AHS)

The important role played by mothers in the proper upbringing of children

The important role played by mothers in the proper upbringing of children

Be mindful of your actions making sure they are good. Make sure your upbringing is for God, your actions for God. Those of you who have children, bring them up on divine teachings. (179)

8 February 1979 (19 Bahman 1357 AHS)

In our revolutionary movement, women have likewise earned more credit than men, for it was the women who not only displayed courage themselves, but also reared men of courage. Like the Noble Qur'an itself, women have the function of rearing and training true human beings. (180)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Islam wants to train you to become an integrated and virtuous human being, so that in your care suchlike human beings may be raised. (181)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Men are raised in your care, you are the educators of men, recognise your own worth, just as Islam does. (182)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

You have served Islam and, God willing, you will continue to do so. You rear lion-hearted men and women in Iran. It is in your laps that virtuousness, decency, and greatness are fostered. You have a duty to raise your children well, to bring them up with Islamic values, with human values, and raise them to be fighters. It is through your struggles and those of all sections of society that we have been able to bring this movement this far and proclaim an Islamic republic. (183)

6 April 1979 (17 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

It is by you that great men and women are raised; it is in your laps they are raised. You are held dear by the nation; you are its support. Strive hard in your studies so that you equip yourselves with moral

excellence and are virtuous in word and deed. Rear strong children for the future of our country. Your laps are like schools in which strong youth should be raised. Seek to acquire the highest virtues so that in your care your children will also acquire them. (184)

10 April 1979 (21 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

Islam wants you to care for your children yourselves and raise them to be good, upright individuals, to brighten up your home with the light of these Islamic children. For they are the children of Islam, and the destiny of Islam and your country lies in their hands. (185)

10 May 1979 (20 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Since in the beginning these children are raised in your care, you are the ones responsible for their actions. If you raise a good child, that child alone may secure the well-being of a nation, just as, God forbid, if you raise a bad child, he may be the cause of corruption in society. Do not think of your child as merely a child, one day, when he enters society, he may become a leader of the society and, if not brought up well, he could lead it into corruption. (186)

13 May 1979 (23 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Your children must be trained well; they must be given a sound, Islamic education while they are in your care. For it is to your apron strings they cling, it is you they follow around, your moves they watch and your words they hear. So let them not hear a lie from you lest in the future they become liars. For surely, if they hear lies from you and then from their fathers, they will become liars, but if they see that both are good, morally sound people, then they will become the same. (187)

13 May 1979 (23 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Our nation's long-term programme is for those who educate our children, that is our teachers, the mothers and fathers of our children, their lecturers and those who write and those who speak for them, to acquaint them with spiritual matters and help them to understand spiritual matters. (188)

24 May 1979 (3 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

The ladies' help is several times more valuable than that of men. May God protect you. May He keep you so that you may carry on your job of training human beings, a job that the prophets were also assigned. May God's peace be upon you all, and also His mercy. (189)

26 May 1979 (5 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

Respected ladies! You are all responsible; we are all responsible. You are responsible for the upbringing of the children; you have the duty of nurturing virtuous children in your care to hand over to society. We all have this duty, but it is in your care that they receive a better upbringing. A mother's lap is the best

school for a child. (190)

26 May 1979 (5 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

As you yourselves now say, you ladies are teachers. You have two noble occupations, two very noble jobs. One is to raise your children well, which is much more important than all other jobs. If you hand over one good individual to society, this is better for you than owning the whole world. I cannot describe how honourable it is for you to bring up your children to be virtuous human beings.

So one of your jobs is to bring up good children. It is in the laps of mothers that true human beings must be produced, for the first stage of their education is in the laps of their mothers. The affection a child feels for his mother is greater than any other, none can compare with the love that exists between a child and his mother. Children learn better from their mothers; they are influenced more by their mothers than they are by their fathers, teachers or lecturers. (191)

11 June 1979 (21 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

May God grant you ladies, who are in effect centres for the training of small children, success to the end in teaching and training these children properly. Their training begins in your laps, and it is in your care that children are trained well. (192)

4 July 1979 (13 Tir 1358 AHS)

These teachings our young people, this generation, received during the time of the *taghut*, these *taghuti* teachings, must be transformed into human, Islamic teachings. It is hoped that this education will begin in the laps of the mothers and continue to the level of university and beyond. For the well-being of a nation depends on its heads, and those in whose hands its destiny lies, being righteous people, pure in heart. (193)

17 July 1979 (26 Tir 1358 AHS)

A mother's lap is the best school in which a child is trained. That which he learns from his mother is quite different from what he learns from his teachers. He picks up more from his mother than he does his teachers; he is trained better in the lap of his mother than he is by his father or teachers. It is a human responsibility and a divine duty, a noble deed, to raise a true human being. (194)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordad 1358 AHS)

You sisters who are responsible for children, take care to promote in them human values, and those of you who are responsible for a community, make sure you guide it to God's straight path. For it is this divine, straight path, which can take man from imperfection to perfection, from darkness to light. (195)

12 October 1979 (20 Mehr 1358 AHS)

God's infinite mercy upon those mothers and fathers in whose pure care you brave fighters in the theatre of battle and struggle against the appetitive soul were raised. (196)

22 March 1982 (2 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

God's mercy be upon these ladies in whose pure laps these lion-hearted youths were raised. (197)

9 February 1984 (20 Bahman 1362 AHS)

The importance and honour of motherhood

The importance and honour of motherhood

One cannot count the many rights mothers have and they cannot be rightly fulfilled. One night of a mother's life with her child is worth more than a lifetime of a dedicated father's. The affection and compassion that shine from a mother's radiant eyes hold a glimmer of the compassion and kindness of the Lord of the worlds. God, the Blessed and Exalted, has imbued the hearts and souls of mothers with the light of his own divine compassion, such that none can describe and no one, save the mothers, can understand.

And it is this everlasting compassion that has given mothers a heavenly-like tolerance in the face of suffering and hardship from the time of conception, throughout pregnancy, during childbirth and throughout the years of the child's life from infancy up to the end. She endures hardship and suffering in a way that the father cannot endure even for one night. The tradition which says "Heaven is under the mother's feet"¹ is absolutely true.

It has been explained in such a subtle fashion because of the significance of the matter and to show children to search for happiness and the gardens of heaven under the blessed feet of their mothers, to respect them as they would Almighty God and to seek the approval and satisfaction of God the Most Holy in their approval and satisfaction.

Jilveha-yi Rahmani, p. 47.

Islam came to fashion true human beings. The divine book of Islam, which is the Most Noble Qur'an, is designed to train man in all his dimensions, in spiritual and physical dimensions, political, social, cultural, and military, in all human dimensions.

Islam came to show us the way to do this. We, in turn, must educate our youth along Islamic lines, our women must be trained Islamically, passing this training on to their children in their care so that when their children mature, they become servants for Islam and humanity. (198)

11 April 1979 (22 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

You who are educators, who wish to educate your children or society, must pay attention to this verse from the Holy Qur'an: "*Read, in the name of thy Lord,*" (Qur'an 96:1). When you want to teach or learn something remember to read, in the name of thy Lord, do so with God in mind, with divine teachings. If a person receives both a formal education and is instructed in divine teachings, he will be useful for his country.

A country is never harmed by one who has been given both a proper education and proper training. Harm is usually done to a country by thinkers who lack proper training, who have received a formal education but one that lacked spiritual training. They have acquired knowledge but have no piety; they have had no training of the inner self. It is for this reason that they become foreign agents that they themselves draw up the plans for the country's destruction. (199)

13 April 1979 (24 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

May God grant you ladies, who are in effect centres for the training of small children, success to the end in teaching and training these children properly. Yes, their training begins in your laps, and it is in your care that children are trained well. It is possible that a child whom you have trained well will save a nation. Take care to hand over good children to society, and let your teaching be accompanied by training. (200)

13 April 1979 (24 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

You ladies are valuable in the eyes of God, God willing. Raise your children to be good, upright individuals, give them an Islamic upbringing. (201)

10 May 1979 (20 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

You bear the great responsibility for the training of your children from when they are very young and easily influenced, when they quickly pick up things they are taught, good or bad. Since in the beginning these children are raised in your care, you are the ones responsible for their actions.

If you raise a good child, that child alone may secure the well-being of a nation, just as, God forbid, if you raise a bad child, he may be the cause of corruption in society. Do not think of your child as merely a child, one day, when he enters society, he may become a leader of the society and, if not brought up well, he could lead it into corruption. (202)

13 May 1979 (23 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

In your role as mothers you must morally purify your children, in your role as teachers you should train them well and hand over to society sound, upright individuals, and in so doing create a sound society. If, God forbid, the opposite is the case, you too will suffer as a result, just as in the same way you will benefit from any good deed they do, for you are the source of that good deed. There is a reckoning, either a penalty or a reward. If, God forbid, you hand over corrupt individuals to society and they perform

corrupt deeds, you will suffer as a result. (203)

13 May 1979 (23 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

You ladies have the honour of being mothers, which puts you ahead of the men. You have the responsibility for training children in your laps. The mother's lap is the first school a child has. A good mother brings up a good child, but, God forbid, if the mother is misguided, the child brought up in her lap will also be misguided. For children have a particular affection for their mothers, which they have for no one else, and when in their laps, all they wish for they find in their mothers, she is their everything.

What she says, how she acts, her nature, all have an effect on a child. When the child is in his mother's lap, which is his first class, if he is taught virtuousness, morality, goodness, he will grow up with a good nature, with that purity of spirit and goodness of deed that has been nurtured in him. While in her lap, the child will begin to imitate his mother, so that if he sees she is good-natured, her words and actions kind and good, he too will behave likewise. For his mother is the one he patterns himself on, and what she instils into him will prove his most effective training. (204)

13 May 1979 (23 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

A long-term programme for you young people, you ladies, indeed for everyone, is self-reform and moral purification to advance the aims of Islam. If you ladies bring up your children to be morally upright, Islamic individuals, you have protected both your religion and your country. If, God forbid, immoral, un-Islamic children spring from your laps, if under the tutelage of you young people un-Islamic, unprincipled children emerge, and in the schools and universities our children attend they are not taught goodness of character and Islamic virtues, then both Islam and our country will be cast to the wind. (205)

24 May 1979 (3 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

The mother in whose lap a child is reared bears the gravest of responsibilities and has the noblest of professions: that of bringing up children. The noblest profession in the world is rearing a child and handing over to society a true human being. This is why, throughout history, God the Blessed and Exalted sent prophets. Throughout history, from Adam to the Seal of the Prophets, prophets came to train true human beings. (206)

24 May 1979 (3 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

When a mother wants to save her child from distress, her kindness is more effective than any medication. The child needs spiritual pacification, and this can be provided by the mother and father. (207)

26 May 1979 (5 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

You can train children to uphold the aims of the prophets. You yourselves must be both guardians and

the trainers of guardians, for your children are the next custodians. Train them well. Your homes must be places where children are given both religious instruction and formal learning, where they are taught moral edification. The future of these children is the responsibility of the mothers and fathers. (208)

26 May 1979 (5 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

Respected ladies! Purify your characters and those of your children. Bring your children up to be Islamic, for Islam has everything. Put yourself in the shelter of Islam and endow yourselves with Islamic morals, for Islam has everything.

Respected gentlemen! Respected ladies! Obey the call of Islam. Islam did not come to provide fodder; it came to secure spirituality. One should not cry out only for material things, for this is not following the path of Islam. If spirituality is realised, then the material will become spiritual and will follow. Islam approves of material progress when it follows spiritual progress, not when it occurs alone. The basis is spiritual; a country with spiritual progress is a true country. (209)

29 May 1979 (8 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

While your children are in your laps give them an Islamic upbringing, teach them to be upright human beings so that when you send them to primary school you send sound, morally upright and well-behaved children. (210)

11 June 1979 (21 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

You must be mindful of giving these children in your care a religious upbringing, a moral upbringing. If you hand over one committed, virtuous child to society you may see that one day he is the one who reforms society, for it is possible for one individual to reform society.

Likewise if, God forbid, this child leaves your laps an unscrupulous individual, if he leaves the care of you who are teachers an immoral person, then it is possible that he will corrupt society, and you will be the ones responsible. If you train your children properly, it will bring with it honour such that likens to that the prophets enjoyed. If, on the other hand, you bring your children up to be immoral, God forbid, they could possibly corrupt a whole society. (211)

11 June 1979 (21 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

You ladies who took part in this movement, and may God keep you, must continue to participate from now on and advance this movement. The most important thing for you to do is train your children well. The former regime wanted to separate the children from their mothers. They lured the ladies into offices, not with the aim of improving these offices, rather with the intention, for one thing, of making them corrupt places and for another of taking the children out of their mothers' care.

Children, who from the beginning are not raised in their mothers' laps, develop complexes from which

much corruption emanates. Look after your children well, train them well for it is these children who can save a country. While in your care give them an Islamic upbringing, raise them to have virtues, to have faith, so that they can be of service in this country. May God grant you all happiness and make you a useful person for your country. (212)

2 July 1979 (11 Tir 1358 AHS)

It is possible that a child whom you have trained well will save a nation. Take care to hand over good children to society, and let your teaching be accompanied by training. (213)

14 July 1979 (23 Tir 1358 AHS)

The prophets came to make true human beings. They were given the mission to transform those men who are no different from animals into true human beings, to purify them. This was their profession and it should be the profession of mothers with regard to the children in their care. They too, through their deeds, must purify their children; children are trained better in the laps of their mothers than they are by their teachers.

The love a child has for his mother he feels for no one else, what he hears from his mother becomes engraved on his heart and stays with him till the end. Mothers must be mindful of training their children properly, of bringing them up to be morally upright individuals. Their laps should be both a school of learning and of religious instruction, this is a very important matter and it is something, which only mothers can achieve. Children hear more from their mothers than they do their fathers. No one can influence a young child or endow the infant with his/her own character and morals the way the child's mother can. (214)

17 July 1979 (26 Tir 1358 AHS)

It is possible that a child whom a mother has trained well may one day save a nation. It is also possible that a child whom a mother has trained badly may destroy a nation. (215)

17 July 1979 (26 Tir 1358 AHS)

If good training begins in the mother's lap and continues through primary school, high school and university or other institutes of higher education, then there may come a time when you see that all the young people are good, upright individuals and they draw a country towards goodness. (216)

17 July 1979 (26 Tir 1358 AHS)

A good, upright individual may train a world, whereas someone unscrupulous and immoral may lead the world to corruption. Both immorality and godliness originate from your laps, from your teachings and from the schools in which you teach. (217)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordad 1358 AHS)

The correct training of these small children begins at this stage of their lives. If, God forbid, the mother is a wrongdoer, these little ones will receive an unsound training from the start. The responsibility for their upbringing lies in your hands. (218)

6 October 1979 (14 Mehr 1358 AHS)

The role of the women in society is more important than that of the men, for in addition to being active members of society themselves in all fields, the ladies also raise active members. A mother's service to the community is greater than that of a teacher, indeed of anyone else. And this is what the prophets wanted, they wanted women to be people who train society and bestow upon the community lion-hearted men and women. (219)

16 March 1981 (25 Esfand 1359 AHS)

Be good mothers for your children, good advisers to society and hard workers for the needy, as, praise God, you already are. (220)

16 March 1981 (25 Esfand 1359 AHS)

A mother's service to the community is much greater than that of a teacher, indeed of anyone else. And this is what the prophets wanted . . . (221)

16 March 1981 (25 Esfand 1359 AHS)

The ladies of Iran have played a greater role in this movement and this revolution than the men, and today as they pursue their activities behind the front lines, their role is greater still. Through their educational pursuits, whether in the form of educating their own children or teaching in classrooms and other places, they still play a great role in this revolution. (222)

23 May 1981 (2 Khordad 1360 AHS)

The respected ladies of Iran have proved that they did not fall victim to these machinations and will not do so. They have proved that they are firmly entrenched in the bastion of virtuousness and modesty and will present this country with strong, integrated young men and virtuous, committed young women, and never will they go down those roads which the superpowers have laid at their feet with the intention of destroying this country. (223)

23 May 1981 (2 Khordad 1360 AHS)

What can one say? What can be laid at the noble feet of the exalted mothers who raised such children in their pure laps? (224)

27 August 1984 (5 Shahrivar 1363 AHS)

The Iranian ladies have brought Islam to the stage it is now at by sacrificing their lives, their youth and their time, and I hope that from now on it will be advanced even further. You can be sure that as long as you remain active and committed to Islam, as long as you are ready to give your young ones for the cause and are willing to train them properly, then Islam will progress . . . (225)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

The negative effects of separating children from the care of their mothers

The negative effects of separating children from the care of their mothers

By putting them under pressure and exerting force, they tried to destroy this segment of the population too. They strove to stop them from performing that glorious deed which is theirs to perform, from executing those services that this segment wishes to render the nation, those valuable services which our ladies are entrusted to undertake, and prevent them from performing that most fundamental of services which it is their duty to render, that is training their children in whose hands the destiny of the country lies.

They feared lest in their laps children were brought up to be pious, Islamic and with a love for their homeland, and that even when these children entered the school system, they still would not be able to change them, not even with all the propaganda they disseminated at the schools through the teachers and propagators they had installed there. Thus, their plan was to turn these ladies away from that great, fundamental role they have and pretend that in so doing they had freed half the population of Iran. (226)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Of course, there is no objection to women taking up employment, sound employment, but we do not want a repeat of the way it was during the Pahlavi era. Then they did not have employment in mind for women, rather their aim was to degrade both men and women, pulling them down from that position they occupy. They did not want a natural growth for either sex. They did not want our children to receive a sound upbringing so they took steps to prevent this from the very beginning by depriving many of the chance to be raised in their mothers' laps, which are centres for a child's training.

Then later at the primary schools, there too they misguided the children and led them astray with their malicious propaganda and misleading books. Even later still, at the universities, their agents there did not let them develop properly, they did not allow training to be given that would produce genuine scholars or individuals committed to the welfare of the country and to Islam. (227)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Unfortunately, the foreigners made us view the profession of being a mother as very demeaning and of little value, consequently some mothers, although by no means all were encouraged to distance themselves from their children. This great profession was made to appear unimportant so that mothers would not rear good children in their laps. Fathers too were made to feel they needed not to pay much attention to their children or to their proper upbringing.

The school system also, up to and including university, suffered the same lack of training. This was because the foreigners did not want true human beings to exist in this country; they knew that if this were to happen, such people would sever their hands from this land. They don't want genuine, believing Muslims, people with faith in God, people who consider martyrdom a triumph, to exist in this country. (228)

24 May 1979 (3 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

Unfortunately, during the rule of the *taghut*, they tried to take this profession away from these mothers, so they propagated views that questioned the woman's role as a mother, they disparaged this noble occupation and made it seem unimportant in the eyes of the mothers. For they wanted to distance the mothers from their children, they wanted the children to be brought up in nurseries and the mothers to go doing the things they wanted them to do.

A child brought up in a nursery is not the same as one raised in his mother's lap. When a child is brought up in a nursery by strangers without his mother's care and affection, he will develop a complex. Much of the corruption from which society suffers, stems from these children who have grown up with a complex. Major complexes are created when a child is separated from his mother. A child needs his mother's affection, therefore this profession, which was also the profession of the prophets, for they too came to make true human beings, is your primary one: to give your child his primary training. (229)

11 June 1979 (21 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

Throughout the rule of this monarchy, they strove to distance mothers from their children. They instilled in the mothers the idea that looking after their children was of no value; that they should work outside in the offices instead. In this way they took the innocent children out of their mothers' laps and put them into nurseries and other places where unsympathetic strangers gave them an unsound training.

When a child is separated from his mother, it doesn't matter who looks after him instead, he will develop complexes that in turn become the source of much corruption. Many of the murders that occur stem from these complexes, and many of these have developed because of a child being separated from his mother. (230)

17 July 1979 (26 Tir 1358 AHS)

When infants are taken from their mothers' care and put into nurseries, they develop complexes

because they are placed in the care of strangers and are deprived of their mothers' love and affection. These complexes become the root of most of mankind's corruption. These wars that occur are a result of complexes, which exist in the hearts of bloodthirsty individuals. This thieving and treachery we witness stems mostly from the complexes within man.

If your children are separated from you, they will develop complexes and be drawn into corruption because of the lack of your motherly love. The former regime was actually assigned the task of leading our children into corruption, of not allowing them to be brought up, to be trained, in the loving care of their mothers, so that they would develop complexes. In the school system the story was the same, our children were placed in the hands of teachers appointed by them, attended universities they had set up; corruption from the bottom right up to the top "*From light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness*" (Qur'an 2:257). The regime did not allow a sound education to be imparted, one that would create true human beings. (231)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordad 1358 AHS)

They did not want true human beings to develop so they made the training of children by their mothers appear to be a very trivial matter. Some of the mothers, those who were easily influenced by them, came to believe their propaganda and stopped caring for their dear children themselves, sending them instead to nurseries where they received devilish training. (232)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordad 1358 AHS)

You are responsible and the responsibility is great. A good, upright individual may train a world, whereas someone unscrupulous and immoral may lead the world to corruption. Both immorality and godliness originate from your laps, from your teachings and from the schools in which you teach. They wanted to remove the children from their mothers' care and send them to nurseries. (233)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordad 1358 AHS)

For the ladies there is one matter, which is more important than anything else that is the proper upbringing of their children. Do not think that those who always decry (the profession of) being a mother and bringing up children, who make it appear a very trivial matter and very demeaning, are right. They want to distance children from their mothers' laps, where they will be given a proper upbringing, and send them from the start to nurseries for strangers to train. They don't want true human beings to be produced, and it is in your laps that this can happen. They wish to prevent your children from being with you and thus prevent true human beings from being trained. (234)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordad 1358 AHS)

The importance of the family and the duty of the parents to prevent children from straying

The importance of the family and the duty of the parents to prevent children from straying

The noble soul of the Most Noble Messenger (peace be upon him and his descendants) is restless and afraid lest the tree of prophethood and Imamate shed its leaves and autumn sets in. The Prophet said: Marry and procreate and indeed I will be proud of you above all other nations.²

Forty Traditions, p. 147.

Your home must be a school, a place where your young ones are taught the principles of Islam, where they are refined morally. You must deliver well-bred, upright youngsters to the schoolteachers and they in turn must edify them further. (235)

10 May 1979 (20 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

This call to marry and the high commendation marriage has been given are to encourage marriage and discourage deviation and corruption. Through their teachings, the prophets aim to prevent the development of an unbridled carnal appetite and the establishment of centres of corruption and fornication, they do not seek to quash passions and carnal desires per se, for these are a natural part of man's nature and must be allowed to perform their purpose.

However, they are subject to restraints. If the teachings of the prophets were realised, then man would become complete in this world, and this gluttony, these injustices, these aggressions and class differences would not arise; in the next world too, which is the most important one, in that life which is eternal, his welfare would be assured. (236)

7 July 1979 (16 Tir 1358 AHS)

When goodness prevails in a society, the people brought up in it will be good, healthy individuals. A family whose members are all sound individuals will bring up sound children, unless, that is, these children enter a corrupt society, which in turn corrupts them.

This is only natural, for the nature of small children makes them very impressionable, and they can be easily influenced by good or bad. If they are brought up in a sound society, they will grow up to be sound individuals, on the other hand if society is corrupt, they will grow up to be corrupt too. (237)

1 July 1980 (10 Tir 1359 AHS)

It was you families who raised these brave youths in your laps, youths who made sacrifices for Islam. (238)

18 December 1980 (27 Azar 1359 AHS)

Our nation must give the situation of these individuals some consideration, the mothers and fathers of these young, misguided boys and girls must give a thought for their children and guide them. We only want what is best for you. (239)

22 June 1981 (1 Tir 1360 AHS)

Time and again I have advised these misguided young people and exhorted their mothers and fathers to counsel their children and prevent them from becoming tools in the hands of criminals. (240)

29 June 1981 (8 Tir 1360 AHS)

Mothers and fathers must give their children careful attention and mind what they do and what goes on with them. They should not allow these helpless girls to fall into their³ trap, these helpless boys to fall into their trap. They should counsel them, but if they pay no heed, then they should report them. (241)

10 August 1981 (19 Mordad 1360 AHS)

The role the family plays in the upbringing of children, in particular that of the mother for infants and the father for teenagers is a very sensitive one. If children are brought up well with salutary teachings in the laps of their mothers and in the care of dedicated fathers, then when they are sent to school, the work of the teachers is made much easier. Fundamentally, a child's training begins in the pure laps of mothers and in the care of fathers, and when a salutary, Islamic upbringing is imparted, this lays the foundations for commitment to the interests of the country and the country's independence and freedom. (242)

22 September 1981 (31 Shahrivar 1360 AHS)

The mothers and fathers of these innocent children, these inexperienced youth,⁴ must strive to save their beloved offspring from this peril, which threatens to destroy their lives in this world and the next. The crusading and committed nation must be vigilant and persevering and save the youth, who are the country's assets and valuable resources, from the evil of these American agents⁵ who wish to lead them astray. (243)

22 September 1981 (31 Shahrivar 1360 AHS)

Dedicated mothers and fathers should keep a close eye on their children and their comings and goings, so that, God forbid, they don't fall prey to the American-backed hypocrites and the Russian-backed deviators. They should involve themselves in their studies, for the role of the mothers and fathers in protecting their children during their school years is very important and valuable.

They must bear in mind that their children are at an age when they can be deceived by one misleading slogan, which can, God forbid, set them off down a path from which no one can turn them away. The

mothers and fathers must remember that they exert more influence than anyone else over their children, and can save them from being sucked into a maelstrom of ignorance and corruption. For this reason, parents should keep in contact with their children's teachers, helping them in this important affair and getting their help.

I hope these young people will secure our cultural, political, economic and military independence of tomorrow, will save us from the malice of the superpowers and be the founders of a real third world.
(244)

23 September 1982 (1 Mehr 1361 AHS)

Good conduct towards family members is recommended

Good conduct towards family members is recommended

Even though all mothers are exemplary, some exhibit special qualities (which put them above the rest). Throughout the course of my life with your respected mother, in my recollections of the nights she spent up with her children and the days she spent looking after them, I found her to have these qualities. So now I exhort you, my son,⁶ along with my other children, to strive in your service to her after my death and in obtaining her approval. Just as I see she is pleased with you now, strive harder in your service to her when I have gone.

Jilveha-yi Rahmani, p. 47

My son, let me say a few words about personal and family matters then bring this verbose disquisition to an end. My foremost exhortation to you is to respect the rights of your very faithful mother. One cannot count the many rights mothers have and they cannot be rightly fulfilled. One night of a mother's life with her child is worth more than a lifetime of a dedicated father's.

