

ISLAM and REVOLUTION

Writings and Declarations of
Imam Khomeini

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	9
INTRODUCTION BY THE TRANSLATOR	13
Notes	22
I. Islamic Government	
1. INTRODUCTION	27
2. THE NECESSITY FOR ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT	40
3. THE FORM OF ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT	55
4. PROGRAM FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT	126
Notes	150
II. Speeches and Declarations	
A Warning to the Nation/1941	169
In Commemoration of the Martyrs at Qum/ April 3, 1963	174
The Afternoon of 'Ashura/June 3, 1963	177
The Granting of Capitulatory Rights to the U.S./ October 27, 1964	181
Open Letter to Prime Minister Hoveyda/ April 16, 1967	189
Message to the Pilgrims/February 6, 1971	195
The Incompatibility of Monarchy With Islam/ October 13, 1971	200

land, the noble nation of Iran is paying its debt to Islam and frustrating the covetous designs entertained on our country by historical oppressors.

At the same time, I wish to draw the attention of the respected religious scholars throughout the country to the possibility that the devils hostile to our Revolution may be spreading malicious propaganda among them against our beloved youth, particularly the university students. They should realize that it is our common duty today to ensure that all segments of society—particularly the university students and the religious leaders, who together constitute the intellectual resources of our nation—unite against satanic and tyrannical forces, advance our Islamic movement in unison with each other, and guard our independence and freedom as jealously as they would their own lives. In the time of the tyrannical regime of the Shah, it was the plan of the world-plunderers and their agents to create a division between these two important classes. Unfortunately, they succeeded, and the country was ruined as a result. Now they wish to implement the same plan again, and the slightest lack of vigilance on our part will lead to the ruin of our country again. It is my hope that in the year that is now beginning, all classes of the nation, in particular these two respected classes, will be fully conscious of the stratagems and conspiracies that are directed against us and frustrate those evil plans with their unity of purpose.

Finally, at the beginning of this new year, I seek God's mercy for the martyrs of the Islamic Revolution, and express my gratitude for the sacrifices they made. I also offer my congratulations to those they left behind, the mothers and fathers who reared those lion-hearted women and men. I also offer congratulations to those who were crippled or wounded when they were in the vanguard of our people's movement for the establishment of an Islamic republic. Our Islamic Revolution is indeed indebted to the sacrifices made by these valiant people. The people and I will never forget their courage and we will always cherish their memory.

I pray to God Almighty that He grant dignity and greatness to Islam and the Muslims.

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

April 26, 1980

The Meaning of the Cultural Revolution

This address concerning the reasons for the planned re-evaluation and reorganization of higher education was delivered in Tehran to an audience composed of Muslim students from the universities of Tehran. Source: Kayhan-i Hava'i, Urdibihisht 10, 1359/April 30, 1980.

GREETINGS TO THE GREAT NATION of Islam, greetings to all Muslims in the world! Greetings to the people of Iran! Greetings to the students of Iran's universities!

It is necessary for me to clarify what our aim is in reforming the universities. Some people have imagined that those who are calling for the reform of our universities and wish to make them Islamic regard every science as consisting of two sectors, one Islamic and the other non-Islamic, so that, for example, there is an Islamic mathematics and a non-Islamic mathematics, or an Islamic physics and a non-Islamic physics. On the basis of this assumption, they have protested that the sciences are not divisible into Islamic and non-Islamic. Others have assumed that the call for the Islamization of the universities means that only *fiqh*, Qur'anic exegesis, and *usul*¹⁰⁶ would be taught there, that, in other words, the universities would adopt the same curriculum as the traditional madrasas. These ideas that some people hold, or pretend to hold, are erroneous. When we speak of the reform of the universities, what we mean is that our universities are at present in a state of dependence; they are imperialist universities, and those whom they educate and train are infatuated with the West. Many university teachers suffer from this infatuation, and they transmit it to their students, our young people. That is why we say that our universities in their present state are of no use to our people.

We have had universities in our country for fifty years now,¹⁰⁷ and throughout this period, the backbreaking expenditures that have been lavished upon them have been borne by our toiling masses. But we have been unable to attain self-sufficiency in any of the subjects taught in our universities. After fifty years of universities, when someone falls sick, many of our doctors will recom-

mend that he go to England for treatment; we do not have doctors that can meet the needs of our people. We have had universities, but we are still dependent on the West for all that a nation needs.

