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# **Great Women of the World**

# **Hazrat Fatima Zahra**

Hazrat<sup>1</sup> 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." 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.

What proves our suggested possibility concerning the truth of the 'Night of Power' (or Decree) *Lailat al-qadr* is the lengthy noble *hadith*, which appears in the exegesis of al–Burhan (*Tafsir al–Burhan*) and is quoted from the book *al–Kafi*, in which it is said that when a Christian asked Imam Musa ibn Ja'far 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 *tasbihat* 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. Tomorrow 14 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 Amir 19 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 invocations 22 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 this 25 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 inciden 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 guoted Abu Ja`far himself who said: I heard Abu Ja`far (Imam Bagir), 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."

Adab al-Salat, p. 448

# 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."

Islamic Government, p. 49.

# 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 executers 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 battlefront 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 Movement 39 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 otherworldiness 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 tradition 40 which can be found in *Usul al–Kafi*. This tradition quotes *Hazrat* Sadiq 41, 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 concession 45 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* Khadija47 (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* Sajjad49 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 that the gardens of paradise, let alone the unimportant chattels of this world. (38)

5 June 1989 (15 Khurdad 1368 AHS)

# **Hazrat Maryam**

*Hazrat* Maryam51 (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.
- <u>3.</u> 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.
- <u>6.</u> 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 (ijithad) from Islamic law for the Shi`ite jurisprudents. 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 jurisprudents as a reference book. Muslim scholars have written extensive expositions on al-Kafi, amongst them Mullah Sadra Shirazi and Muhammad Bagir al-Majlisi.

- 9. Imam Abu 'I-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.
- <u>16.</u> 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.
- <u>20.</u> 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 Muʻawiya 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 Shiʻite 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.
- <u>22.</u> 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 'I-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.
- <u>27.</u> 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 Azerbayjan. 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.
- <u>34.</u> The theological school situated in the vicinity of the shrine of Hazrat Ma'suma, upon whom be peace, in the city of Qum.
- <u>35.</u> 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.
- <u>36.</u> 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.
- <u>44.</u> 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.

- <u>46.</u> 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.
- <u>50.</u> 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.

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