

Imam Khomeini's Message to Members of the Islamic Society and University Jihad

The Text of Imam Khomeini's discourse at a meeting with the members of the Islamic Society and university Jihad of the college of Science and Technology, and members of the Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research, as well as a number of inventors and innovators on 25th May 1981.

In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful

Islam And Specialisation

Our difficulty lies in the fact that we are faced with people who without considering the problems and aspirations of the nation, declare as soon as it is said that such and such centre must become Islamic, that it means that there should be no specialisation. They intend to show to the world that Islam is opposed to knowledge and specialisation, whereas the verses of the Holy Qur'an have emphasised the worth of knowledge and science to an extent unparalleled in other books. Islam is in complete favour of both knowledge and specialisation, but of a kind which would be at the service of people and Muslim interests.

Sometimes it is stated that there is no need for experts, and this statement is attributed to some quarters as a means of propaganda. For instance when it is said that there should take place a cultural revolution at the universities to Islamize them, some people immediately conclude that the university, no longer needs any physicians, medical specialists or experts in advanced technology, and only Islamic injunctions must be discussed there.

This is in fact a kind of mischief played by some individuals and groups against Islam, Islamic societies and the cultural Revolution.

When we say that all organisations and particularly the university which is the brain of society, must be Islamized, we never say that there is no need for specialists. Islam has always in its ordinary and divine

laws, considered specialisation as a criterion, and an expert's verdict as a standard.

Our talk is about something different. It is about this point that during these long years and especially the fifty years of the black Pahlavi regime, the foreigners who entered our country have propagated this idea in the minds of our youths that Iran and Islam are incapable of developing science, industry and specialisation, as if we should always stretch our hands for everything to the East and Communism, or to the Western Capitalism and America. Their propaganda claims that we should be either wholly Westernized or Easternized.

When I was in Turkey, the people talked about the Ataturk's statue with a lifted arm in various squares and said that he is pointing to the West everything should come from the West. The propaganda in other Islamic countries had gone so far that we in Iran need advisers from the West or East in every matter, as if an Iranian brain is incapable of undertaking and executing a positive task, even in agriculture!

This was a scheme prepared in advance, and the propaganda which followed it, had brought this belief in our nation that we have got nothing, cannot have anything, and must always go to the Western bloc to be pitied and helped in our needs, or to the east and Communism for the same end. Even now there are people who consider themselves enlightened brains and are not ready to believe that we are capable of being full human beings.

According to them, the reason why we insist that the university as the brain of a nation must free itself from dependence on the East and West and cannot do so without assuming an Islamic form – is not that the university should abandon science and technology, but that it should only perform the prayer rituals.

It is only a fallacious reasoning that the moment they hear a talk about the need of an Islamic university and a cultural revolution, they cry out that those who want to drag us to the East or West are the ones who opposed to science and specialisation.

No, we are not opposed to science and specialisation. We are opposed to being subservient to aliens. We say that a kind of specialisation which drags us towards America, England, the Soviet Union or China is deadly and non-constructive.

We wish to have experts trained in the university who would serve their country, not those who drag the university towards the East or West. We want all our offices and centres of technology to offer their services to our people, not to foreigners. A specialisation which serves foreigners is more harmful than anything else.

The Islamic University

A knowledge that drags us towards America or Russia is harmful, and leads to the destruction of nations. Those who were trained at the former university, with the exception of a few, were not useful, even if they were not harmful.

We wish to have a university which could serve Iran and its people, not a university with the slogan of "a civilised and flourishing nation" or "approaching the gate of a great civilisation".

We have now realised that all of it meant dependence in every respect. We are fundamentally opposed to a university which makes us dependent on a foreigner, whoever he may be. We want a university which would put an end to dependence, and make us and the country independent. We want experts, and Islam agrees with specialisation, Islam comes first among the religions that praise knowledge and specialisation.

It calls upon people to gain knowledge wherever possible, even from infidels. This knowledge should be employed to serve Islam and country, and not to be used against them. We wish to get rid mental dependence on others, which is the worst of all types of dependence and most dangerous of them.

We need university professors who can train the minds of our young people to be independent, and not to turn to the East or West like Ataturk or Taghi-Zadeh. We want a university that could enable us, after a few years, to meet our needs ourselves.

We have no opposition to specialisation at all. What we are opposed to is to make the minds of our youths, with the exception of a few, dependent on external powers. We want a situation where in case of illness, we could not at once be advised to go to England or America for treatment as an ailing American or Englishman does not come to Iran for treatment, so an ailing Iranian should not go abroad to be cured.

We require a specialisation by which our youths, who run the affairs of the country, would be brought up not to depend on others and have no thought but of Iran and Islam. Neither are we opposed to specialisation, nor rid of the Islamic societies.

What Islamic society can oppose specialisation? What Islamic society does not wish our youths be specialists in various fields and to be self-sufficient? All of them desire it, but you saw that in spite of having universities for so long, when the usurper king's relative had appendicitis, he called a foreign surgeon to come and operate it, for, in his hollow head he knew how dependent he had made the country that its surgeons could not perform a simple operation, or even if they could, all the peoples of the world would be made to understand that we are non-entities.

We wish to get rid of such ideas. Islamic societies must remove these thoughts from people's minds, so that they discover themselves after being almost lost during so many centuries. We want individuals like Avicenna whose book of 'Law' is still taught in Europe, not those who are ignorant of even Islamic alphabets, and keep on claiming that Islam is incapable of doing anything.

We want a university to be of the same level as our theological schools which were never dependent, or even if one or two of their members were dependent, they have been disgraced. We desire co-operation between universities and these schools.

A reminder, often given by me, to Islamic societies is that they should be wary of the entry into them of pro-Eastern or pro-Western individuals who pretend to be wholly Islamic, while in fact they are inclined towards the right or left. Their members should have been tested beforehand, and their records, particularly of the pre-revolutionary period, should be known, and their activities after the revolution should be overt.

God forbid you lose your attention to reality and suddenly find yourselves turned to the East or West.

I have given this advice repeatedly, and this is especially important in the Islamic societies of science and technology and universities. Care should be taken against any deviation.

Today as the mischievous individuals cannot make headway in the name of what is non-Islamic, they exploit Islam to propagate their ideas. Even those who consider Islam as an obstacle in their way and are wholly opposed to it, enter the field in the name of Islam. They do so, not to say that they are not Muslims, for, such a claim would not be very dangerous.

Greater danger comes from those in offices, universities and other institutions who enter them in the name of Islam without any belief in it. The danger from the former group is not much because the people know them and avoid them.

Those in charge of the Cultural Revolution should take care, find devoted colleagues and, by their advice, carry on the affairs, so that the universities are opened soon; universities which would serve us and not the right or left.

I hope that those in charge of the Cultural Revolution will be aided by others interested in such matters who have faith in Islam and their country and are without any inclination to the East or the West. They should be invited to cooperation in order to have a university which, by God's will, would be able to save this nation from the difficulties it has had so far.

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

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