It is for these reasons that fundamental changes must take place in the universities and it is in this sense that they must become Islamic. We do not mean that only Islamic learning should be taught in them, or that each science comes in two varieties, one Islamic and the other non-Islamic. But show us the achievements of our universities during their fifty years of existence! Our universities have served to impede the progress of the sons and daughters of this land; they have become propaganda arenas. Our young people may have succeeded in acquiring some knowledge, but they have not received an education, an Islamic education. Those who go to our universities to study do so in order to acquire a piece of paper and then become a burden to the people. The universities do not impart an education that corresponds to the needs of the people and the country; instead they squander the energies of whole generations of our beloved youth, or oblige them to serve the foreigners.

Teachers in our schools, as a class, have not conceived of their profession in Islamic terms; they have imparted knowledge, but not an education. Our university system, therefore, has not produced committed individuals, people concerned with the welfare of their country and prepared to overlook their narrow personal interests.

So, to repeat, we demand fundamental changes in our university system so that the universities come to serve the nation and its needs instead of serving foreigners. Many of our schoolteachers and university professors are now effectively serving the West by brainwashing and miseducating our youth. We are not rejecting modern science, nor are we saying that each science exists in two varieties, one Islamic and the other non-Islamic; this notion is attributed to us by some people out of malice or ignorance. Our universities lack Islamic morality and fail to impart an Islamic education; if this were not so, our universities would not have been transformed into a battlefield for ideologies harmful to the nation. If Islamic morality existed in the universities, these shameful clashes would not occur.¹⁰⁸ They reflect a lack of Islamic

education and true understanding of Islam. The universities, then, must change fundamentally. They must be reconstructed in such a way that our young people will receive a correct Islamic education side-by-side with their acquisition of formal learning, not a Western education.

This is our aim, to prevent one group of our young people from being drawn to the West and another group to the East. We do not wish even one group among our university students and young people to aid those who are actively at war with us, who wish to impose an economic embargo on us.¹⁰⁹ If the Iranian people stand up to the West, we want our university students to join them in their resistance. Similarly, if the people take a stand against the communists, we want our university students to do the same.

Some of our young people have been simple-minded enough to assimilate the wrong education that was given by their teachers. As a result, now that we wish to carry out fundamental changes in the universities in order to make them independent both of the West and of the communist East, they oppose us. This is in itself an indication that our universities have not been Islamic or given our young people a proper education. Many of our university students not only lack an Islamic education, they also fail to pursue their studies; they spend all their time on sloganeering, false propaganda, and expressions of support for America or the Soviet Union. We want our young people to be truly independent and to perceive their own real needs instead of following the East or the West.

Those who are creating disturbances on the streets or in the universities and creating problems for the government and the nation are followers of the West or the East. In my opinion, they are mostly followers of the West, of America. For today it is the superpower America that we are confronting, and at a time when we need our youth to participate in this confrontation, we see them confronting each other instead and thus serving America. But we want to reconstruct our universities in such a way that our young people work for themselves and the nation.

Certain gentlemen sitting on the sidelines are raising all kinds of objections and imagine that the members of the Revolutionary

Council do not know what they are doing. They pretend, for example, that the Islamization of the universities rests on the assumption that the sciences are divisible into Islamic and non-Islamic varieties, so that we have Islamic mathematics and non-Islamic mathematics. Do they not know that some members of the Revolutionary Council hold doctorates and some are *mujtahids*?¹¹⁰ The place for the strictly Islamic sciences is the traditional *madrassa*; the other sciences are to be taught at the university. However, the universities must become Islamic in the sense that the subjects studied in them are to be pursued in accordance with the needs of the nation and for the sake of strengthening it. The curricula that have been followed up to now at the universities have resulted in the gravitation of one part of our young people toward communism and another part toward the West. Some university professors, moreover, have prevented our young people from progressing in their various fields of study; being in the service of the West, they want us to remain in a state of perpetual dependence on the West. To Islamize the universities means to make them autonomous, independent of the West and independent of the East, so that we have an independent country with an independent university system and an independent culture.

My beloved listeners! We fear neither economic boycott nor military intervention. What we fear is cultural dependence and imperialist universities that propel our young people into the service of communism. We do not wish our universities to produce more people of the same type as those who are now objecting to the Islamization of the universities. They do not understand what is meant by making the universities independent and Islamic.

I support all that has been said by the Revolutionary Council and the President of the Republic concerning the necessity for a purge of the universities and a change in the atmosphere prevailing in them in order to make them fully independent. I request that all of our young people not resist or try to sabotage the reform of the universities; if any of them do so, I will instruct the nation as to how to respond.

I beseech God Almighty to grant happiness to the nation of Islam and to our young people, and I hope that our universities

will be cleared of all elements of dependency, so that, God willing, we will come to have a university system based on Islamic morality and an Islamic culture.

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