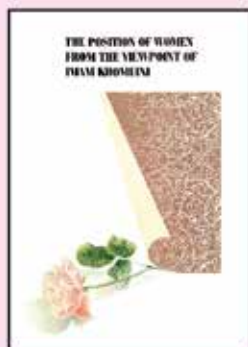


**International Book
Reading
Competition**



**A summary and brief review
of**

**"The position of women from the viewpoint of
Imam Khomeini"**



**Institute for compilation and publication of
Imam Khomeini's works**

International Affairs Department

FĀTIMAH ZAHRĀ¹ (upon whom be peace)

The anniversary of *Hadrat* Fātimah'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 Ordībehesht 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 Fātimah Zahrā, 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 Ordībehesht 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 Ordībehesht 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 Fātimah Zahrā, 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

¹ The word *Hadrat* is used as a respectful form of address.

woman's revivification, and the day to establish her honour and the great role she plays in society. (4)

24 April 1981 (4 Ordībehesht 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 Jumādī ath-Thānī (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 Farvardīn 1361 AHS)

I congratulate all you ladies and women in all Islamic countries on this joyous holiday marking the glorious birth of *Hadrat Fātimah Zahrā*, 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 *Hadrat Fātimah's* birthday as Women's Day; it is a source of pride and responsibility. (6)

2 March 1986 (11 Isfānd 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 Imāms (upon whom be peace) existed before the creation of the world in the form of lights 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'rāj*:¹ "Were I to draw closer by as much as the breadth of a finger, surely I would burn." The Prophet himself said: "We have states with God that are beyond the reach of the cherubim and

¹ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 25, pp. 1-103.

² The archangel Gabriel accompanied the Most Noble Messenger on his *mi'rāj* (ascension to the Divine Presence), but being of lowlier station than the Messenger, he was unable to endure the splendour of the Divine Presence.

³ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 18, p. 382, 'History of the Prophet', Chapter 'Proof of the Ascension', Narrative 85.

the prophets.”¹ It is part of our belief that the Imāms (upon whom be peace) too enjoy similar states, before the question of government even arises. For example, according to the traditions, *Hadrat Fātimah Zahrā*, 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 *Hadrat Fātimah Zahrā*, 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. (7)

Islamic Government, pp. 64-65

What proves our suggested possibility concerning the truth of the ‘Night of Power’ (or Decree) *Laylat al-Qadr*² is the lengthy noble *hadīth*,³ which appears in the *Exegesis of al-Burhān (Tafsīr al-Burhān)* and is quoted from the book *al-Kāfī*,⁴ in which it is said that when a Christian asked Imām Mūsā ibn

¹ *Al-Arbaʿīn*, ‘Allāmah Majlisī, p. 177, description of tradition 15.

² *Laylat 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 *Laylat al-Qadr* will be granted.

³ 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.

⁴ *Al-Kāfī*: one of the most important collections of Shi’ite *hadīth* compiled by Shaykh Abū Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn Yaʿqūb ibn Ishāq Kulaynī (d. 941 AD). *Al-Kāfī* 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. Kulaynī lived relatively close in time to the period of the Prophet and the twelve Imāms, this, along with the method of gathering, classifying and specifying the chain of transmission, has given *al-Kāfī* 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-Arbaʿah* (The Four Books). *Al-Kāfī* is divided into three sections: *Usūl al-Kāfī*; *Furūʿ al-Kāfī* and *Rauda al-Kāfī*. *Usūl al-Kāfī* 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. *Furūʿ al-Kāfī*, on the other hand, consists of books and sections on jurisprudence and is one of the authoritative reference books for deduction and independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) from Islamic law for the Shi’ite jurists. *Rawdah al-Kāfī* comprises different traditions on numerous matters. This book, also known as *Sharīf al-Kāfī*, has for centuries been used by the Shi’ite ‘*ulamā* and jurists as a reference book. Muslim scholars have written extensive expositions on *al-Kāfī*, amongst them Mullah Sadra Shīrāzī and Muhammad Bāqir al-Majlisī.

Ja‘far¹ 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),² 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 Amīr al-Muminīn ‘Alī, upon whom be peace, and the ‘night’ is Fātimah, upon whom be peace.”³(8)

Ādāb as-Salāt, p. 329

Amongst the supererogatory prayers to be performed after the prescribed prayer (*salāt*) are the *tasbīhat*⁴ of Fātimah Zahrā, 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.⁵ It is in the *hadīth* that had there been anything better, the Messenger of God, peace be upon him and his descendants, would have presented Fātimah, upon whom be peace, with it. (9)

Ādāb as-Salāt, p. 377

The divine personality of Hadrat Fātimah Zahrā (upon whom be peace)

All dimensions that one can imagine exist for a woman and a human being were personified in Fātimah Zahrā, 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

¹ Imām Abu’l-Hasan Mūsā, son of Ja‘far: seventh of the Twelve Imāms, and generally known as Imām Mūsā al-Kāzim. He was born in Medina in 744 AD and died in prison in Baghdad in 799 AD.

² *Tafsīr al-Burhān*, vol. 4, p. 158.

³ *Usūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 326. *Kitāb al-Hujjat*, section on the birth of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his descendants, *Hadīth* 4.

⁴ *Tasbīhāt*: words uttered in praise of God.

⁵ *Furū‘ al-Kāfi*, vol. 3, p. 343, *Kitāb as-Salāt*, the section on supererogatory prayers performed after the prescribed prayer, and supplications. *Hadīth* 14.

human and female traits that one can imagine. Tomorrow¹ 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 Fātimah Zahrā'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. (10)

16 May 1979 (26 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

Fātimah Zahrā, 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 *hadīths*² 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

¹ 27 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS corresponding with 17 May 1979 and 20 Jumādī ath-Thānī 1399 AH.

² Refer to footnote 16.

understanding not commensurate with her standing. So let us leave this vale of wonder . . . (11)

5 May 1980 (15 Ordībehesht 1359 AHS)

I do not consider myself adequate to the task of speaking about *Hadrat Fātimah*, upon whom be peace, so I will suffice with reciting a sound tradition¹ which can be found in *Usūl al-Kāfi*.² This tradition quotes *Hadrat Sādiq*,³ upon whom be peace, as saying: “After the death of her father, Fātimah, 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.

*Hadrat Amīr*⁴ 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 *Hadrat Fātimah* 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

¹ *Hadīths* and their *isnāds*, or chain of authorities, have been subjected to a wide range of types of categorisation. A basic one is to classify the hadīth under one of several major categories of trustworthiness. The term ‘*sahīh*’ or sound indicates the highest level of trustworthiness in a tradition.

² See footnote 17.

³ Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq, the sixth Shi’ite Imām. He was born, lived and taught in Medina and was buried there when he died. He was a notable scholar of *hadīth* and in his own life gained a massive reputation for his knowledge and holiness.

⁴ ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib, cousin and husband of *Hadrat Fātimah* and first of the Twelve Imāms of Shi’ite belief. He exercised rule from 656 until his martyrdom in 661.

such revelations, whether we side with the secularists 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 Imāms as he did to the prophets. As far as I know it was only to *Hadrat Fātimah Zahrā*, 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 *Hadrat Amīr* recorded. Perhaps he spoke to her about the time of her exalted offspring *Hadrat Sāhib*,¹ 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 *Hadrat Fātimah*, upon whom be peace. (12)

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 Kawthar, *Hadrat Fātimah*, upon whom be peace, all of which spring

¹ Referring to the twelfth and last Imām of Shi'ite belief Imām Mahdī, also known as the Imām 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.

from the knowledge gained from Islam and the family of the Prophet and from the blessings gained by following the path of the Imām of ‘Āshūrā. (13)

5 February 1987 (16 Isfand 1365 AHS)

We are honoured that the vivifying prayers, which are called the ‘ascending recitation’ come from our Infallible Imāms. We are proud that the Sha‘bān invocations¹ of the Imāms, the Prayer of Husayn ibn ‘‘Alī (upon whom be peace) on the Day of ‘Arafah,² the prayers of the *Sahīfeh-ye Sajjādiyyah*³ known as the ‘Psalms of the Family of the Holy Prophet’, and the *Sahīfeh-ye Fātimīyyah*, which is a book of God’s revelations to *Hadrat Fātimah*, are from us. (14)

5 June 1990 (15 Khordād 1368 AHS)

Hadrat Fātimah Zahrā’s home and its blessings

Hadrat Amīr (Imām ‘Alī), 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 this⁴ was not beneath him. He possessed one pelisse, which, tradition holds, he and *Hadrat Fātimah* would sleep upon at night and during

¹ Referring to Imām Husayn, grandson of the Prophet, and also known as the Lord of the Martyrs. In 680, Imām Husayn refused to swear allegiance to Yazīd, son of Mu‘āwiyah and second caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, since Yazīd did not possess legitimate authority and had succeeded to the caliphate by hereditary succession. The ensuing death of the Imām in battle at Karbalā has always been commemorated by Shi‘ite Muslims as the supreme example of martyrdom in the face of tyranny. It served as an important point of both ideological and emotive reference throughout the Islamic Revolution in Iran. ‘Āshūrā, the tenth day of Muharram, is the day on which he was martyred in Karbalā.

² A litany that was recited by all the Imāms, something true of no other prayer or invocation, during the month of Sha‘bān.

³ Day of ‘Arafah: the ninth day of the month of Dhu’l-Hijjah, when all the pilgrims participating in the hajj must be present at the plain of ‘Arafah outside Mecca. For a translation of the text of the prayer that Imām Husayn recited on this day, see ‘Allāmah Muhammad Husayn Tabātabā‘ī, *A Shi‘ite Anthology*, trans. William C. Chittick, pp. 93-113.

⁴ The book of fifty-seven prayers known as the *Sahīfeh-ye Sajjādiyyah*, which is one of the major Shi‘ite manuals of prayer, was composed by Imām Zayn al-‘Ābidīn Sajjād, the fourth of the Twelve Imāms and the only son of Imām Husayn to survive the massacre at Karbalā.

⁵ Imām is referring to the simple mat on which he was sitting in his home in Qum.

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. (15)

4 July 1979 (13 Tīr 1358 AHS)

The ideology was being erased and destroyed by the deviationists remaining from the Age of Ignorance¹ and by the calculated plans for the revival of nationalism and Arabism with the slogan ‘no message received, no revelation revealed’,² 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 Mustafā, and the lord of the Imāms, ‘Alī Murtadā (Imām ‘Alī), and raised in the care of Siddīqah Tāhirah (*Hadrat Fātimah*), rose up and through his unequalled sacrifice and movement for God created a great incident *wafāt*, which brought the palaces of the oppressors tumbling down and saved the ideology of Islam. (16)

16 June 1980 (26 Khordād 1359 AHS)

This small house of Fātimah’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. (17)

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. (18)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardīn 1361 AHS)

We had a humble dwelling in the early days of Islam and that belonged to Fātimah Zahrā, upon whom be peace. It was even smaller than these rooms here,³ 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

¹ Referring to the pagan times before the rise of Islam.

² A line from a poem attributed to Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah, which denies the revelation and the basis of the Prophet’s mission.

³ Referring to his own humble home.

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. (19)

21 March 1983 (1 Farvardīn 1362 AHS)

In the exegesis of al-Burhān (*Tafsīr al-Burhān*), there is a narrative from *Hadrat* Bāqir.¹ Being a noble *hadīth* referring to several pieces of information and disclosing important secrets, we will, owing to its blessedness, relate it in full: The author of *Tafsīr al-Burhān*, may God have mercy on him, quoting a narrative from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Ajlān as-Sakūnī who quoted from the men of Shaykh Abū Ja‘far at-Tūsī who quoted Abū Ja‘far himself who said: I heard Abū Ja‘far (Imām Bāqir), upon whom be peace, say: The house of ‘Alī and Fātimah 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, ‘Alī, Fātimah, 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 was revealed?” He replied: “Yes.” (20)

Ādāb as-Salāt, p. 448

The way of life of *Hadrat* Fātimah (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

¹ The fifth Imām, Muhammad al-Bāqir.

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. (21)

11 April 1979 (22 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

The exemplar is *Hadrat Fātimah Zahrā*, 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. (22)

29 May 1979 (8 Khordād 1358 AHS)

The speech of Fātimah Zahrā, upon whom be peace, decrying the government, the uprising of the Commander of the Faithful (Imām ‘Alī), 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: Imām Mujtabā,¹ who discredited the tyrannical Umayyad government through the great service he rendered; and Imām Mujtabā’s dear brother, the Lord of the Martyrs (Imām 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 Imāms, 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. (23)

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, *Hadrat Fātimah Zahrā*, upon whom be peace, was. All of us

¹ Imām Hasan: son of Imām ‘Alī and the second Imām from the Prophet’s Progeny.

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. (24)

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 *Hadrat Fātimah Zahrā*, 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. (25)

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. (26)

29 January 1989 (9 Bahman 1367 AHS)

In order to assure the unity of the Islamic *ummah*,¹ 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

¹ *Ummah*: the entire Islamic community without territorial or ethnic distinction.

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 Fātimah Zahrā, 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.” (27)

Islamic Government, p. 49.

The status of and esteem for women in Islam

Islam wants men and women to develop. Islam freed women from those circumstances, which existed for them during the age of ignorance of pre-Islamic times. Islam did not serve men to the extent that it did women. You cannot imagine what circumstances were like for women during pre-Islamic times and to what degree their situation improved with the advent of Islam. (39)

9 November 1978 (18 Ābān 1357 AHS)

Islam did a service for women, which has no precedent in history. Islam raised women up out of that slough and gave her back her identity. (40)

9 November 1978 (18 Ābān 1357 AHS)

Question: In the eyes of Western countries, Shi'ism is seen as being a conservative element hindering progress. We have heard Shi'ite calls for the exclusion of women from active roles in society and a return to Shi'ite laws, which envisage religious tradition as the basis of state laws, something stipulated in the Constitution but later and unlawfully dropped. We have also heard that Shi'ism rejects the Western lifestyle because it does not conform to religious customs. Would you please give us your view on this on the basis of the Shi'ite faith?