The affection and compassion that shine from a mother's radiant eyes hold a glimmer of the compassion and kindness of the Lord of the worlds. God the Blessed and Exalted has imbued the hearts and souls of mothers with the light of his own divine compassion such that none can describe and no one save the mothers can understand. And it is this everlasting compassion that has given mothers a heavenly-like tolerance in the face of suffering and hardship from the time of conception, throughout pregnancy, during childbirth and throughout the years of the child's life from infancy up to the end.

She endures hardship and suffering in a way that the father cannot endure even for one night. The tradition which says "Heaven is under the mother's feet"⁷ is absolutely true. It has been explained in such a subtle fashion because of the significance of the matter and to show children to search for happiness and the gardens of heaven under the blessed feet of their mothers, to respect them as they would Almighty God and to seek the approval and satisfaction of God the Most Holy in their approval and satisfaction.

And my last words of advice to Ahmad are to bring his children up well, to acquaint them with Islam from an early age, to take good care of his respected mother and to help all of his family and dependants. May God's peace be upon all the virtuous.

I ask all my kinsmen, especially my children, to forgive me for any failings, neglect or unfairness I may have shown them, and to pray that God will show me mercy and forgiveness, and He is the most merciful. I humbly ask God the Beneficent to grant my kinsfolk success in persevering in His way and following the path to happiness, and to bathe them in his extensive mercy.

And I exhort Ahmad, my son, to treat his kin, especially his sisters and his nephews and nieces, with love and affection, and to be good, generous, pleasant and respectful towards them. I exhort all my children to treat one another with kindness and generosity, to be of one mind and tread one path, the path of God and His deprived servants, for well-being and happiness in this world and the next can be found through this.

And to Husayn,⁸ who is the apple of my eye, I advise him not to neglect religious studies nor waste the talent God has given him, to treat his mother and sister with kindness and generosity, to disencumber himself from attachment to this world and to set out on the straight path of worship and servitude while still young.

In addition to greeting all the family members and relatives and asking them to show courtesy and tolerance towards one another, to harbour no fear and resort to no other policy, for that which Almighty God has preordained will come to pass, it is necessary to draw your⁹ attention to this point: if you seek Almighty God's approval and mine, then treat your mother, sisters, brother and relatives with unlimited kindness, for all are in need of your courtesies. I ask you to treat everyone well.

When I was being taken away I was told that the family could come with me if I so desired, again, here, this was repeated, but even though I would dearly love to see you all, I will not agree to your coming for I know how difficult it would be for you all and your respected mother here in a strange place.¹⁰ God willing, I will be taken care of here. (245)

4 November 1964 (13 Aban 1343 AHS)

Concerning your mother, sisters, Ahmad,¹¹ and other relatives, it is necessary for me to stress that God's approval and mine will be found in your good conduct towards them. Your mother is truly in need of your help; you must keep her happy in every respect, both materially and psychologically. Do not let her worry and provide for her comfort. (246)

10 November 1964 (19 Aban 1343 AHS)

I am sure there is no need to remind you to treat your mother and your dependants with the utmost kindness and affection, in particular oblige your mother, for that will please Almighty God. (247)

14 November 1964 (23 Aban 1343 AHS)

Complete texts of some of Imam's speeches about the role of the family and women in the training of the next generation

Complete texts of some of Imam's speeches about the role of the family and women in the training of the next generation

13 May 1979

Imam's speech on the sensitive role played by mothers in the upbringing of their children and consequently in the rectification or degeneration of society

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

You ladies have the honour of being mothers, which puts you ahead of the men. You have the responsibility for training children in your laps. The mother's lap is the first school a child has. A good mother brings up a good child, but, God forbid, if the mother is misguided, the child brought up in her lap will also be misguided. For children have a particular affection for their mothers, which they have for no one else, and when in their laps, all they wish for they find in their mothers, she is their everything. What she says, how she acts, her nature, all have an effect on a child.

When the child is in his mother's lap, which is his first class, if he is taught virtuousness, morality, goodness, he will grow up with a good nature, with that purity of spirit and goodness of deed that has been nurtured in him. While in her lap, the child will begin to imitate his mother, so that if he sees she is good-natured, her words and actions kind and good, he too will behave likewise. For his mother is the one he patterns himself on, and what she instils into him will prove the most effective training.

You bear the great responsibility for the training of your children from when they are very young and easily influenced, when they quickly pick up things they are taught, good or bad. Since in the beginning these children are raised in your care, you are the ones responsible for their actions. If you raise a good child, that child alone may secure the well-being of a nation, just as, God forbid, if you raise a bad child, he may be the cause of corruption in society. Do not think of your child as merely a child, one day, when he enters society, he may become a leader of the society and, if not brought up well, he could lead it into corruption.

Take the example of Iran's experience under the Pahlavis. Their corruption was not merely evident in the

fact that they stole our resources, or handed the country over to others with both hands, giving them whatever we had. No, for worse than this, they made others in this country corrupt like themselves, thieves like themselves, so that now when we want to find a healthy, upright individual we have to search for one, we have to grab a torch and search for someone who is sound, who is not a thief, who is trustworthy and honest, someone who would not betray his country.

Such individuals are today very scarce, the reason being that for fifty odd years these people led this country and wreaked havoc on it, and because they themselves were corrupt, those in their circle also became corrupt as did others close to them. The blight started at the top and spread down to the lower levels until corruption permeated everywhere, such that today there is a scarcity of sound, morally upright individuals in our country.

There are a few, but only a few, and this is because for over fifty years the Pahlavis impaired our human resources, damaged them in a way that they did not damage our national resources, those they simply stole. It was the human resources that were the important ones. If a person, a shah, or a state leader is a morally refined, sound individual, then those around him will also be good people and their good deeds will, in turn, encourage others to act likewise. At one time you may see that if for twenty years a righteous ruler holds sway, then in that time a whole country can be made righteous and just.

The reason why we insist on having an 'Islamic' republic is that Islam seeks to create morally refined individuals. The Qur'an is a book designed to create true human beings, the prophets came to ameliorate mankind, [and] they had no other task but this. Throughout their lives, the great prophets and the Immaculate Imams (upon whom be peace) strove to educate the people. God the Blessed and Exalted sent the prophets to purify and reform mankind.

If a person who leads a community, a mullah who leads a community, is a reformed, righteous individual, the community too will become a righteous one, for the people take their example from him. If a government is a sound, righteous one, the people too will become righteous, for they take their cue from them. This process must begin in the laps of you mothers, with your children.

Your children must be trained well; they must be given a sound, Islamic education while they are in your care. For it is to your apron strings they cling, it is you they follow around, your moves they watch and your words they hear. So let them not hear a lie from you lest in the future they become liars. For surely, if they hear lies from you and then from their fathers, they will become liars, but if they see that both are good, morally sound people, then they will become the same.

When you deliver such children to the school system, if there they are taught by sound teachers, then when they leave the system and enter society they will make society a sound, morally upright one. God willing you ladies will at some time become teachers, and those of you who are not mothers already will be so in the future, God willing.

In your role as mothers you should bring your children up well, in your role as teachers you should train

them well and hand over to society sound, upright individuals and in so doing create a sound society. If, God forbid, the opposite is the case, you too will suffer as a result, just as in the same way you will benefit from any good deed they do, for you are the source of that good deed. There is a reckoning, either a penalty or a reward. If, God forbid, you hand over corrupt individuals to society and they perform corrupt deeds, you will suffer as a result.

I ask God, the Blessed and Exalted, to grant all you ladies and gentlemen success, health and happiness.

Peace be upon you and also the mercy and blessings of God. (248)

13 May 1979 (23 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

26 May 1979

Imam's address to a gathering of ladies from the families of scholars at the theological school in Qum

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

"O Apostle! Sufficient unto thee is God and those who follow thee among the believers," (Qur'an 8:64).

Such pride this verse evokes in the believers, such a responsibility it brings for them. It evokes pride because although God the Blessed and Exalted alone is sufficient and one in His omnipotence, everyone else being insignificant compared to Him, He gave the believers, and this includes the women, the honour of mentioning their name alongside His own blessed name and telling the Prophet that He and the believers, those who follow him, both male and female, are enough for him: *"Sufficient unto thee is God and those who follow thee among the believers."*

What an honour this is for us, for the believers, for you devout ladies, to be mentioned in the same line as God, and what a responsibility this brings for us all. In this verse, God the Blessed and Exalted is telling us that we must protect Islam, the Noble Prophet of Islam and all those associated with him, and we must uphold the laws and aims of Islam. We have been commissioned to protect God's religion, to uphold divine aims.

You believing women, who are from the families of religious scholars, who are from the household of prophecy, you more than anyone else have a fundamental role to play in upholding the aims of Islam. God has favoured us by saying that along with Him, we should protect the religion of Islam. *"Sufficient unto thee is God and those who follow thee among the believers."*

Respected ladies! You are all responsible; we are all responsible. You are responsible for the upbringing of the children; you have the duty of nurturing virtuous children in your care to hand over to society. We all have this duty, but it is in your care that they receive a better upbringing. A mother's lap is the best school for a child. You have a responsibility towards your children, towards your country; you can train

your children so that one day they make the country flourish. You can train children to uphold the aims of the prophets.

You yourselves must be both guardians and the trainers of guardians, for your children are the next custodians. Train them well. Your homes must be places where children are given both religious instruction and formal learning, where they are taught moral edification. The future of these children is the responsibility of the mothers and fathers, but that of the mothers is greater. They are honoured more than the fathers, the mother's influence on the child's psychology is greater than the father's.

You are responsible; we are all responsible; God, the Blessed and Exalted, has made us all responsible and has said in this noble verse: *"Sufficient unto thee is God and those who follow thee among the believers."* Those among the believers who follow Islam, who follow the Messenger of Islam, these are the people who are sufficient for the Messenger.

This is a great responsibility which all the people, all the followers, all those who follow the Messenger must undertake. This mark *"Sufficient unto thee is God and those who follow thee among the believers,"* must be on their foreheads. They must protect God's religion, Islam and the Most Noble Qur'an.

They must not tremble in the face of these impotent insurrections that these inhuman elements create in Iran, nor fear these feeble insurrectionists who assassinate people thinking they can terrorise the nation. Our nation will never be intimidated by such tactics and our movement will never be assassinated.

By assassinating individuals they will not be able to assassinate the movement. Our movement is rooted even without such personalities as the late Muthahari,^{[12](#)} Mr. Hashemi^{[13](#)} and others. God the Blessed and Exalted and those who follow the Prophet from among the believers are sufficient, the nation is sufficient. Our nation has found its way, there is no fear, we will never allow these assassinations to intimidate us, nor will we return to the past or permit the East or West to ever again interfere in the affairs of our country.

May God keep you believing women who participated greatly in the Islamic movement and who are now helping the needy. Your help is very valuable. The ladies' help is several times more valuable than that of men.

May God protect you, may He keep you so that you may carry on your job of training human beings, a job that the prophets were also assigned.

May God's peace be upon you all, and also His mercy. (249)

26 May 1979 (5 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

11 June 1979

Imam's address to a group of ladies from Dezful

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

As you yourselves now say, you ladies are teachers. You have two noble occupations, two very noble jobs. One is to raise your children well, which is much more important than all other jobs. If you hand over one good individual to society, this is better for you than owning the whole world. I cannot describe how honourable it is for you to bring up your children to be virtuous human beings.

So one of your jobs is to bring up good children. It is in the laps of mothers that true human beings must be produced, for the first stage of their education is in the laps of their mothers. The affection a child feels for his mother is greater than any other, none can compare with the love that exists between a child and his mother.

Children learn better from their mothers; they are influenced more by their mothers than they are by their fathers, teachers or lecturers. While your children are in your laps give them an Islamic upbringing, teach them to be upright human beings so that when you send them to primary school you send sound, morally upright and well-behaved children.

So one of your jobs is to educate your children. Unfortunately, during the rule of the *taghut*, they tried to take this profession away from these mothers, so they propagated views that questioned the woman's role as a mother, they disparaged this noble occupation and made it seem unimportant in the eyes of the mothers. For they wanted to distance the mothers from their children, they wanted the children to be brought up in nurseries and the mothers to go doing the things they wanted them to do.

A child brought up in a nursery is not the same as one raised in his mother's lap. When a child is brought up in a nursery by strangers without his mother's care and affection, he will develop a complex. Much of the corruption from which society suffers stems from these children who have grown up with a complex. Major complexes are created when a child is separated from his mother. A child needs his mother's affection, therefore this profession, which was also the profession of the prophets, for they too came to make true human beings, is your primary one: to give your child his primary training.

Another honourable profession has also been assigned to you, for you are also teachers and the responsibility this job brings with it is as great as the honour. As teachers, your job is to develop man, the same task that the prophets were assigned. The prophets, from the first to the last, came to train and develop mankind; indeed this is the whole point of their coming.

The Most Noble Messenger was a teacher of man, as was *Hazrat* Amir (Imam `Ali, upon whom be peace) after him. Their teachings are meant for the whole of mankind whereas you teach only a portion, your profession is the same as theirs, only on a smaller scale, their teachings are far more extensive.

So this profession of yours is also a very honourable one, and the responsibility it carries with it is very great, in the same way as the responsibility of the prophets was very great in their task to develop man, a task which they accomplished. Your profession is the profession of the prophets, it is a very

honourable one and your responsibilities the same.

You must be mindful of giving these children in your care a religious upbringing, a moral upbringing. If you hand over one committed, virtuous child to society you may see that one day he is the one who reforms society, for it is possible for one individual to reform society.

Likewise if, God forbid, this child leaves your laps an unscrupulous individual, if he leaves the care of you who are teachers an immoral person, then it is possible that he will corrupt society, and you will be the ones responsible. If you train your children properly, it will bring with it honour such that likens to that the prophets enjoyed. If, on the other hand, you bring your children up to be immoral, God forbid, they could possibly corrupt a whole society.

May God protect you and grant you happiness. May you be good teachers for your children and for the girls who come to you for training, God willing.

Peace be upon you and also the mercy and blessings of God. (250)

11 June 1979 (21 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

16 March 1981

Imam's address to a group of ladies

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Greetings to you great women who through your counsel wish to lead us to the right path. Greetings to the ladies throughout the country who acted as teachers to the men during this noble movement, and who remain so today. Foreign hands tried to turn these esteemed members of society, in whose capable hands the sound structure of countries rest, to turn you ladies, who have the job of building Iran and building the men, into dolls and playthings in the hands of corrupt individuals.

However, praise be to God, they did not succeed. The plan was this: to induce these influential members of society, from whose laps spring influential men and women, to stop caring for their children themselves and to place them instead in nurseries and other such places, thus depriving these mothers of their right to exercise their motherly duties and love to the full, and keeping these children from their mothers' supervision. In this way they could prevent children from being trained in their mothers' laps and from becoming individuals who would act for their country and for beloved Islam.

Through the ignominious scheme for the unveiling of women devised during the reign of that dim-witted thug Riza Khan, they conspired to change this beloved segment of the population whose role it is to develop society, into one that would corrupt society. And their plan was not aimed only at you ladies. It also sought to corrupt the young men too by luring them into centres of corruption, and by training them in such a way that were their country to fall into the hands of others they would remain indifferent or even assist in its capitulation.

If this movement, this Islamic revolution, had achieved nothing other than the transformation that has taken place in our women and our youth, this alone would have been enough for our country. There are individuals around who like to tell people that this revolution has achieved nothing. They are people who sneer at this transformation, which has taken place in you because it is detrimental to them and to the plundering powers.

Through their malicious propaganda they try to make you believe that nothing has changed. But what better demonstrates that change than a gathering such as this where you ladies are present, than the moral agenda you have set yourselves or the unqualified trouble you go to for the needy and homeless? If this were the time of the former regime, then such gatherings would not take place, nor would the all-encompassing activities of the ladies who form one half of Iran's population and who educate the other half.

The role of the women in society is much more important than that of the men, for in addition to being active members of society in all fields, the ladies also raise active members. A mother's service to the community is much greater than that of a teacher, indeed of anyone else. And this is what the prophets wanted, they wanted women to be people who train society and bestow upon the community lion-hearted men and women.

Those who sought to deprive this country of all its gifts, of Islam, morals and good deeds, and drag the people into centres of corruption, now see as you enter society and serve society that their plans for you and the men have come to naught. For this reason, they are raising their voices, insisting that nothing has happened, that the situation is just as it was under the former regime and nothing has changed from the time of Riza Khan and his son.

This is mere propaganda, which contradicts what is evident to all the men and women throughout the country, that a change has occurred in the people and in the value systems prevalent in Islamic countries, particularly Iran. For whereas under the former regime one's consequence and standing were measured by obnoxious make-up, by what one wore and in what kind of house one lived, the values found today in Islamic countries, particularly in Iran, are human, moral values.

These values have come about because of the change that has taken place in the ladies. Those who once liked to show off amongst the female community with their costly clothes and pernicious make-up are now condemned and stand shamefaced. In those days, our Muslim ladies were embarrassed wearing Islamic dress, and the deprived classes who observed the Islamic dress code felt ashamed of the way they dressed before the affluent, but corrupt, classes. Today the opposite is true, and now one of those people who once put on such corrupt displays of make-up and dress would be ashamed in your midst.

This transformation is the greatest to take place in our society. Those of our women who were typical of the Muhammad Riza and Riza Khan era have now returned to being Zaynab-like women and followers

of Fatima. In those days, they were followers of European fashion waiting for the latest designs to arrive; today they are followers of a school of thought and accept that which Islam approves of.

This is the greatest transformation to take place in our society, make sure it lasts. Be alert so that corrupt hands, corrupt pens and corrupt words cannot deceive you and return you to your former state. Pursue this path, all of you, you millions of men and women, pursue this path as you are doing and do not pay any attention to what they say or write.

Think for yourselves; don't simply bow to the ideas of others. Try to be useful for your country, guide the men and counsel the statesmen. Be good mothers for your children, good advisers to society and hard workers for the needy, as, praise God, you already are. You are already active throughout the country doing things that need doing. You are taking care of children who have no refuge, helping the needy and homeless, comforting them and showing them kindness. This is a great service, which carries much merit before God, the Blessed and Exalted.

May God guide all the ladies and men to this straight path, which you ladies are now following. May the other segments of Iran's population also follow that same right path which you are now treading sincerely and without a thought to self-indulgence. The nation must realise that this kind of talk and the mistakes government officials sometimes make are not significant enough to harm our Islamic Republic.

I ask God, the Blessed and Exalted, to quickly bring an end to these disagreements which exist among people in the different echelons of society, from the country's officials down to the ordinary people, so that everyone together can work towards leading this country to the straight path, to making it flourish and to promoting Islamic and human morals in all segments of the population.

My advice to all sections of society, whether the ladies, the youth or the men, is that they must not think they have to differ with one another over the issues which arise in Iran. The differences that arise among those in the upper echelons will be solved, God willing, but if you start fanning the flames of this dissension, you may actually be preventing a solution from being found.

You, the masses, must remain united and not pay any attention to these problems, which arise among the officials. Always be mindful of the fact that it is your ideological unity which can bring happiness and well-being to this society, and that disunity can perhaps, God forbid, lead to the special favour God has bestowed upon you being taken away and your country becoming once again that which it was and which for so many long years you had to suffer.

If disagreements arise among the people which lead, God forbid, to us being defeated in the war or to it being prolonged, the blame will lie with those who fan the flames of these disagreements and who create unrest in the streets and the bazaar. Muslims, believers and those committed to God the Blessed and Exalted should pay no heed to these elements in society who are the remnants of the former regime, or to corrupt individuals among the people, for they simply want to push you into the arms of the West or East. Be vigilant and take pains to solve the differences yourselves. Urge the quarrelling parties to settle

their disputes.

I ask God, the Blessed and Exalted, for the happiness and well being of the Islamic nations, for you ladies, for all the Muslim women and all segments of the population. I beseech God the Blessed and Exalted to grant victory to the armies of Islam over the forces of unbelief. May God grant you all happiness and success in helping your fellow man.

Peace be upon you and also the mercy and blessings of God. (251)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

- [1.](#) – A saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his descendants).
- [2.](#) – See Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, Book on Marriage, Chapter 1, the Preliminaries of Marriage, Narrative 17.
- [3.](#) – Referring to deviatory groups who tried to lead young people astray with their untruthful claims.
- [4.](#) – Referring to those youth deceived by the false claims of deviatory groups.
- [5.](#) – Referring to the deviatory and anti-revolutionary groups.
- [6.](#) – Imam here is addressing his son, the now deceased Hajj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeini.
- [7.](#) – A saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his descendants).
- [8.](#) – Referring to Sayyid Husayn Khomeini, the son of Imam's late son, Hajj Sayyid Mustafa Khomeini.
- [9.](#) – Imam is addressing his son, Hajj Sayyid Mustafa Khomeini, who was martyred in 1977.
- [10.](#) – The city of Bursa in Turkey, where Imam spent the first months of his period in exile.
- [11.](#) – Referring to the late Hajj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeini.
- [12.](#) – Referring to the martyr Murtaza Mutahhari who was martyred on 2 May 1979 (11 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS) by the terrorist group Furqan.
- [13.](#) – Hujjat al-Islam wal Muslimin `Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on whose life an attempt was made in 1979 (1358 AHS) by the terrorist group Furqan.

The role of women in the victory of the Islamic revolution

The transformation undergone by women during the Islamic revolution

The transformation undergone by women during the Islamic revolution

A spiritual transformation took place, a change in attitude. With tenacious resolve, all segments of the population, from small children to older men, from small girls to older women, rose up together obeying the call to *"rise up for God, it may be in pairs or it may be singly"* (Qur'an 34:46), and stood fast. (252)

11 May 1979 (21 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

In a short period of time, a people whose wont it was to haggle with one another in all transactions underwent a transformation and began to act benevolently towards each other. One of the gentlemen said that during the demonstrations he saw a woman holding a bowl of coins in her hand. At first he presumed she was a poor beggar, but as he got closer to her he heard her saying that she had brought the coins along because the demonstrators may need to make telephone calls and as everywhere was closed that day they may have difficulty finding change. This was a small, but great act; it showed that a transformation had taken place the magnitude of which was great indeed. (253)

31 May 1979 (10 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

This was a transformation that a human being could not bring about, this was a divine transformation; He who changes hearts did this. He removed the fear of this regime, which all the people harboured, from their hearts and put in its place determination and bravery, such that women and children as well as men all rose up to fight.

Has there ever been such a time when women rushed into the fray like this, standing fast before tanks and cannons? This was a spiritual transformation that God the Blessed and Exalted brought about in this nation and so long as we preserve this and the nature of the movement, we will be victorious. (254)

16 June 1979 (26 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

This transformation that Iran underwent was sweeping. It was a spiritual transformation, a change in attitude which God, the Blessed and Exalted, wrought in you people. This change has come about because of this Islamic movement, and as a consequence we see that today the subjects broached by the speaker of you ladies from the coast are current affairs, current political and social affairs, and the same is true of other ladies in other parts of the country.

I hope that you ladies and brothers, all our brothers and sisters, endeavour to preserve this transformation making it a permanent one, and that you involve yourselves in the political and social issues which concern you. (255)

3 July 1979 (12 Tir 1358 AHS)

Such an effect it has on the morale of the farmers when they see the women leaving their homes in Europe and Iran, when they see young men and women leaving their colleges, universities and centres of learning, as shown on television last night, to pour into the countryside and help them on the farms.

How grand it makes them feel to see those helping them comprise doctors and engineers. This is a very valuable service. And now you too say you are ready to help. Previously your hearts were not so inclined, you were not concerned with such affairs. Who has brought about this change of heart? [It is] God who is the changer of hearts. (256)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

Our sisters, who were previously occupied with other matters, today shoulder-to-shoulder with the brothers, indeed leading the brothers, concern themselves with the destiny of their people and their country. They make plans, form views and criticise. This is a change that God the Blessed and Exalted, who is the changer of hearts, has brought about. (257)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

Ladies whose previous situation was quite different, whom the monarchical regime distracted and preoccupied with other problems, underwent a transformation and became women who stood up to the regime and who shoulder-to-shoulder with the brothers, or rather at the forefront of the brothers, participated in this movement. These changes are nothing short of a miracle.

Another change has also occurred. Today, a group of young people, young men and women who had come from Europe, came to see me and said they had returned to Iran to go into the rural areas and help people there. Young people whose minds were previously occupied with other things have today turned their attention to such matters, and so they return from Europe, from abroad, so that they can go to the countryside and help the villagers there.

The same is true of the young people within the country. Physicians, engineers, men and women alike, are leaving the universities and going into the villages to help out there. This newfound spirit of co-operation signifies a miraculous change, one which God the Blessed and Exalted has wrought in the people. (258)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

This is a change that came about in everyone and led to our respected brothers and sisters feeling a sense of responsibility. This in turn brought you all out into the streets and with your cries you drove your enemy out. This was your direct involvement in politics. (259)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

I am delighted that such a change has occurred in all segments of the population in Iran. Nowadays one sees educated people from all over helping in this Crusade for Reconstruction (*Jihad-i Sazandegi*), and this applies particularly to the ladies. Only today I listened to some of them being interviewed and they said they are out working from dawn until dusk. This denotes that a change has taken place. They are eagerly working for the people because they feel that this is the right thing to do, and most certainly you feel the same way. (260)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

They (the farmers) had never seen anything like it before: a group of ladies from the provincial cities joining them to reap the crops; they had never even imagined such a thing. When they witness such humaneness – which has developed under the auspices of Islam, indeed worldly powers could not have

brought this about, this is a transformation wrought by Islam in the human spirit – it so gladdens their hearts that they find renewed strength and work even harder. A human and spiritual transformation has taken place that is reassuring. (261)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

The young people, who at that time were drawn to Shemiran¹ and the goings-on there, are now drawn to the areas where the Crusade for Reconstruction is active. These young people, those women who at that time were indifferent to the welfare of their country, who were indifferent towards everything, entered the arena and we saw how well they too could carry out their duties. (262)

18 September 1979 (27 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

I can see that an amazing transformation has taken place in the female community, one that is much more pronounced than that which has taken place in the men, and the extent to which this respected community has served Islam during this period exceeds the service the men have rendered. (263)

31 December 1979 (10 Dey 1358 AHS)

Through the blessings of Islam, the Islamic movement has brought about such a change in the spirit of the men and women of our society that they have travelled a road in one night that would have normally taken a hundred years to travel. You noble people witnessed for yourselves how the respected, committed women of Iran entered the arena ahead of the men to free the country from the trammels of imperial rule. We are all indebted to them for their uprising and their efforts. (264)

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibehisht 1359 AHS)

Recall how it was when that transformation occurred, when all devilish inclinations and desires were lost on practically all of those who entered the arena, on women, men, women with babes in arms, on the young and old alike. Remember how you were when you went onto the rooftops and shouted *Allahu Akbar* (God is the Greater) while the devils around you trained their sights on you.

