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The role of women in the victory of the Islamic revolution

The transformation undergone by women during the Islamic revolution

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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 Shemiran[1] 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 Urdibihisht 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 Urdibihisht 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 Khurdad 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 Murdad 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 you[3] 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 your 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 Mardan[4] 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 Urdibihisht 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 Murdad 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 Murdad 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 Urdibihisht 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 Murdad 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 Assembly[11] – 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 Murdad 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.

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