Reply: Shi'ism is a revolutionary school of thought and is a continuation of the true Islam of the Prophet. Just like the Shi'ites themselves, their faith has always been the target of craven attacks from dictators and imperialists. Not only does Shi'ism not exclude women from society, it gives them their elevated status in society. We accept the developments of the Western world, but not the West's corruption of which Westerners themselves complain.(41)

15 November 1978 (24 Ābān 1357 AHS)

Islam took women by the hand and made them equal with men, whereas before the Prophet came, women had no standing. Islam gave women strength. (42)

11 December 1978 (20 Āzar 1357 AHS)

We want women to attain the high rank of true humanity. Women must have a share in determining their destiny. (43)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

If nations were deprived of courageous women to rear true human beings, they would decline and collapse. (44)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Islam holds you in higher esteem than it does men. Islam wants to save you; it wants to save you from becoming this plaything they want to turn you into. Islam wants to train you to become a perfect human being. (45)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Unfortunately, women have suffered from victimisation in the past, notably in two periods. The first was during the Age of Ignorance, the period before the advent of Islam. During this time, women were oppressed; they were treated like animals, even worse than animals. Then Islam came and bestowed its blessings on mankind, it dragged women out of that state of oppression, [and] it pulled her from that slough of ignorance. (46)

16 May 1979 (26 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

. . . Women are human beings, great human beings. Women are the educators of society. It is from the laps of women that true human beings originate. The first stage in the development of sound men and women begins in the lap of a woman. Women are the educators of human beings. A country's success or its misfortune depends on women. If they impart sound teachings, they create (sound) human beings and a flourishing country. Good fortune originates from the laps of women; they should be the source of every success and happiness . . . (47)

16 May 1979 (26 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

Mothers are the source of all blessings, but if, God forbid, they bring their children up badly, they become the source of all evil. (48)

17 July 1979 (26 Tir 1358 AHS)

The realisation of mankind's hopes lies in the hands of women. She is the educator of great men and women. It is from the laps of women that man begins his ascent. It is in the laps of women that great men and great women are nurtured. (49)

17 May 1979 (27 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

Women raise brave men in their care. Like the Noble Qur'an itself, women have the function of rearing and training true human beings. Indeed, it is their duty to do so. If nations were deprived of women to rear true human beings, they would decline and collapse. (50)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

The position of women is a high one. Women in Islam enjoy a high rank.(51)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

We want women to enjoy the high rank of true humanity, which is theirs, not to be a plaything in the hands of men, in the hands of depraved men. (52)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Islam grants woman a say in all affairs, just as it grants man a say. Just as men should avoid corruption, so too should women. Women should not allow themselves to be playthings in the hands of dissolute youths, they should not lower their station and, God forbid, come out into the streets dressed up and made up, placing themselves in full view of depraved men. Women must act like true human beings; they must be pious. Women enjoy a dignified position; they have free will, just as men have. God created you free beings and gave you dignity. (53)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Islam has particular regard for women. Islam appeared in the Arabian Peninsula at a time when women had lost their dignity, and it raised them up and gave them back their pride. Islam made women equal with men; in fact, it shows a concern for women that it does not show for men. (54)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

One of the benefits of the Islamic movement obvious today is that women, these effective members of society, have to some extent regained their standing. (55)

5 May 1980 (15 Ordibehesht 1359 AHS)

Women's rights in Islam

As regards the issue of the right of the woman to execute a divorce, if, at the time of marriage, she stipulates that she would possess this right either conditionally or unconditionally, the question has been raised: What about

those women who have already entered into matrimony? They oppose this legal power of the *faqīh* even when they don't know what his powers are. If a man mistreats his wife, this is one of the concerns of the *faqīh* who will first of all counsel him then secondly punish him, and if he sees that none of this has worked, he will grant the divorce. Support this guardianship of the *faqīh*, it is a gift from God the Blessed and Exalted to the Muslims. Among the concerns the *faqīh* deals with are matters relating to the question you have just posed: what must those women do who already have a husband and are experiencing difficulties in their marriage? They must refer the matter to a *faqīh*, either at a court or elsewhere, and he will deal with it. If the complaint is valid, he will punish the husband, he will try to compel him to behave properly, and if this fails, the *faqīh* will grant the woman a divorce. He has the legal power to do so if he sees that it would be damaging to the people involved if the marriage were to continue. Even though divorce is the prerogative of the man, in situations where the *faqīh* believes it to be in the interests of Islam, in the interests of the Muslims, and when he realises there can be no other course of action, he will grant the woman a divorce. This is what the guardianship of the *faqīh* is about. It is a divine gift to you. (56)

31 October 1978 (9 Ābān 1357 AHS)

Islam put women on a par with men, and made them equal with men. Of course, there are certain Islamic precepts, which apply only to men, and others which apply only to women, but this does not mean that Islam discriminates between men and women. (57)

11 December 1978 (20 Āzar 1357 AHS)

Question: Women make up a large section of the Muslim population, what role and what rights do you foresee for them in the Islamic system?

Reply: The Muslim women of Iran are currently participating in the political struggle and the demonstrations against the Shāh. I have been told that in some Iranian cities they hold political meetings. In the Islamic system, women will have the same rights as men: the right to education, the right to work, the right to own property, the right to vote, the right to stand for election. In all aspects that men have rights, women have the same rights. However, there are some things unlawful for men, because of the corruption they create in men, and others unlawful for women because of their tendency to corrupt women. Islam wants the human dignity of both men and women to be safeguarded. It doesn't

¹ *Faqīh*: one learned in the principles and ordinances of Islamic law, or more generally, in all aspects of the faith.

want women to be playthings in the hands of men. The image they have portrayed abroad of women being treated harshly under Islam is not a correct one. This is false propaganda emanating from elements motivated by self-interest. In Islam both men and women enjoy free will, any differences, which exist, do so for both of them and concern their different natures. (58)

7 December 1978 (16 Āzar 1357 AHS)

The laws of Islam are all for the benefit of both man and woman. (59)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Just as the rights of men are propounded in Islam, so too are those of women. Indeed, Islam shows a concern for women that it does not show for men. It pays a greater regard to their rights than those of men. Women have the right to vote; indeed they enjoy more rights than women in the West. They have the right to vote, the right to elect or be elected. They control their finances; they are free, free to choose their profession. In the East certain restrictions are placed on men for their own good. Consequently Islam prevents gambling, drinking and the use of heroin because these are a cause of corruption. Restrictions exist for everyone. Religion imposes restrictions for the benefit of society, it is not the case that something is beneficial to society and Islam places restrictions on it. (60)

29 March 1979 (9 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

The rights of all segments of the population have also been observed in the law. The rights of the religious minorities, women and other segments of society have all been taken into consideration. Islam does not discriminate between the various groups (in society), the only difference between them stems from their piety and fear of God the Exalted. (61)

1 April 1979 (12 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

Because Islam has laid down special rights for women, show moderation in their case if it is not proved that they are spies. Likewise the black Americans, for they have been subject to oppression and suffering for an age and those there may have been forced to come to Iran. Dear Students! Hand over those African Americans and women whom you do not believe to be spies to the

¹ Addressing the students following Imām's line who seized the American Embassy on 3rd November 1979.

Foreign Ministry so their immediate departure can be arranged. The noble nation of Iran does not give permission for the others to be freed; consequently they will be detained until the American government acts on the (Iranian) nation's demands. (62)

17 November 1979 (26 Ābān 1358 AHS)

When women wish to marry, there are certain prerogatives they can stipulate for themselves that are contrary neither to the *sharī'ah* nor to their own self-respect. For example, a woman can stipulate that if her future husband turns out to be of corrupt moral character or if he mistreats her, she would possess the right to execute a divorce. This is a right that Islam has granted to women. If Islam has imposed certain restrictions on both women and men, it is for the benefit of both. All Islamic laws, be they those which permit or those which prohibit, are for the benefit of all. Similarly, just as Islam has granted man the right to divorce, it has also granted it to woman, on condition that the parties stipulate at the time of the marriage that if the husband behaves in a certain manner, the wife will have the right to execute a divorce. Once the man has accepted such a stipulation, he can never repudiate it. Apart from making it possible to include such a stipulation in the marriage contract, Islam forbids the husband to mistreat his wife; if he habitually mistreats her, he is to be punished, lashed even, and if he still persists, the *mujtahid* will grant the wife a divorce. (63)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Just as God has laid down laws for men imposing restrictions to prevent them from becoming corrupt, so too He has laid down laws for women. These are for your benefit; all Islamic laws are for the good of society. (64)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

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

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

standing and dignity of women is allowed. Abortion is prohibited in Islam. (65)

5 November 1980 (16 Ābān 1359 AHS)

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

Reply: The law has prescribed an easy way for the respected women to be able to execute a divorce, and that is when she enters into marriage she must stipulate her conditions. If she stipulates that she can execute a divorce whenever she wants or under certain conditions, such as if the husband were to mistreat her or get another wife, then she will have no problem in getting a divorce. I ask God Almighty to grant the honourable women success. It is hoped that you will not fall under the influence of those who oppose Islam and the Islamic revolution, for Islam is beneficial to all. (66)

29 October 1980 (7 Ābān 1359 AHS)

Question: Please tell us how married women should practise *taqlīd*.¹ Can she follow the rulings of a different *mujtahid*² from the one her husband follows, and if so would that contradict the requirement of a woman to obey her husband?

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

Istiftā'āt, vol. 1, p. 13

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

¹ The adoption of the authoritative rulings of a scholar of proven learning and piety in matters of religious practice.

² Refer to footnote 3.

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

Istiftā'āt, vol. 1, p. 210

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

Reply: If she stipulates this condition at the time of the marriage, it cannot be taken from her later.¹

Istiftā'āt, vol. 2, p. 319

¹ If when exchanging the marriage vows the woman stipulates that she will become the man's wife only if he accepts her condition that she has the irrevocable right to execute a divorce, and the man accepts this condition, then that right of the wife cannot be taken away from her.

Women's role in the establishment of an Islamic society

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

Reply: In an Islamic system, women, in their role as human beings, can work alongside men to establish the Islamic society, but not if they wish to act as mere objects. Women do not have the right to lower themselves to such a level, nor do men have the right to think of them as such. As to those things known as entertainment, Islam opposes anything that tends to lead human beings towards acquiring a frivolous nature or towards self-estrangement. The consumption of alcohol is forbidden in Islam, as are films, which pervert the exalted nature of the human being. (67)

9 November 1978 (18 Ābān 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: In Islam, women have a sensitive role to play in the establishment of the Islamic society. Islam elevates women to the extent that they can regain their human status in society and leave that woman-as-object level. In proportion with such growth, she can assume responsibilities in an Islamic government. (68)

10 November 1978 (19 Ābān 1357 AHS)

Women like men have a part to play in building the Islamic society of tomorrow. They enjoy the right to vote and be voted for. Iranian women participate in Iran's current struggle just as the men do. (69)

23 January 1979 (3 Bahman 1357 AHS)

Islam grants woman a say in all affairs just as it grants man a say. All the people of Iran, men and women alike, must repair the ruins that the previous regime has left us; the hands of men alone will not suffice to accomplish the task. Men and women must collaborate in this respect. (70)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Women must have a say in the fundamental destiny of the country. Just as you have participated in our revolutionary movement, indeed played a basic role

in it, now you must also participate in its triumph, and must not fail to rise up again whenever it is necessary. The country belongs to you and, God willing, you will rebuild it. (71)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

You and we together, the government and nation together, must right this chaos, for neither can do it alone. If the ladies think they can leave it up to the men to do, who in turn think they can leave it up to the ladies, or both think the government can do it or all three think the clergymen can do it, then they are all sadly mistaken. For the situation is so chaotic, the problems so many that it is up to each individual to do his duty and rebuild wherever he is to the best of his ability. (72)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

Women have the right to participate in politics; indeed it is their duty to do so. The clergymen too have a right to concern themselves with politics, and it is their duty to do so. The Islamic religion is a political religion; everything in it has a political dimension, even its acts of worship. (73)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

Greetings to you great women who through your counsel wish to lead us to the right path. (74)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

It is hoped that the community of women will cease being indifferent and will awaken from the unnatural stupor the plunderers have forced them into, and that together, shoulder-to-shoulder, they will help those who have been deceived and guide them to the lofty station which is theirs. It is also hoped that women in the other Islamic countries will take lessons from the miraculous change that has occurred in the Iranian women as a result of the great Islamic revolution, and will strive to reform their society and bring freedom and independence to their countries. (75)

24 April 1981 (4 Ordibehesht 1360 AHS)

The role of women in the world enjoys certain special characteristics. The rectitude or immorality of a society stems from the rectitude or immorality of the women in that society. Women are the only creatures who can bestow upon society individuals raised in their care whose deeds can be a blessing to

communities and can inspire perseverance and lofty human values, or can have the opposite effect. (76)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardīn 1361 AHS)

Women's activities in the social and political arenas

All of you must cast your vote, a vote for an Islamic republic, not a word less (in this designation) nor a word more.¹You too must vote, you are no different from others, indeed you lead the men. (77)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

It is necessary for me to reiterate that the crusading and brave women all over Iran must participate in the referendum. The women who played a sensitive role in the victory of the Islamic revolution at the side of men, indeed who led the men should realise that by actively participating they will ensure the further victory of the Iranian nation. Participation in this referendum is one of the national and Islamic duties of the men and women. (78)

24 March 1979 (4 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

Women have the right to vote; indeed they enjoy more rights than women in the West. They have the right to vote, the right to elect or be elected. (79)

29 March 1979 (9 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

I ask Almighty God to grant you health and happiness and I hope that side by side with the men you will vote for the Constituent Assembly² and the National Consultative Assembly so that an Islamic republic, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic and the Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic can be founded and we can attain that which we want. (80)

10 April 1979 (21 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

¹ The reference here is to arguments advanced before the referendum of 29-30 March 1979 by various non-Islamic elements who said it would be enough to have a republic, that to speak of Islam in this connection was unnecessary, or others who said they wanted a 'democratic republic' not an Islamic one, or those who said they wanted a 'democratic Islamic republic.' For more of Imām's views on this matter refer to p. 337 of the book *Islam and Revolution*, translated by Hāmid Algār (Mizān Press).