Remember how you were when you poured into the streets, confronting those who had no fear of God and who sought to crush you under their tanks. Remember that spirit you had, this is found when God is your helper, when everything you do is for God, when your actions are for God, when you are the Hand of God. And at that time this is what you were, these people, these groups of people who acted in unison, they were the Hand of God: “the Hand of God is with the group.”² Remember that spirit and preserve it. (265)

29 May 1980 (8 Khurdad 1359 AHS)

If this movement, this Islamic revolution, had achieved nothing other than the transformation that has taken place in our women and our youth, this alone would have been enough for our country. (266)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

I am proud of these honourable women of Iran and the change they have wrought in themselves, a change that has brought to naught the devilish plans which the foreign strategists and their dishonourable stooges, from the profligate poets to the venal writers and propaganda organisations, have spent more than fifty years trying to bring to maturity.

They have proved that the worthy Muslim women (of Iran) will not be misled and will not be hurt by the malicious machinations of the West and of those infatuated with the West. Even with all the propaganda which was trumpeted over those propaganda loudspeakers throughout the usurper reign of the Pahlavis, apart from a handful of affluent *taghuti* women, agents of SAVAK and people affiliated to them, millions of committed women from other segments of the population did not fall into the trap of those who had surrendered themselves to the West, and throughout the benighted fifty years, standing proud before God and mankind, they bravely resisted the onslaught. Consequently, through this recent, divinely inspired change which has taken place, the hopes of the undiscerning, who regard the West as their *qibla*, have been dashed forever. (267)

24 April 1981 (4 Urdibehisht 1360 AHS)

That which was more significant than anything else in Iran was the change, which took place in the Iranian women. (268)

23 May 1981 (2 Khordad 1360 AHS)

They led our women, a number of them that is, to the wrong path and as things were going it seemed that number would increase. However, God the Blessed and Exalted showed us His favour and saved us from the fate the arrogant powers and their lackeys had in mind for us. He saved our women and today they are immersed in God's limitless grace, even though perhaps they themselves are unaware of these great divine blessings He has bestowed upon them. (269)

21 March 1983 (1 Farvardin 1362 AHS)

A transformation occurred in our youth which took them from the cabarets to the field of battle against the unbelievers, from the centres of corruption to the centres of righteousness, prayer and blessings, and in our women who have suffered so much oppression but who are today busy throughout the country teaching, learning and striving in the way of God. (270)

17 August 1983 (26 Mordad 1362 AHS)

We cannot begin to describe how valuable the service is that this Islam, which has been revived in Iran, has done for the ladies and will continue to do for them. Had this revolution not occurred, had this change, this transformation, not come about in Iran, then in a few years' time there would be no trace of Islamic morals in Iran. (271)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardin 1363 AHS)

Compare our women now with how they were then. Our women have become religious. (272)

27 August 1984 (5 Shahrivar 1363 AHS)

Have the women in Iran stepped aside completely, or are they working shoulder-to-shoulder with the men on development projects? Do you³ want the women here too to be unrestrained, to be able to act in whatever way they like? This is contrary to the transformation, which has occurred in the women, it contradicts the change that has taken place in our country and our people. (273)

10 February 1986 (21 Bahman 1364 AHS)

Women at the forefront of the movement encouraging the men

Women at the forefront of the movement encouraging the men

You courageous women were and continue to be in the vanguard of our triumph. (274)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

You ladies have proved that you are in the vanguard of the movement, you have proved that you lead the men, men get their inspiration from you, the men of Iran have learnt lessons from the honourable ladies of Iran and the men of Qum have learnt lessons from you dear ladies. You are in the vanguard of the movement. (275)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

They are in the front line because the men are made brave by them, are emboldened by their struggles. (276)

6 April 1979 (17 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

You ladies here have proved that you are at the forefront of this movement. You have a great share in our Islamic movement. The future of our country depends on your support. (277)

10 April 1979 (21 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

May God keep you all. This victory has come to us first and foremost because of the women rather than the men. Our respected women were in the front line. (278)

12 April 1979 (23 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

The men found strength and courage because of our dear women. We are indebted to you ladies for your pains, and you are all, as indeed all the people are, in my prayers. (279)

12 April 1979 (23 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

I thank you respected ladies who took part in this movement shoulder-to-shoulder with your brothers, or, more accurately who led them. I hope you will once again be in the front line and will take this movement to its culmination so that, God willing, an Islamic government will be established and all segments of the population, all the deprived, will attain the rights that are legitimately theirs. May God protect you and keep you for Islam and the Muslims. (280)

24 April 1979 (4 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

The great name of the Iranian nation has been established internationally for its political development. The great name of Qum has gone down in the history of the Iranian nation for its political development, its activism and its self-sacrifice. The great name of Chahar Mardan⁴ has gone down in the history of the world for its devotion and self-sacrifice.

The great name of the Iranian ladies, the great name of the ladies of Qum and the great name of the ladies of Chahar Mardan have gone down (in history). The ladies of Qum and Chahar Mardan spearheaded this Islamic movement. They proved their political maturity; they led the movement. You, the ladies, are the leaders of our movement; we follow you. I accept your leadership and am at your service. (281)

25 April 1979 (5 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Our movement is indebted to them. The men poured into the streets after the women; the women encouraged the men; they formed the vanguard. Women are creatures who can destroy a power that seems everlasting, a demonic power. (282)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Stand together all of you, all of you must stick together. You play an important part in this movement, one can even go so far as to say that it was the ladies who took this movement forward because they poured into the streets even though they were not expected to do so. This dispelled any fears the men may have had, it emboldened them to see the women doing something, it gave them courage. It was you who gave Islam this victory; you participated in this triumph. Keep on participating. (283)

1 June 1979 (11 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

I thank you respected ladies who have travelled far to come and see me. May God grant you all happiness and well being. I thank you for being at the forefront of this movement. The ladies of Iran were in the vanguard of this movement, like the ladies in the early days of Islam, and it was taken forward because of them. I hope you will continue to advance this movement even further. (284)

18 June 1979 (28 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

The ladies who have come here have a great part to play in this movement, they are partners or rather one should say they are the leaders. (285)

2 July 1979 (11 Tir 1358 AHS)

We are indebted to the ladies much more than we are their brave men folks. The ladies in Iran played a great role, for when they came out into the streets the men were spurred on, their morale strengthened two-fold, nay several-fold, even though they had nothing save the power of faith. (286)

25 August 1979 (3 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

I hope that you ladies who always spearheaded this movement, guiding the other ladies and making others stronger in the process, will be successful, happy and healthy, God willing. I hope that just as you have reached this stage through unity of purpose and the power of faith, so too, hereafter, you all, all the nation, will promote Islam step by step, so that eventually all our affairs are handled in conformance with the decrees of Islam. Peace be upon you all. (287)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

When you ladies came into the streets and entered the battle arenas, it gave the men renewed strength and boosted their morale. You have a great part to play in this movement and we are still only half way there. (288)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

We must thank the ladies who were steadfast in this movement and who helped the nation greatly. It was these women who spurred on the men and renewed their strength several-fold when they spilled out into the streets and alleys crying out. Thus, in addition to making themselves stronger, they made others stronger too. (289)

10 October 1979 (18 Mehr 1358 AHS)

Women are sometimes observed taking part in the Crusade for Reconstruction. Of course, they are not able to work like a farmer or like people who are accustomed to such tasks, but the very fact that they have joined the farmers and are helping to the best of their ability is enough to spur the farmers on and give them several times the strength.

When they see these female students and these respected ladies are willing to come from the towns and cities to help their brothers in the villages, it has an encouraging effect on them. The action of these ladies is a very valuable one, even though it may not produce much in terms of volume, its psychological value is very great. (290)

10 October 1979 (18 Mehr 1358 AHS)

You sisters played a worthy role in this movement. You helped in everything, leading the men and making them strong. I thank you for this. (291)

12 October 1979 (20 Mehr 1358 AHS)

You went through a great deal of hardship, may God keep you all. All these men and women of this country, in particular the ladies, who were in the front line of this movement and suffered much hardship so that Islam could be brought into effect, they all wanted an Islamic republic to be established, divine justice to be implemented. (292)

16 December 1979 (25 Azar 1358 AHS)

The service the men performed also owes much to the service rendered by the women. Men have a certain sensitivity where women are concerned, so if they see women leaving their homes to fulfil a certain aim, they are encouraged and made stronger by this. This is what happened in our country. The women left their homes and shoulder-to-shoulder with the men, or rather ahead of them, struggled and suffered for this Islamic cause, giving their young ones, their husbands and their brothers and yet continuing to struggle, to act and to support Islam. And the men, many of them following in their footsteps, did the same. (293)

31 December 1979 (10 Dey 1358 AHS)

You noble people saw for yourselves how the esteemed and committed women of Iran entered the arena ahead of the men and destroyed the great imperial barrier. We are all indebted to them for rising up and taking action. (294)

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibehisht 1359 AHS)

This movement rose from the soul of the masses, the soul of the ordinary men and women, and just as the men entered the arena, so too did the esteemed ladies. Indeed one must say that they played a greater part in this movement than the men; they made more effort. For when the ladies take action, it spurs the men on, it doubles their strength or even bolsters it ten-fold, because men cannot simply stand by and watch as the women take action. (295)

12 July 1980 (21 Tir 1359 AHS)

The ladies do not come out (into the streets) and risk their lives and those of their children for some personal benefit or position. It is Islam and the Qur'an, which brings them out and into the political scene alongside, or rather ahead of, the men. (296)

12 July 1980 (21 Tir 1359 AHS)

These commentators should realise the profundity of what has taken place in Iran. When during these

past fifty years, or these past ten or twenty years which are easier for you to remember, can you recall a time when women entered the battlefield along with the men and began leading the men? (297)

12 July 1980 (21 Tir 1359 AHS)

A nation whose women stand in the front line for advancing the aims of Islam will not be harmed. (298)

18 August 1980 (27 Mordad 1359 AHS)

I thank you esteemed ladies who have travelled great distances from the border regions to be here today. I hope that just as hitherto you have been determined in your efforts to bring to fruition the plans of the Islamic Republic, so too from here on you will maintain that resolve and with serried ranks in front of the men you will be active in advancing the aims of Islam. (299)

19 August 1980 (28 Mordad 1359 AHS)

If the role of the women was not greater than that of the men, it was certainly no less. Their presence on the various fields of battle made the faint-hearted strong and doubled the strength of the strong. And you yourselves can vouch for the fact that the role of you ladies throughout this Islamic movement, this Islamic revolution, has been greater. For you were both active yourselves and inspired the men to be active too. You have been a source of pride and it is much appreciated. (300)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardin 1363 AHS)

If a number of women enter an arena, let us say a war arena, then in addition to the fighting they do, they also act as inspiration for the men, emboldening them. For where women are concerned men are very sensitive. It is not the case that if they embark on a defence (of their country), they do so alone, no, they defend, but they also inspire others to take part in that defence. Men are sensitive where women are concerned.

If a man sees a hundred men being killed, he may not be moved, but if he sees one woman, even a woman who is a stranger to him, being treated disrespectfully, his sensitivity will force him to react. Thus your spearheading role in all affairs, including matters of defence, *jihad* and assisting in the war effort, will encourage the men to do more, it will embolden them. (301)

2 March 1985 (11 Isfand 1363 AHS)

. . . Hitherto we have been successful in our aims, and we attribute much of that success to the service rendered by you ladies, and for that we are deeply indebted to you. You are the ones who, in addition to the activities you yourselves carry out, redouble the activities of the men. You are the ones who suffered psychological torture during the *taghut* era.

Praise be to God, with your strength and your commitment you expunged this devilish force from the

pages of history and stopped the plans they were brewing up from being realised. God knows that if it were not for this movement and the efforts of the Iranian people, women and men, young and old alike, this nation would have lost everything. (302)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

The women's brave presence in the demonstrations and their participation in the movement

The women's brave presence in the demonstrations and their participation in the movement

I humbly express my devotion to all classes of the nation, particularly to the women who continue to play a very worthy role in this movement. I see the ladies as being in the vanguard of this movement and I have said repeatedly that they have done more than anyone for Islam, especially the ladies from the southern areas of Tehran who are the motivators of the Islamic uprising and the leaders of the other classes.

From unpublished documents at the Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works (may God grant him peace), No. 246

There is no doubt that when a nation awakes, when even its women rise up against the government and against the oppressors, it will be victorious, if God so wills. (303)

9 January 1978 (19 Dey 1356 AHS)

Triumphant is the nation whose esteemed ladies even demonstrate, clad in *hijab*, to declare their hatred of the Shah's regime. (304)

22 January 1978 (2 Bahman 1356 AHS)

You men and women of history must prove to the world and the future generations the validity of perseverance in the way of crushing tyrants and defending truth. (305)

6 October 1978 (14 Mehr 1357 AHS)

Today our lion-hearted women snatch up their infants and go to confront the machine guns and tanks of the regime. Where in history has such valiant and self-sacrificing behaviour by women been recorded? (306)

12 October 1978 (20 Mehr 1357 AHS)

Question: What does the active participation of women in the revolution actually mean?

Reply: The Shah's jails are full of lion-hearted women. In the street demonstrations, our women held their young ones close to their chests and fearing neither tanks, cannons nor machine guns, entered the fray. The political meetings, which women hold in the various cities of Iran, are not few in number. They have played a very valuable role in our struggle. The memory of the sacrifices made by heroic women throughout history and their valour has been brought alive by these brave mothers of the children of Islam. Where in history can you find their like? In which country? (307)

11 November 1978 (20 Aban 1357 AHS)

You trained your bayonets on the people, but still they came out making shields of their chests. Children came out; women came out; women clutching their small children in their arms came out joining the ranks of the people. (308)

9 December 1978 (18 Azar 1357 AHS)

Now is not the time for silence, now is the time for action. No one must keep silent, no matter what position or post they may hold. You can see for yourselves how the women cry out; how the men cry out, these cries of the people, they are your support. May God reward these people for their efforts, if it weren't for them, we would not have taken action. They force us to act. (309)

2 February 1979 (13 Bahman 1357 AHS)

We are all indebted to the courage of you lion-hearted women. (310)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

We all have a part in this movement and you ladies have a greater part. (311)

13 April 1979 (24 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

I would like to thank everyone particularly these esteemed ladies who always made sacrifices to bring our movement to fruition and who continue to advance its aims. May God adorn all of you with dignity and may He exalt Islam. (312)

25 April 1979 (5 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

. . . It is a miracle that the ladies confronted tanks, cannons and machine guns, fearing nothing. This is the light of the Qur'an and Islam that has appeared in your hearts and the hearts of the entire Iranian nation. It is the light of faith that stops you ladies from fearing martyrdom. (313)

6 May 1979 (16 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

I thank the dear sisters who have gathered here and who support the movement with their demonstrations. May God protect you and keep you for Islam. You have played a great role in this

movement and continue to do so. It is you who must bring it to fruition, and this you will do. (314)

6 May 1979 (16 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

I thank you for not being remiss in our movement, for rising up shoulder-to-shoulder with the men and for helping the poor. (315)

10 May 1979 (20 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

You ladies, ladies everywhere in Iran, particularly the ladies of Qum, play a role in this movement and shoulder-to-shoulder with the men helped in our struggle against despotism and imperialism. May God keep you all. (316)

10 May 1979 (20 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

We saw that it was you who were active members of our society, who did this movement a great service. It was you who dressed the way you are here now, [5](#) poured into the streets and helped our movement. (317)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

We all saw what role the women played in this movement. History has witnessed great women in the world and what it means to be a woman, but history is remote. We ourselves have witnessed the kind of woman Islam has nurtured. In this recent period, the women who rose up were the veiled women from the south of the city, from Qum and other places where Islam enjoys a strong foothold.

Those who had the type of upbringing that the Aryamehr [6](#) decreed did not participate in this uprising at all. They were given a training that was depraving and corrupt and were deprived of Islamic teachings, whereas those who were given an Islamic education shed blood, sacrificed lives, poured into the streets and brought the movement to victory. (318)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

This is what women should be like, [7](#) and, praise be to God, this is how the women of our day are. They stood against the tyrant with clenched fists carrying their infants in their arms and helped the movement. (319)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

The women too came out with their babies in their arms. The secret of their success was that everyone was united and their call the same: 'We do not want this corrupt regime, we want an Islamic republic.' (320)

21 May 1979 (31 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

It was these dear, esteemed men and women from the classes of the deprived under that regime who poured out into the streets with faith in their hearts, fists clenched and cries of *Allahu Akbar* (God is the Greater) paying no heed to the satanic powers. It was they who managed to destroy this diabolical power and smash this barrier. It is they who continue to have duties to carry out, indeed, as do we all. (321)

24 May 1979 (3 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

You underwent much hardship, men and women both underwent much hardship, they poured into the streets, they suffered and shed their blood to revive Islam. They shed their blood for Islam, they volunteered for martyrdom. An Islamic republic was what our nation wanted, what it voted for. Islam was what the nation wanted. (322)

25 May 1979 (4 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

You esteemed ladies are also a party to this, for despite the dangers all around, you too went out into the streets. No one forced you to do this, to pour into the streets and onto the rooftops to shout *Allahu Akbar* (God is the Greater) and lay yourselves open to the bullets fired in response. It was the power of faith that did this, and the value of the action lies in this. (323)

18 June 1979 (28 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

Oh young people who confronted cannons and tanks! Oh sisters who lost your young ones, who joined in the people's demonstrations shouting *Allahu Akbar* (God is the Greater)! Guard yourselves, guard your movement, do not sit back in anticipation of others doing something for you, they will do nothing, just as the foreigners will do nothing for you. (324)

30 October 1979 (8 Aban 1358 AHS)

Let us see what it was our nation, from the esteemed ladies to the respected youths, wanted on the day they poured into the streets, and whether they have obtained that or not. That which they wanted, that which they cried out for all over the country, in the streets, alleys, schools, everywhere, was independence, freedom and an Islamic republic. These three words were on everyone's lips. (325)

7 November 1979 (16 Aban 1358 AHS)

May the mercy of God be upon you, lion-hearted women, whose noble efforts have delivered Islam from the fetters of enslavement to foreigners. The peace of God the Blessed and Exalted be upon the nation of Iran, upon the ladies and the men. Courageous sisters, you fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the men and ensured the victory of Islam.

I thank you, women of Iran and women of Qum. May God and the Imam of the Age be pleased with you. Carrying your infants in your arms, you came into the streets and supported Islam with your ardent

demonstrations. I have heard what happened in Qum and other cities; I have heard what happened in Chahar Mardan.⁸ I take pride in all the courageous deeds accomplished by the women of Iran . . . (326)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

It was out of love for Islam that our nation came out everywhere empty-handed using their chests as shields. Men and women together, taking their young ones with them, entered the arena, fought and won. (327)

19 May 1980 (29 Urdibehisht 1359 AHS)

Snatching up one child in one arm and leading the other by the hand, the women too joined the demonstrations and confronted the cannons, tanks and whatever else they brought out against them. When can you recall a time in Iran when the different groups of people were united like this and when everyone participated in the affairs of the country, in political affairs as they are now doing?

Previously, if an incident took place in the country, perhaps whole districts of Tehran were unaware of it, the men too were perhaps unaware, and those who knew about it, men and women alike, were indifferent. This present participation of all segments of the population has never happened before. Today the entire nation are involving themselves in political and social affairs, indeed they consider it their moral obligation to do so.

They are no longer indifferent if something takes place, which contradicts the rules, the men turning a blind eye and the women busying themselves with other things. No, this is not the case. Today you women and you revolutionary guards are all involved in the affairs of the country, and may God assist you all. (328)

12 July 1980 (21 Tir 1359 AHS)

You esteemed ladies rose up for God and it is for God that you stand firm in this uprising, therefore you will suffer no harm. Bring your ranks even closer still, protect the revolution and take it forward. (329)

18 August 1980 (27 Mordad 1359 AHS)

Are our ladies today the same as those during His Imperial Majesty's period? Have we merely changed a name?⁹ Is the Islamic Republic simply a name without real meaning? Are the men the same men, the women the same women and is everything just the same? Are these women today the same as those who appeared on the television and wandered the streets during the *taghut* period?

Or did they go to hell and our women come out like brave men, like lions, and along with their brothers establish the Islamic Republic? Are these ladies in the streets today the same dolls who were there before? Have we merely changed a name, or has there been a fundamental change? (330)

16 February 1981 (27 Bahman 1359 AHS)

. . . [F]or what is more deserving of pride than that which our great women did in standing against the former tyrannical regime, and, upon its destruction, against the superpowers and their retainers, in the forefront of the struggle, demonstrating such perseverance, resistance and bravery the likes of which have not been recorded of men in any age. (331)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

It goes without saying that the majority of religious women resisted this assault especially society's deprived. But among the perfidious imperialists in the affluent and hedonistic echelons of society, their plans found success and it was these people who created a favourable market for their masters.

Even now that through the providence of God Almighty and the actions of the exalted nation, particularly its lion-hearted ladies, the hands of the oppressors have been severed, still an insignificant minority persist in their foolish ways. It is hoped that, God willing, they too will see the tricks of the devils, both great and small, and will escape their cunning traps. (332)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

The women's financial aid to the deprived

The women's financial aid to the deprived

Iranian women have undertaken both great human and financial endeavours. This respected class of women from the south of Tehran, from Qum and other cities, these veiled ladies, these symbols of virtuousness, took the lead in the movement and in financial sacrifice, donating their jewels and gold to the oppressed. And the most important issue here is that one's intentions are pure.

For the few loaves of bread that *Hazrat* Amir (Imam `Ali), upon whom be peace, and his family gave in charity, God revealed several (Qur'anic) verses. These verses were revealed not because of the loaves of bread, but because the intention was pure, it was an act done for God. The value of an action lies in its spiritual motives.

The actions of those sisters who took part in the movement were more valuable than those of the men; they came out (into the streets) in their veils of modesty and shouting in unison with the men brought about victory. Now, with the purest of intentions, what they had accumulated during their lives they donated to the needy. This is worth much, were the affluent to donate millions it would not match this in value. (333)

17 May 1979 (27 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

The women gave their money and their gold jewellery. Women from different strata of society, large

numbers of them, have donated things they have been keeping for the greater part of their lives so that houses can be built for the deprived. (334)

21 May 1979 (31 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

May God keep you believing women who participated greatly in the Islamic movement and who are now helping the needy. Your help is very valuable. The ladies' help is several times more valuable than that of men.

May God protect you. (335)

26 May 1979 (5 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

It is the women of Qum, of south Tehran and the poor quarters of other cities, those same people you [10](#) regard as being 'the lower classes', who understand what human rights are all about and act in accordance with their convictions. They donate their gold jewellery, which they have kept for twenty, thirty or even fifty years, to help the poor. What have you done? What have you all done? (336)

5 June 1979 (15 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

Complete texts of some of Imam's speeches on the role of women in the victory of the Islamic revolution

Complete texts of some of Imam's speeches on the role of women in the victory of the Islamic revolution

6 May 1979

Address to a group of ladies from the south of Tehran

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

This is a miracle, a great miracle, that you sisters and brothers came together and with one voice and clenched fists confronted satanic powers. It is a miracle of Islam, this is the power of Islam that has manifested itself in you; it is the power of faith that made you victorious in this struggle. It is a miracle that with the martyrdom of a dear one a wave is started throughout the world.

It is a miracle that the ladies confronted tanks, cannons and machine guns, fearing nothing. This is the light of the Qur'an and Islam that has appeared in your hearts and the hearts of the entire Iranian nation. It is the light of faith that stops you ladies from fearing martyrdom.

The enemies should not suppose that by martyring our leading personalities this movement would subside. This movement is aflame and will remain so until all the roots of corruption are deracinated, until the ultimate victory. And whenever signs of a possible dampening occur, Almighty God will rekindle

it by some means.

Our enemies are mistaken if they think that by killing us, the former sinister regime can be reinstated or one like it installed. The clock cannot be put back; the Iranian nation will no longer accept the situation as it was then. America has made a mistake, the plotters of Britain, America and other places have erred; their machinations have had no effect. We have destroyed the great dam and these drops that are left are nothing.

I thank the dear sisters who have gathered here and who support the movement with their demonstrations. May God protect you and keep you for Islam. You have played a great role in this movement and continue to do so. It is you who must bring it to fruition, and this you will do.

My greetings to you dear sisters, to all the sisters and brothers of this nation and to all the Muslims. Peace be upon you and also the mercy and blessings of God. (337)

6 May 1979 (16 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

10 May 1979

Address to a group of ladies from Qum

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Greetings to the people of Qum; greetings to the precious ladies of Qum. You ladies struggled for both the movement and our triumph and in the financial arena. You are on a par with the soldiers of Islam and the ladies of the early days of Islam. Just as those ladies assisted Islam and helped in the Islamic movements and wars of that time, so too you ladies today, ladies everywhere in Iran, particularly the ladies of Qum, play a role in this movement and shoulder-to-shoulder with the men helped in our struggle against despotism and imperialism. May God keep you all in his care.

You ladies are valuable in the eyes of God, God willing. Raise your children to be good, upright individuals, give them an Islamic upbringing. Islam wants you to care for your children yourselves and raise them to be good, upright individuals, to brighten up your home with the light of these Islamic children. For they are the children of Islam, and the destiny of Islam and your country lies in their hands.

I thank you for not being remiss in our movement, for rising up shoulder-to-shoulder with the men and for helping the poor. May God grant you peace and happiness both in this world and the next. (338)

10 May 1979 (20 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

3 July 1979

Address to a gathering of ladies from the southern coastal regions

In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful

It is one of the blessings of the movement that you ladies from the coastal regions, and indeed the other respected ladies of Iran, are now involved with the issues of the day and political issues. The criminal hands, which were manifested in the form of the hands of Muhammad Riza and his father, had excluded all segments of the population from involvement in social and political affairs.

Political problems were never presented for the consideration of the ladies, or for that matter the brothers either. And if a political issue was put forward for the people to decide on, it was still based on their (the West's) plundering policy. If some classes of the population, the so-called political classes, became involved in the political problems of the day, they were simply involving themselves in policies dictated by the West and aimed at plundering the East.

This transformation that Iran underwent was sweeping. It was a spiritual transformation, a change in attitude which God the Blessed and Exalted wrought in you people. This change has come about because of this Islamic movement, and as a consequence we see that today the subjects broached by the speaker of you ladies from the coast are current affairs, current political and social affairs, and the same is true of other ladies in other parts of the country.

I hope that you ladies and brothers, all our brothers and sisters, endeavour to preserve this transformation making it a permanent one, and that you involve yourselves in the political and social issues which concern you.