² As it turned out, the plan to form a Constituent Assembly that would draw up the definitive text for a new constitution was abandoned in favour of convening a numerically more limited Assembly of Experts, for which an election was held on 3 August 1979.

Of course there is no objection to women taking up employment, sound employment, but we do not want a repeat of the way it was during the Pahlavī era. Then they did not have employment in mind for women, rather their aim was to degrade both men and women, pulling them down from that position they occupy. They did not want a natural growth for either sex. (81)

16 May 1979 (26 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

It is one of the blessings of the movement that you ladies from the coastal regions, and indeed the other respected ladies of Iran, are now involved with the issues of the day and political issues. The criminal hands, which were manifested in the form of the hands of Muhammad Ridā and his father, had excluded all segments of the population from involvement in social and political affairs. Political matters were never presented for the consideration of the ladies, nor for that matter the brothers either. And if a political issue was put forward for the people to decide on, it was still based on their (the West's) plundering policy. If some classes of the population, the so-called political classes, became involved in the political issues of the day, they were simply involving themselves in policies dictated by the West and aimed at plundering the East. (82)

3 July 1979 (12 Tīr 1358 AHS)

It is today when all segments of society have a say in their own affairs, in the affairs of the country and the political affairs of state. It is today when all people of the nation, whether the esteemed ladies or the brothers, have a say in determining their own destiny. (83)

3 July 1979 (12 Tīr 1358 AHS)

The respected women and dear ladies have gone into the villages to help with the harvest and other things. Of course they are not reapers in the same sense as the farmers are, but by their action, small as it may seem, they enable the reaper to work twice as much of his land and thus double his harvest. For when the men who reap the land see that these ladies, who normally sit in the shade and have nothing to do with such work, are prepared to come out into the sun and harvest the barley, it breathes new life into their spirit. So the action of these ladies is also valuable in that it gives renewed vigour to the farmers and they work even harder. (84)

21 July 1979 (30 Tīr 1358 AHS)

We all voted for an Islamic republic, you too voted, but voting alone is not enough. Our votes mean only that the country of Iran is now officially an Islamic republic. But it will be a true Islamic republic only when you ladies, along with these gentlemen, undertake your responsibilities and we all see ourselves as having a duty to perform. (85)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrīvar 1358 AHS)

It is important that each of us sees ourselves as having a duty to perform. So, for example, I, as a theological student, consider it my duty to serve (the nation) to the best of my ability, while you sisters must consider it your duty to help rebuild this country which they (the Pahlavīs) ruined and destroyed, beginning in the area where you live, and through your efforts put it right. (86)

20 September 1979 (29 Shahrīvar 1358 AHS)

The sisters who hitherto have not been involved in the issues of the day must now involve themselves. (87)

20 September 1979 (29 Shahrīvar 1358 AHS)

Women must have a say in determining their destiny. Women in the Islamic Republic must vote. Just as men have the right to vote, women too have that right. (88)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Today, women in the Islamic Republic shoulder-to-shoulder with the men are striving to rebuild themselves and their country. (89)

5 May 1980 (15 Ordībehesht 1359 AHS)

I return once again to you sisters and dear ones and remind you that you must attend to the matter of observing Islamic rules in your environment. The country is an Islamic one, it is an Islamic republic, [and] there must be a change in all aspects of its character. (90)

13 May 1980 (23 Ordībehesht 1359 AHS)

Who has mobilised these women to involve themselves, and quite rightly so, in all the country's affairs? God has called them to this task and they are obeying His call. (91)

12 July 1980 (21 Tīr 1359 AHS)

Today, the ladies must act on their social and religious duties and protect public morality, and in so doing carry out their social and political activities. (92)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

I hope that this movement will end in victory and you will all be successful, God willing. May you expand your gatherings everywhere in an even more splendid manner so that women will awaken and reject those things of the past, reject that former role of being a plaything, of having to dress up and make up. You yourselves know how much damage that attitude did to our economy and how much harm it did to public morality. Today's women, like the men, must be properly educated and concern themselves with the issues (of the day), they too must exercise sound judgement in their involvement in the (country's) affairs, and God willing, they will be successful. (93)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

All the women and all the men must involve themselves in social and political affairs. They must be supervisors, supervising the work of the Parliament and the government; they must express their opinions. (94)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

Guiding a nation is a momentous task to undertake, and guiding half of that nation—the women—is even more so. This task¹ is fraught with difficulties; indeed the decision to take it on is itself an important undertaking. But now that you have resolved to do such a thing, let nothing weaken or shake that resolve. (95)

7 February 1981 (18 Bahman 1359 AHS)

You ladies who are occupied with this humanitarian and Islamic task can be absolutely certain that because you are doing this work for God, you will be successful. (96)

7 February 1981 (18 Bahman 1359 AHS)

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

¹ Referring to the publication of an informative magazine for women.

mindful of Islamic precepts and armed with the weapon of faith and devotion to Islam, they will carry this victory forward and will be the mainstay of this revolution too. (97)

23 May 1981 (2 Khordād 1360 AHS)

It is the duty of every man and woman of legal voting age to go to the polling stations and cast their vote for a president. If you waver in this regard, then those who wish to see this country destroyed may be victorious. All of you, all of us, men and women together, are bound by duty to determine our destiny just as we are bound by duty to perform our *namāz* (the ritual prayer). (98)

4 July 1981 (13 Tīr 1360 AHS)

I advise both men and women who are of legal voting age to take part in these elections and vote for any of the candidates they wish. Participate they must. (99)

27 November 1982 (6 Āzar 1361 AHS)

Wherever one looks in Iran, one sees women pursuing Islamic activities, religious and even political activities, while at the same time preserving their modesty and their dignity. Whereas those women who freely mingled with men in society produced nothing other than corruption throughout the whole of the *tāghūt* period, these women (today), in this short span of time, have been so active that the results of their endeavours are already beginning to show in Qum and other cities. (100)

13 March 1983 (22 Isfand 1361 AHS)

If those people¹ who wish to sabotage the activities of these ladies—this great service they are performing which before God is a worthy service—are Muslim, then they are committing a cardinal sin, and if they are not Muslim and by their actions merely seek a return to the dissoluteness which once existed, then they should know that the season of wantonness is over, and the ladies of Iran will no longer give them permission to return to the way they used to act.

I must thank all of you. Praise God, you are busy doing religious activities and you also have political insight. Iranian women today enjoy both religious and

¹ Referring to those people who for various reasons opposed women's social activities.

political acumen. The obstacles that once prevented you from carrying out religious and political activities have now been removed. I hope that very soon each one of you will reach the point where you will be able to educate others. (101)

13 March 1983 (22 Isfand 1361 AHS)

You must involve yourselves in all aspects of the country's life to the extent that Islam has allowed, such as taking part in elections. The elections are one of the most talked about issues in Iran at the moment, and participation in them today is something that must be done. The ladies must be active in the elections just as the men are, for when it comes to their destiny, there is no difference between them and others. The destiny of Iran is the destiny of all. Islam has served you ladies more than it has the men. Islam protected you, so now you reciprocate by protecting Islam. This means taking part in these elections, for they will determine the formation of the second parliamentary assembly. Elections play a very important role in your destiny and ours, a primary role. It is elections that must lay down the path the country follows in all its affairs, whether domestic or foreign.

Therefore, you ladies must play a very active role so that the parliament does not become one that is, God forbid, infiltrated by some unscrupulous elements and is gradually drawn towards the East or the West, becoming the kind of parliament that existed in the previous era and imposing on us policies which parliaments of that time imposed on the people. (102)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardīn 1363 AHS)

Just as men should concern themselves with political matters and safeguard their society, so too should women. Women should take part in social and political activities shoulder-to-shoulder with men, while, of course, at the same time complying with Islamic principles. God be praised, this is happening today. (103)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardīn 1363 AHS)

We are proud that the ladies, both young and old, are present in the cultural, economic and military arenas, and that they are active shoulder-to-shoulder with the men or even more so than they are—in the area of elevating Islam and advancing the goals of the Most Noble Qur'an. (104)

5 June 1989 (15 Khordād 1368 AHS)

Women and education

Question: Can women attain the position of *mujtahid*?^۱ Would you please elaborate?

Reply: It is possible for a woman to become a *mujtahid*, however she cannot become a *marja* 'e *taqlīd*^۲ for others. (105)

Istiftā'āt, vol. 1, p. 21

The men and women of Qum are exemplary in their learning and their willingness to act, as are the men and women of Iran on the whole. (106)

17 May 1979 (27 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

If you are in a position that requires you to educate small girls, educate them well. If you are in a place where your position is to propagate, then do so well. All segments of the population in whatever post they may occupy must carry out their duties well. (107)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrīvar 1358 AHS)

One of the most significant effects of this movement is the change brought about in all of you, in the ladies, in the brothers and sisters alike. That change is the sense of duty that we all now feel, a duty to our country, a duty to educate, to educate people in those things that will be useful to them in religious and worldly affairs. (108)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrīvar 1358 AHS)

All those who are illiterate should rise up and embark on a campaign to learn, and all the literate brothers and sisters should rise up to teach them. The Ministry of Education, with all the facilities it has at its disposal, should also take action in this regard, not allowing bureaucracy and administrative formalities to get in its way. Brothers and sisters in faith! You must mobilise yourselves in order to eradicate this painful shortcoming. Teaching and learning are forms of worship which God the Blessed and Exalted has called on us to perform. The congregational prayer leaders in the provincial towns and villages should invite the people to this task. Those who are literate should

^۱ Refer to footnote 3.

^۲ Refer to footnote 2.

teach reading and writing to the brothers and sisters who are not in the mosques, in other religious centres and even in their homes. They should not wait for the authorities to take action. For their part, the illiterate people should not shrink from this task. (109)

28 December 1979 (7 Dey 1358 AHS)

The women of Iran today are committed, lion-hearted individuals, who shoulder-to-shoulder with our dear men are busy rebuilding their beloved country, just as they are busy rebuilding themselves through learning and education. You will not find a town or village without cultural or scientific centres composed of dedicated and honourable Muslim women. (110)

5 May 1980 (15 Ordībehesht 1359 AHS)

I hope that the teachers, the brothers and sisters, wherever they may be, in whatever capacity they may be teaching, whether as trained teachers, as students or simply as scholars with a knowledge to pass on, consider themselves to be both teachers and students. Teachers to call the people to the straight path of guidance of the prophets, and students as they themselves tread that path. (111)

30 August 1980 (8 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

Elderly men and women too can learn. They too can receive an education. They should not give up on themselves. (112)

27 December 1980 (6 Dey 1359 AHS)

I hope that the sisters and brothers busy with their studies and propaganda activities at the Shahīd Mutahharī (may God grant him peace) school of higher education are mindful of the fact that this school was named after a martyr who was very beneficial to Islam and whose teachings serve as instruction for our youth, as well they should. You sisters and brothers who attend this school should arrange your daily programme in such a way that other Mutahharīs or another Mutahharī will emerge from your midst. Resolve to see this happen, direct your attention to God and let everything you do be for God the Blessed and Exalted alone. Strive to pursue your studies well at the school, and even more importantly, strive to achieve moral edification. Be Islamic, and as you complete your Islamic studies, so too perfect an Islamic spirit in yourselves. Alongside your studies be serious about observing Islamic decrees and striving to purify yourselves Islamically. (113)

1 March 1981 (10 Isfand 1359 AHS)

Endless greetings to the committed women who are presently busy throughout the country educating children and illiterate people and teaching the rich culture of the Qur'an. (114)

24 April 1981 (4 Ordibehesht 1360 AHS)

Women who in the past were deprived of an active involvement in society, have, over these past few years, praise God, entered the arena. And they have done so in a fitting manner, with *sharī'ah* rules being adhered to. They are now active in the areas of education and propagation. (115)

13 January 1982 (23 Dey 1360 AHS)

Praise God, those shackles that once bound our beliefs have today been cast off. Today, all segments of the nation are engaged in education, including the ladies. Today, ladies are among the theological students in Qum and other places; wherever they are in the country, they are busy with education. And this is something that has materialised in this revolution. Previously, the ladies were confined to such an extent that they did not even have the right to join a group of ten people and discuss scientific or religious matters. Today, however, while observing Islamic precepts, they can go and speak anywhere in the country, even abroad. In these matters we were very backward, today we must make up for that, we must redress the failings. (116)

6 September 1983 (15 Shahrivar 1362 AHS)

I ask God, the Blessed and Exalted, to grant you ladies and sisters success both in your educational endeavours and in your ability to take action and to purify yourselves morally. For just as knowledge alone is to no avail, so too is blind purification. It is knowledge and purification together that will take man to the stage of the true human being. I ask God the Blessed and Exalted to grant you ladies, indeed all the sisters throughout the country and the brothers, success in advancing these two aspects, which are learning and action, together with Islamic morals, so that Islam can be put into practice in Iran in a way that pleases God the Blessed and Exalted. (117)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardin 1363 AHS)