The previous regime, on the plea of involving half the population in the country's current political and social affairs, actually excluded the whole of the population from them. It is today that all segments of society have a say in their own affairs, in the affairs of the country and the political affairs of state. It is today that all people of the nation, whether the esteemed ladies or the brothers, have a say in determining their own destiny. The former regime claimed to have freed half the population, but under that pretext they in fact deprived the whole of the population of freedom.

Today you are free, all the brothers and sisters are today free, free to criticise the government, free to criticise anything that goes against the path of the nation and Islam, free to make fundamental demands of the government. This movement has made you free, has liberated you from the bonds that bound the nation. You have accepted the heavy responsibility, which in this period of history rests on the shoulders of each person in the country.

I must stress that just as you have brought the movement this far, you have a duty to take it to its culmination and when selecting experts for the Constituent Assembly¹¹ – which will study the Constitution and determine the destiny of the nation – be careful to elect devout, well-informed and committed individuals who believe in the movement, individuals who lean neither to the East nor West but who tread the straight path of humanity and Islam. Place your destiny in the hands of trustworthy individuals.

Peace be upon you and also the mercy and blessings of God. (339)

3 July 1979 (12 Tir 1358 AHS)

18 August 1980

Imam's address to a gathering of ladies from Ardabil

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

I welcome you ladies who have travelled far to be here today. May God grant you happiness. A nation whose women stand in the front line for advancing the aims of Islam will not be harmed. A nation whose women enter the arenas to battle with the superpowers and confront satanic powers ahead of the men will be victorious. A nation whose martyrs in the way of Islam are from the class of women as well as men and whose women actually seek martyrdom along with its men will not suffer harm. We have confidence in this thunderous torrent of people led by the esteemed ladies, who form the most precious class of the nation and who struggle to advance the aims of Islam.

I congratulate the Iranian nation. We fear no power for none can confront a nation whose men and women are ready to make sacrifices and who seek martyrdom. Your power is a divine power. You esteemed ladies rose up for God and it is for God that you stand firm in this uprising, therefore you will suffer no harm. Bring your ranks even closer still, protect the revolution and take it forward.

Do not listen to what the malicious elements have to say, for they are trying to disunite you and make you lose hope in the revolution. They are the mouthpiece of the Devil and God the Blessed and Exalted will crush them, if He so wills.

I would like to express my appreciation to you, esteemed ladies, and thank you for coming here from such a distance. May God grant you glory, greatness and well-being, if He so wills, and keep you for the Muslims and for Islam.

Peace be upon you and also the mercy and blessings of God. (340)

18 August 1980 (27 Mordad 1359 AHS)

23 May 1981

Imam's address to a group of ladies from the University Crusade association of Isfahan

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

What was more significant than anything else in Iran was the change, which took place in the Iranian women. The ladies of Iran have played a greater role in this movement and this revolution than the men, and today as they pursue their activities behind the front lines, their role is greater still.

Through their educational pursuits, whether in the form of educating their own children or teaching in classrooms or other places, they still play a great role in this revolution.

Women have a special kind of compassion and benevolence in their natures which men lack and which pushes them to strive harder than the men behind the front lines. It is this compassion that has led them to make very useful and valuable contributions to the war effort and to continue to do so.

But more important than this is the fact that since the revolution, they have participated tirelessly alongside the men, or rather one should say ahead of them, in the affairs of the country while maintaining their modesty and observing Islamic precepts. Praise God the former regime failed in the plans it had for our women – devised for it by the world plunderers – and did not succeed in creating even more catastrophes.

Today we see that the respected ladies of Iran throughout the country are useful members (of our society) and form a committed and devout community serving their country. They are the mainstay of this country. I hope that, mindful of Islamic precepts and armed with the weapon of faith and devotion to Islam, they will carry this victory forward and will be the mainstay of this revolution too.

They have trained their youths and sent them to the warfronts. There are mothers who are happy, who take pride in the fact that their young ones have been martyred at the fronts in the way of Islam and who offer their other children for Islam. This transformation has taken place because the revolution is Islamic in nature.

The former regime wanted our women to conform to their idea of what a woman should be like, and thus drag this great section of the nation into corruption and ruination, condemning the future generations and consequently the whole of the country to the same fate in the process. However, God the Blessed and Exalted bestowed His favour on this nation and granted our country this victory.

I am hopeful that through the dedication and commitment of the ladies, support for this nation and Islam will become stronger in the future, and through the efforts of you esteemed women, young people will emerge who will help bring victory at the warfront and will work behind the lines to develop and improve the country. The former regime did not know you well enough; it presumed that all the ladies of Iran were like those few they had been able to lead astray and that they could lead you astray too.

However the respected ladies of Iran have proved that they did not fall victim to these machinations and will not do so. They have proved that they are firmly entrenched in the bastion of virtuousness and modesty and will present this country with strong, integrated young men and virtuous, committed young women, and never will they go down those roads which the superpowers have laid at their feet with the intention of destroying this country.

I pray to God the Blessed and Exalted for the well being of the entire nation and hope that through your efforts and dedication this country will be outstandingly successful in attaining the ultimate victory. Peace and blessings be upon you ladies and the entire nation. (341)

23 May 1981 (2 Khurdad 1360 AHS)

8 April 1984

Imam's address to a group of ladies from the Islamic school in Qum and the Friday mosque of Narmak

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

I would like to thank the sisters, the esteemed ladies, for coming to this gathering and giving me the opportunity to talk about some of the things that happened to our sisters during the previous period, and about the role of women over the past hundred years or so of Iran's history.

The oppression suffered by the esteemed ladies of Iran under the *taghuti* Pahlavi regime was not suffered by the men. Those ladies who felt obliged to act in accordance with Islamic principles, who accepted the precepts Islam laid down for them and dressed accordingly, suffered in different ways under both Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza.

I can remember what happened to the ladies during the time of Riza Shah, and it's a good thing that you cannot, for what occurred was so horrendous it defies description. One cannot begin to put into words the oppression suffered by this class of the nation during the period of that corrupt shah, nor determine the extent of the pressures they were subjected to and the tragedies they were made to endure.

Under Muhammad Riza the situation changed and the depth of the crime deepened. While under Riza Shah the women were bullied, pressurised, beaten, arrested, had their chadors ripped off them and their hair pulled, Muhammad Riza took a radical stand against women's modesty, indeed against everything in Iran, the women being just one aspect.

Each one adopted his own special method, devised his own particular plot to drag the women into corruption and rob our society of its modesty and decency. Praise God though, the Iranian women resisted, and apart from a group of the monarch's relatives or women infatuated with the West or connected to the regime, the rest of the sisters resisted this onslaught.

Consequently, Islam survived in Iran, and we cannot begin to describe how valuable the service is that this Islam, which has been revived in Iran, has done for the ladies and will continue to do for them. Had this revolution not occurred, had this change, this transformation, not come about in Iran, then in a few years' time there would be no trace of Islamic morals in Iran.

Praise God this problem has been solved. Now the situation is such that the women, shoulder-to-shoulder with the brothers, are studying mysticism, philosophy, all branches of science, and, God willing, of industry too. At that time they used to say that the half of Iran's population in veils could not do anything, not that they wanted them to be able to do anything for they prevented the men too from being productive.

No, they simply wanted to get them to enter society adopting the style that they, their friends and

adherents had adopted and thus drag society into corruption. God, however, did not want them to succeed. Today, you ladies are a source of pride, for along with your brothers in the theological seminaries you are busy studying, teaching and pursuing other Islamic activities; and I hope you will prove to be even more active than they are. Still you must be careful and act contrary to what was expected under the former regime.

They wanted to destroy Islamic values and put European values in their place. Act contrary to this so that some of those who were deceived, and are still to be found in Iran, may be influenced by you and adopt your style instead.

As to the role of women in society, as far as I can remember and as much as history has related to us, in the few movements which have taken place in Iran, in the Tobacco, Constitutional and 15th Khurdad movements, if the role of the women was not greater than that of the men, it was certainly no less.

Their presence on the various fields of battle made the faint-hearted strong and doubled the strength of the strong. And you yourselves can vouch for the fact that the role of you ladies throughout this Islamic movement, this Islamic revolution, has been greater. For you were both active yourselves and inspired the men to be active too. You have been a source of pride and it is much appreciated.

You must involve yourselves in all aspects of the country's life to the extent that Islam has allowed, such as taking part in elections. The elections are one of the most talked about issues in Iran at the moment, and participation in them today is something that must be done. The ladies must be active in the elections just as the men are, for when it comes to their destiny, there is no difference between them and others.

The destiny of Iran is the destiny of all. Islam has served you ladies more than it has the men. Islam protected you, so now you reciprocate by protecting Islam. This means taking part in these elections, for they will determine the formation of the second parliamentary assembly. Elections play a very important role in your destiny and ours, a primary role. It is elections that must lay down the path the country follows in all its affairs, whether domestic or foreign.

Therefore, you ladies must play a very active role so that the parliament does not become one that is, God forbid, infiltrated by some unscrupulous elements and is gradually drawn towards the East or the West, becoming the kind of parliament that existed in the previous era and imposing on us policies which parliaments of that time imposed on the people.

I hope that this new parliament will be better than ones in the past; God willing it will be because all segments of the population are active. Those who have studied the situation say that the people are actively participating; they have their views and are expressing them. All of you should have views on this matter, you should all have views on political matters, for politics is not the preserve of any one class in the same way as learning is not the preserve of one particular class.

Just as men should concern themselves with political matters and safeguard their society, so too should women. Women should take part in social and political activities shoulder-to-shoulder with men, while, of course, at the same time complying with Islamic principles. God be praised, this is happening today.

I hope that this parliament will be a very good one and one in whose selection the entire nation has freely participated without showing concern for what is going to be said about us afterwards. For our enemies are very active both at home and abroad in their attempts to tarnish this parliament. You must neutralise these attempts by becoming involved, by going to the polling stations and casting your vote.

God willing, the parliament will be a good one. We are confident that with the involvement of religious scholars, jurists, lawyers and the Council of Guardians, measures which are against Islam and against the interests of the country will not be adopted, God willing, and if a mistake is made, then the esteemed Council of Guardians will act just as effectively and independently as it did during this period, and take this nation, this government and this country forward.

I also hope that the war will end in Iran's favour and the attempts currently being made throughout the world to save Saddam will fail and they will not be able to keep this criminal in his position.

I hope that all of you, all of us together, will work to take the material and spiritual aspects of this country forward, and, God willing, make it an Islamic one in such a way that it becomes a shining example for all Islamic countries.

As you are aware, the group that came to look into the great crime perpetrated by Saddam – who threatens the whole of mankind – has submitted its report, but it has not condemned Saddam, as it should have. It would have been better had they not sent this group in the first place, for then their true intentions would not have been revealed as they have.

Those who claim to be independent and to be supporters of human rights have shown their true colours. Because of the regard they have for the East and West, they could not condemn Iraq by name for this crime, and instead issued a general statement condemning any country that used chemical weapons. They couldn't even say who was using such weapons and condemn him for it. It would be better if these people didn't get involved.

God willing, we ourselves, without having to resort to such criminal tactics, will deliver Saddam a severe blow and knock him and the Ba'ath party aside and free the people of Iraq from the shackles in which this nefarious man has bound them.

I ask God, the Blessed and Exalted, to grant you ladies and sisters success both in your educational endeavours and in your ability to take action and to purify yourselves morally. For just as knowledge alone is to no avail, so too is blind purification. It is knowledge and purification together that will take man to the stage of the true human being.

I ask God the Blessed and Exalted to grant you ladies, indeed all the sisters throughout the country and the brothers, success in advancing these two aspects, which are learning and action, together with Islamic morals, so that Islam can be put into practice in Iran in a way that pleases God the Blessed and Exalted.

Peace be upon you and also the mercy and blessings of God. (342)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardin 1363 AHS)

- [1.](#) – An area in the north of Tehran.
- [2.](#) – A saying attributed to the Prophet. Sahih Tirmidhi, Vol. 9, p. 10.
- [3.](#) – Addressing those infatuated with the West who advocate a Western style of freedom for women.
- [4.](#) – Chahar Mardan: a district in the city of Qum the people of which played a very significant role in the struggle against the Shah's regime.
- [5.](#) – Referring to the women dressed in hijab who had come to see Imam.
- [6.](#) – Refer to footnote 42.
- [7.](#) – Referring to women such as Hazrat Zaynab who stood up to tyrants such as Yazid and defended their rights.
- [8.](#) – Refer to footnote 95.
- [9.](#) – There were those at this time who held the mistaken notion that apart from a few superficial changes the nature of the Islamic Republic was no different from the Shah's regime.
- [10.](#) – Here Imam is addressing the anti-revolutionaries and those elements infatuated with the West.
- [11.](#) – Refer to footnote 64.

Women and the Sacred Defence, Jihad

Defence of Islam and the Islamic country, incumbent on women

Defence of Islam and the Islamic country, incumbent on women

Question: What is the duty of Muslim women in the battle of truth against falsehood?

Reply: *Jihad* is not incumbent on women, but defence is incumbent on everyone in line with their ability and means.

Istifta'at Vol. 1, p. 503

Dear sisters and brothers, in whatever country you may live, defend your Islamic and national honour! Defend fearlessly and unhesitatingly the peoples and countries of Islam against their enemies: America, international Zionism, and all the superpowers of East and West. Loudly proclaim the crimes of the enemies of Islam. (343)

29 September 1979 (7 Mehr 1358 AHS)

If, God forbid, an attack is made on an Islamic country, then all the people, women as well as men, must take action. Defence is not a duty confined to men or something that pertains exclusively to one group, everyone must defend their country. (344)

27 December 1979 (6 Dey 1358 AHS)

I ask the brothers and sisters of Kurdistan to stand together in a fraternal manner with the rest of their Muslim brothers and defend their country. (345)

1 April 1980 (12 Farvardin 1359 AHS)

Now that we are confronting the world's major powers and are on the defensive, defending the things that our movement, our uprising has brought for us, defending Islamic objectives, our Islamic country and everything to do with Islam and the country, the mobilisation must be a general one. *Jihad* is one matter and defence another. *Jihad* has particular conditions attached to it, only certain people or groups can take part, whereas defence is for everyone, men, women, young and old alike.

Just as reason dictates that if someone forces their way into another person's home, the people of that house will defend themselves, or if a city is attacked the inhabitants of that city will defend themselves in order to protect their lives and property, so too there are no conditions attached to the defence of one's country.

If our country, our Islamic country, is attacked and invaded, then it is the duty of everyone living there, women and men, young and old, to help defend it. So defence is different from *jihad*, it has no conditions attached, everyone must take part; even the old man who is not able to do much must defend his country to the extent that he is able. (346)

15 April 1980 (26 Farvardin 1359 AHS)

My brothers! My sisters! We are in a situation that we must handle wisely. We are faced with one superpower in the West and one in the East, both of whom want to swallow us up. But by the will of God the Blessed and Exalted, and through the determination of the devout brothers and sisters of Iran, we are standing against them both with the utmost resolve.

Indeed, we will not allow any power to threaten us and try to take control of our destiny. Do not fear big powers, for you are under God's protection and all powers are transient before that of God the Blessed and Exalted. (347)

17 May 1980 (27 Urdibehisht 1359 AHS)

The men and women of this country are all guards of Islam. It is a matter of faith, not of material gain; they are not seeking to gain something so that when they fail to do so they give up trying. No, this is a matter of faith, it is a matter of defending Islam, and this must be carried out until the last person left

standing. In other words, if necessary a population of 35 million must perish and then there will be no country left for a coup d'état to take place. Of course, a coup d'état is something that will never happen, those who think it possible are mistaken, they don't understand. (348)

12 July 1980 (21 Tir 1359 AHS)

Oh brave tribes of the Tigris and the Euphrates! Oh fighters and warriors! Rise up and defend Islam, protect the Qur'an and its decrees, for defending Islam and the Most Noble Qur'an is a duty incumbent on all Muslims, women and men alike. (349)

4 October 1980 (12 Mehr 1359 AHS)

We have a duty to safeguard this Islam, which has been handed down to us, until, God forbid, the last person left standing. Everyone, women, men, young and old, has a duty to protect Islam, to defend the nation and defend their Islamic country to the last. Defence is a matter that concerns all, it is incumbent on all, whoever is able to defend his or her Islamic country must do so to the best of his or her ability. (350)

18 August 1981 (27 Mordad 1360 AHS)

When an Islamic country is threatened by enemies of Islam, it is incumbent on us all to strive to the best of our ability to defend that country and the honour of the Muslims. When we found ourselves in such a situation, you all, all the men and women of our country, praise God, proved yourselves ready to handle it, so you should not be intimidated by talk of a group coming from Paris or somewhere else to do whatever. They made one attempt by setting Saddam loose to attack Iran, and what a slap in the face he was dealt! (351)

18 August 1981 (27 Mordad 1360 AHS)

And I hope you will accept and perform those duties you are obliged to carry out, which are to strive both in the area of education, which is an important matter, and in the defence of Islam. These are among the important tasks the performance of which is incumbent on every man and woman, on the young and old alike.

Defending Islam, defending the Islamic country, is an indisputable duty of the clerics, of those whose lives are Islam and who are Muslim. That which is disputable is women's role in the lesser *jihad*. [1](#) It is not incumbent on women to take part in this *jihad*. However, defending oneself, one's country, one's life, one's property and defending Islam is the duty of us all. (352)

2 March 1985 (11 Isfand 1364)

You ladies must bear in mind that just as it is necessary for the men at the fronts to push forward and spearhead the battle, so too it is necessary for you to help on the home front and to prepare yourselves

so that if, God forbid, there comes a time when national defence is obligatory for everyone, for every able-bodied person without exception, you are ready to fulfil this obligation. Education is, of course, also a bastion, a bastion of the Islamic culture.

You know that throughout these past centuries, from the period after the demise of the Prophet, upon whom be peace and blessings, to the present, the Islamic culture has been trampled underfoot, the laws of Islam falling into abeyance. This culture must be brought alive again. You ladies must be active on the educational and cultural fronts just as the men are.

I hope that God will grant you all success and you will make advances on these fronts too. Pray that those who are at the war front defending their country and Islam will also be successful, God willing. May you all be healthy and successful. (353)

2 March 1985 (11 Isfand 1364 AHS)

What is at stake here is not simply a government or one aspect of life; it is Islam. Islam is the concern. So it is incumbent on the men and women of this country to defend it to the best of their ability. And this defence must be continued until we attain the victories that God the Blessed and Exalted wants for us, if He so wills. (354)

19 July 1986 (28 Tir 1365 AHS)

Military training for women

Military training for women

Question: I am a girl who would like to serve the revolution by entering the Revolutionary Guards Corps, but my father does not approve. Please could you tell me what my position is according to the *shari'a* law?

Reply: The sisters may become revolutionary guards so long as Islamic precepts are observed. You had better seek your father's consent.

Istifta'at Vol. 1, p. 503.

As I said earlier, women can join the army. That which Islam opposes and which it forbids as something sinful (*haram*) is corruption, whether on the part of the woman or the man, it makes no difference. (355)

28 December 1978 (7 Dey 1357 AHS)

Bearing in mind all that has been achieved so far through the efforts of the noble and crusading men and women, I hope that, with the support of Almighty God, they will be successful in their multidimensional mobilisation for military, ideological, moral and educational training, and that they will complete their

practical military training in a manner befitting an Islamic nation that has risen. (356)

20 February 1979 (1 Isfand 1358 AHS)

Praise Almighty God, our dear nation has young combatants among the sisters and brothers who, through their military instruction throughout the country, have perplexed the enemies of Iran and Islam. With confidence in God's power and a willingness to make sacrifices for the cause of Islam, they will surmount all difficulties and triumph over all satanic powers. (357)

8 September 1980 (17 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

Consequently, if defence is a duty incumbent on us all, then the preparations for this defence must be carried out, and these include military planning and military training for those who are able. For it is not the case that it is our bounden duty to defend ourselves and we have no idea how to do so. We have to know how to defend ourselves. It goes without saying, however, that the environment in which you receive military training must be a sound one, an Islamic one, all aspects of decency and modesty, all Islamic aspects being upheld. (358)

2 March 1985 (11 Isfand 1364 AHS)

It makes me proud to see the ladies, young and old alike, playing a role in the educational, economic and military arenas and shoulder-to-shoulder with the men, ahead of them even, actively involving themselves in the cause of exalting Islam and advancing the aims of the Most Noble Qur'an. Those who are able to fight are partaking in military training – for this is one of the important duties that must be carried out in order to defend Islam and the Islamic homeland.

They have bravely and resolutely freed themselves from the restrictions that have been imposed on them, as indeed on Islam and the Muslims in general, by the enemies' plots and the friends' unfamiliarity with the laws of Islam and the Qur'an. They have thrown off the shackles of superstition in which the self-seeking enemies, using people suffering from ignorance and some *akhunds*² oblivious to the interests of the Muslims, had bound them. (359)

5 June 1989 (15 Khurdad 1368 AHS)

Women's presence on the fields of battle

Women's presence on the fields of battle

Question: What are the rules governing female relief and medical workers going to the war fronts, where their presence would be useful, without the consent of their parents?

Reply: If it is going to cause the parents distress, their consent must first be obtained.

They are trying to frighten you away from an Islamic government. They say that if an Islamic government were set up, women would be locked up in rooms for all time. This is not so, in the early history of Islam, women went to battle! They stayed with the armies throughout the years of battle and tended to the soldiers' wounds. (360)

8 November 1978 (17 Aban 1357 AHS)

They say they are afraid that Islam will take power and keep the women behind closed doors, that it will lock the doors of their homes so they can't come out. Such talk and such myths come from abroad, God forbid that some of our own youth should be taken in by these. In the earliest age of Islam, women participated in the wars. They were there on the battlefields tending to the wounds of the injured, and many were killed there! Who has told you that women will be locked up?! They are free like men. (361)

9 November 1978 (18 Aban 1357 AHS)

This regime has disseminated propaganda to the effect that were Islam to come to power, women, for example, would have to remain at home with the doors locked to prevent them from getting out! Such falsehoods they spread about Islam. In the earliest age of Islam, women formed part of the army and entered the field of battle together with the men. (362)

11 December 1978 (20 Azar 1357 AHS)

In the earliest age of Islam, the women participated in wars together with the men. We saw how in this movement the women, the honourable ladies, stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the men, in front of them even, in the line of battle. They lost their infants and youth, but still they bravely resisted the enemy. (363)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

You are on a par with the soldiers of Islam and the ladies of the early days of Islam. Just as those ladies assisted Islam and helped in the Islamic movements and wars of that time, so too you ladies today, ladies everywhere in Iran, particularly the ladies of Qum, play a role in this movement and shoulder-to-shoulder with the men helped in our struggle against despotism and imperialism. (364)

10 May 1979 (20 Urdibehisht 1358 AHS)

In the earliest age of Islam, the women participated in wars together with the men. The position of women is a high one. Women in Islam enjoy a high rank. We saw how in this movement the women, the honourable ladies, stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the men, in front of them even, in the line of battle. They lost their infants and youth, but still they bravely resisted the enemy. (365)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

A nation whose women enter the arenas to battle with the superpowers and confront satanic powers ahead of the men will be victorious. (366)

18 August 1980 (27 Mordad 1359 AHS)

The sacrifices made by women during the sacred defence

The sacrifices made by women during the sacred defence

Greetings to the disabled brothers and sisters who bravely rose up in the way of truth and victory, who made sacrifices and gave the nation cause to hold its head high in the world. (367)

30 December 1979 (9 Dey 1358 AHS)

Greetings to you all, sisters and brothers, who are bravely living your lives in the war-stricken areas, and who are not afraid of dying for God at the hands of His enemies. You are defending your beloved homeland tooth and nail to please God, and you have inspired the fighters of Islam.

You have given everything you had with the purest of intentions, and through your repeated sacrifices, episodes of bravery and gallantry have been recorded in the annals of your unremitting struggles, and will continue to be so. Through your lessons of self-sacrifice and valour, you teach the meek of the earth the truth of God's pledge that they shall inherit the earth. I salute you who through your struggles have brought shame upon the superpowers, and I stand humble before your forbearance and steadfastness. (368)

31 March 1980 (11 Farvardin 1359 AHS)

May the Islamic movement of the great women of Iran be victorious and glorious. Glory be to this exalted segment of the population who with their valuable and brave contribution to the defence of the Islamic homeland and the venerable Qur'an brought victory to the revolution, and who today are actively involved in the war effort, either at the front or in other areas, and are prepared to make sacrifices. (369)

24 April 1981 (4 Urdibehisht 1360 AHS)

You can see how the people are making sacrifices in this war, how these young people, these mothers and these fathers are making sacrifices. (370)

13 April 1982 (24 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

The resistance demonstrated by these great women in the imposed war and the sacrifices they are making are so astonishing that pens and tongues cannot adequately describe them, indeed they put

them to shame.

Throughout this war, I have seen the mothers, sisters and wives who have lost their dear ones do things that I don't think could be witnessed anywhere else other than here in this revolution. One event in particular stands out in my mind from all the rest, and that is the marriage of a young girl to a dear revolutionary guard who had lost both his hands in the war and had received injuries to both his eyes.

That brave young girl whose magnanimous spirit overflowed with sincerity and genuineness said: 'Since I cannot go to the war front, let me pay my debt to the revolution and my religion through this marriage.'

No writer, poet, speaker, painter, artist, mystic, philosopher or jurisprudent, indeed anyone you care to name, can adequately convey the spiritual magnificence of this event or the human worth and the divine tones contained therein. No one can evaluate this great girl's self-sacrifice, her otherworldliness and devotion to God using current criteria.