Now the situation is such that the women, shoulder-to-shoulder with the brothers, are studying mysticism, philosophy, all branches of science, and, God willing, of industry too. At that time, they used to say that the half of

Iran's population in veils could not do anything, not that they wanted them to be able to do anything for they prevented the men too from being productive. No, they simply wanted to get them to enter society adopting the style that they, their friends and adherents had adopted, and thus drag society into corruption. God, however, did not want them to succeed. Today, you ladies are a source of pride, for along with your brothers in the theological schools you are busy studying and teaching or pursuing other Islamic activities; and I hope you will prove to be even more active than they are. Still, you must be careful and act contrary to what was expected under the former regime. They wanted to destroy Islamic values and put European values in their place. Act contrary to this so that some of those who were deceived, and are still to be found in Iran, may be influenced by you and adopt your style instead. (118)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardīn 1363 AHS)

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

Praise God, currently an institute is in the process of being built in the holy city of Qum, the city of learning and struggle (*jihād*), for the education of the respected ladies. It is hoped that through the efforts of the learned '*ulamā* and the teachers at Qum's theological schools, may their blessings continue, this Islamic goal is achieved and proves to be an effective step towards the intellectual development of women and the blossoming of Islamic learning among them. Therefore, I appoint their excellencies the Hujjat al-Islāms Hāj Shaykh 'Alī Meshkīnī, Mūsawī Ardabīlī, Hāj Shaykh Ahmad Jannatī, Hāj Shaykh Muhammad Fādīl, Hāj Shaykh Muhammad 'Alī Shar'ī, Hāj Shaykh Muhammad Ridā Tawassulī and Hāj Shaykh Hasan Sānī'ī, may their blessings continue, as the organising committee for this institute so that they can take the appropriate steps to appoint the managerial board, prepare the articles of association, determine its name and see to its other affairs. It is hoped that with the assistance of Almighty God and the prayers of *Hadrat* Mahdī, may our souls be sacrificed for his coming, this institute will render a valuable service to the community of revolutionary Muslim women of Iran. (119)

22 August 1984 (31 Mordād 1363 AHS)

God be praised, you worked hard, you suffered and were steadfast in every stage (of the movement). Iranian women were actively involved in all affairs, from the cultural to the economic, and today a large number of them are involved in agriculture, a large number in industry and still others in the educational arena in the areas of literature, science and the arts. All of these efforts are commendable in the eyes of God the Blessed and Exalted, and you are all in God's care; as long as you remain committed, God the Blessed and Exalted will assist you. (120)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

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

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

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

I hope that Muslim women wherever they may be will imitate you dear ones who are striving to elevate the status of women and to make up for the injustices, which were perpetrated against you in that era. (121)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

Freedom of women in the Islamic system

Question: You have been accused of being against civilisation and you have turned the accusation against the Shāh. That is not necessarily convincing. How do you stand on specific issues like agrarian reform, industrialisation and the status of women?

Reply: . . . As for women, Islam has never been against their freedom. It is, to the contrary, opposed to the idea of woman-as-object and it gives her back her

dignity. A woman is a man's equal; she and he are both free to determine their destiny and choose their occupations. But the Shāh's regime is trying to prevent women from becoming free by plunging them into immorality. It is to this that Islam raises objections. This regime has destroyed the freedom of women as well as men. Women as well as men swell the population of Iranian prisons, and this is where freedom is threatened. We want to free them from the corruption menacing them. (122)

6 May 1978 (16 Ordībehesht 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: Women are free in the Islamic society and will, under no condition, be barred from universities, offices or Parliament. What will be checked equally among both men and women is moral corruption which is prohibited for both sexes. As far as birth control is concerned, that depends on what decision the government will take on the matter. (123)

7 December 1978 (16 Āzar 1357 AHS)

Both women and men are free to attend university, both are free to vote and stand as parliamentary representatives, that which is objectionable is the way these people (the Shāh and his regime) want women to be: a plaything in the hands of men. To quote the Shāh "a woman should be beguiling." We want to get rid of this mistaken idea. We want a woman to be a person like other people, a human being like any other human being, to be free as others are free. (124)

11 December 1978 (20 Āzar 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: Women are free, just as men are. We will act in accordance with Islamic law. (125)

12 December 1978 (21 Āzar 1357 AHS)

These people you call lawyers have always misguided our women. Today, the Shāh's prisons are filled with our 'free' women, yet these lawyers have consistently endorsed the Shāh's crimes. Which of the two is free? (126)

28 December 1978 (7 Dey 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: The Shāh's malicious propaganda, along with that of people bought with his money, has obscured the issue of women's freedom for the people, so that they think Islam has come just to make women stay at home. Why should we oppose women's education? Why should we oppose them working? Why shouldn't women be able to work in the civil service? Why should we oppose women being able to travel? Women, like men, are free in all these things, women are in no way different from men. Yes, in Islam women must dress modestly and wear a veil (i.e. have *hijāb*), but that does not necessarily mean she has to wear a chador. Women can choose any kind of attire they like so long as it covers them properly and they have *hijāb*. Islam does not want women to be an object, to be a doll in our hands. Islam wants to safeguard women's nobility; it wishes to make her a serious and efficient human being. We shall never allow women to be merely men's sex objects. Islam has prohibited abortion. Women can gain the right to execute a divorce if she adds this condition to her marriage contract. The respect Islam shows woman and the freedom it grants her is equalled by no other system of laws or school of thought. (127)

28 December 1978 (7 Dey 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: Islam has given women freedom. It is this government and this Shāh that have deprived them of freedom and have restricted them in every aspect. (128)

5 January 1979 (15 Dey 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: The Shāh's government opposed our social development and gave away the freedom and independence of our country. An Islamic government is not a retrogressive one. It sanctions all the manifestations of civilisation apart from those that disrupt the nation's peace of mind and are incompatible with the nation's view of public decency. Islam not only sanctions freedom for women, it is actually the founder of freedom for women in all the dimensions, which exist for a woman. (129)

10 January 1979 (20 Dey 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: The Shāh has not done anything positive in Iran, trying to mend the damage he has done will take quite a while. The Shāh has given freedom neither to women nor to men, we, however, will give freedom to all. Cinemas under the Shāh's regime have been in the service of corruption, in an Islamic republic they will have to serve the good of the nation. We will fight illiteracy in the best way possible. (130)

11 January 1979 (21 Dey 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: Women are free to participate in many affairs, free in the true sense of the word, not in the sense that the Shāh wanted. Some of our women are in prison, and of those who are not, a great number take part in the demonstrations and the struggles. An insignificant number are 'free', free in the sense that the Shāh wants them to be free. We are most definitely opposed to that kind of freedom. (131)

15 January 1979 (25 Dey 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: They will have the status of a true human being and a free individual, contrary to these past periods we have lived through when neither our women were free nor our men. The nation whose men and women were not free [and]

were repressed, has now thrown off the yoke and from now on men and women are free. However, if they wish to act immodestly or contrary to the interests of the country, then naturally they will be prevented from doing so. (132)

15 January 1979 (25 Dey 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: The Islamic government will determine the course to be taken in such matters. Now is not the time for me to comment on such things. Women, like men, are participating in building the Islamic society of tomorrow; they can vote and be voted for in elections. Women have taken part in the recent struggles in Iran to the same degree as the men. We will give women every kind of freedom, but we will prevent corruption, and where this is concerned, there is no difference between men and women. (133)

23 January 1979 (3 Bahman 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: To say I have accepted you means nothing. I have not personally accepted you; you came here without my knowledge. This is not proof that Islam is progressive. Islam did not become progressive the minute you walked in here. Progress is not what some of our women or our men think it is. Progress is determined in terms of human and spiritual perfections and by how useful a person is for the nation and the country, not by whether people go to the cinema or dances. These are things they made you think were progressive so they could drive you into a backward state. Later we must remedy this. In salutary activities, you are free; you are free to go to university and to do any kind of respectable job. The whole nation is free in this respect. However, if anyone wants to do something immodest or harmful to the nation, he or she will be prevented. This is a sign of being progressive.(134)

23 January 1979 (3 Bahman 1357 AHS)

There is no suppression in Islam. In Islam there is liberty for all strata of society, for women, men, for whites and blacks, for everyone. From now on men should be afraid of themselves, not of the government, they should be afraid lest they do wrong. (135)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

Islam has set you free. Islam has declared men and women free; all are free. (136)

6 April 1979 (17 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

Today you are free, all the brothers and sisters are today free, free to criticise the government, free to criticise anything that goes against the path of the nation and Islam, free to make fundamental demands of the government. This movement has made you free, has liberated you from the bonds, which bound the nation. You have gathered here freely, and freely you are propounding political and social issues vital to the nation; you are not the ladies of a few years ago. Today you are having a say in your destiny. You are propounding political issues and are making demands of the government. This is the meaning of freedom. (137)

3 July 1979 (12 Tīr 1358 AHS)

This freedom that our nation now enjoys, which the women, men, writers and so on, now enjoy, this freedom is in all affairs, which are beneficial to you. You are free to go out and say what you have to say, to criticise the government, criticise anyone who puts a foot wrong, no one is going to ask you why you are doing so. You are free to join the Construction Crusade (*Jihād-e Sāzandegī*) and help your countrymen. Anything that is involved with the growth of man, the growth of the sisters, brothers and these dear children, is free for you. That which is not free, indeed which Islam prevents, is gambling which corrupts the nation, drinking which corrupts the nation, and all types of obscenities which were made available during the time of that criminal (the Shāh). Islam forbids such things. (138)

30 September 1979 (8 Mehr 1358 AHS)

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

Reply: The things you have heard said about women and other issues are all simply propaganda put about by the Shāh and people guided by self-interests. Women are free (in Islam), free to study, free in other areas too, just as the men are. It is at the present time that neither women are free nor men. (139)

13 November 1978 (22 Ābān 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: We released the women and the blacks because women are shown a special regard in Islam and the blacks have been subject to pressure and oppression in America. We do not consider them totally culpable, for perhaps they were pressurised into coming here. We did this out of obedience to the command of Islam and God, we don't expect anything from Mr. Carter¹ and we do not want any reward for what we have done. The issue here is that Mr. Carter must hand this criminal (the Shāh) back to us. A criminal who has committed crimes against a people in a country must, according to all international laws, be returned to that country. Yet he (Carter) goes against all the rules of reason. (140)

18 November 1979 (27 Ābān 1358 AHS)

Question: Your Holiness, in Neauphle-le-Chateau² you promised that not only would freedoms be protected but that they would reach all, whereas after the victory of the revolution we witnessed demonstrations against women, pressure being brought to bear on tribal minorities such as the Kurds and the banning of certain newspapers and political groups. Could you please explain these apparent contradictions?

Reply: The women who demonstrated are the remnants of former problems, women whom the Shāh brought into the arena as “free women” and whom he led to corruption. They prefer the former situation, which that corruption had brought about, those freedoms that the former regime wanted: freedom for the youth to do anything they wanted, to embrace vice and to act indecently. But they saw that Islam does not consent to indecency and to actions, which drag the country into corruption and drive the nation into a state of backwardness.

¹ James Earl Carter, the former American president.

² A hamlet near Paris where Imām took up residence in early October 1978 during his period in exile.

It was these women who came out onto the streets, with faces made up as everyone observed, and demonstrated. Otherwise, freedom most certainly has not been and will not be curtailed. The people are fee, but not to create corruption and drive the nation into backwardness. (141)

26 November 1979 (5 Āzar 1358 AHS)

Today, women in the Islamic Republic are striving shoulder-to-shoulder with the men to rebuild their country and rebuild themselves. This is the true meaning of free men and free women not that which was promulgated during the reign of the deposed Shāh, for freedom then meant prison, repression, persecution and torture. (142)

5 May 1980 (15 Ordībehesht 1359 AHS)

I ask the youth, the girls and boys, not to sacrifice their independence, freedom and human values, regardless of the trouble and suffering this may cause them, for a life of luxury, pleasure, indulgence and frequenting the centres of corruption which the West and its agents, men without a country, open to you. (143)

5 June 1989 (3 Khordād 1368 AHS)

Islamic dress (*hijāb*)

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

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

Reply 1: There is no problem.

Reply 2: Her prayers are not invalid. (144)

Istiftā'āt, vol. 1, p. 137

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

¹ A scarf sewn at the front under the chin and covering the chest.

Reply: There is no problem concerning the viewing of foreign films in which the actresses are not known and which do not have a corrupting influence. Dance music is forbidden, but there is no problem with other types of music. (145)

Istiftā'āt, vol. 2, p. 17

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

Reply: Based on the conditions set out in the question there is no problem, and income earned in this way is religiously legal. (146)

Istiftā'āt, vol. 2, p. 32

Question: For a long time now Your Holiness has been criticising the Shāh's policies, to what extent will your policies, with regard to the following, differ from those of the Shāh: Social issues, will Islamic laws be put into effect and what difference will they make to daily life in comparison with the present laws? 'Beneath the banner of Islamic government', could Your Holiness explain more precisely what this means? Will women have the right to freely choose between the veil and Western dress? Will cinemas continue to exist? If so, what kind of films will be selected for viewing? Will alcoholic beverages be banned? Finally, will Iran become another Saudi Arabia or Libya?