This blessed day is the day of women such as her, may God keep them for Islam and Iran. (371)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

Martyrdom and the martyrdom-seeking spirit of women

Martyrdom and the martyrdom-seeking spirit of women

This is the light of the Qur'an and Islam that has appeared in your hearts and the hearts of the entire Iranian nation. It is the light of faith that stops you ladies from fearing martyrdom. (372)

6 May 1979 (16 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

Our young people are ready for martyrdom; our men and our women both are ready for martyrdom. (373)

9 May 1979 (19 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

A group of honourable ladies were here. One of them insisted that I allow them to go to Kurdistan. I told her it was not necessary for the women to go there, that their going would not solve Kurdistan's problems. Another lady came after me asking me to pray that she be martyred. I told her to serve her country and I would pray that she would receive the reward from God that the martyrs receive. This is a transformation that has taken place. In the early days of Islam, they advanced with just such a spirit, they sought martyrdom, and in only half a century they had conquered the civilised world of that time. (374)

3 September 1979 (12 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

Some ladies would come here asking me to allow them to go to Kurdistan to fight, and to pray that they

would be martyred there. I would tell them that I did not think it advisable for them to go, that the people and the army would deal with the situation there. (375)

2 October 1979 (10 Mehr 1358 AHS)

Some of the ladies come here asking me to pray that they attain martyrdom; some of the brothers do the same. This spiritual transformation that came about in all classes of the nation, this change in attitude whereby all sought the same thing, that is an Islamic republic, this is what led to victory. For it is right, and rightness will prevail. This transformation must be safeguarded. (376)

3 October 1979 (11 Mehr 1358 AHS)

When I see the esteemed ladies treading the path towards their goal with a firm resolve and prepared for all kinds of suffering, prepared even for martyrdom, I am confident that this path will lead to victory. (377)

31 December 1979 (10 Dey 1358 AHS)

A young couple once came here to be married by me. Before she left, the young lady handed me a note, in it she asked me to pray for our young people, and at the end she wrote 'I long for martyrdom'. There are many like her. This is a transformation wrought in you by God, it is God's gift to you; cherish it. (378)

2 January 1980 (12 Dey 1358 AHS)

You know that our young people seek martyrdom, sometimes when they meet with me, some of them, some of the women, ask me to promise them that I will pray that they may become martyrs. But I tell them I will pray that they receive the same reward from God a martyr receives, and that they will be victorious. (379)

15 April 1980 (26 Farvardin 1359 AHS)

Since this movement's inception, women and men have frequently come to see me insisting I pray that they become martyrs. I tell them I will pray that they are successful and that they receive the reward from God a martyr receives. Serve Islam. This spirit you possess will bring progress; strive to preserve it. (380)

15 May 1980 (25 Urdibehisht 1359 AHS)

From the very beginning of the movement almost – when I was in Najaf – up to the present, young men and women have come to me imploring me to pray that they are martyred. I pray they will receive the reward from God a martyr receives. Here in Tehran not long ago we had a marriage ceremony. When the ceremony was over, the lady handed me a note, in it she asked me to pray that she would become a martyr. A lady who had just got married asked me to pray that she may attain martyrdom. A people who seek martyrdom, who ask for prayers to be said for their martyrdom, are they afraid of military

intervention? (381)

4 June 1980 (14 Khurdad 1359 AHS)

A nation whose martyrs in the way of Islam are from the class of women as well as men and whose women actually seek martyrdom along with its men will not suffer harm. We have confidence in this thunderous torrent of people led by the esteemed ladies, who form the most precious class of the nation and who struggle to advance the aims of Islam.

I congratulate the Iranian nation, we fear no power for none can confront a nation whose men and women are ready to make sacrifices and who seek martyrdom. Your power is a divine power. (382)

18 August 1980 (27 Mordad 1359 AHS)

What can intimidate a nation whose young newly-weds volunteer for martyrdom and who tread God's path prepared for any event? Triumphant is the nation for whom martyrdom is good fortune. Triumphant is the nation that will give itself and everything it has for Islam. We are victorious whether we get killed or kill. (383)

8 September 1980 (17 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

Today our people, our men and women, young and old alike, are determined to stand against aggression as they have already demonstrated by curbing that perpetrated against them up until now, and sacrifice their lives for freedom and independence and for freeing themselves from the yoke of oppression. We have this expectation, as human beings, of all nations and governments. (384)

11 February 1981 (22 Bahman 1359 AHS)

May God's blessings be upon the women who in this revolution and in the defence of the homeland attained the high rank of martyrdom. (385)

24 April 1981 (4 Urdibehisht 1360 AHS)

A nation, the hearts of whose women and men, young and old alike, beat for martyrdom, whose people vie with one another for attaining it, who flee from carnal desires and who believe in the invisible world and in the Supreme Companion, will not give up and leave the scene because of these losses, no matter how great they may be. (386)

11 February 1982 (22 Bahman 1360 AHS)

These exemplary women, men and children who under air bombardment and from hospital beds sing the song of martyrdom, who with limbs amputated wish to return to the fronts where true human beings are fashioned, are beyond the bounds of human conception, they transcend that about which a philosopher or gnostic could write, are beyond that which an artist or painter could portray.

That which the latter found through a scientific, gnostic or rational approach, the former found through a belief in that which is transcendent. That which the one found in books and papers, the other found in arenas of blood and martyrdom and in the path of Truth. (387)

28 August 1983 (6 Shahrivar 1362 AHS)

A nation that aspires after martyrdom, a nation whose women and men long for martyrdom, who cry out for it, such a nation does not care whether something is in short supply or in abundance. It doesn't let the state of the economy bother it, this is for those who are tied to the economy, who have given their hearts to the economy. Those who have given their hearts to God don't care whether something can be found easily on the market or not, whether something is cheap or expensive. (388)

18 February 1985 (29 Bahman 1363 AHS)

You came and attacked the Friday Prayer gathering thinking that by so doing our nation would back down! But you saw how the people at the Friday Prayers reacted. What happened there will go down in history. It had to be seen to be believed.

Women with their infants in their arms, men with their small children at their sides remained where they were despite the distressing circumstances. On one side there was the explosion set off by those inhuman cowards, and on the other the shooting³, yet no one moved, everyone kept their composure and remained where they were sitting. This nation is such a nation. (389)

15 March 1985 (24 Isfand 1363 AHS)

Women's role behind the front lines and their support for the fighters

Women's role behind the front lines and their support for the fighters

Where throughout history have you heard of young women, who are supposed to be enjoying their youth, old women and old men striving the way ours are doing here today to support their army? Where in the world have you seen women struggling shoulder-to-shoulder with their men folks, with their revolutionary guards, police, army and all the armed forces? If you know of such a place tell us so that we may know too. (390)

28 October 1980 (6 Aban 1359 AHS)

You yourselves can see that the entire country is now at war. Even girls in their homes have joined the war by contributing to the war effort. (391)

3 November 1980 (12 Aban 1359 AHS)

Can you find a single village in Iraq that would help them⁴ in their war effort as our people are helping in ours? Of course they get the things they need, but by forcing the people to contribute, by plundering their people. You can't find one village in the whole of the country of Iraq whose women would bake bread, pack it and send it for the soldiers as ours are doing. Such a nation fears no one, it has no reason to fear. (392)

3 November 1980 (12 Aban 1359 AHS)

Who are supporting our armed forces, may God assist them, now that they are at the war fronts and are in the thick of the fighting? [They are] those ladies who bake bread for them and those people who send money, provisions and so many other things for them. [They are] these Muslim people. You can see on your televisions a lady who donates ten eggs, a young child who gives his ten tumans. Why are they doing this? They are doing it for Islam, for their Islamic country. (393)

16 November 1980 (25 Aban 1359 AHS)

If a war had broken out during the time of Muhammad Riza in Ahwaz, for example, would the women of Khorasan province⁵ have baked bread for his soldiers? They would have prayed for their defeat! Now, however, things have changed. Where in the world can you find a similar situation where the people support their government, support their army as they are doing here today? This has no equal; you cannot find its likes in history.

From the small child who donates his ten tumans to the aged 80-year-old who gives her few eggs to help the armed forces, these are very valuable acts. Such values must be preserved, our country's victory stems from such values; the victory over hearts is much greater than the victory over a country. (394)

6 December 1980 (15 Azar 1359 AHS)

The entire nation, not only the young people and those at the war fronts, but even the aged men and women and the very young girls, all are active in the struggles and the war effort, all consider themselves to be at the battle front. (395)

19 March 1981 (28 Isfand 1359 AHS)

When I see on the television those esteemed ladies who are busy helping and supporting the armed forces, my heart is filled with admiration for them such that no one else can inspire. The things they do, they do without expecting anything in return, they are not seeking a post or something from the people in return. They are the unknown soldiers who are busy performing their *jihad* on the different fronts.

If we have gained nothing else from this Islamic Republic, this active involvement of all segments of the population in the country's affairs, their supervision of these affairs, is in itself a miracle that I don't believe has occurred anywhere else. And this is a gift from God, the hands of man are not involved here,

God, the Blessed and Exalted, has bestowed this upon us. We must cherish this gift.

Let us imitate these ladies and children who are working behind the lines, and those who have remained in these ruined and half-ruined cities. We must learn Islamic ethics, faith and turning to God from them. (396)

19 March 1981 (28 Isfand 1359 AHS)

Perhaps throughout the whole of history you cannot find anything quite like it. Small children, young adults, old women, young brides and bridegrooms, all take part in the war effort together. The battlefield here is one on which the entire nation is present. (397)

5 April 1981 (16 Farvardin 1360 AHS)

What was more significant than anything else in Iran was the change, which took place in the Iranian women. The ladies of Iran have played a greater role in this movement and this revolution than the men, and today as they pursue their activities behind the front lines, their role is greater still. Through their educational pursuits, whether in the form of educating their own children or teaching in classrooms or other places, they still play a great role in this revolution.

Women have a special kind of compassion and benevolence in their natures which men lack and which pushes them to strive harder than the men behind the front lines. It is this compassion, which has led them to make very useful and valuable contributions to the war effort and to continue to do so. (398)

23 May 1981 (2 Khurdad 1360 AHS)

However, God the Blessed and Exalted bestowed His favour on this nation and granted our country this victory. I am hopeful that through the dedication and commitment of the ladies, support for this nation and Islam will become stronger in the future, and through the efforts of you esteemed women, young people will emerge who will help bring victory at the warfront and will work behind the lines to develop and improve the country. (399)

23 May 1981 (2 Khurdad 1360 AHS)

All the Muslim people of Iran support the army. As you fight at the fronts, they help behind the lines. No one forces them to do so; they do so willingly. Small children come forward and give their savings for you; a 70-year-old lady comes and gives the gold she has had for years to help you. (400)

14 June 1981 (24 Khurdad 1360 AHS)

Today the people's co-operation and help is unprecedented. Every day we see women giving their life savings, their pieces of gold, for God and the war effort. (401)

25 May 1982 (4 Khurdad 1361 AHS)

Greetings to you lion-hearted men and women who through your mobilisation, financial help and co-operation in other areas, whether at the front line or behind the lines, encourage our brave fighters and reinforce these warriors, and who are instrumental in uncovering and neutralising the plots of our enemies. (402)

4 June 1982 (14 Khurdad 1361 AHS)

We are indeed indebted to the kindness of these generous masses who give all they have and expect nothing in return. From those old ladies who give for Islam what it has taken them a lifetime to collect, to those who break open their moneyboxes and donate the contents. I can find no words to adequately describe this nation; I cannot praise them enough. I leave it to God the Blessed and Exalted to bestow His special favour upon them. May God protect you all and keep you steadfast in these bastions. (403)

17 October 1982 (25 Mehr 1361 AHS)

I must thank the people of Qum, the great ladies of Qum, who, at a time when we are forced to confront the superpowers and other corrupt powers who are attacking Iran on all sides, are active behind the lines just as the warriors are in the front lines. You are active on two fronts, on one you are fashioning yourselves and your young ones, and on the other you are supporting those at the war fronts. What you are doing is worthy of thanks; it is very valuable and carries much weight before God the Blessed and Exalted. (404)

13 March 1983 (22 Isfand 1361 AHS)

These people in the streets and bazaars, these people in the provincial towns, cities and villages, they are the nation; they are the ones helping the war effort, helping behind the lines. It is their women, their children, all of them together who are busy rendering a service. They are not tired. What is there to be tired of? Should they turn away from Islam?! (405)

17 August 1983 (26 Mordad 1362 AHS)

If it were not for your efforts, along with those of your noble brothers and sisters at the war fronts and behind the front lines who through their particular form of sincere devotion attracted Almighty God's special favour, which power and which weapon of war could save the Islamic Republic and your beloved country from this raging tidal wave which the East and West, hand in glove with its satellites, created in the hope of submerging it? (406)

7 February 1985 (18 Bahman 1363 AHS)

While acknowledging my own weaknesses and failures, I should like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the dear warriors who through their valour and martyrdom-seeking spirit defended their Islamic homeland, and with their pure blood have lit up the path to freedom for all the captive nations. Also to the honourable mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and spouses on the home front who have risen

up in support of the dear combatants, sparing no effort in the sacred defence of Islam and their Islamic country. Indeed, I thank the entire nation of great and committed people who form an active presence on all scenes. (407)

1 September 1985 (10 Shahrivar 1364 AHS)

You ladies should bear in mind that just as it is necessary for the men at the fronts to push forward and spearhead the battle, so too it is necessary for you to help on the home front. (408)

2 March 1986 (11 Isfand 1364 AHS)

A very significant sum of money donated by the esteemed Iraqi ladies has been received. May God assist them further in their service to Islam and to the dear combatants who are sacrificing their lives to eliminate the wickedness of the powers and their vile dependants. I ask Almighty God to grant health and happiness to all. (409)

19 December 1987 (28 Azar 1366 AHS)

[1.](#) – Refer to footnote 53.

[2.](#) – Akhund: a word of uncertain etymology that originally denoted a scholar of unusual attainment, but was later applied to lesser-ranking scholars, and then acquired a pejorative connotation, particularly in secularist usage.

[3.](#) – This refers to the bomb that went off during the Friday Prayer ceremony in Tehran on 18 February 1985 (29 Bahman 1363 AHS).

[4.](#) – The Ba’athist regime in Iraq.

[5.](#) – In the northeast of Iran.

The crimes perpetrated against women and the plots devised against them by imperialism and the Pahlavi regime

Loss of self-esteem and Westernisation

Loss of self-esteem and Westernisation

They disseminated propaganda with the aim of making you ladies lose your self-esteem and of Westernising you. Beauty products had to come from the West, the latest fashions had to be brought in from the West, and you had to change every day in keeping with the changes in fashion. Everything of yours came from the West. This is what they propagated and everyone fell into this habit (of copying the

West).

If word arrived that in England, for example, such and such was the fashion, and then all previous models would have to be discarded in favour of the new one. When they were designing a dress for Farah, for her coronation I think it was, the designers flew back and forth many times at immense cost all for the sake of one dress! What is amusing then is that according to the newspapers, she used to say 'our children share their clothes, the younger wearing the elder's hand-me-downs'!!

This said by someone who sends her designers abroad three times simply to get the design right, and spends I don't know how much, 150,000 tumans or so, on the design of just one dress! What was their aim behind all this? They simply wanted to shut your eyes (to other things). (410)

3 May 1979 (12 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

They (the Pahlavis) completely did away with promoting human values in Iran, replacing them instead with values from the West. And it wasn't the good Western values they proceeded to spread among us, rather the corrupt ones. It was perhaps during the period of the son (Muhammad Riza) that most of our spiritual values were destroyed. But in his time (the time of the father, Riza Shah), one could say the oppression was more noticeable. They tormented the women more than, as indeed they did all the people. (411)

2 July 1979 (11 Tir 1358 AHS)

I can say that during the reigns of this father and son, our ladies suffered more than any other segment of society. Perhaps most of you cannot remember what they did to the ladies in the time of Riza Shah, what calamities they created on the plea of wanting to make Iran like Europe, of wanting to modernise Iran and bring half of its population into society. You have no idea what they did to the ladies. (412)

2 July 1979 (11 Tir 1358 AHS)

As long as these ladies (I am not referring to you ladies, you are of the people, I mean the other ladies) continue to direct their attention to such things as fashion that must come from the West – the latest mode there having to be copied here – as long as they keep imitating the West, they will not enjoy any self-esteem nor be independent. If you want to be independent, if you want to be seen as, or rather if you want to be a truly independent nation, you must stop imitating the West. Don't even hope for independence before you can do this. (413)

8 September 1979 (17 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

All the things they used to pervert our youth were gifts from the West. Their plan was to devise the means to pervert both our men and our women, to corrupt them and thus prevent them from their human development. (414)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

Those who want to see women as playthings in the hands of dissolute men are traitors. Women should not be tricked, they shouldn't imagine their station in life calls for them to come out into the streets dressed up and made up, with no veil and scantily dressed. This is not the role of women; this is the role of a doll. (415)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

For during this past half-century of blackness and bondage, this opprobrious Pahlavi era, the poisonous pens of the misguided and the words of benighted speakers sought to give women the status of a commodity, and those women who were vulnerable were drawn to centres that the pen is ashamed to mention.

Anyone wishing to know something of these crimes can refer to the newspapers and magazines of the Riza Khan era, to the poems of the blackguards and scoundrels of that period, that corrupt period from the compulsory unveiling of women onwards. One can find out about the social gatherings of those days and the centres of corruption that existed.

Shame on those people. May the pens of such intellectuals be broken. Do not think that the crimes perpetrated on the plea of freedom for women and freedom for men had nothing to do with the plans of the world-plunderers and the international criminals. (416)

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibihisht 1359 AHS)

Another thing about which I have spoken on previous occasions is that they instilled in us the idea that it was either the European culture or nothing at all. If a young man or lady were to dress from head to toe in European fashion, this showed that they were really somebody, whereas if they were to dress like the other Muslims, they would be considered extremely backward. European styles were the criteria, the type of clothes one wore, these determined backwardness or progressiveness. Everything we used had to be from the West. They turned us into a country of consumers. (417)

8 March 1982 (17 Isfand 1360 AHS)

Those who can remember those days know only too well what this criminal traitor did with the aid of his perfidious agents who had no homeland, and what measures they took to lead the innocent women astray, to turn them into consumers and drag them into corruption in order to expedite the success of their plans.

It is enough for the present generation, who did not experience those black days, to look at the books, poems, writings, plays, songs, newspapers and magazines of that period and the centres of corruption, the gambling houses, liquor stores and cinemas which are all vestiges of those times. Alternatively, they can speak to those who lived through that period and ask them what acts of oppression and betrayal

were carried out against women, this segment of the population that nurtures human beings, in the guise of advancing their position. (418)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

When you looked at society, at men and women both, you saw that it was their appearance that determined their worth: what kind of clothes they wore, how they were tailored, what kind of make-up they wore. Whoever dressed better and with greater chic was held in higher esteem by the people. A woman who copied the European style of dress and make-up commanded more respect and admiration from most other women than those who didn't. The value system was based on the material. (419)

26 December 1982 (5 Dey 1361 AHS)

Throughout the not-too-distant past, especially in the recent centuries, we were deprived of progress in any form. Perfidious statesmen, and the Pahlavi family in particular, along with the dissemination of propaganda discouraging domestic achievement and instilling in the people a lack of self-worth and a feeling of self-contempt, worked together to stop us doing anything that would ensure our development.

They imported goods of every sort, preoccupying the men and women, particularly the young generation, with all kinds of make-up, styles and luxury goods imported from abroad. They kept them busy with infantile games, made them feel they had to compete with one another socially, turned them into ardent consumers – which is a sorrowful tale in itself – sought to corrupt the youth, who are the active members of a society, by opening centres of fornication and by inflicting scores of other similar adversities upon us, all with the sole intention of keeping our country in a state of backwardness. (420)

5 June 1989 (15 Khurdad 1368 AHS)

Unveiling

Unveiling

The clergy say this shameful unveiling (of women), this 'movement of the bayonet',¹ is detrimental to the country both in a material and spiritual sense and is prohibited by the laws of God and the Messenger. The clergy say this basin-shaped cap,² the cast-off of the foreigners, brings shame to an Islamic country, is damaging to our independence and is forbidden by God's law.

Kashf al-Asrar p. 213.

Of course, they regard the civilisation and advancement of the country as being dependent upon women's going naked in the streets, or to quote their own idiotic words, turning half the population into workers by unveiling them (we know only too well what kind of work is involved here). They will not agree to the country's being administered rationally and in accordance with God's law.

Kashf al-Asrar p. 224.

A government which, contrary to the laws of the land and everything considered just, appoints a group of predatory animals as police in every town and city to fall upon chaste Muslim women, who have committed no crime, and by force of the bayonet to tear their veils from their heads and confiscate them, to kick these defenceless women causing some of the pregnant ones amongst them to miscarry their innocent, unborn babes, we call a tyrannical government, and say assisting or working with it in any way is tantamount to blasphemy.

We say a dictatorial government is an oppressive one, and those who work for it are tyrants and oppressors. If you have anything to say on this matter do so, so that their infamy may be added to.

The oppressed masses of Iran today also abhor the agents of the dictatorial regime of that day who so mistreated their innocent women and children the way they did, and perpetrated such shameful injustices against them. Indeed, whoever regards them as decent, honourable people is himself devoid of honour and justice. Those newspapers that back the oppressive actions of the runaway dictator, the most painful of which is the unveiling of women, are actually aiding the savage principles of dictatorship and should be burnt in public.

Kashf al-Asrar p. 239.

When men see that the police, instead of keeping the peace, use their boots and bayonets to force their innocent women to remove their veils or to establish brothels, and that they themselves are mistreated so that the disgraceful basin cap (Pahlavi cap) can be imposed on them, do you still expect them to accept taxes as the legitimate right of the state?

Kashf al-Asrar p. 250.

These lascivious animals who, on the plea of wanting to develop the country, engage in bacchanalian revelry with the young daughters of the people, continue to persist with this heinous policy of unveiling – which cast the modesty and correctness of our susceptible youth to the winds and was one of Riza Khan's biggest acts of treason against this country – oblivious to the fact that very soon, if God wills, the religious people will raise an iron fist and deliver them a blow such that it will knock these feelings of lust right out of their foolish heads.

Kashf al-Asrar p. 283.

So where is the prosperity and happiness that this country has been so fortunate to have had so far? Yes, it amounts to nothing other than a basin-shaped hat, the cast-off of others, the unveiling of women, which committed modesty and chastity to the flames, and several boulevards for which our resources of wealth and moral excellence were forfeited.

Kashf al-Asrar p. 292.

They forced the women to attend certain gatherings. They forced the men to attend those corrupt gatherings they held with their wives and daughters. The situation was the same in every city, even in Qum, the spiritual centre of the country. (421)

2 December 1962 (11 Azar 1341 AHS)

Twenty-odd years have passed since the scandalous forced removal of the Islamic veil took place. Check and see what you have done. You've put women into the offices, and every office they've been put into has become paralysed. (422)

2 December 1962 (11 Azar 1341 AHS)

Why are the events of the 7th January (17 Dey)³ freely celebrated? These things create hatred. Don't make the country's king hated. We advise you not to turn the 7th January into a day of celebration. We believe this to be a heinous act. Protect this country. The events of 7th January do not signify progress. (423)

2 December 1962 (11 Azar 1341 AHS)

God only knows how this nation of Iran suffered when he forced the women to remove their veils. The veil of humanity was rent asunder. God knows which women he dishonoured in this way, which people he humiliated. He forced the *`ulama* at bayonet-point to attend celebratory parties with their wives, which they did with heavy hearts and which ended with the people crying.

Other people as well, different groups in turn, were invited and obliged to attend parties with their wives. This was the freedom for women, which Riza Shah enforced. He used bayonets and the police to compel the respected people, the merchants and the *`ulama*, to attend these parties on the excuse that he himself had organised them. At some of these celebrations – as the regime called them – the people cried so much that those agents with a sense of shame regretted having forced them to attend. (424)

9 January 1978 (19 Dey 1356 AHS)

Could any Muslim agree with this scandalous uncovering of women? The women of Iran have themselves risen up against the Shah and given him a punch in the mouth with the cry: "We don't want to live this way! We want to be free!" To which this good-for-nothing replies: "But you are free! The only thing is that you cannot go to school wearing a chador or head-covering!" You call this freedom? (425)

18 February 1978 (29 Bahman 1356 AHS)

Today is 7th January (17 Dey), I can remember, as perhaps this man (the Shah) does, indeed anyone of our age may recall what wickedness this man (Riza Shah) perpetrated around this time. Such pressure he put this nation under, such repression; what disgraceful acts were carried out against so many honourable women because of him; so many miscarriages occurred around the time of 7th January.

Such acts of aggression this man's agents and executioners perpetrated against the men, how outrageously they violated the rights of the women and dragged them from their homes. These are the deeds your father perpetrated; they are beyond description. His true character will be evident in the next world; we could not understand him properly while he was in this world, we could not understand what kind of an animal he truly was. (426)

7 January 1979 (17 Dey 1357 AHS)

God only knows what this father and son⁴ have done to this country of ours. Throughout its history Iran has not witnessed the likes of such acts of treason. All the monarchs throughout the 2,500 years or more of monarchical rule in Iran were traitors; even those who were reputed to be good were traitors, yet their treachery did not reach the bounds which that of these two did. Indeed, no one really knows to what bounds Riza Shah and his son's treachery did in fact reach, the extent of their crimes was huge, but the extent of their treachery was even greater.

What scenes we witnessed during the reign of Riza Khan, a reign that perhaps most of you cannot remember. In Qum and indeed in all the towns and cities in accordance with the wishes of those who instructed him and in the name of *kashf-i hijab*, he violated that which is inviolable in Islam; he violated that which is sacrosanct to the believers and to our respected women. What his agents did to our veiled ladies! How they treated them! They tore off their chadors and scarves and confiscated them. I myself witnessed these scenes, and you have witnessed what this son did to this country on the plea of creating a 'great civilisation'. (427)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

You have no idea what they did to the ladies of Qum. There was a police chief there, I don't know if he's still alive or not, who treated the women very badly. One day, so it was said, he had a nosebleed, as he sat there with blood dripping from his nose, his eyes fell on a lady wearing a chador or a scarf. Paying no heed to his nosebleed, he jumped up and attacked her. This is how they treated the women in those days, and in this recent period you yourselves witnessed what they did to this nation, what killings they perpetrated in all cities, what calamities they brought about in Qum alone. (428)

28 March 1979 (8 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

News came from villages, towns and cities that could not be repeated. Our ladies had information that blackened the face of history. You don't know what events took place here, in Qum, the spiritual centre. You have no idea what a spectacle they created, how they brought the women out and forced them to attend parties celebrating the unveiling. (429)

23 April 1979 (3 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

The goal was to pervert not to reform. The goal was to stop the country from developing. Thus, from this

we can deduce that the unveiling which Riza Khan pursued in imitation of Turkey and the West and in accordance with the mission with which he had been assigned was against our country's interests. (430)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

You must realise that all the inhabitants of our country were subjected to pressure. During that period, when the former ruler (Riza Shah) took steps to enforce the unveiling and drag the nation into depravation and ruination, perhaps Qum, and Tehran too, suffered more as a consequence than anywhere else. Pressure, however, was brought to bear on the people everywhere. (431)

13 June 1979 (23 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

He did things that caused much opprobrium, like the unveiling. You have no idea what a calamity the unveiling at that time was for the people; you can't imagine what his agents did to the people and the women causing much public discontent. But their power was great and people had no leadership, they couldn't do anything in the face of such power; the grudges, however, were many. (432)

27 May 1979 (6 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

You may not remember most of what went on, but I can remember what they did at the time of Riza Khan in the name of uniformity of dress and unveiling, how the taboos of this country were torn apart, how they bullied and how miscarriages occurred as a result of their attacking the women in order to rend their chadors from their heads. (433)

5 November 1979 (14 Aban 1358 AHS)

In the final years of my period in Qum, perhaps it was in my last year there just before the uprising of the 15th Khurdad,⁵ I heard that the government was planning for some women to gather at the tomb of Riza Shah and commemorate the unveiling of women.⁶ Some government officials in Qum came to see me and I told them each to inform their ministries that were this plan to be carried out, I would call on the nation to hold a day of national mourning for those killed in the massacre perpetrated by the regime at the Gauhar Shad mosque.⁷

They reported what I'd said to them and subsequently the government changed its plans. Be that as it may, the circumstances that the regime had created were in direct contradiction to what the nation had to do. (434)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

The goal behind the unveiling affair was not, as they purported, to bring the women, say ten million women, into society and get them involved in social affairs. Rather it was an order that they had received from abroad and which they carried out with the intention of leading us into captivity.

Perhaps none of you can remember the affair, you may have been too small at that time, but the bitter taste of the unveiling, which later Riza Khan's son called creating 'free men and free women' remains in my mouth. You don't know what they did to the esteemed ladies, indeed to all segments of the society. Merchants, tradesmen and clergymen all were forced to attend parties (celebrating the unveiling) along with their wives; if they refused, they were beaten and subjected to verbal abuse.

Their aim was to use the women as a preoccupation for the youth so that they would not get involved in fundamental issues. They employed different methods to stop our youth and our academics from pondering their own situation and that of their country, the unveiling, with the disgraceful acts they perpetrated, being one of them. Respectable women were mistreated, clergymen likewise, agents even approached the late Mr. Kashani and told him he had to attend the parties too, but he sent them away, protesting that they were only obeying orders, with a flea in their ear.

In towns and villages everywhere throughout the country the story was the same. The deeds they perpetrated in Qum were so opprobrious they defy description. And this was all in order to bring the young people, the gullible young people, men and women, together socially and preoccupy them with one another, so that they became indifferent towards the fundamental problems facing the country.

They created centres of fornication and other forms of corruption for the same reason; from Tehran to Tajrish hundreds of these centres were opened. So as you see they used the women, and consequently our youth, our people, did not attend to the basic problems, as they should have, neither the men nor the women. (435)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

Through the ignominious scheme for the unveiling of women devised during the reign of that dim-witted thug Riza Khan, they conspired to change this beloved segment of the population whose role it is to develop society, into one that would corrupt society. And their plan was not aimed only at you ladies. It also sought to corrupt the young men too by luring them into centres of corruption, and to train them in such a way that were their country to fall into the hands of others they would remain indifferent or even assist in its capitulation. (436)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

Those of you who say the Riza Shah period was better than the present,⁸ what was life like for you at that time? Not only you, but our late Shaykh⁹ too, may God's blessings be upon him, what was his situation at that time? The late Shaykh `Abdulkarim Ha'iri wrote a letter to Riza Shah about one affair, which may have been the unveiling, but he didn't receive a reply. However, his prime minister told him his concerns had been reported to His Imperial Majesty to which the latter had retorted: 'He had better mind his own business.' (437)

21 March 1982 (1 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

Perhaps I know better than most the problems, which beset this country throughout the reigns of this father and son, for there are not many, like me who have lived long enough to witness events in both eras. Most of you ladies will not be able to remember the period of Riza Shah, perhaps there are only a few among you who can recall those sad times.

During that era, on the plea of wanting to make one half of the population of Iran (i.e. the women) active members of society, that villainous scoundrel perpetrated the crime of the unveiling, and instead of making half the population active, to a great extent he paralysed the other half, that is the men. Those dolls he and his regime created and put in all the offices, simply prevented others in the office from working effectively, and those they put on the streets led our youth astray and robbed them of their activeness. They claimed to want to bring Eastern civilisation into Iran, but in the process, they destroyed the great Islamic civilisation in the country. (438)

13 March 1982 (22 Isfand 1361 AHS)

The oppression suffered by the esteemed ladies of Iran under the *taghuti* Pahlavi regime was not suffered by the men. Those ladies who felt obliged to act in accordance with Islamic principles, who accepted the precepts Islam laid down for them and dressed accordingly, suffered in different ways under both Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza.

I can remember what happened to the ladies during the time of Riza Shah, and it's a good thing that you cannot, for what occurred was so horrendous it defies description. One cannot begin to put into words the oppression suffered by this class of the nation during the period of that corrupt shah, nor determine the extent of the pressures they were subjected to and the tragedies they were made to endure.

Under Muhammad Riza the situation changed and the depth of the crime deepened. While under Riza Shah the women were bullied, pressurised, beaten, arrested, had their chadors ripped off them and their hair pulled, Muhammad Riza took a radical stand against women's modesty, indeed against everything in Iran, the women being just one aspect.

Each of them adopted his own special method, devised his own particular plot to drag the women into corruption and rob our society of its modesty and decency. Praise God though, the Iranian women resisted, and apart from a group of their relatives or women infatuated with the West or connected to the regime, the rest of the sisters resisted this onslaught. (439)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardin 1363 AHS)

The undertaking to remove the veil of modesty from the heads of virtuous Muslim women was spurred by carnal desires and is now rampant in the country at variance with religion and the laws, yet no one utters a word against it. (440)

The year 1946

At that time the propaganda was such that women did not dare come out dressed the way they should (according to Islamic precepts). Those who wanted to keep their *hijab* either did not leave their homes at all or they came out only when darkness had fallen, and crept surreptitiously from one place to another. As we observe, everything else was the same. (441)

27 August 1985 (5 Shahrivar 1364 AHS)

Women's entry into rubber-stamp parliaments and other assemblies

Women's entry into rubber-stamp parliaments and other assemblies

From the time this ignorant, despicable government¹⁰ came into power, its target has been Islam. In the newspapers they wrote in big, bold print that they had given women the right to participate in elections, but this was just a devilish ruse to deflect public criticism from the true intention, which was to eliminate Islam and the Qur'an from the process.¹¹

Consequently, when we first met here to discuss the issue,¹² our minds were initially distracted by the matter of women's participation. Later, after studying the issue more closely, we realised that it was not about women, this was only a minor point; it was about opposing Islam. (442)

30 March 1963 (10 Farvardin 1342 AHS)

Imam's telegram to the Shah

Imam's telegram to the Shah

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

His Imperial Majesty,

Greetings and good wishes. According to that which has been published in the newspapers, the government has not made Islamic qualifications a prerequisite for candidates and voters in the elections for the Provincial and County Councils, and has given women the right to vote. This is of great concern to the religious authorities and other Muslims.

As Your Majesty knows, the well being of this country lies in the preservation of Islamic decrees and in the people's peace of mind. Therefore, it is requested that you order for those issues, which contravene the official religion of this country to be excluded from the programmes of the government and political parties so that you will be the recipient of the Muslim nation's prayers. (443)

Ruhullah al-Musawi

9 October 1962 (17 Mehr 1341 AHS)

Telegram to Assadollah `Alam

Telegram to Assadollah `Alam

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Tehran – The Honourable Mr. Assadollah `Alam, Prime Minister of Iran.

This long recess of the Parliament proves that the government is considering procedures, which are against divine laws and clearly contradict the constitutional law. Know for certain that any violation of Islamic and constitutional laws, as well as those enacted by the Consultative Assembly (Parliament), will make His Excellency and the government seriously accountable before Almighty God, the Muslim nation and the law.

The entry of women into Parliament, Provincial and County Councils and Town Councils contravenes the indisputable laws of Islam,¹³ the interpretation of which, according to the text of the Constitution, is given over to the learned *`ulama* and the *maraji'*, no one else having the right to interfere.

The jurists of Islam and the Muslims' *maraji'* have issued an edict forbidding it. Such being the case, women's franchise and right to be elected at any level contravenes Article 2 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law. Similarly, the National Consultative Assembly's Electoral Law ratified in Rabi' II 1325 deprives women of the right to vote or be voted for in Provincial and County Council and Town Council elections. Refer to Articles 7 and 9 of the Provincial and County Council Bill and Articles 15 and 17 of the Municipal Law. Thus, granting the women such a right would be an infringement of the law.

Likewise the abrogation of the qualification that electors and candidates must be Muslim, which is stipulated in the said law, and replacing the policy of swearing the oath on the Holy Qur'an to one which stipulates swearing on a 'holy book', are an infringement of the said law, are dangerous for Islam and the independence of the country, and have been carried out either unintentionally or, God forbid, with malice aforethought.

Now that His Majesty has referred the learned *`ulama's* request to the government, and has passed on the responsibility for dealing with this matter to your government, it is expected that, in compliance with the unassailable laws of Islam and the country, this matter be rectified as soon as possible, and that you are careful to avoid a repetition of anything similar.

If the honourable prime minister is uncertain about anything, he can do us the honour of visiting us here in Qum so that any ambiguity can be removed in his presence, and he can be notified of matters which are in the interests of the country but which cannot be put down on paper.

Finally, I would like to remind you that the learned *`ulama* of Iran and the major centres of Shi`ite learning, along with other Muslims, will not remain silent on issues that contravene the inviolable *shari'a* laws. Through the power and strength of Almighty God, issues that contravene Islam will not become official. (444)

20 October 1962 (28 Mehr 1341 AHS)

The opinion of the maraji'-i taqlid and the Grand Ayatullahs of the Qum religious seminary on the decree concerning the Provincial and County Council elections which opposed both shari'a and statute law

The opinion of the maraji'-i taqlid and the Grand Ayatullahs of the Qum religious seminary on the decree concerning the Provincial and County Council elections which opposed both shari'a and statute law.

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

There is no power and no strength save in God the Almighty

Because the government of Mr. `Alam has, by means of legislation, with surprising haste and without first giving due thought to the articles of the constitutional law, granted women the right to vote and be voted for in elections, it has become necessary to notify the Muslim nation of Iran of a few points so that they know under what conditions and what kind of governments they are living. Thus, we would like to draw the public's attention to the following:

1 – The Interior Minister in a proposal presented to the Prime Minister wrote: “As you are well aware, in the preamble to the constitutional law it clearly stipulates that each citizen of the country is entitled to participate in the approval and supervision of public affairs, and according to Article 2 of the constitutional law, the National Consultative Assembly represents all the inhabitants of the country of Iran who participate in the political and economic affairs of their homeland.

Consequently, excluding the class of women from the voting process is not only impermissible according to the constitutional law and its supplement, but in view of the phrase ‘each citizen of the country’ in the preamble to the law and the phrase ‘all the inhabitants of the country’ mentioned in Article 2, it contravenes these as well.

The Cabinet has approved the deletion of paragraph one of Article 10 and paragraph two of Article 13 of the National Consultative Assembly Electoral Law, and also the qualification ‘male’ from Articles 6 and 9 of the Senate Electoral Law.”^{[14](#)}

Additionally, the Interior Ministry has been charged with the duty to obtain authorisation for this legislation when Parliament convenes. Thus it is necessary to explain the problems with the above argument.

a) – If the participation of women in elections can be reconciled with the constitutional law, as the Interior Minister and the Cabinet too apparently seem to think it can, then the approval of the Cabinet is meaningless, for it is as if they were approving the participation of men in the elections. If, on the other hand, it is correct to seek their approval, then it is obvious that in the opinion of the Cabinet the participation of women is at variance with the constitutional law.

b) – If the non-participation of women is in their eyes contrary to the constitutional law, then the Cabinet's act of commissioning the Interior Minister to obtain authorisation for this legislation when the deputies convene has no basis, and if it needs authorisation, then it is obvious that the government views the participation of women as being contrary to the constitutional law. Wouldn't it have been better had the Cabinet not employed a little thought and deliberation before introducing legislation which gives rise to such clear contradictions?

2 – The preamble to the constitutional law does not constitute a part of the law; it is simply the words of the shah of the time and does not carry any legal weight. However, the Interior Minister, either for want of sufficient deliberation or in order to deceive, has used it to draw his conclusions. However, had he studied it to the end before doing so, then it would have been made clear to him that according to that same preamble, women do not have the right to participate in elections because it is written therein: 'Now that the National Consultative Assembly, in conformity with our holy intentions, has convened.' This being the case, if the participation of women was envisaged, then how could the Parliament open 'in conformity with our holy intentions' without their presence?

So it is obvious that women did not have the right, and this phrase makes it clear that the first session of Parliament was held in conformity with the Shah's intentions, for women did not participate.

3 – From the previous explanation it is evident that the meaning of 'all the inhabitants of the country' in Article 2, is not that which the Cabinet understands it to be. Rather its meaning is that the representative for Tehran represents the entire nation, as does the representative for Qum.

They do not represent their own constituency as stipulated in Article 30 of the supplement to the constitutional law. The reason behind this claim lies in the fact that more than ten classes of the population do not have the right to vote even though they also form 'all the inhabitants of the country.' Thus, they must accept that either depriving these other groups of participation is unconstitutional or the participation of women is.

4 – Supposing there is a mistake in the interpretation of this article, according to Article 27 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law, the explanation and interpretation of the law is one of the prerogatives of the National Consultative Assembly, which the ministers do not enjoy.

5 – It is the opinion of the government that women and other excluded groups have the constitutional right to participate in elections. Thus, from the beginning of the constitutional period up to the present all the parliaments have been formed in contravention of the constitutional law and were illegal because women and more than ten other groups have, according to the Electoral Law, not been allowed to participate, and this contravenes the constitutional law.

In this case it becomes necessary to point out many irregularities, which stem from that:

- a) – All the laws effective in the country from the beginning of the constitutional period to the present were null and void and must be declared to be so.
- b) – In the view of Mr. `Alam's government, the Constituent Assemblies that have been convened were unconstitutional and were consequently null and void. According to the law, to make such a claim is a crime and the person making it must be indicted.
- c) – The government of Mr. `Alam is illegal, as were all the governments formed since the beginning of the constitutional period up to the present. Consequently, an illegal government has no right to issue decrees or anything else, on the contrary its interference in the country's affairs and its handling of the treasury is a crime and is subject to prosecution.
- d) – According to the government of Mr. `Alam, all the agreements signed with foreign governments, among them oil agreements, are null and void, and this must be declared to be so to the nation.

6 – The deletion of the first paragraph of Article 10 and paragraph 2 of Article 13 of the National Consultative Assembly Electoral Law approved in Shawwal 1329 AS, and the deletion of the qualification 'male' from paragraphs 6 and 9 of the Senate Electoral Law approved on 14 Urdibihisht 1339 (4 May 1960), based on the preamble to the constitutional law and Article 2 of this law, is illegal, and the government has no right to do this because it itself has no basis in the law. Additionally, the government does not have the right to annul legislation approved by the Parliament, and according to the text of Article 28 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law, the executive power will always be separate and distinct from the legislative power.

This lists the illegal aspects of an illegal law. This law also contravenes Article [215](#) and Article 27 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law.

Despite the pressures and difficulties that the government has imposed and will further impose on them, and the insults that it will continue to hurl against them, the clergy consider it their religious and moral duty to point out to the Muslim governments and people both the advantages and the harm that may ensue from these actions.

They consider it incumbent on them not to withhold their friendly advice from the authorities and, in the face of this worrying suppression of the press and police repression, whereby people are carried off to

prison and subjected to abuse and torture simply for printing or circulating a leaflet containing advice and guidance, to let mankind know what these actions portend for this poor, weak and hungry nation, the signs of which are already becoming apparent one after the other.

The clergy observe that the government has made the official religion of the country a plaything, and in meetings it allows it to be said that steps have been taken to establish equal rights for men and women. Islam has stipulated what action must be taken against anyone who, because of his belief in equal rights for women, annuls the unequivocal and mandatory laws of Islam concerning inheritance, divorce and the suchlike.

The clergy observe that the pillars of this country's economy are crumbling; the market is on the verge of collapse as demonstrated by the ever-increasing number of files on bad debts. Likewise, the country's agriculture is tottering on the brink of ruin because while each province of this country should be able to meet the agricultural needs of the whole land, bills for the import of wheat, or, as was said to be the case recently, for flour, are approved every so often on the plea of the possibility of a drought or some other excuse, thus making the land, along with Iranian mills, idle.

Faced with this deplorable situation, the government, instead of trying to find a solution, keeps itself and the people preoccupied with issues such as women's franchise, with granting rights to women and bringing half the Iranian population into society and other such deceptions which will bring nothing but misery, corruption and fornication.

The gentlemen don't realise that Islam shows a special regard for women in all aspects not found anywhere else. It has brought respect for their social and moral standing which prevents the kind of social mixing of the sexes that is incompatible with women's modesty and virtue, and this is not because Islam thinks, God forbid, that they are legally incompetent or they are prisoners. Is entering these parliaments the only sign of them not being incompetent?

If such is the case then it must be said that all those in the land and naval forces, the officers and members of the security and police forces, the immediate members of the royal family and those under 20 years of age are also among the legally incompetent and prisoners.

In their declarations of 2-3 months ago, the clergy foresaw this turn of events you are witnessing today and predicted that similar incidents would happen in the future, and this they stated unequivocally therein.

Now too today, they announce an even greater danger and express their grave concern about what the consequences of these attacks on the *shari'a* law and the Constitution may mean for the independence and economy of this country, indeed for all aspects of this country's life.

Consequently, the clergy hereby discharge the important duty they have in this matter, of which the entire nation is aware, and state most categorically that the government's recently introduced legislation

concerning the participation of women in elections has no legal force according to both the *shari'a* and the constitutional law.

Furthermore, despite suppression of the press, pressures brought to bear by the police and the prevention of the printing and publication of notices, such as this one, containing exhortations and facts, they will take steps to publish such notices to the best of their ability so that the governments cannot say we introduced legislation and the *'ulama* did not object. God willing, the clergy will take measures at the appropriate time to stop this law being practised.

The nation of Iran also opposes this kind of legislation, as demonstrated two–three months ago, when the pressure and intimidation were a little less, in the telegrams and communications sent from all around Iran in which they declared their acceptance of the Islamic *'ulama*'s authority and called for the annulment of the government's illegal legislation concerning the Provincial and County Council Elections.

The government in turn acceded to the nation's request and turned the matter over to the Parliament. However, now that it has gained sway over the nation through imprisonment, persecution and abuse of the clergymen and pious elements in society, the government is, with blatant disregard for the laws of Islam, the Constitution and electoral laws, adopting measures the consequences of which are dangerous and alarming for Islam and the Muslims.

May God awaken our governments from this sleep of ignorance and have mercy on the Muslim nation and country.

O Lord we complain to Thee for the loss of our Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his descendants, for the absence of our Imam, the multitude of our enemies, the fewness of our number and the domination of life and circumstances. Then greet Muhammad and his family, assist us in all affairs by quick victory from Thy side, to eradicate pain and ennui and to provide us with aid and power that Thou cherish, for you are the Lord and Master of rights to unveil. We are from God and to Him is our return. [16](#)

Murtaza al-Husayni al-Langarudi, Ahmad al-Husayni al-Zanjani, Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, Muhammad al-Musawi al-Yazdi, Muhammad Riza al-Musawi al-Gulpaygani, Sayyid Kazim Shari'atmadari, Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khomeini, Hashim al-Amuli, Murtaza al-Ha'iri. (445)

March 1963 (Isfand 1341 AHS)

What is there for this "developed nation" to learn? What do you think? What's your opinion? Do you really think that words are sufficient? Can development result from sending a few women to the Majlis (Parliament)? Have the male members of the Majlis actually accomplished anything for you so far which leads you to believe that your women may now do so? We believe that sending women to the Majlis will result in nothing but immorality, and we believe that in ten, twenty or thirty years' time you will see that we were right. We in no way oppose women's progress, but we do oppose fornication and other such sinful deeds. (446)

15 April 1964 (26 Farvardin 1343 AHS)

Those lords seated in their palaces speak of 'the developed nation'; does a 'developed nation' die of starvation?! `Ali, upon whom be peace, the emir of Islam, used to eat barley bread, but now they spend five hundred thousand or one million tumans, if not more, for the receptions arranged in honour of their masters; and all they ever talk about is the 'development' programme! They maintain that our country is on a par with advanced countries, but how can the admission of a few women to Parliament cause a country to be developed?[17](#) You won't put the country right by implementing Israel's policies. (447)

10 April 1964 (21 Farvardin 1343 AHS)

Claims made about equal rights for women

Claims made about equal rights for women

The ruling regime (of the Shah) in Iran infringed upon the holy Islamic laws and is now set to violate the unequivocal and mandatory laws of the Qur'an. The honour and dignity of the Muslims are about to be violated and through legislation, which contravenes shari'a, law and the Constitution, the tyrannical regime means to put chaste women to shame and humiliate the Iranian nation.

The tyrannical regime intends to introduce legislation and implement equal rights for men and women, in other words it means to trample underfoot the incontrovertible and mandatory laws of Islam and the Most Noble Qur'an. They want to force 18-year-old girls to do military service and drag them to the barracks. At the point of the bayonet they mean to force young, chaste Muslim girls into centres of fornication. (448)

1962 (1341 AHS)

They yet again espoused equal rights for women in all aspects, which means in effect trampling underfoot the unequivocal and mandatory laws of Islam and disclaiming some clear Qur'anic ordinances. Afterwards, they again saw that this was the cause of certain resentment, objection and difficulties and so once more they denied the issue; it was disclaimed by the minister in one place and by the commanding official in another.[18](#)

In the press it was quite explicitly reported that women's conscription was in the process of being legislated. Nevertheless, when they saw that the matter gave rise to opprobrium and that the people and even the regime's henchmen were truly perturbed, again they said that it was a lie.[19](#) Indeed, they wanted to open a lawsuit because of it – a most foolish, ludicrous intention.[20](#) (449)

30 March 1962 (10 Farvardin 1341 AHS)

This year (1962) was a bad year because these events took place, and yet it was a good year because

you gentlemen, by confronting oppression gave new life to Islam. Had you not shown resistance, God knows that by now they would have fully executed all of their evil schemes. It was your resistance which caused them to deny their former intentions, whereby they said: "Of course divorce is a man's prerogative, when did we ever say otherwise?"²¹

Whilst one voice from the "People's Party"²² can be heard advocating full and equal rights, another voice from the other Party asks: "When did we say that divorce is a woman's prerogative?" Hence, on one occasion they espouse equality in all spheres of life, but on another they advocate something quite different. Again they speak in similar terms with regard to inheritance and women's conscription, advocating one thing one minute and denying it the next. As for women's conscription, we read about it in your (the Shah's) very own newspapers, which write whatever the security forces dictate to them. (450)

30 March 1962 (10 Farvardin 1341 AHS)

The clergy observe that the government has made the official religion of the country a plaything, and in meetings it allows it to be said that steps have been taken to establish equal rights for men and women. Islam has stipulated what action must be taken against anyone who, because of his belief in equal rights for women, annuls the unequivocal and mandatory laws of Islam concerning inheritance, divorce and the suchlike. (451)

March 1963 (Isfand 1341 AHS)

I must draw the honourable gentlemen's attention to the past and present actions of the tyrannical regime. In the past, it abused Islam and the Qur'an, and tried to put the Qur'an in the same category as other misguided books. Now, with the announcement of equal rights, a number of the mandatory and unequivocal laws of Islam will be effaced. Recently, the justice minister abolished the requirement that judges be Muslim and male. (452)

April 1963 (Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

The tyrannical regime imagined that with this talk about equal rights it could open the way for advancing its evil goal, which is to deliver the final blow to Islam. But they didn't count on the reaction they would have to face. (453)

2 May 1963 (12 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

It is necessary for me to point out to the respected gentlemen that there is every indication the tyrannical regime intends to disregard mandatory and unequivocal Islamic laws and perhaps, God forbid, take even more drastic measures. Repeatedly in their meaningless, absurd speeches they have spoken openly about equal rights for men and women in all political and social aspects, which would involve changing some ordinances of the Most Noble Qur'an.

Yet when they came up against strong objections from the Muslims, they made excuses worse than the offence itself and hypocritically denied the whole issue. They don't realise that we know them only too well, and have no confidence in what they say. (454)

2 May 1963 (12 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

. . . One thing is certain – if, gentlemen, you take a look at the Baha'i almanac of two or three years ago, you will read: "Abdul Baha²³ advocates equal rights for men and women"; and this is the line that has been adopted by them. Then the ignorant Mr. Shah also steps forward and talks of equal rights for men and women! You poor wretch, they have purposely set you up so that they can say that you are a Baha'i, and so that I in turn denounce you as an unbeliever and you are finally got rid of. Don't continue in this way. (455)

3 June 1963 (13 Khurdad 1342 AHS)

We have evidence that suggests that the tyrannical regime, due to its evil nature and to meet its own needs, is set on fundamentally destroying Islam. The armed attacks on the centres of religious jurisprudence; the aspersions cast on the good name of the *maraji'* and the jurisprudents of Islam; the imprisonment and persecution of students of the Islamic schools; the disrespect shown the Most Noble Qur'an and other sacred things, all clearly point to this.

The announcement of equal rights for men and women in all aspects, the annulment of the requirement that candidates and electors must be Muslim and male, and the abolition of the same requirement for judges, are other patent signs. (456)

6 May 1963 (16 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

Beware the wrath of Almighty God. If because of your²⁴ silence Islam is dealt a blow, you will be responsible before God and the Muslim nation. "Scholars must, through their knowledge, challenge a heresy, otherwise God's curse will be upon them."²⁵

Express your loathing for this equal rights idea and your repugnance for the participation of women in social affairs, which will give rise to numerous acts of corruption. Assist the religion of God and remember, "*If ye will aid (the cause of) God, He will aid you and plant your feet firmly,*" (Qur'an 40:7).

Do not let the police and others intimidate you, for they, like you, have a duty to perform and they are compelled to do what they do. If the truth be told, many of them actually support you and despise the regime. (457)

18 May 1963 (28 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

Conscription of girls into the military

Conscription of girls into the military

Do not deceive our girls and carry them off to the barracks; do not betray the honour of the Muslims. Will you once again deny this bitter reality, now that it is being practised, as you did previously saying that those who espouse such a notion should be prosecuted? Do you deny the atrocities, which took place during the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations (for the Shah's rule) and the thoroughly benighted things you did therein? (458)

16 April 1967 (27 Farvardin 1346 AHS)

They invite and encourage girls to join the Literacy Corps and then declare that first they have to do military service. When they see the matter gives rise to opprobrium, they begin to deny it and in the press it is announced that the bill for female conscription is in the process of being prepared. Even then they continue to deny it and resort to preposterous excuses. (459)

2 May 1963 (12 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

Mixing of the sexes

Mixing of the sexes

It is a good idea for you to compare the time the boys and girls of our country spend learning matters of worship and religious culture with the time they spend together in the cinemas, theatres, dance halls and swimming pools, and on other such activities which have torn the veil of modesty from them and smothered the spirit of piety and valour in them, so that it is made clear just what you consider to be time wasted and what you consider to be time well spent.