Reply: The implementation of penal laws in Islam depends on many conditions first being fulfilled and involves many preliminaries. Many aspects must first be justly considered and Islam must be implemented fully. If these conditions exist, it will be seen that Islamic laws are not as harsh as others. Women are free to choose their activities, their destiny and also their manner of dress, while complying with the rules. Present-day experience in the action against the Shāh's regime shows that women have found more freedom than ever before in the mode of dress which Islam stipulates for them. We are opposed to cinemas whose programmes corrupt our youth morally and subvert Islamic culture, but we approve of programmes which educate society and which contribute to its healthy, scientific and moral development. Alcoholic beverages, alcoholism and other narcotics, which are harmful to society, will be banned. The Islamic republic government that we have in mind will not be like any of the regimes mentioned (i.e. Saudi Arabia and Libya). (147)

1 November 1978 (10 Ābān 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: The veil, in the form we commonly understand it to take and which goes by the name Islamic *hijāb*, is not opposed to freedom. Islam is against indecency. We invite the women to accept the Islamic *hijāb*. Indeed, our brave women are tired of the calamities that the West, in the name of civilisation, has brought upon them, and they have turned to Islam. (148)

28 December 1978 (7 Dey 1357 AHS)

In Islam women must dress modestly and wear a veil (i.e. have *hijāb*), but that does not necessarily mean she has to wear a chador. Women can choose any kind of attire they like so long as it covers them properly and they have *hijāb*. (149)

28 December 1978 (7 Dey 1357 AHS)

Women must not enter the Islamic ministries improperly dressed. They can work there, but they must have *hijāb* and must observe *sharī'ah* principles.(150)

6 March 1978 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

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

Reply: First of all, this is something that is their choice, and they have chosen it for themselves. What right do you have to deprive them of their choice? If we tell the people to come out and demonstrate their approval for Islamic dress, whether the chador or some other form, out of our population of 35 million, 33 million would come out. What right do you have to stop them? What kind of dictatorship is this you want to impose on the women? Secondly, we do not say a woman has to wear a specific type of dress, particularly in cases of women your age¹ there are no specifications. We are concerned mainly with the younger women who when they make up and dress up draw hordes of

¹ Addressing Oriana Fallaci, a famous Italian journalist.

young men after them. It is these women we are stopping. They don't need your sympathy. (151)

12 September 1979 (21 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

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

It is possible that the attacks on women in the streets, alleys and market places are being carried out by perverse elements opposed to the revolution. No one has the right to perpetrate such an attack and this kind of behaviour is unlawful (harām) for Muslims. The police and revolutionary committees must prevent such incidents. (152)

4 July 1980 (13 Tīr 1359 AHS)

Whereas under the former regime one's consequence and standing were measured by obnoxious make-up, by what one wore and in what kind of house one lived, the values found today in Islamic countries, particularly in Iran, are human, moral values. These values have come about because of the change that has taken place in the ladies. Those who once liked to show off amongst the female community with their costly clothes and pernicious make-up are now condemned and stand shamefaced. In those days, our Muslim ladies were embarrassed wearing Islamic dress, and the deprived classes who observed the Islamic dress code felt ashamed of the way they dressed before the affluent, but corrupt, classes. Today the opposite is true, and now one of those people who once put on such corrupt displays of make-up and dress would be ashamed in your midst. (153)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

You must remember that the veil, which Islam has prescribed for you is to protect your status. Whatever God has decreed for man or for woman is to keep alive the true values they possess, values that may be destroyed by the devil's insinuations or at the corrupt hands of imperialism and its agents. (154)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

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

1. On the airing of TV programmes in which the woman's role requires her not to observe fully the rules of the Islamic dress code concerning the face, neck and hair.
2. On the airing of sports programmes such as wrestling and football in which some parts of the sportsmen's bodies are uncovered.
3. On watching such programmes when broadcast on TV.

Reply: There is no problem from the point of view of the sharī'ah to watching these kinds of films and plays, indeed many of them are educational and it is perfectly permissible to broadcast them. The same goes for sports programmes and music, most of them present no problem. On rare occasions transgressions do occur and greater care must be taken to avoid them. Two points, however, must be heeded. Firstly, the person who does the actor's make-up must be mahram¹ for the person being made up. It is forbidden for anyone else to perform this task. Secondly, people watching the programmes mentioned above must not do so in a lustful manner. (155)

21 December 1987 (30 Āzar 1366 AHS)

Most probably the struggle against the wearing of the veil by Muslim women in educational institutions is a perverse attempt to undermine this great manifestation of the Islamic world's defence of the Most Noble Messenger, peace be upon him and his descendants. The issue is one which vexes the Islamic nations: why in the so-called free world forcing women and girls to remove their veils is considered pure democracy, yet when we simply state that anyone who insults the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his descendants, should be sentenced to death, and the council of Islamic jurists issues an edict to this effect, this is considered undemocratic! Why does the world sit back and remain silent in the face of people who do not allow Muslim girls who have chosen to wear Islamic dress into universities to attend classes or teach? Is it not that the interpretation of freedom and how it is used lies in the hands of people who are opposed to the fundamentals of a freedom which is sacrosanct. Today God has made us responsible, we must not be negligent. Today, we must struggle against apathy, inaction and silence and the enthusiasm and momentum of the revolution must be maintained. (156)

۲۲ March ۱۹۸۹ (۲ Farvardīn ۱۳۶۸ AHS)

¹ Either someone of the same sex or who shares a degree of consanguinity with the person being made up, if of the opposite sex, thus precluding marriage.

The serious attention accorded all dimensions of family life by Islam

... [T]he laws of the *sharī'ah* embrace a diverse body of laws and regulations, which amounts to a complete social system. In this system of laws, all the needs of man have been met: his dealings with his neighbours, fellow citizens, and clan, as well as children and relatives; the concerns of private and marital life; regulations concerning war and peace and intercourse with other nations; penal and commercial law; and regulations pertaining to trade and agriculture. Islamic law contains provisions relating to the preliminaries of marriage and the form in which it should be contracted, and others relating to the development of the embryo in the womb and even what food the parents should eat at the time of conception. It further stipulates the duties that are incumbent upon them while the infant is being suckled, and specifies how the child should be reared, and how the husband and the wife should relate to each other and to their children. Islam provides laws and instructions for all of these matters, aiming, as it does, to produce integrated and virtuous human beings. (164)

Islamic Government, pp. 43-44

One of the things that creates different human behavioural patterns is how the rules for marriage, sexual intercourse and the times it can take place, for the gestation period and when the woman is breastfeeding, for selecting a husband and a woman who will be the one to breastfeed the child, and other instructions are observed. These rules influence fully the physical and spiritual health of the child in the same manner as his learning environment, his teachers, friends, associates and kind of knowledge imparted to him do, along with other things that are too many to be mentioned here. All these things can have strange effects on a child's development, some of which are noticeable. (165)

At-Talab wa'l-Irādah, p. 148

Islam has laid the foundations of man's life from before his birth. It has established the social foundations of the family and has laid down injunctions for man covering the period he lives with his family, the time that he enters into education, the time he enters society, and the time that he has relations with other countries, with other governments, with other nations. All of these have a programme; the holy laws contain provisions for all of these things. (166)

14 November 1965 (23 Ābān 1344 AHS)

Islam has moral teachings and it has rules that govern man's social relations, his relationship with himself, his wife, his children, his neighbours, his friends, his fellow countrymen, his co-religionists, and people of a different religion. Islam has rules for men, which extend from before his birth until after his death. It contains provisions relating to the preliminaries of marriage and the form in which it should be contracted, and others relating to the development of the embryo in the womb until birth. It specifies how the child should be reared, it has rules for him at puberty, in his youth, in old age, when he dies and is laid in his grave and even after that . . . (167)

28 September 1977 (6 Mehr 1356 AHS)

. . . [T]here are rules for other relationships concerning man. There are rules to ensure man's well-being even before he is born, to ensure that a sound, healthy, refined individual comes into the world. Islamic law contains provisions relating to the preliminaries of marriage, the choice of spouse, and the form in which a marriage should be contracted; there are laws for when intimate relations take place between a man and his wife, for when a child is conceived and when being suckled. There are rules for the child for the time he is being reared by his mother and when he is being trained by his first teachers. Islam has rules for all of these things, and laws to train man. (168)

9 November 1978 (18 Ābān 1357 AHS)

One facet of Islam deals with government and governmental and political affairs, and another deals with man's spiritual development which concerns man himself alone: What should he be in terms of beliefs, ethics and social behaviour? What must a man be? In this regard, Islam encompasses every aspect of human life, whereas other governments and societies are impassive towards the same. That is, no government will ever approach an individual and reprimand him for whatever (immoral) activities he may engage in at home. Whatever misdeed takes place in an individual's home is of no concern to other governments. Islam, however, is concerned with the individual even if he is alone at home; that is, it tells him what he is supposed to do, how to behave and what ethics and intellectual perceptions he should adopt. It tells him how a father should treat his children, how a child should behave towards his father, a mother to her child, a child to his mother, a brother to a brother, how families

should behave among themselves or a family towards another. All of these have rules to follow in Islam, which takes everything into consideration. (169)

11 November 1978 (20 Ābān 1357 AHS)

Islam is a religion that belongs to all. It was revealed to build up a human being in a way that it proposes; to mould him into an equitable man in such a way that one human being cannot commit one grain or pinhead of injustice against another; that a human being cannot be unjust to his own child or to his wife, or a wife to a husband, or two brothers to one another or these to their friends. Islam wants to mould man into a just being in the fullest sense of the word “human being,” one whose intellect is humane, whose essence and appearance are human and one who respects human behaviour and conduct. Islam wants to materialise these goals. (170)

11 November 1978 (20 Ābān 1357 AHS)

We want such an ideology, one that when it first starts to train the people directs them towards the development of the excellence of the human being. You look around yourselves in the world; can you find an ideology like Islam, which has laws aimed at making man a true human being even before he has been born, before his parents have married? All of the world's ideologies deal with people who have reached puberty and who are active members of society. Islam, however, aims to perfect man even before he is born, before his parents marry, by stating what kind of spouse a man and a woman should choose. Why does it do this? Because the husband and wife are the origin of an individual or individuals and Islam wants these individuals, who are to be handed over to society, to be righteous individuals.

So before a couple marry, Islam stipulates what kind of a woman the man's prospective wife should be and what kind of a man the woman's prospective husband should be, what kind of personalities they should have, how they should behave and in what kind of family they should have been brought up. After marriage too, Islam stipulates how the husband and wife should treat each other. Islam has laid down rules that pertain to the period when the woman is with child, and to the delivery of the child. It also specifies how a child should be reared. Islam provides laws and instructions for all of these matters so that this child that is produced from these two people will be a virtuous individual in the society and righteousness will reign throughout the world.

This is Islam. Islam seeks to create true human beings and it sets out to do this even before the child is born, before his parents have even married. It begins there and has laid down laws that cover this period and the period after the child has come into the world: it stipulates the duties that are incumbent upon the parents while the child is being suckled; it specifies how the child should be reared by the parents, how he should be treated later in the elementary and high schools and what the teachers there should be like. Then when the child reaches the age of independence, the age at which he must make his own decisions, Islam tells him what kind of a person he should be, what he should and shouldn't do. Islam does this because it wants the people in society to be righteous, sound individuals. (171)

31 December 1978 (10 Dey 1357 AHS)

If you examine Islam closely, you will see that it has laws and programmes for all the dimensions man possesses. It has regulations for man for even before he is born, before his parents marry. It has procedures to ensure the embryo develops well. Islam stipulates what kind of woman you should choose for a wife, what kind of man you should choose for a husband, what circumstances should prevail at the time of marriage, what rules exist and what the procedure should be. It has rules governing the time the child is conceived and the period of gestation, like a farmer who sows a seed taking care to choose fecund soil in which to plant it, irrigating it with pure water, at the proper times, and tending to it so that it grows properly. In order to train true human beings, Islam begins even before the parents have married; it wants the basis to be strong and good, the spouse to be a healthy, sound person of human qualities. Islam contains further provisions relating to the child's birth, to the period the infant is being suckled, it specifies how the parents should rear the child and the kind of instruction he should receive from them and others. No other system of laws covers such things; this is something peculiar only to those laws brought by the prophets. (172)

2 February 1979 (14 Bahman 1357 AHS)

Know that Islam covers everything; it contains laws relating to before marriage takes place between a man and woman to the time of interment. All its laws are progressive instructions necessary for man's happiness whether in this world or the next. (173)

19 February 1979 (30 Bahman 1357 AHS)

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

When a farmer wants to plant a seed, he must consider the type of soil there is in the area in which he intends to plant it and the things needed for its growth, which are useful and which are not. He must take care of the seed from the time it sprouts to when it bears its fruit. Islam treats humans in the same manner that is in the manner of a farmer who wants to produce a good harvest. From before the seed is planted Islam has rules stipulating what kind of mother and father the child should have, and prescribes the form in which the marriage should be contracted. This is because Islam is concerned with the child's future life, for if the father or mother is of corrupt moral nature, [and] their actions that of an inhuman being, their offspring will be affected by these traits, they will inherit them. Therefore, like a very conscientious and compassionate farmer, Islam takes care of mankind. It has rules for man, which extend from before his birth to the time he marries. It has many rules relating to the time of conception, the gestation period, the time the infant is being suckled; it specifies how the child should be cared for in the mother's lap and later under the protection of the father. It has rules for him when he enters school, then later when he joins society. From before he is born Islam cares for the child, so that he can achieve the high station man can attain. Islam has rules covering all these things.