Kashf al-Asrar, p. 194

The result they obtained from the Sepah Salar School, which they made the school of theology, was unfavourable. Students there who were to qualify the following term as clergymen and to go out into society to purify the morals and spirit of the future generations were forced into a line to exercise and dance with half-naked girls. Now too, as long as the schools are in the hands of the government and its agents, the same sorry state of affairs will persist.

Kashf al-Asrar, p. 201

The clergy say that these coeducational schools, mixing young girls and lustful young boys, destroy chastity and manliness. They are both a material and spiritual detriment to the country and are forbidden according to God's command.

Islam shows a special regard for women in all aspects not found anywhere else. It has brought respect for their social and moral standing which prevents the kind of social mixing of the sexes that is incompatible with women's modesty and virtue, and this is not because Islam thinks, God forbid, that they are legally incompetent or they are prisoners. (460)

March 1963 (Isfand 1341 AHS)

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit the Parliament to come to such a miserable state as this; they will not permit the Parliament to be formed at bayonet-point, with the ignominious results that we see.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit girls and boys to wrestle together, as recently happened in Shiraz.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit people's innocent daughters to be under the tutelage of young men at school; they will not permit women to teach at boys' schools and men to teach at girls' schools, with the resulting corruption.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will strike this government in the mouth; they will strike this Parliament in the mouth and chase these deputies out of both its houses! (461)

26 October 1964 (4 Aban 1343 AHS)

. . . Instead of thinking up ways to improve the economy, to prevent the bankruptcy of the respected traders, to provide bread and water for the destitute during the winter months ahead and to find employment for the young graduates and others in society, the ruling clique is bent upon destructive measures referred to above and upon such measures contributing to moral corruption as the employment of women teachers for boys' high schools and men teachers for girls' high schools, upon insisting on employing women in government offices to spread corruption. (462)

26 October 1964 (4 Aban 1343 AHS)

Islam prevents lustful behaviour. It will not tolerate men and women going swimming together half-naked in the sea. During the period of the *taghut*, such things occurred and the women would then go into the towns dressed in their bathing costumes. Today, if they did such a thing, the people would skin them alive. The people are Muslim, they won't allow men and women to frolic in the sea together the way they used to.

This is their idea of civilisation. This is the kind of civilisation they want, the kind of freedom. They want the Western form of freedom, which allows men and women to go swimming together in the sea half-naked.

This is the kind of civilisation that those gentlemen want. This is the kind of civilisation that was imposed on our country under the former regime, whereby men and women could swim together in the sea and the women could enter the seaside resorts with hardly any clothes on, and the people would not dare say a word.

We know what to do with them today should they try to do such a thing. Indeed the government has taken measures to prevent it. According to the Interior Minister, a stop has been put to such behaviour, and if the government does not stop it, the people will.

Do you really think the people of Mazandaran or Rasht will allow a repeat of such behaviour on their beaches today? Are the people of Bandar Pahlavi so incapacitated that they would allow men and women to go into the sea and carry on as they did at that time? Do you really think the people will let them do such things?

This is the kind of civilisation and freedom that they want. They want to be free to gamble, they want to see men and women frolicking together half-naked and doing other things together. (463)

28 June 1979 (7 Tir 1358 AHS)

Once again those venal writers are at work, their pens hired to lead our youth astray. Some of the newspapers have even turned to this problem of the beaches and the shameful activities, which normally go on there, saying to stop them, would be reactionary.

Nowadays it seems civilisation consists of nothing other than men and women frolicking about together in the sea, and anything short of this is reactionism. Civilisation, it seems, entails the youth spending nearly all their time at the cinema, for it to take over their lives, all their ideals and desires to be found therein. (464)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

In the summer they would get the resorts by the seas and lakes ready to attract the young. Men and women would mix together freely there, making use of the facilities, which were available free of charge, and doing whatever they wanted. This wasn't something that developed naturally; it was all part of a special plan, a plot devised to stunt the natural and human development of the young people by keeping them busy with such pursuits. (465)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

One of the things they encouraged at the seaside was the mixing of the sexes. They didn't do this out of wanting our youth to enjoy themselves; rather their aim was to drag them into corruption. (466)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

. . . The mixing of the sexes at the seaside was one such plan. The people must try hard to stop it themselves. The police and government must prevent it. Let the radio be used to propagate against it and to advise the people of its pernicious and corrupting nature. (467)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

A man (I don't know who) at the seaside was quoted in a magazine as saying that segregating men and women was a disgrace, that civilisation meant boys and girls playing together in the sea!! Is this what civilisation is?! (468)

22 July 1979 (31 Tir 1358 AHS)

These *akhunds*²⁶ won't let men and women frolic about together in the sea. These *akhunds* won't let these young people of ours be free to frequent bars, casinos and houses of ill repute. (469)

8 September 1979 (17 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

The pretence of women's freedom during the regime of the taghut

The pretence of women's freedom during the regime of the taghut

The tyrannical regime, which grants freedom to no one in this country and which for years has deprived the nation of freedom in order to advance its aims, thought that on the plea of granting women freedom, it could deceive the Muslim nation and implement Israel's malicious goals. Oh Muslim nation! I have repeatedly warned you of the danger, and do so again. (470)

2 May 1963 (12 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

It's all too easy to talk about 'men's freedom' and 'women's freedom', but will it be achieved by mere words? And anyway, do men themselves really enjoy 'freedom' in this country that you now want to offer 'freedom' to women? Exactly what is it men are free to do? (471)

15 May 1964 (25 Urdibihisht 1343 AHS)

To speak of freedom for women in a country whose people in these past 50 years of despotic Pahlavi rule have not had even a whiff of freedom, is both ludicrous and deluding. (472)

22 January 1978 (2 Bahman 1356 AHS)

It is the Shah's regime, which by immersing the women in immoral issues actually strives to prevent their freedom; Islam is strongly opposed to this. This regime has trampled on the freedom of women and destroyed it, just as it has that of the men. Like men, women too have filled Iranian jails. It is this

corruption, which threatens and endangers their freedom, and we want to free them from this. (473)

6 May 1978 (16 Urdibihisht 1357 AHS)

Unfortunately, women have suffered from victimisation in the past, notably in two periods. The first was during the Age of Ignorance, the period before the advent of Islam. During this time, women were oppressed; they were treated like animals, even worse than animals. Then Islam came and bestowed its blessings on mankind, it dragged women out of that state of oppression, it pulled her from that slough of ignorance.

The second period when women have been oppressed occurred in our Iran, during the reigns of the former Shah (Riza Khan) and his son (Muhammad Riza). In the name of wanting to liberate women, they oppressed the women; they committed outrages against them. They dragged them down from that position of honour and esteem that they occupied, from that spiritual position that they enjoyed, making them instead mere objects.

In the name of freedom, freedom for women and freedom for men, they deprived men and women of their freedom. They corrupted our women and our youth. The Shah (Muhammad Riza) believed women should be 'ravishing and beguiling' as he put it. Of course it was because he had allowed the animal aspect of his nature, the base animal aspect with its concern for the physical, for the material, to overcome him that he viewed women as such.

Accordingly, he pulled women down from their position as human beings to the level of an animal, and on the plea of wanting to give women status, he dragged her down from the status she had to a lower one. He turned women into dolls, whereas women are human beings, great human beings. (474)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

The Shah speaks of freedom for women, freedom for which women? Today in Iran women of character, who are seeking their basic human rights and who make up the majority of women in Iran, are all opposed to the Shah and are demanding his overthrow.

All of them know that freedom for women in the Shah's logic means dragging them down from their status as human beings and treating them as nothing better than objects. Freedom for women in the Shah's way of reasoning means filling the prisons with Iranian women who are not prepared to yield to the moral degradations he promotes. (475)

15 December 1978 (24 Azar 1357 AHS)

During their reigns, Riza Khan and Muhammad Riza Khan vulgarised women, dragging them down from that status they once enjoyed, doing the same to the men and youth too. Numerous centres of corruption were created for our youth. In the name of freedom, in the name of progress, in the name of civilisation, they dragged our youth into corruption. In the name of freedom, they deprived us of all

freedoms.

Those who lived through the Riza Khan period understand perfectly well what I am talking about, they witnessed for themselves what we were put through and what our respected women were put through, just as those who lived through Muhammad Riza's era saw what went on then. With deceptive words and bombastic terms, they set our country on a course for destruction. And worse than everything else, much worse, was the fact that they corrupted our youth.

Our human resources were put in a state of backwardness because of them. Women during the time of Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza Pahlavi were oppressed creatures and did not know it. It is doubtful that women were subjected to as much oppression during the Age of Ignorance as they were during the reigns of these two men, or as much degradation.

In both periods (the Age of Ignorance and under the Pahlavis), women were oppressed. In the first, Islam came and rescued them from their bondage, and in this period too I hope that Islam will be able to take their hands and save them from the maelstrom of abjectness and oppression. (476)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

. . . The Pahlavis had no intention of granting the ladies freedom, because during their rule the men weren't given it either. Neither the ladies nor the men were free. They saw freedom to lie in allowing other things, all of which were corrupt. (477)

2 July 1979 (11 Tir 1358 AHS)

They claimed to have freed half the population, but on the plea of doing this, they deprived the entire population of freedom. (478)

3 July 1979 (12 Tir 1358 AHS)

With deceptive words and bombastic terms, in the name of this and that, they destroyed the power of our youth. How they harped on about wanting 'free men and free women', how 'everyone in the country is now free, the peasants are no more, now they are farmers'. (479)

5 July 1979 (14 Tir 1358 AHS)

It is that kind of freedom that you want. The kind through which you can nurture indifference in our youth so that they have no interest in what goes on. The big powers can come and take all our resources and they are too preoccupied with enjoying themselves to care. Places were opened to provide for their enjoyment, bars and cinemas were opened and young men and women were encouraged to go there together. Thus, in the name of freedom, they dragged both into corruption. Our country was plundered, but those who were free, those who acted with licence, were indifferent. (480)

24 August 1979 (2 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

They purported that they had created free men and free women, and, for example, that they had freed some fifteen million women. But what kind of freedom was it that they gave? Were the men free that they were going to make the women free? What kind of freedom did these 'free men' and 'free women' enjoy? What kind of freedom did any of us enjoy?

Yes, in some areas there was freedom, in frequenting the centres of corruption, which the regime encouraged. Those women and young men who were in the same class as them were free in those centres to do whatever they wanted. On these beaches, you all know what went on. The people there acted with licence.

This is what being a 'free woman' and a 'free man' meant. Otherwise, which section of the press was free at that time to speak out? Which one of you was free to utter a word? That which they wanted to be free was corruption and that which brought corruption, affliction and that which brought affliction. During these few years they destroyed our youth. (481)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

When you look at it, you see that the women realised what kind of circumstances the previous regime wanted to bring about for them in the name of creating 'free women and free men', and that this talk of freedom was just a sham, a deceptive ruse. During his (the Shah's) reign, nobody was free, neither men nor women, the press nor the radio.

True freedom did not exist, just plenty of talk and propaganda about it. The kind of freedom they envisaged for our country – and today too some of the writers are suggesting the same – was the kind that dragged our young boys and girls into corruption, the kind that I call an 'imported freedom', an 'imperialist freedom', a gift the imperialists give to countries they want to make dependent. (482)

17 September 1979 (26 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

The clergy are not against progress, but they are against Muhammad Riza's kind of progress. They are against this civilisation, this 'gateway to civilisation', which destroyed everything, we had. They are against this 'free men and free women' idea that he espoused, not freedom per se. Freedom is one thing, but should it be of the uncontrolled kind that causes harm? Does freedom mean allowing people to do whatever they want, regardless of the consequences? (483)

17 September 1979 (26 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

The bit of freedom that existed in our country during these periods was a pernicious, corrupting freedom. It was the freedom to drink alcohol, the freedom to gamble, the freedom for men and women to frolic together on the beaches, the freedom to frequent those centres of corruption. It was in these things people were free; but they were not free to write a word against them (the Shah and his regime) or in the

interests of the country.

They were not free to utter a word against him (the Shah). He was right when he talked about 'free men and free women', but what was this freedom they enjoyed? It was the kind they wanted, the kind I call an 'imported freedom', an 'imperialist freedom'. It was all part of the plan. (484)

18 September 1979 (27 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

At the time of that regime which ranted on about 'free men and free women', what activities did the women actually perform? All we saw them do was a few of them get together and go, in that shameful state, to the tomb of Riza Khan to thank him for having freed them. What freedom did he give them? What did he do? They don't think about the kind of freedom they were granted, or to what extent these people really wanted the women or the men to be free.

Yes, they wanted freedom; they wanted the kind that these people today with pens in their hands who write against Islam and against the clergy also want, and that is a freedom dictated by the West and aimed at luring our youth into corruption.

They (these writers) want the men and women to be free, the women to be free to attend gatherings as they used to, dressed the way they used to and acting the way they used to before the lecherous eyes of men. They want this kind of corruption that drags both our sisters into corruption and our men and youth.

They want all kinds of obscenities to be free. During this 'free women' period, which woman could speak out on current issues of concern? Which man could write a word about the sufferings endured by our nation at the hands of foreign and domestic elements? Which section of our press was free? In what way were the radio and television free?

In what way were the people, the youth, those at the universities and the seminaries free? Over these past 50 years that I can vouch for, having witnessed what went on, society has been deprived of a true, beneficial freedom. We had nothing. The women weren't free to get involved in the affairs of society or to speak about the nation's problems. They weren't free to say a word about the problems besetting the nation because of the East and West, or the difficulties the nation had to suffer because of the puppet governments. (485)

30 September 1979 (8 Mehr 1358 AHS)

. . . So we have two types of freedom, one is the beneficial kind, which did not exist during the period of these two criminals,[27](#) indeed which was forbidden during their time. The kind of freedom they wanted to see prevalent was that which allowed women to go out into the streets dressed up to kill and, God forbid, behave however they liked with young men. This was the type of freedom they implemented, and it is this type that is desired by those today who don't want Islam. (486)

30 September 1979 (8 Mehr 1358 AHS)

They limited freedom to one area and ranted on about 'free men' and 'free women', meaning that they were free to frequent any kind of centre of corruption they pleased. On another front though there was suppression. Those who wished to write anything concerning the interests of the country or the interests of Islam were not free to do so, they were suppressed. (487)

26 October 1979 (4 Aban 1358 AHS)

The women who demonstrated are the remnants of former problems, women whom the Shah brought into the arena as "free women" and whom he led to corruption. They prefer the former situation, which that corruption had brought about, those freedoms that the former regime wanted: freedom for the youth to do anything they wanted, to embrace vice and to act indecently.

But they saw that Islam does not consent to indecency and to actions, which drag the country into corruption and drive the nation into a state of backwardness. It was these women who came out onto the streets, with faces made up as everyone observed, and demonstrated. (488)

31 October 1979 (9 Aban 1358 AHS)

What a ballyhoo they made about this 'free men' and 'free women' idea. What hype they and those parasites in the Imperial – I can't call it the National – Consultative Assembly and in the Senate made about it. What a fuss the SAVAK²⁸ agents and the Shah's own agents made about the idea that now our country is free, we are 'free men and free women'.

And yet throughout the reigns of this father and son²⁹ – and especially this son who was a true heir to his father and who went even further than he in his policies – throughout the incumbency of these two criminals, you can see that freedom existed for no one. No one was free to utter a word of truth.

Freedom existed in the sense that they (the Pahlavis) were free to create whatever kind of corruption they liked in order to rein in the power of our youth. They did not harm the country's natural resources to the same extent they did its human resources. They incapacitated people, they destroyed (the power of) our youth. Our youth who were meant to serve this country were lured into places which did nothing for them only stupefy their minds so that they could be of no service.

All the centres of corruption were opened by them. They promoted them with great fanfare over their propaganda loudspeakers, aiding and encouraging our young people to frequent them and thus have no function. Their youth had to be interred there, the youth of our young people, it was taken off them, they were paralysed. These respected sisters who fell into their propaganda trap, who were prevented from performing their human duty, became playthings in the hands of criminals.

This was deplored by self-respecting individuals, by those who had not lost their human disposition. What they did to these respected ladies in the name of freedom is a source of great sorrow that will remain with us for all times. (489)

16 December 1979 (25 Azar 1358 AHS)

Complete texts of some speeches about the crimes perpetrated against women and the plots devised against them by imperialism and the Pahlavi regime

Complete texts of some speeches about the crimes perpetrated against women and the plots devised against them by imperialism and the Pahlavi regime

16 May 1979

Imam Khomeini's address to a group of ladies from Mashhad
In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

First of all I must thank you respected ladies and apologise that you have to sit under this blazing sun. Both when I was abroad and here at home, I heard about the valuable activities carried out by the ladies of Mashhad. I am proud of such ladies. As I see you are uncomfortable in this heat, I will keep my address short.

I would like to turn to some of the actions carried out by governments or holders of power and shed light on some points, which may be obscure. Riza Shah came, carried out a coup d'état, overthrew the government of Iran and put himself in power.³⁰ After him Muhammad Riza took over.

They carried out policies some of which at first may have appeared positive and beneficial to some naive people, and others in the name of reform or civilisation the pernicious nature of which was only too clear from the start. Such was the case with the programme for land reform. Initially they created such ballyhoo for this land reform programme³¹ saying things like 'we want this and that for the farmers and the peasant-landowner relationship no longer exists, all are farmers now.'

The newspapers wrote about it, the radios spoke about it, and it was talked about in speeches, all with a view to deceiving the people. But we knew what was really going on, and now the nation too has realised that it had nothing to do with reforms, they didn't want to free the peasants, they didn't want them and the indigent to prosper, rather the aim was to make Iran a market for America and ruin her agrarian economy so that she would depend on America for everything; a dependence which still persists today. They talked about land reforms but we knew it was really all about weakening the country and dragging it into decay.

Another example is this 'freedom for the classes, for women and men', this 'free men and free women' business. We all know that during the time of this father and son a repression existed that was perhaps unprecedented throughout the whole of the history of Iran. Neither men nor women were free. Everyone

was subjected to suppression; everyone suffered.

One day celebrations were held marking the abrogation of capitulation (at the time of Riza Khan), and in the newspapers and in speeches given it was said we could do this because we were an advanced country, then another it was reinstated and immunity given to the Americans. This was in obedience to what the power wielders decided should be done. Whatever the powerful class said should be done, others created a real fuss over. In the puppet parliaments noisy approval was made and the policies praised to the skies.

Two policies that were implemented at the time of Riza Khan in imitation of Ataturk³² were uniformity of dress and the unveiling of women. Both were trumpeted over their (the regime's) propaganda loudspeakers and praised highly.

What accusations they levelled against those *akhunds* who opposed these policies, calling them liars and composing defamatory poems, which some of you may have heard but which cannot be repeated. Then we all realised that this unveiling policy was not one meant to do the women a service, rather by putting them under pressure and exerting force, they tried to destroy this segment of the population too.

They strove to stop them from performing that glorious deed which is theirs to perform, from executing those services that this segment wishes to render the nation, those valuable services which our ladies are entrusted to undertake, and prevent them from performing that most fundamental of services which it is their duty to render, that is training their children in whose hands the destiny of the country lies.

They feared lest in their laps children were brought up to be pious, Islamic and with a love for their homeland, and that even when these children entered the school system, they still would not be able to change them, not even with all the propaganda they disseminated at the schools through the teachers and propagators they had installed there. Thus, their plan was to turn these ladies away from that great, fundamental role they have and pretend that in so doing they had freed half the population of Iran.

You saw what kind of freedom they gave the women (during the reign of Riza Khan), or perhaps most of you cannot recall that period, but I witnessed for myself what they did with the respected ladies of Iran, what pressures they subjected them to. I saw the bayonets they used to carry out this improper act (the unveiling).

Then later, they decided to get results by taking from women their fundamental occupation, that of rearing their children, the only one in which they act according to their instincts. Of course, there is no objection to women taking up employment, sound employment, but we do not want a repeat of the way it was during the Pahlavi era. At that time, they did not have employment in mind for women, rather their aim was to degrade both men and women, pulling them down from that position they occupy.

They did not want a natural growth for either sex. They did not want our children to receive a sound upbringing, so they took steps to prevent this from the very beginning by depriving many of the chance

to be raised in their mothers' laps, which are centres for a child's training.

Then later, at the primary schools, there too they misguided the children and led them astray with their malicious propaganda and misleading books. Even later still, at the universities, their agents there did not let them develop properly, they did not allow training to be given that would produce genuine scholars or individuals committed to the welfare of the country and to Islam.

So from their policies, which we have seen were actually against our nation and in conflict with the interests of our country, like this capitulation affair, these land reforms and others, we realise that the goal was to pervert, not to reform. The goal was to stop the country from developing. Thus, from this we can deduce that the unveiling which Riza Khan pursued in imitation of Turkey and the West and in accordance with the mission with which he had been assigned was against our country's interests.

We saw that it was you who were active members of our society, who did this movement a great service. It was you who dressed the way you are here now, poured into the streets and helped our movement. If any of those who were brought up with their (the Pahlavis') form of training took part, it was a group of them who were closer to you in their way of thinking. Otherwise, those who were brought up with a Pahlavi mentality had nothing to do with this affair at all.

Some of the men too played no role in this movement, but now they come forward and want to reap the benefits. Now that this oppressed class, this class that others deemed weak but who were, praise God, strong, this class that they referred to as the third class whereas in fact they are the first class and it is they themselves who are in the third or rather the seventh class in hell, have worked for the country, have smashed this great barrier, have opened the way, the gentlemen pour in from America and Europe wanting to partake of the fruits of their success. Some of the women too, who played no role in this affair, now think they can join in the victory feast.

But you class of people, may God preserve you, may God grant you happiness, you have no expectations. You continue to serve Islam as you did then, expecting nothing in return. It is those who had nothing to do with this affair, who did not make any sacrifices for the cause and lost no one, who are now coming forward with their ridiculous expectations, one wanting to become a minister, another a member of Parliament and another something else.

They are just building castles in the air, they had better come down to earth. What idle fancy it is they entertain thinking that now they can come and reap the benefits for themselves after they sat comfortable at home or abroad while others struggled.

This nation is indebted first and foremost to this group of women sat here today, and the community they represent: the respected ladies of Mashhad and the other ladies of Iran. Among the men, it is to these workers, farmers, tradesmen, people from the universities and from our deprived classes that the nation owes a debt, for they were the ones who took our movement forward. Today, they do not aspire after the things those who contributed nothing to this movement do.

The latter have come forward now wanting to become the president for example or the prime minister. Those who were the mouthpieces of the former regime now want to return and participate. Today, everyone has become a revolutionary. Whoever comes to see me nowadays tells me: 'I was a combatant, I spent time in jail' etc. I know they are lying to me, but what can I say to them. You think I am unaware, but I know, I know only too well that most of you were servants of the regime and it's only now that you've become 'revolutionaries'.

No, you are not revolutionaries and will never be. At the first sign of trouble or, God forbid, defeat, you are the ones who will rush out there shouting long live so and so. Yes, we know what kind of people you are, you should correct yourselves and be a little bit careful.

The government must do something for these workers who are of the weak and oppressed class, this class that you consider to be lower than you but who are in fact of a much higher station than you. You who have money in banks at home and abroad, who own companies and have businesses, what say do you have in the matter?

It was these people who have nothing who got involved in this affair. One day the television showed these slum-dwellers of Tehran (at a demonstration), when one of them was asked what he was doing there he replied 'every morning we go to the demonstrations with our children.' It was these poor slum-dwellers who demonstrated and brought about this victory, the governments should do something for them. You opportunists who sat by and watched and who now come and try to take advantage of the situation, you had better mind your own business.

May God preserve this class of people (the deprived).

May God keep you dear, respected ladies and grant you happiness. Please give my greetings to all the ladies of Mashhad whom you represent.

I am the servant of you all.

Peace and blessings be upon you and also the mercy of God. (490)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

30 September 1979

Imam's address to a group of female teachers and students from Mashhad, Amul and Abadan In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

I would like, first of all, to thank these young girls for their recitation, and all the sisters who have come from different areas, from Khorrasan, Amul and Abadan to be here today. I am, God willing, your humble supplicant.

We should analyse this matter to see what kind of freedom it was the former Shah had in mind – and what it is these people today who follow the same path want – and what role women played during his

time and throughout other periods in our history. Those acquainted with the past hundred years of Iran's history know that in the most important movements, which took place before the Pahlavi era, such as the Tobacco Movement³³ and the Constitutional Movement,³⁴ women participated shoulder-to-shoulder with the men.

Women played an active role in the society and involved themselves, along with the men, in the political and social affairs of their country and in the problems that beset it. Just as the men rose up against the tobacco concession, which threatened to throw everything we had to the wind, so too did the women. In the Constitutional Movement also, just as the men were active, so too were the women. This was how it was before the Pahlavi regime.

During the period of its decline, in the movement started by the Muslims, by our nation, you all saw for yourselves that the women were in the vanguard. Their activities in this regard were even more valuable than those of the men, because when these sisters poured into the streets and demonstrated before the tanks and cannons with clenched fists, they doubled the resolve of the men.

When men see ladies coming and standing before tanks and cannons, it spurs them to make more of an effort. As we ourselves saw, these sisters played a very great role throughout this movement, and now that the regime has gone, we see that they participate in all affairs, in the campaign to reform and purge our establishments, in the crusade for reconstruction (*Jihad-i Sazandeghi*), in all these affairs they actively and freely participate.

Such was the situation before the Pahlavi era and such is the situation now, the details of which you know and therefore no explanation is needed. Now let's take a look at the time of that regime which ranted on about 'free men and free women', what activities did the women actually perform? All we saw them do was a few of them get together and go, in that shameful state, to the tomb of Riza Khan to thank him for having freed them.

What freedom did he give them? What did he do? They don't think about the kind of freedom they were granted, or to what extent these people really wanted the women or the men to be free. Yes, they wanted freedom; they wanted the kind that these people today with pens in their hands who write against Islam and against the clergy also want, and that is a freedom dictated by the West and aimed at luring our youth into corruption.

They (these writers) want the men and women to be free, the women to be free to attend gatherings as they used to, dressed the way they used to and acting the way they used to before the lecherous eyes of men. They want this kind of corruption that drags both our sisters into corruption and our men and youth. They want all kinds of obscenities to be free.

During this 'free women' period, which woman could speak out on current issues of concern? Which man could write a word about the sufferings endured by our nation at the hands of foreign and domestic elements? Which section of our press was free? In what way were the radio and television free? In what

way were the people, the youth, those at the universities and the seminaries free?

Over these past 50 years that I can vouch for, having witnessed what went on, society has been deprived of a true, beneficial freedom. We had nothing. The women weren't free to get involved in the affairs of society or to speak about the nation's problems. They weren't free to say a word about the problems besetting the nation because of the East and West, or the difficulties the nation had to suffer because of the puppet governments.

The last one hundred years then can be divided into three periods. Some events that occurred during these periods you witnessed for yourselves, but all of them have been recorded in history. Let us take the period from the beginning of these one hundred years covering the constitutional period and up to the reign of Riza Khan as the first, and, regardless of the fact that the government at that time was also corrupt, let us look at the circumstances then and what freedom women and men enjoyed.

Let us take another period as covering the era of the Pahlavi regime, from the time Riza Khan enacted his coup d'état to the time of its dwindling power, and the third period as being from the fall of this regime, or rather the time when it was facing defeat and had become ineffective, to the present.

Let us examine these three periods and present our findings to those who are still shedding tears over the loss of the Pahlavi regime, those who would like to see its return or the installation of one similar and who remonstrate against Islam and the Muslims in the name of freedom and democracy. We will examine these three periods and see whether the freedom the women and men enjoyed in the first and third periods was true freedom, or whether they enjoyed it in this second period from the time of Riza Khan's coup d'état to the decline in his son's power.

It must be noted that the first period fell during the time of Qajar rule, which was also not pleasing to Islam, however the Muslims were much stronger then and the government did not have the same power and hold over the clergy of Islam (it acquired in the Pahlavi era). It was weak in the face of the clergy and the nation. It was only when Riza Khan came along and was given the reins of power that the clergy were suppressed along with the rest of the nation.

So if we assess the freedom the men and women have enjoyed in these first and third periods, we see it was a freedom that was useful for their country, for Islam, for the Muslims, for their nation. In both periods they were free to play a role in social affairs, to serve the country, to have a say in matters concerning the good of the country and to criticise the government and public figures of the day, and they availed themselves of this freedom and do so today, as you yourselves can vouch.

Today, you are free to participate in social matters, in these fundamental matters that are related to the interests of your own country and your own nation. There are no restrictions, as you can see. Give us one example when you have wanted to talk about a matter that is in the interests of the country – and is not some kind of plot as has sometimes been the case in the past – when you have wanted to take action over something that is in your interests and the interests of the country, and you have been

stopped and the bayonets unsheathed against you.

You can't. In the first period too, the women played an active role in dealing with any problem that arose, including the two I mentioned above; that is the issue of the tobacco concession and in the Constitutional Movement, which were the most important issues of that time. They involved themselves in all the affairs of the day, they played a leading role alongside the men, they spoke up on matters, which concerned their country; they vociferated their views.[35](#)

During this third period you yourselves were there on the scene playing an active and effective role, so you yourselves can vouch for the fact that nothing stopped you from gathering, from coming out amongst the people and shouting out against the tyrannies perpetrated. It was because of these activities of yours and this freedom, which you enjoyed that this victory came about for our nation.

However, the freedom Riza Khan and, in particular, his son sought to bring about, was not really freedom, it was more the corruption and ruination of the nation. In this second period too you can divide freedom into two kinds, one freedom of the press, including the radio and television, and in general freedom to write or say anything in the interests of the nation and the country.

All this at that time was subject to censorship, no one was free to do such a thing because our problems came from the government itself and its masters, and anything you wanted to say would have been first and foremost about the actions of Riza Khan, about the treachery he perpetrated and the crimes he committed, or about the perfidy of his son. But you weren't free at that time to utter one word about such things.

You couldn't criticise the police, the government or the army, our press were not free to criticise such things. Our country was completely denied a freedom that was beneficial to its interests. Pens were broken, tongues silenced, no one had the right to say a word. Whatever appeared in the press, whatever was broadcast over the radio and television, whatever was written, had to be in praise of someone who had thrown everything we had to the winds.

There was no true, sound freedom during this second period. Some freedoms, however, did exist. They opened the doors of cinemas, and these being in the state they were in those days corrupted those of our youth who frequented them and stopped them completely from pondering ways to help their country. The doors of casinos were opened too, to all our young people, the doors of brothels likewise. It is said numerous centres of corruption were operating from Tehran to Shemiran, too many to be counted. These were what they made free, what they promoted even. They gave us the kind of freedom, which is detrimental to the country and the people.

Following this second period, we returned to a period similar to the first only much better. The first period occurred at the time of the Qajar dynasty whose kings too were wicked and depraved, but not as bad as the Pahlavis, this father and son broke the record for corruption and evil. This freedom that our nation now enjoys, which the women, men, writers and so on, now enjoy, this freedom is in all affairs, which are

beneficial to you.

You are free to go out and say what you have to say, to criticise the government, criticise anyone who puts a foot wrong, no one is going to ask you why you are doing so. You are free to join the Construction Crusade (*Jihad-i Sazandeghi*) and help your countrymen.

Anything that is involved with the growth of man, the growth of the sisters, brothers and these dear children, is free for you. That which is not free, indeed which Islam prevents, is gambling which corrupts the nation, drinking which corrupts the nation, and all types of obscenities which were made available during the time of that criminal. Islam forbids such things.

So we have two types of freedom, one is the beneficial kind, which did not exist during the period of these two criminals,³⁶ indeed which was forbidden during their time. The kind of freedom they wanted to see prevalent was that which allowed women to go out into the streets dressed up to kill and, God forbid, behave however they liked with young men. This was the type of freedom they implemented, and it is this type that is desired by those today who don't want Islam. The kind we propose is not even open to consideration for them.

You won't find one of these people who go on about 'our country' and 'our nation' helping the brothers and sisters in the Construction Crusade as you have done. Those who shout about 'the people, the people' are those who go and burn the harvest, not gather it. You go through the trouble to help your brothers and sisters with the harvest, weeding and reaping the crops, then those who shout about the people, about how they are for the masses, come along and, if they can, burn all you have reaped.

It is these individuals who claim to be doing mighty things for the people who blow up our oil pipelines with their guns, these democrats and their followers in Kurdistan. It was these people who, fearing an Islamic republic would be established and would grab them by the tails and throw them out, tried to destroy our oil installations, to ruin our farmers and destroy our industry and our agriculture. Indeed, this was the fear of all those opposed to the course pursued by the nation, thus their cries for freedom were not about freedom, they were about perverting the nation (from that course).

Freedom exists now, and if the remnants of the former regime, their servants and the servants of the foreigners let you, you will see what freedom is.

May God keep all you sisters, brothers, children and young men.

May you be successful and serve this country well.

May you teachers train these children well, and give them an Islamic and a human education, which is beneficial both to the country and to their spiritual well being, and in which can be found happiness in this world and the next.

Peace be upon all you ladies and brothers. (491)

30 September 1979 (8 Mehr 1358 AHS)

10 September 1980

Address to a gathering of Iranians recently returned from a five-yearly conference on women held in Copenhagen

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Basically, any organisation in which the superpowers have a hand has to be one, which works to their benefit. Take the United Nations, these meetings it has abroad, the Security Council meetings, all serve the purposes of the superpowers and are held to deceive the other countries. Thus, they create the right of veto for themselves and use it to reject anything they deem not to be in their interests. Indeed, the United Nations is itself in the service of the superpowers.

The agencies they (the superpowers) set up under whatever name, all attempt to bring others into line with their interests. We are so suspicious of the superpowers that even if they are honest about something, still we will think they are saying it to deceive the people.

The task you have performed is very valuable, and God willing you will be even more successful. As you all know, our revolution is portrayed abroad contrary to that which it truly is. We must begin to gradually remedy this and start giving the world a true picture of our revolution. It is not only concerning the women (in the country), who are truly free in Iran now, who are committed, dedicated individuals, perhaps even more so than the men, that a false picture has been painted.

Indeed abroad the idea was promulgated that it was Riza Khan who brought up the issue of women's freedom and through the unveiling sought to free them. But the goal behind the unveiling affair was not, as they purported, to bring the women, say ten million women, into society and get them involved in social affairs. Rather it was an order that they had received from abroad and which they carried out with the intention of leading us into captivity.

Perhaps none of you can remember the affair, you may have been too small at that time, but the bitter taste of the unveiling, which later Riza Khan's son called creating 'free men and free women' remains in my mouth. You don't know what they did to the esteemed ladies, indeed to all segments of the society. Merchants, tradesmen and clergymen all were forced to attend parties (celebrating the unveiling) along with their wives, and if they refused, they were beaten and subjected to verbal abuse.

Their aim was to use the women as a preoccupation for the youth so that they would not get involved in fundamental issues. They employed different methods to stop our youth and our academics from pondering their own situation and that of their country, the unveiling, with the disgraceful acts they perpetrated, being one of them. Respectable women were mistreated, clergymen likewise, agents even approached the late Mr. Kashani and told him he had to attend the parties too, but he sent them away, protesting that they were only obeying orders, with a flea in their ear.

In towns and villages everywhere throughout the country the story was the same. The deeds they perpetrated in Qum were so opprobrious they defy description. And this was all in order to bring the young people, the gullible young people, men and women, together socially and preoccupy them with one another, so that they became indifferent towards the fundamental problems facing the country.

They created centres of fornication and other forms of corruption for the same reason; from Tehran to Tajrish hundreds of these centres were opened. So as you see they used the women, and consequently our youth, our people, did not attend to the basic problems, as they should have, neither the men nor the women. Neither were free, they were just called free men and free women.

This was the foundation that Riza Khan first laid. He was brought to power by the British, may God's curse rest upon them, and it was the British who pushed him into such action. Then their (the regime's) poets, writers and media took up the cause and worked to make this nation turn away from itself and preoccupy itself with the pursuit of pleasure and animal gratification. Centres of debauchery were freely opened to the public, yet perhaps in the whole of Tehran there was not one centre of religious learning for these men or these women who were supposed to be free to study whatever they liked.

Be that as it may, these are problems that the superpowers brought about through their very carefully prepared plans devised by their experts, and these conferences and gatherings may be part of the same plans. We must all be very vigilant, the entire nation of Iran must be careful not to fall into their trap. When they attend these gatherings, the Iranians must preserve their dignity, just as you say you did at this recent gathering, and not allow themselves to be influenced by the people there. If Iranians are going to attend such conferences, let it not be that their participation will end up being in their (the superpowers') favour. Most of the time people are neglectful.

The things you ladies say you have done are very valuable actions, and if there are to be other gatherings, the men too, the committed men that is, not those who would go there and act against the interests of our country, should attend. I wish you all success, God willing.

Today is not like the olden days; today is different from the former period. Today the ladies must act on their social and religious duties and protect public morality, and in so doing carry out their social and political activities. Today is not like the former period when women of uncertain repute and uncertain objectives were brought into the Parliament. Women enter the Parliament today, but the circumstances are totally different.

In those days they had their gatherings, they had their Women's Day, but it was a day when the unveiling was celebrated. In the final years of my period in Qum, perhaps it was in my last year there just before the uprising of the 15th Khurdad, I heard that the government was planning for some women to gather at the tomb of Riza Shah and commemorate the unveiling of women.

Some government officials in Qum came to see me and I told them each to inform their ministries that were this plan to be carried out, I would call on the nation to hold a day of national mourning for those

killed in the massacre perpetrated by the regime at the Gauhar Shad mosque. They reported what I'd said to them and subsequently the government changed its plans. Be that as it may, the circumstances that the regime had created were in direct contradiction to what the nation had to do.

Praise God those days are over and all the women and all the men must involve themselves in the social and political affairs. They must be supervisors, supervising the work of the Majlis (Parliament) and the government; they must express their opinions. The entire nation must today watch over affairs, they must express their opinions, comment on political and social problems and all that the government does. If they see something wrong they must take the proper action.

I hope that this movement will end in victory and you will all be successful, God willing. May you expand your gatherings everywhere in an even more splendid manner so that women will awaken and reject those things of the past, reject that former role of being a plaything, of having to dress up and make up. You yourselves know how much damage that attitude did to our economy and how much harm it did to public morality. Today's women, like the men, must be properly educated and concern themselves with the issues (of the day), they too must exercise sound judgement in their involvement in the (country's) affairs, and God willing, they will be successful. (492)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

- [1.](#) – Soldiers were ordered to tear apart women's veils on the street with their bayonets.
- [2.](#) – In December 1928, Riza Shah imposed on the Iranian nation a Uniform Dress law, which made it obligatory for men to wear a round peaked cap----similar to a kepi----which became known as the Pahlavi cap. This measure – like much else in his programme of 'reform' – was doubtless inspired by the example of Ataturk, who had, in November 1925, enacted the notorious Hat Law, which provided the death penalty for all who refused to don European headgear.
- [3.](#) – Refer to footnote 1.
- [4.](#) – Referring to Riza Shah and his son Muhammad Riza Shah.
- [5.](#) – Refer to footnote 77.
- [6.](#) – Parades and celebrations were planned to commemorate 7 January 1935 (17 Dey 1314 AHS), the day the law calling for the unveiling of women was implemented in Iran.
- [7.](#) – In late 1935, Riza Khan gave orders for strict enforcement of his decree requiring men to wear Western headgear and the Islamic veils of women to be removed. This move angered the people and prompted opposition from the clergy. Ayatullah Hajj Aqa Husayn Qummi, a religious leader of Mashhad, travelled to Tehran in protest. He set up residence in the vicinity of the shrine of `Abd al-`Azim and when the people heard of his arrival, they rushed from all areas of Tehran to the shrine to see him. The gathering of people there worried Riza Khan, and he gave orders that the residence of Ayatullah Qummi and the shrine be surrounded and no one be allowed to enter. When news of this occurrence reached Mashhad, the people held a large gathering in the new courtyard of the shrine of Imam Riza (pbuh) and immediately orders were given to shoot those gathered there. After this event, Bahlul, a famous preacher of Khurasan province, called the mourners of those murdered in the incident to come together at the mosque of Gauhar Shad, part of the shrine complex in that city. Upon hearing of this second large gathering, Riza Khan ordered that machine-gun fire be used to disperse the crowd and that mercy be shown to no one. Police in Mashhad, along with the infantry, entered the mosque and massacred several hundred people. The bodies of the martyrs and even the wounded were then mercilessly loaded onto trucks and taken out of the city where they were buried in a mass grave. The site of this grave is known as the "seat of carnage."
- [8.](#) – Referring to comments made by a group of simple-minded people who, using the excuse of some inadequacies, cast aspersions on the fundamentals of the Islamic republic system.

[9.](#) – The late Ayatullah al-`Uzma Hajj Shaykh `Abdulkarim Ha'iri Yazdi (1856–1935) is considered to be one of the most outstanding maraji' of the Shi'a. Initially he began his studies in Yazd and then in the holy cities of Baghdad, Karbala and Najaf (`Atabat `Aliyat). Studying alongside such eminent scholars as Sayyid Muhammad Faysharaki, Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi, Mirzayi Bozurg Shirazi and Akhund Khurasani, he achieved the noble rank of ijtihad and successfully initiated religious classes in Karbala. In 1912 he travelled to Arak and brought high repute to the theological centre there. In 1920 he visited the holy city of Qum with the intention of making a pilgrimage. Whilst there, local `ulama insisted on his remaining in order to establish a religious learning centre. Many distinguished jurists have received training and education from his classes, they include Ayatullah al-`Uzma Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Khansari, Ayatullah al-`Uzma Sayyid Ahmad Khansari, Ayatullah al-`Uzma Sayyid Sadruddin Sadr, Ayatullah al-`Uzma Shaykh Muhammad `Ali Araki and Ayatullah al-`Uzma Sayyid Muhammad Riza Gulpaygani. Among his students was the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatullah al-`Uzma Imam Khomeini. His eminence Ayatullah Ha'iri was able to retain his extremely modest way of life even when he was recognised as the marja'-i taqlid and much has been related with regard to his moral and ethical virtues. The grave of this magnanimous and honourable scholar is situated by the holy shrine of Hazrat Ma'suma (pbuh) in Qum.

[10.](#) – The government and cabinet of Amir Assadollah `Alam.

[11.](#) – Laws governing Provincial and County Council elections were announced by the national press on 8 October 1962 (16 Mehr 1341 AHS) and the headlines read: 'Women Given the Right to Vote'. On the face of it the laws were not in contradiction with Islam, but the regime planned to cover up its true intentions which were to eliminate the qualification which stipulated that candidates and voters were to be Muslim, and to replace the policy of taking oaths on the Holy Qur'an with another which stipulated swearing in on a 'Holy Book'. In addition to this assault on Islam, the regime also planned to officially approve pseudo-religious activities instigated by the imperialists. Any objections to their scheme were labelled as opposition to the legal rights and freedom of women. The new laws, promulgated by the Shah's regime on 6 October 1962, were seen as a prelude to increased participation in public life by the Baha'is and eventual abolition of the Constitution of 1906. After a prolonged campaign against the laws in which Imam Khomeini took a prominent part, they were annulled by the government on 28 November 1962.

[12.](#) – When the newspapers carrying this report reached Qum, the maraji' and high-ranking religious leaders such as Imam Khomeini held a meeting that same evening in the home of the late Ayatullah Murtaza Ha'iri (eldest son of the late Shaykh `Abdulkarim Ha'iri) to hold discussions and exchange views. As a result of this meeting, the religious leaders sent telegrams to the Shah who passed on the responsibility of replying to the Prime Minister.

[13.](#) – It is clear that Imam's view expressed here concerns the entry of women into Parliament during the period of the Shah with all its concomitant corruption, and takes this into account along with the political and economic circumstances of the time. Otherwise, as this book demonstrates only too well, not only did he not consider women's participation in social and political affairs to be a violation of religious law, he actually encouraged it.

[14.](#) – The Cabinet had assumed charge of the legislative process following the dissolution of Parliament by royal decree the preceding year.

[15.](#) – Article 2 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law stipulates that no law is valid unless the mujtahids (Islamic jurists) exercise a supervisory role in the Parliament, which they did not.

[16.](#) – From the Mafatih al-Jinan (Keys to the Gardens of Paradise) a standard collection of Shi'ite prayers compiled from Bihar al-Anwar (Oceans of Light) and other sources by `Abbas Qummi (d. 1940–1).

[17.](#) – According to the precept "Reforming the Electoral Law" – one of the underlying principles of the Shah's "White Revolution" – both the right to vote and the right to be elected to the Majlis had been given to women. In the first election to follow the "White Revolution" a number of women from the Royal Court and upper classes entered the Majlis as parliamentary representatives. These included: Showkat Jahanbani, Farukhrow Parsa (the wife of General Shirinsokhan), Hajar Tarbiyat, Mehrangiz Dowlatshahi and several others.

[18.](#) – Imam Khomeini, in his New Year declaration of 1963 (1342 AHS) entitled "The Clergy of Islam Does Not Hold New Year Celebrations This Year", objected very strongly to the legislation calling for the compulsory conscription of eighteen-year-old girls for military service. As a result of this objection, despite the fact that this news had already been published and that speeches and interviews had already been given on the radio, the Shah and his government were forced to deny what they had formerly said. In fact the Shah denied the validity of the news reports on two different occasions before the

end of that month. Jahangir Tafazzuli, Minister of State in charge of publications and broadcasting, in an interview he gave, described the news concerning women's conscription as totally unfounded. Refer to the speeches delivered by the Shah on 1 April 1963 (12 Farvardin 1342 AHS) in Mashhad and 2 April 1963 in Birjand; also refer to the 11,056th issue of the *Ittila'at* newspaper dated 31 March 1963 (11 Farvardin 1342 AHS).

[19.](#) – Tehran evening press, 1 April 1963 (12 Farvardin 1342 AHS), the Shah: ". . . A publication has recently reported that they are trying to conscript eighteen-year-old girls for military service, how ridiculous! We are in no way short of military personnel. Such falsities are a sign of the weakness of those who are responsible for fabricating this news. Our girls must continue their education and pursue their female responsibilities. We have enough people to safeguard the security of this land."

[20.](#) – The publication of Imam Khomeini's declaration, and the determined stance taken by him in opposition to the conscription of young girls, left the Shah with no alternative but to request that the judiciary make the necessary enquiries and prosecute those responsible for circulating such news. In turn, the judicial system filed a lawsuit against the movement's leadership and proceeded to arrange for its arrest, although this never actually amounted to anything. It is worth mentioning that the official who actually delivered the summons to Imam's house, entered the building with tearful eyes saying: "They have ordered me to obtain Imam's signature for this letter and I feel that as a follower of Imam I must apologise for this." He left the house however, without having obtained a signature. (Quoted from the memoirs of Hujjat al-Islam wal Muslimin Hajj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeini).

[21.](#) – By adopting the blanket phrase "full and equal rights" the ground was laid for the elimination of Islam and the propagation of Western culture. The granting of women's divorce rights was initially denied by the Shah, his Prime Minister and other officials. However, several years later during Hoveyda's premiership a law was ratified in Parliament entitled "The Family Protection Law" according to which women were permitted to divorce their husbands on the approval of the law courts. The rulings of the judges of these courts were not recognised by Islamic law according to which a husband is able to endorse a women's right to divorce on condition that this stipulation has been included in the marriage vows.

[22.](#) – In the year 1960 (1339 AHS), a time of international political upheaval, the Shah was compelled to reconsider his style of government and his domestic policies. He therefore called on his Prime Minister, Dr. Iqbal and his Royal Court adviser `Alam to form two political parties called "The National Party" (Hizb-i Melliyyun) and "The People's Party" (Hizb-i Mardom) both of which were to give the appearance of being mutual rivals. In 1974 however, when the "National Resurgence Party" (Hizb-i Rastakhiz) was founded by the Shah himself, the two aforementioned parties were abolished.

[23.](#) – `Abbas Effendi, the celebrated `Abdul Baha (1844–1921), son of Mirza Husayn `Ali (Baha'ullah) became the leader of the Baha'is after his father. He was amongst the British government's active spies who actually worked for the British in Palestine. The services rendered by `Abbas Effendi to the British government made him worthy of a knighthood and the title of 'Sir'. `Abdul Baha published *Ta'alim-i Baha'iyyat* (The Teachings of Baha'ism) in which he addressed the issue of full and equal rights of the sexes.

[24.](#) – Addressing the `ulama of Islam.

[25.](#) – *Usul al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, p. 54, the book *Fazl al-ilm*.

[26.](#) – Refer to footnote 104.

[27.](#) – Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza Pahlavi.

[28.](#) – The bill for the formation of SAVAK, The State Security and Intelligence Organisation, was passed by Parliament in 1956 (1335 AHS) and the organisation was subsequently officially established in 1957 (1336 AHS). SAVAK's mission was to quash and confront any Islamic struggle or opposition to the regime. SAVAK was closely linked to the intelligence agencies of both America and Israel (CIA and MOSSAD) and gradually it turned into a terrorist organisation. This institution, which in fact served as the CIA's headquarters, possessed several investigative and detective teams. In order to obtain information from those they had arrested, SAVAK would firstly send the latter to torture chambers, after which it would hand its captives over to rubber-stamp courts where, after the passing of a predetermined court verdict, the accused would be convicted and taken to horrendous prisons. The cruelty and callousness of SAVAK was so great that the Secretary General of Amnesty International, in a report made in 1975 stated: "No country in the world has a worse record in human rights than Iran . . . In order to obtain confessions, the torturers of SAVAK subject its captives to beatings and electric shocks. It employs all kinds of horrendous and inhumane methods to achieve its ends; the inflicting of agonising pain on the sexual organs and the

sexual assault of the wives and daughters of the captives before the latter's very eyes, are but two of such atrocities perpetrated." The Shah was fully aware of SAVAK's practices. This organisation was abolished by Iranian Muslims in 1978 (1357 AHS) and its torturers were prosecuted in revolutionary courts.

[29.](#) – Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza Pahlavi.

[30.](#) – During the reign of Ahmad Shah Qajar, a contract known as "The Contract of Vusuq al-Dula" (the Prime Minister of the day) was concluded between Iran and Britain (1919), according to which Britain was obliged to pay a loan of two million pounds sterling to Iran and was to be responsible for organising and administering the Iranian army. In effect, this contract rendered Iran a subject of British sovereignty whilst also serving to protect the country from Russia. Ahmad Shah Qajar, for reasons too lengthy to mention here, opposed this contract and thus the British government decided to remove him from their path – a task not too difficult for he was not very popular with the people anyway. Therefore, in 1920 (1299 AHS), a coup d'état was staged by Riza Khan Mirpanj, military commander of a cossack unit in Qazvin, which not only resulted in Ahmad Shah's dethronement, but also paved the way for the overthrow of the Qajar dynasty and the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty; and indeed, shortly afterwards, it led to Riza Khan being placed on the imperial throne.

[31.](#) – Land Reform was one of the main principles of neo-colonialism, which was urged on all the countries under the dominance of colonialism, from Latin America to Asia and Africa, and was implemented by the governments of these countries in a very similar manner. In 1962 (1342 AHS), the Shah launched the land reform programme as the first tenet of his six-point 'White Revolution,' later renamed the 'Shah-People Revolution.' This 'Revolution' was not a revolution at all, rather it was put into effect on the one hand to win the confidence of American capitalism; to show his approval of and co-operation with the new strategy; and to open a new market for the Western economy, and on the other to curb internal discontent and actually prevent a revolution! The reform programme, which was dependent on foreign, especially American investment, dragged the Iranian agrarian economy into bankruptcy, such that a few years after its implementation the country had been changed from a wheat exporter to a major wheat importer. In addition, as a result of the migration of villagers into the towns and cities and their attraction as a cheap work force to the industries and the service sector, over a period of eleven years from 1966–1977 (1345–56 AHS), 20,000 Iranian villages became uninhabited!

[32.](#) – Ataturk, Kemal (1881–1938), Turkish general and statesman. He was first president of the Turkish republic when it was officially established in 1923, and remained in power until his death, wielding almost dictatorial powers in his struggle to make Turkey a modern secular state. Known first as Mustapha Kemal, and then as Kemal Pasha, he took the name of Ataturk (= father-Turk) in 1934.

[33.](#) – Refer to footnote 54.

[34.](#) – The Iranian Constitutional Movement (1905–1911) greatly benefited from the support and co-operation it received from such personalities as Akhund Mullah Muhammad Kazim Khurasani and Aqa Shaykh `Abdullah Mazandarani both maraji' of Najaf, and from Sayyid `Abdullah Bihbihani and Sayyid Muhammad Tabataba'i, two of Tehran's prominent `ulama. Akhund Khurasani issued a fatwa (decree) about the importance of the Constitution and in this way made the Constitutional Movement in Iran indebted to him. Shaykh `Abdullah Mazandarani was one of Akhund Khurasani's close associates throughout the movement. A proclamation issued by these two religious scholars read: "The Constitution of each country limits and conditions the will of the ruler and the offices of government so that the divine ordinances and common laws based on the official religion of the country are not transgressed."

[35.](#) – Take for example the time in 1911 when three hundred women marched into the public galleries of the Parliament building with pistols hidden under their long veils and threatened to shoot any deputy willing to submit to a recently issued Russian ultimatum.

[36.](#) – Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza Pahlavi.

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