Other systems in the world, other forms of government in the world, do not concern themselves with such matters, they are only bothered about making sure this society serves their interests and that the peace is kept so they can plunder the people. Even the best and most equitable of them cares only for rectifying its own society a little. Otherwise, how a child should be reared, what rules exist covering the period the child is in the womb and is being suckled are of no consequence to other systems. Islam, to the contrary, does care about such things, and when the child grows into a man, it stipulates how he should behave towards his brother, towards his mother and father, how the mother and father should treat their son, how they should treat their

neighbours, their fellow citizens, their co-religionists and foreigners. Islam concerns itself with all of these.

One facet of Islam deals with government and governmental and political affairs, and another deals with man's spiritual development. For man is a two-dimensional being, there are two sides to him: one the physical, for every aspect of which Islam has rules; and the other the spiritual, which no other system even broaches. No other system is concerned about giving man spiritual training or moral refinement so that he can reach the stage that none, save God, knows of. Islam even stretches to that stage; it takes man's hands and leads him to the highest heaven. No other system does this. (174)

19 February 1979 (30 Bahman 1357 AHS)

Religions concern themselves with all the dimensions man possesses. There are rules to ensure man's well-being even before he is born, instructions relating to how a marriage should be contracted, what conditions should be met, what kind of woman the man should choose for a wife and what kind of man the woman should choose so that the marriage is a good one. For marriage is like cultivated land used for producing human beings. Before the marriage even takes place, precautions are taken to ensure that a sound, spiritually healthy individual comes into the world. Thus, attention is paid to the preliminaries of marriage, the conditions that should be met, and following the marriage there are rules governing the intimate relations between a man and his wife and for when a child is conceived. The mother is advised what food she should eat when she is carrying the child and what she should avoid, what her life should be like and how she should behave. Instructions are provided stating what kind of woman should suckle the child after he is born—that is if the parents wish to employ a wet nurse—how the child should be suckled, at what times, under what conditions, how the mother should treat the child when he is in her care, and later, when he has left the lap of his mother, how the father should treat him. There are rules governing how the child should be reared in the family, what his teachers should be like, and when he enters society, how he should act. This is all to make sure that upright, morally correct individuals enter society. (175)

14 May 1979 (24 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

Islam is concerned with everything. It plans for the child you will bring into the world even before you marry. It stipulates what kind of woman the man's prospective wife should be, what kind of man the woman's prospective

husband. For a human being is like a plant that must grow and blossom, and just as a farmer must take care when planting his seeds, selecting the right soil in which to plant them, good fertiliser and the right amount of water to nourish them, so too much the same applies in the case of a human being. Islam stipulates what conditions must prevail from before man is conceived, in what kind of seedbed the seed must be planted, what kind of person the man should be who will plant the seed. Then later, after marriage, Islam has rules for when the child is conceived. Islam seeks to put right all aspects of man's life, aiming, as it does, to produce integrated and virtuous human beings. (176)

21 May 1979 (31 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

Islamic law contains provisions for the period before marriage takes place, because it is through marriage that human beings are created. When you want to get married, no other system of laws in the world is concerned with how you should go about this. As far as other laws are concerned, you need only register your marriage at the registry office, the rest is up to you. Islam, however, pays attention to the period before marriage, for it is from marriage that a child springs, and he must have sound beginnings. Like an extremely caring and affectionate farmer who, to ensure that his crop turns out well, selects only seeds of the best kind, planting them in fertile soil and nourishing them with only pure water, Islam seeks to produce true human beings, and it sets out to do this even before the child's parents have married by telling the woman what kind of man she should choose for a husband and the man what kind of woman he should choose for a wife, it gives them the rules for this. It has rules covering the marriage and afterwards when the woman is with child, then following that for the period of the child's upbringing. For Islam seeks to create a true human being, and it begins at the very beginning when the foundations of a child's life are first laid. So, it pays attention to such affairs, whereas all other laws in the world ignore them.

Other laws pay scant regard to how a man acts in the privacy of his own home, they adopt the attitude that as long as the person remains indoors and does not disturb the peace and order in society, he can do what he likes. Islam is not this way. Islam seeks to create upright human beings so that even at home they do nothing illegal or immoral. Islam wants man to behave at home as he would in the street, as he would in public. It seeks to make man a true human being in all circumstances. (177)

10 June 1979 (20 Khordād 1358 AHS)

No teachings other than those of the prophets are concerned with who you choose as a wife or who the woman chooses as a husband. They consider it none of their concern. Not one of their laws covers this area or what duties are incumbent on the mother when she is with child, when she is breastfeeding and when raising the child, or what the father must do in rearing his child. Corporeal laws, and systems other than those of the prophets, are not concerned with such matters. They are concerned only with preventing the individual from committing corrupt acts when he enters society, and even then they only make it their business when such acts are likely to cause disorder. Otherwise, they do not consider indulging in corrupt acts of the bacchanalian type as wrong; indeed, they encourage such behaviour. They are not concerned with man's moral refinement or with creating a true human being. In their view, the only difference between humans and animals is that man has progressed more, he can make aeroplanes whereas animals cannot, he can become a physician, an animal cannot. The limits for such laws exist in the physical realm.

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

Islam does the same, only with regard to human beings. So, it stipulates what kind of person you should choose for a spouse so that a virtuous human being is produced. It has instructions covering the marriage and what conditions should be fulfilled, there are also instructions pertaining to the time a child is conceived, to the period when the woman is with child and when the infant is being suckled. This is because the monotheistic schools of thought, of which Islam is the most comprehensive, have come to produce true human beings. They haven't come to produce a creature with human intelligence but whose limits and aims are those of an animal. No, they have come to produce human beings in the true sense of the word. (178)

4 July 1979 (13 Tīr 1358 AHS)

Let them come and see what Islam says, how it is with an individual from the time he/she wishes to marry to ensure that the child this union produces is a

good child. How later it has rules for how the infant should be reared by his mother, how he should be treated at school and for all stages of his life until the end. Islam seeks to guide you along a straight path. (179)

6 July 1980 (15 Tīr 1359 AHS)

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

Be mindful of your actions making sure they are good. Make sure your uprising is for God, your actions for God. Those of you who have children, bring them up on divine teachings. (180)

8 February 1979 (19 Bahman 1357 AHS)

In our revolutionary movement, women have likewise earned more credit than men, for it was the women who not only displayed courage themselves, but also reared men of courage. Like the Noble Qur'an itself, women have the function of rearing and training true human beings. (181)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Islam wants to train you to become an integrated and virtuous human being, so that in your care suchlike human beings may be raised. (182)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

Men are raised in your care, you are the educators of men, recognise your own worth, just as Islam does. (183)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

You have served Islam and, God willing, you will continue to do so. You rear lion-hearted men and women in Iran. It is in your laps that virtuousness, decency, and greatness are fostered. You have a duty to raise your children well, to bring them up with Islamic values, with human values, and raise them to be fighters. It is through your struggles and those of all sections of society that we have been able to bring this movement this far and proclaim an Islamic republic. (184)

6 April 1979 (17 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

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

studies so that you equip yourselves with moral excellence and are virtuous in word and deed. Rear strong children for the future of our country. Your laps are like schools in which strong youth should be raised. Seek to acquire the highest virtues so that in your care your children will also acquire them. (185)

10 April 1979 (21 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

Islam wants you to care for your children yourselves and raise them to be good, upright individuals, to brighten up your home with the light of these Islamic children. For they are the children of Islam, and the destiny of Islam and your country lies in their hands. (186)

10 May 1979 (20 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

Since in the beginning these children are raised in your care, you are the ones responsible for their actions. If you raise a good child, that child alone may secure the well-being of a nation, just as, God forbid, if you raise a bad child, he may be the cause of corruption in society. Do not think of your child as merely a child, one day, when he enters society, he may become a leader of the society and, if not brought up well, he could lead it into corruption. (187)

13 May 1979 (23 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

Your children must be trained well; they must be given a sound, Islamic education while they are in your care. For it is to your apron strings they cling, it is you they follow around, your moves they watch and your words they hear. So let them not hear a lie from you lest in the future they become liars. For surely, if they hear lies from you and then from their fathers, they will become liars, but if they see that both are good, morally sound people, then they will become the same. (188)

13 May 1979 (23 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

Our nation's long-term programme is for those who educate our children, that is our teachers, the mothers and fathers of our children, their lecturers and those who write and those who speak for them, to acquaint them with spiritual matters and help them to understand spiritual matters. (189)

24 May 1979 (3 Khordād 1358 AHS)

The ladies' help is several times more valuable than that of men. May God protect you. May He keep you so that you may carry on your job of training

human beings, a job that the prophets were also assigned. May God's peace be upon you all, and also His mercy. (190)

26 May 1979 (5 Khordād 1358 AHS)

Respected ladies! You are all responsible; we are all responsible. You are responsible for the upbringing of the children; you have the duty of nurturing virtuous children in your care to hand over to society. We all have this duty, but it is in your care that they receive a better upbringing. A mother's lap is the best school for a child. (191)

26 May 1979 (5 Khordād 1358 AHS)

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

So one of your jobs is to bring up good children. It is in the laps of mothers that true human beings must be produced, for the first stage of their education is in the laps of their mothers. The affection a child feels for his mother is greater than any other, none can compare with the love that exists between a child and his mother. Children learn better from their mothers; they are influenced more by their mothers than they are by their fathers, teachers or lecturers. (192)

11 June 1979 (21 Khordād 1358 AHS)

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

17 July 1979 (26 Tīr 1358 AHS)

A mother's lap is the best school in which a child is trained. That which he learns from his mother is quite different from what he learns from his teachers. He picks up more from his mother than he does his teachers; he is trained better in the lap of his mother than he is by his father or teachers. It is a human

responsibility and a divine duty, a noble deed, to raise a true human being. (194)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordād 1358 AHS)

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

12 October 1979 (20 Mehr 1358 AHS)

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

22 March 1982 (2 Farvardīn 1361 AHS)

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

9 February 1984 (20 Bahman 1362 AHS)

The importance and honour of motherhood

One cannot count the many rights mothers have and they cannot be rightly fulfilled. One night of a mother's life with her child is worth more than a lifetime of a dedicated father's. The affection and compassion that shine from a mother's radiant eyes hold a glimmer of the compassion and kindness of the Lord of the worlds. God, the Blessed and Exalted, has imbued the hearts and souls of mothers with the light of his own divine compassion, such that none can describe and no one, save the mothers, can understand. And it is this everlasting compassion that has given mothers a heavenly-like tolerance in the face of suffering and hardship from the time of conception, throughout pregnancy, during childbirth and throughout the years of the child's life from infancy up to the end. She endures hardship and suffering in a way that the father cannot endure even for one night. The tradition which says "Heaven is under the mother's feet"¹ is absolutely true. It has been explained in such a subtle fashion because of the significance of the matter and to show children to search for happiness and the gardens of heaven under the blessed feet of

¹ A saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his descendants).

their mothers, to respect them as they would Almighty God and to seek the approval and satisfaction of God the Most Holy in their approval and satisfaction. (198)

Jelvehā-ye Rahmānī, p. 47

Islam came to fashion true human beings. The divine book of Islam, which is the Most Noble Qur'an, is designed to train man in all his dimensions, in spiritual and physical dimensions, political, social, cultural, and military, in all human dimensions. Islam came to show us the way to do this. We, in turn, must educate our youth along Islamic lines, our women must be trained Islamically, passing this training on to their children in their care so that when their children mature, they become servants for Islam and humanity. (199)

11 April 1979 (22 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

Women play a significant role in building an Islamic society; Islam promotes women to where they can realize their humanistic values in the society, and more beyond the boundaries of being simply an object, and along with such growth, they can assume responsibilities in constructing an Islamic government. (200)

10 November 1978 (19 Aban 1357 AHS)

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

10 May 1979 (20 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

In your role as mothers, you must morally purify your children, in your role as teachers you should train them well and hand over to society sound, upright individuals, and in so doing create a sound society. If, God forbid, the opposite is the case, you too will suffer as a result, just as in the same way you will benefit from any good deed they do, for you are the source of that good deed. There is a reckoning, either a penalty or a reward. If, God forbid, you hand over corrupt individuals to society and they perform corrupt deeds, you will suffer as a result. (202)

13 May 1979 (23 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

You ladies have the honour of being mothers, which puts you ahead of the men. You have the responsibility for training children in your laps. The mother's lap is the first school a child has. A good mother brings up a good

child, but, God forbid, if the mother is misguided, the child brought up in her lap will also be misguided. For children have a particular affection for their mothers, which they have for no one else, and when in their laps, all they wish for they find in their mothers, she is their everything. What she says, how she acts, her nature, all have an effect on a child. When the child is in his mother's lap, which is his first class, if he is taught virtuousness, morality, goodness, he will grow up with a good nature, with that purity of spirit and goodness of deed that has been nurtured in him. While in her lap, the child will begin to imitate his mother, so that if he sees she is good-natured, her words and actions kind and good, he too will behave likewise. For his mother is the one he patterns himself on, and what she instils into him will prove his most effective training. (203)

13 May 1979 (23 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

A long-term programme for you young people, you ladies, indeed for everyone, is self-reform and moral purification to advance the aims of Islam. If you ladies bring up your children to be morally upright, Islamic individuals, you have protected both your religion and your country. If, God forbid, immoral, un-Islamic children spring from your laps, if under the tutelage of you young people un-Islamic, unprincipled children emerge, and in the schools and universities our children attend they are not taught goodness of character and Islamic virtues, then both Islam and our country will be cast to the wind. (204)

24 May 1979 (3 Khordād 1358 AHS)

The mother in whose lap a child is reared bears the gravest of responsibilities and has the noblest of professions: that of bringing up children. The noblest profession in the world is rearing a child and handing over to society a true human being. This is why, throughout history, God the Blessed and Exalted sent prophets. Throughout history, from Adam to the Seal of the Prophets, prophets came to train true human beings. (205)

24 May 1979 (3 Khordād 1358 AHS)

When a mother wants to save her child from distress, her kindness is more effective than any medication. The child needs spiritual pacification, and this can be provided by the mother and father. (206)

26 May 1979 (5 Khordād 1358 AHS)

You can train children to uphold the aims of the prophets. You yourselves must be both guardians and the trainers of guardians, for your children are the next custodians. Train them well. Your homes must be places where children are given both religious instruction and formal learning, where they are taught moral edification. The future of these children is the responsibility of the mothers and fathers. (207)

26 May 1979 (5 Khordād 1358 AHS)

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

Respected gentlemen! Respected ladies! Obey the call of Islam. Islam did not come to provide fodder; it came to secure spirituality. One should not cry out only for material things, for this is not following the path of Islam. If spirituality is realised, then the material will become spiritual and will follow. Islam approves of material progress when it follows spiritual progress, not when it occurs alone. The basis is spiritual; a country with spiritual progress is a true country. (208)

29 May 1979 (8 Khordād 1358 AHS)

While your children are in your laps give them an Islamic upbringing, teach them to be upright human beings so that when you send them to primary school you send sound, morally upright and well-behaved children. (209)

11 June 1979 (21 Khordād 1358 AHS)

You must be mindful of giving these children in your care a religious upbringing, a moral upbringing. If you hand over one committed, virtuous child to society you may see that one day he is the one who reforms society, for it is possible for one individual to reform society. Likewise, if, God forbid, this child leaves your laps an unscrupulous individual, if he leaves the care of you who are teachers an immoral person, then it is possible that he will corrupt society, and you will be the ones responsible. If you train your children properly, it will bring with it honour such that likens to that the prophets enjoyed. If, on the other hand, you bring your children up to be immoral, God forbid, they could possibly corrupt a whole society. (210)

11 June 1979 (21 Khordād 1358 AHS)

You ladies who took part in this movement, and may God keep you, must continue to participate from now on and advance this movement. The most important thing for you to do is train your children well. The former regime wanted to separate the children from their mothers. They lured the ladies into offices, not with the aim of improving these offices, rather with the intention, for one thing, of making them corrupt places and for another of taking the children out of their mothers' care. Children, who from the beginning are not raised in their mothers' laps, develop complexes from which much corruption emanates. Look after your children well, train them well for it is these children who can save a country. While in your care give them an Islamic upbringing, raise them to have virtues, to have faith, so that they can be of service in this country. May God grant you all happiness and make you a useful person for your country. (211)

1 July 1979 (10 Tīr 1358 AHS)

It is possible that a child whom you have trained well will save a nation. Take care to hand over good children to society, and let your teaching be accompanied by training. (212)

14 July 1979 (23 Tīr 1358 AHS)

The prophets came to make true human beings. They were given the mission to transform those men who are no different from animals into true human beings, to purify them. This was their profession and it should be the profession of mothers with regard to the children in their care. They too, through their deeds, must purify their children; children are trained better in the laps of their mothers than they are by their teachers. The love a child has for his mother he feels for no one else, what he hears from his mother becomes engraved on his heart and stays with him till the end. Mothers must be mindful of training their children properly, of bringing them up to be morally upright individuals. Their laps should be both a school of learning and of religious instruction, this is a very important matter and it is something, which only mothers can achieve. Children hear more from their mothers than they do their fathers. No one can influence a young child or endow the infant with his/her own character and morals the way the child's mother can. (213)

17 July 1979 (26 Tīr 1358 AHS)

It is possible that a child whom a mother has trained well may one day save a nation. It is also possible that a child whom a mother has trained badly may destroy a nation. (214)

17 July 1979 (26 Tīr 1358 AHS)

If good training begins in the mother's lap and continues through primary school, high school and university or other institutes of higher education, then there may come a time when you see that all the young people are good, upright individuals and they draw a country towards goodness. (215)

17 July 1979 (26 Tīr 1358 AHS)

A good, upright individual may train a world, whereas someone unscrupulous and immoral may lead the world to corruption. Both immorality and godliness originate from your laps, from your teachings and from the schools in which you teach. (216)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordād 1358 AHS)

The correct training of these small children begins at this stage of their lives. If, God forbid, the mother is a wrongdoer, these little ones will receive an unsound training from the start. The responsibility for their upbringing lies in your hands. (217)

6 October 1979 (14 Mehr 1358 AHS)

The role of the women in society is more important than that of the men, for in addition to being active members of society themselves in all fields, the ladies also raise active members. A mother's service to the community is greater than that of a teacher, indeed of anyone else. And this is what the prophets wanted, they wanted women to be people who train society and bestow upon the community lion-hearted men and women. (218)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

Be good mothers for your children, good advisers to society and hard workers for the needy, as, praise God, you already are. (219)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

The ladies of Iran have played a greater role in this movement and this revolution than the men, and today as they pursue their activities behind the

front lines, their role is greater still. Through their educational pursuits, whether in the form of educating their own children or teaching in classrooms and other places, they still play a great role in this revolution. (220)

23 May 1981 (2 Khordād 1360 AHS)

The respected ladies of Iran have proved that they did not fall victim to these machinations and will not do so. They have proved that they are firmly entrenched in the bastion of virtuousness and modesty and will present this country with strong, integrated young men and virtuous, committed young women, and never will they go down those roads which the superpowers have laid at their feet with the intention of destroying this country. (221)

23 May 1981 (2 Khordād 1360 AHS)

What can one say? What can be laid at the noble feet of the exalted mothers who raised such children in their pure laps? (222)

27 August 1984 (5 Shahrīvar 1363 AHS)

The Iranian ladies have brought Islam to the stage it is now at by sacrificing their lives, their youth and their time, and I hope that from now on it will be advanced even further. You can be sure that as long as you remain active and committed to Islam, as long as you are ready to give your young ones for the cause and are willing to train them properly, then Islam will progress . . . (223)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

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

By putting them under pressure and exerting force, they tried to destroy this segment of the population too. They strove to stop them from performing that glorious deed which is theirs to perform, from executing those services that this segment wishes to render the nation, those valuable services which our ladies are entrusted to undertake, and prevent them from performing that most fundamental of services which it is their duty to render, that is training their children in whose hands the destiny of the country lies. They feared lest in their laps children were brought up to be pious, Islamic and with a love for their homeland, and that even when these children entered the school system, they still would not be able to change them, not even with all the propaganda they disseminated at the schools through the teachers and propagators they had

installed there. Thus, their plan was to turn these ladies away from that great, fundamental role they have and pretend that in so doing they had freed half the population of Iran. (224)

16 May 1979 (26 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

Of course, there is no objection to women taking up employment, sound employment, but we do not want a repeat of the way it was during the Pahlavī era. Then they did not have employment in mind for women, rather their aim was to degrade both men and women, pulling them down from that position they occupy. They did not want a natural growth for either sex. They did not want our children to receive a sound upbringing so they took steps to prevent this from the very beginning by depriving many of the chance to be raised in their mothers' laps, which are centres for a child's training. Then later at the primary schools, there too they misguided the children and led them astray with their malicious propaganda and misleading books. Even later still, at the universities, their agents there did not let them develop properly; they did not allow training to be given that would produce genuine scholars or individuals committed to the welfare of the country and to Islam. (225)

16 May 1979 (26 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

Unfortunately, the foreigners made us view the profession of being a mother as very demeaning and of little value, consequently some mothers, although by no means all were encouraged to distance themselves from their children. This great profession was made to appear unimportant so that mothers would not rear good children in their laps. Fathers too were made to feel they needed not to pay much attention to their children or to their proper upbringing. The school system also, up to and including university, suffered the same lack of training. This was because the foreigners did not want true human beings to exist in this country; they knew that if this were to happen, such people would sever their hands from this land. They don't want genuine, believing Muslims, people with faith in God, people who consider martyrdom a triumph, to exist in this country. (226)

24 May 1979 (3 Khordād 1358 AHS)

Unfortunately, during the rule of the *tāghūt*, they tried to take this profession away from these mothers, so they propagated views that questioned the woman's role as a mother; they disparaged this noble occupation and made it

seem unimportant in the eyes of the mothers. For they wanted to distance the mothers from their children, they wanted the children to be brought up in nurseries and the mothers to go doing the things they wanted them to do. A child brought up in a nursery is not the same as one raised in his mother's lap. When a child is brought up in a nursery by strangers without his mother's care and affection, he will develop a complex. Much of the corruption from which society suffers, stems from these children who have grown up with a complex. Major complexes are created when a child is separated from his mother. A child needs his mother's affection, therefore this profession, which was also the profession of the prophets, for they too came to make true human beings, is your primary one: to give your child his primary training. (227)

11 June 1979 (21 Khordād 1358 AHS)

Throughout the rule of this monarchy, they strove to distance mothers from their children. They instilled in the mothers the idea that looking after their children was of no value; that they should work outside in the offices instead. In this way they took the innocent children out of their mothers' laps and put them into nurseries and other places where unsympathetic strangers gave them an unsound training. When a child is separated from his mother, it doesn't matter who looks after him instead, he will develop complexes that in turn become the source of much corruption. Many of the murders that occur stem from these complexes, and many of these have developed because of a child being separated from his mother. (228)

17 July 1979 (26 Tīr 1358 AHS)

When infants are taken from their mothers' care and put into nurseries, they develop complexes because they are placed in the care of strangers and are deprived of their mothers' love and affection. These complexes become the root of most of mankind's corruption. These wars that occur are a result of complexes, which exist in the hearts of bloodthirsty individuals. This thieving and treachery we witness stems mostly from the complexes within man. If your children are separated from you, they will develop complexes and be drawn into corruption because of the lack of your motherly love. The former regime was actually assigned the task of leading our children into corruption, of not allowing them to be brought up, to be trained, in the loving care of their mothers, so that they would develop complexes. In the school system the story was the same, our children were placed in the hands of teachers appointed by them, attended universities they had set up; corruption from the bottom right up to the top "*From light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness*"

(Qur'an 2:257). The regime did not allow a sound education to be imparted, one that would create true human beings. (229)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordād 1358 AHS)

They did not want true human beings to develop so they made the training of children by their mothers appear to be a very trivial matter. Some of the mothers, those who were easily influenced by them, came to believe their propaganda and stopped caring for their dear children themselves, sending them instead to nurseries where they received devilish training. (230)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordād 1358 AHS)

You are responsible and the responsibility is great. A good, upright individual may train a world, whereas someone unscrupulous and immoral may lead the world to corruption. Both immorality and godliness originate from your laps, from your teachings and from the schools in which you teach. They wanted to remove the children from their mothers' care and send them to nurseries. (231)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordād 1358 AHS)

For the ladies there is one matter, which is more important than anything else that is the proper upbringing of their children. Do not think that those who always decry (the profession of) being a mother and bringing up children, who make it appear a very trivial matter and very demeaning, are right. They want to distance children from their mothers' laps, where they will be given a proper upbringing, and send them from the start to nurseries for strangers to train. They don't want true human beings to be produced, and it is in your laps that this can happen. They wish to prevent your children from being with you and thus prevent true human beings from being trained. (232)

17 August 1979 (26 Mordād 1358 AHS)

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

The noble soul of the Most Noble Messenger (peace be upon him and his descendants) is restless and afraid lest the tree of prophethood and Imamate shed its leaves and autumn sets in. The Prophet said: Marry and procreate and indeed I will be proud of you above all other nations.'¹(233)

Forty Traditions, p. 147.

Your home must be a school, a place where your young ones are taught the principles of Islam, where they are refined morally. You must deliver well-bred, upright youngsters to the schoolteachers and they in turn must edify them further. (234)

10 May 1979 (20 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

This call to marry and the high commendation marriage has been given are to encourage marriage and discourage deviation and corruption. Through their teachings, the prophets aim to prevent the development of an unbridled carnal appetite and the establishment of centres of corruption and fornication, they do not seek to quash passions and carnal desires per se, for these are a natural part of man's nature and must be allowed to perform their purpose. However, they are subject to restraints. If the teachings of the prophets were realised, then man would become complete in this world, and this gluttony, these injustices, these aggressions and class differences would not arise; in the next world too, which is the most important one, in that life which is eternal, his welfare would be assured. (235)

7 July 1979 (16 Tīr 1358 AHS)

When goodness prevails in a society, the people brought up in it will be good, healthy individuals. A family whose members are all sound individuals will bring up sound children, unless, that is, these children enter a corrupt society, which in turn corrupts them. This is only natural, for the nature of small children makes them very impressionable, and they can be easily influenced by good or bad. If they are brought up in a sound society, they will grow up to

¹ See *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Book on Marriage, Chapter 1, the Preliminaries of Marriage, Narrative 17.

be sound individuals, on the other hand if society is corrupt, they will grow up to be corrupt too. (236)

1 July 1980 (10 Tīr 1359 AHS)

It was you families who raised these brave youths in your laps, youths who made sacrifices for Islam. (237)

18 December 1980 (27 Āzar 1359 AHS)

Our nation must give the situation of these individuals some consideration, the mothers and fathers of these young, misguided boys and girls must give a thought for their children and guide them. We only want what is best for you. (238)

22 June 1981 (1 Tīr 1360 AHS)

Time and again I have advised these misguided young people and exhorted their mothers and fathers to counsel their children and prevent them from becoming tools in the hands of criminals. (239)

29 June 1981 (8 Tīr 1360 AHS)

Mothers and fathers must give their children careful attention and mind what they do and what goes on with them. They should not allow these helpless girls to fall into their trap, these helpless boys to fall into their trap. They should counsel them, but if they pay no heed, then they should report them. (240)

10 August 1981 (19 Mordād 1360 AHS)

The role the family plays in the upbringing of children, in particular that of the mother for infants and the father for teenagers is a very sensitive one. If children are brought up well with salutary teachings in the laps of their mothers and in the care of dedicated fathers, then when they are sent to school, the work of the teachers is made much easier. Fundamentally, a child's training begins in the pure laps of mothers and in the care of fathers, and when a salutary, Islamic upbringing is imparted, this lays the foundations for commitment to the interests of the country and the country's independence and freedom. (241)

¹ Referring to deviatory groups who tried to lead young people astray with their untruthful claims.

22 September 1981 (31 Shahrivar 1360 AHS)

The mothers and fathers of these innocent children, these inexperienced youth,¹ must strive to save their beloved offspring from this peril, which threatens to destroy their lives in this world and the next. The crusading and committed nation must be vigilant and persevering and save the youth, who are the country's assets and valuable resources, from the evil of these American agents² who wish to lead them astray. (242)

22 September 1981 (31 Shahrivar 1360 AHS)

Dedicated mothers and fathers should keep a close eye on their children and their comings and goings, so that, God forbid, they don't fall prey to the American-backed hypocrites and the Russian-backed deviators. They should involve themselves in their studies, for the role of the mothers and fathers in protecting their children during their school years is very important and valuable. They must bear in mind that their children are at an age when they can be deceived by one misleading slogan, which can, God forbid, set them off down a path from which no one can turn them away. The mothers and fathers must remember that they exert more influence than anyone else over their children, and can save them from being sucked into a maelstrom of ignorance and corruption. For this reason, parents should keep in contact with their children's teachers, helping them in this important affair and getting their help. I hope these young people will secure our cultural, political, economic and military independence of tomorrow, will save us from the malice of the superpowers and be the founders of a real third world. (243)

23 September 1982 (1 Mehr 1361 AHS)

Good conduct towards family members is recommended

Even though all mothers are exemplary, some exhibit special qualities (which put them above the rest). Throughout the course of my life with your respected mother, in my recollections of the nights she spent up with her children and the days she spent looking after them, I found her to have these qualities. So

¹ Referring to those youth deceived by the false claims of deviatory groups.

² Referring to the deviatory and anti-revolutionary groups.

now I exhort you, my son,¹ along with my other children, to strive in your service to her after my death and in obtaining her approval. Just as I see she is pleased with you now, strive harder in your service to her when I have gone. (244)

Jelvehā-ye Rahmānī, p. 47

And my last words of advice to Ahmad are to bring his children up well, to acquaint them with Islam from an early age, to take good care of his respected mother and to help all of his family and dependants. May God's peace be upon all the virtuous. I ask all my kinsmen, especially my children, to forgive me for any failings, neglect or unfairness I may have shown them, and to pray that God will show me mercy and forgiveness, and He is the most merciful. I humbly ask God the Beneficent to grant my kinsfolk success in persevering in His way and following the path to happiness, and to bathe them in his extensive mercy. (245)

Jelvehā-ye Rahmānī, p. 48

And I exhort Ahmad, my son, to treat his kin, especially his sisters and his nephews and nieces, with love and affection, and to be good, generous, pleasant and respectful towards them. I exhort all my children to treat one another with kindness and generosity, to be of one mind and tread one path, the path of God and His deprived servants, for well-being and happiness in this world and the next can be found through this. And to Husayn,² who is the apple of my eye, I advise him not to neglect religious studies nor waste the talent God has given him, to treat his mother and sister with kindness and generosity, to disencumber himself from attachment to this world and to set out on the straight path of worship and servitude while still young. (246)

Jelvehā-ye Rahmānī, p. 48

In addition to greeting all the family members and relatives and asking them to show courtesy and tolerance towards one another, to harbour no fear and resort to no other policy, for that which Almighty God has preordained will come to pass, it is necessary to draw your³ attention to this point: if you seek Almighty God's approval and mine, then treat your mother, sisters, brother

¹ Imām here is addressing his son, the now deceased Hāj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeinī.

² Referring to Sayyid Husayn Khomeinī, the son of Imām's late son, Hāj Sayyid Mustafā Khomeinī.

³ Imām is addressing his son, Hāj Sayyid Mustafā Khomeinī, who was martyred in 1977.

and relatives with unlimited kindness, for all are in need of your courtesies. I ask you to treat everyone well. When I was being taken away, I was told that the family could come with me if I so desired, again, here, this was repeated, but even though I would dearly love to see you all, I will not agree to your coming for I know how difficult it would be for you all and your respected mother here in a strange place. ^۱God willing, I will be taken care of here. (247)

4 November 1964 (13 Ābān 1343 AHS)

Concerning your mother, sisters, Ahmad,^۲ and other relatives, it is necessary for me to stress that God's approval and mine will be found in your good conduct towards them. Your mother is truly in need of your help; you must keep her happy in every respect, both materially and psychologically. Do not let her worry and provide for her comfort. (248)

10 November 1964 (19 Ābān 1343 AHS)

I am sure there is no need to remind you to treat your mother and your dependents with the utmost kindness and affection, in particular oblige your mother, for that will please Almighty God. (249)

14 November 1964 (23 Ābān 1343 AHS)

^۱ The city of Bursa in Turkey, where Imām spent the first months of his period in exile.

^۲ Referring to the late Hāj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeinī.

The transformation undergone by women during the Islamic revolution

A spiritual transformation took place, a change in attitude. With tenacious resolve, all segments of the population, from small children to older men, from small girls to older women, rose up together obeying the call to “*rise up for God, it may be in pairs or it may be singly*” (Qur’an 34:46), and stood fast. (250)

11 May 1979 (21 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

In a short period of time, a people whose wont it was to haggle with one another in all transactions underwent a transformation and began to act benevolently towards each other. One of the gentlemen said that during the demonstrations he saw a woman holding a bowl of coins in her hand. At first he presumed she was a poor beggar, but as he got closer to her he heard her saying that she had brought the coins along because the demonstrators may need to make telephone calls and as everywhere was closed that day they may have difficulty finding change. This was a small, but great act; it showed that a transformation had taken place the magnitude of which was great indeed. (251)

31 May 1979 (10 Khordād 1358 AHS)

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

all rose up to fight. Has there ever been such a time when women rushed into the fray like this, standing fast before tanks and cannons? This was a spiritual transformation that God the Blessed and Exalted brought about in this nation and so long as we preserve this and the nature of the movement, we will be victorious. (252)

16 June 1979 (26 Khordād 1358 AHS)

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

I hope that you ladies and brothers, all our brothers and sisters, endeavour to preserve this transformation making it a permanent one, and that you involve yourselves in the political and social issues which concern you. (253)

3 July 1979 (12 Tīr 1358 AHS)

Such an effect it has on the morale of the farmers when they see the women leaving their homes in Europe and Iran, when they see young men and women leaving their colleges, universities and centres of learning, as shown on television last night, to pour into the countryside and help them on the farms. How grand it makes them feel to see those helping them comprise doctors and engineers. This is a very valuable service. And now you too say you are ready to help. Previously your hearts were not so inclined; you were not concerned with such affairs. Who has brought about this change of heart? [It is] God who is the changer of hearts. (254)

21 July 1979 (30 Tīr 1358 AHS)

Our sisters, who were previously occupied with other matters, today shoulder-to-shoulder with the brothers, indeed leading the brothers, concern themselves with the destiny of their people and their country. They make plans, form views and criticise. This is a change that God the Blessed and Exalted, who is the changer of hearts, has brought about. (255)

21 July 1979 (30 Tīr 1358 AHS)

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

Another change has also occurred. Today, a group of young people, young men and women who had come from Europe came to see me and said they had returned to Iran to go into the rural areas and help people there. Young people whose minds were previously occupied with other things have today turned their attention to such matters, and so they return from Europe, from abroad, so that they can go to the countryside and help the villagers there. The same is true of the young people within the country. Physicians, engineers, men and women alike, are leaving the universities and going into the villages to help out there. This newfound spirit of co-operation signifies a miraculous change, one which God the Blessed and Exalted has wrought in the people. (256)

21 July 1979 (30 Tīr 1358 AHS)

This is a change that came about in everyone and led to our respected brothers and sisters feeling a sense of responsibility. This in turn brought you all out into the streets and with your cries you drove your enemy out. This was your direct involvement in politics. (257)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrīvar 1358 AHS)

I am delighted that such a change has occurred in all segments of the population in Iran. Nowadays one sees educated people from all over helping in this Crusade for Reconstruction (*Jihād-e Sāzandegī*), and this applies particularly to the ladies. Only today I listened to some of them being interviewed and they said they are out working from dawn until dusk. This denotes that a change has taken place. They are eagerly working for the people because they feel that this is the right thing to do, and most certainly you feel the same way. (258)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrīvar 1358 AHS)

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

brought this about, this is a transformation wrought by Islam in the human spirit—it so gladdens their hearts that they find renewed strength and work even harder. A human and spiritual transformation has taken place that is reassuring. (259)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

The young people, who at that time were drawn to Shemīrān¹ and the goings-on there, are now drawn to the areas where the Crusade for Reconstruction is active. These young people, those women who at that time were indifferent to the welfare of their country, who were indifferent towards everything, entered the arena and we saw how well they too could carry out their duties. (260)

18 September 1979 (27 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

I can see that an amazing transformation has taken place in the female community, one that is much more pronounced than that which has taken place in the men, and the extent to which this respected community has served Islam during this period exceeds the service the men have rendered. (261)

31 December 1979 (10 Dey 1358 AHS)

Through the blessings of Islam, the Islamic movement has brought about such a change in the spirit of the men and women of our society that they have travelled a road in one night that would have normally taken a hundred years to travel. You noble people witnessed for yourselves how the respected, committed women of Iran entered the arena ahead of the men to free the country from the trammels of imperial rule. We are all indebted to them for their uprising and their efforts. (262)

5 May 1980 (15 Ordibehesht 1359 AHS)

Recall how it was when that transformation occurred, when all devilish inclinations and desires were lost on practically all of those who entered the arena, on women, men, women with babes in arms, on the young and old alike. Remember how you were when you went onto the rooftops and shouted *Allāhu Akbar* (God is the Greater) while the devils around you trained their sights on you. Remember how you were when you poured into the streets, confronting those who had no fear of God and who sought to crush you under their tanks. Remember that spirit you had, this is found when God is your helper, when

¹ An area in the north of Tehran.

everything you do is for God, when your actions are for God, when you are the Hand of God. And at that time this is what you were, these people, these groups of people who acted in unison, they were the Hand of God: “The Hand of God is with the group.” Remember that spirit and preserve it. (263)

29 May 1980 (8 Khordād 1359 AHS)

If this movement, this Islamic revolution, had achieved nothing other than the transformation that has taken place in our women and our youth, this alone would have been enough for our country. (264)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

I am proud of these honourable women of Iran and the change they have wrought in themselves, a change that has brought to naught the devilish plans which the foreign strategists and their dishonourable stooges, from the profligate poets to the venal writers and propaganda organisations, have spent more than fifty years trying to bring to maturity. They have proved that the worthy Muslim women (of Iran) will not be misled and will not be hurt by the malicious machinations of the West and of those infatuated with the West. Even with all the propaganda which was trumpeted over those propaganda loudspeakers throughout the usurper reign of the Pahlavīs, apart from a handful of affluent *tāghūtī* women, agents of SAVAK and people affiliated to them, millions of committed women from other segments of the population did not fall into the trap of those who had surrendered themselves to the West, and throughout the benighted fifty years, standing proud before God and mankind, they bravely resisted the onslaught. Consequently, through this recent, divinely inspired change which has taken place, the hopes of the undiscerning, who regard the West as their *qiblah*, have been dashed forever. (265)

24 April 1981 (4 Ordībehesht 1360 AHS)

That which was more significant than anything else in Iran was the change, which took place in the Iranian women. (266)

23 May 1981 (2 Khordād 1360 AHS)

They led our women, a number of them that is, to the wrong path and as things were going it seemed that number would increase. However, God the Blessed and Exalted showed us His favour and saved us from the fate the arrogant powers and their lackeys had in mind for us. He saved our women and today

¹ A saying attributed to the Prophet. *Sahīh Tirmidhī*, vol. 9, p. 10.

they are immersed in God's limitless grace, even though perhaps they themselves are unaware of these great divine blessings He has bestowed upon them. (267)

21 March 1983 (1 Farvardīn 1362 AHS)

A transformation occurred in our youth which took them from the cabarets to the field of battle against the unbelievers, from the centres of corruption to the centres of righteousness, prayer and blessings, and in our women who have suffered so much oppression but who are today busy throughout the country teaching, learning and striving in the way of God. (268)

17 August 1983 (26 Mordād 1362 AHS)

We cannot begin to describe how valuable the service is that this Islam, which has been revived in Iran, has done for the ladies and will continue to do for them. Had this revolution not occurred, had this change, this transformation, not come about in Iran, then in a few years' time there would be no trace of Islamic morals in Iran. (269)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardīn 1363 AHS)

Compare our women now with how they were then. Our women have become religious. (270)

27 August 1984 (5 Shahrīvar 1363 AHS)

Have the women in Iran stepped aside completely, or are they working shoulder-to-shoulder with the men on development projects? Do you want the women here too to be unrestrained, to be able to act in whatever way they like? This is contrary to the transformation, which has occurred in the women, it contradicts the change that has taken place in our country and our people. (271)

10 February 1986 (21 Bahman 1364 AHS)

Women at the forefront of the movement encouraging the men

You ladies have proved that you are in the vanguard of the movement; you have proved that you lead the men, men get their inspiration from you, the men of Iran have learnt lessons from the honourable ladies of Iran and the men of

¹ Addressing those infatuated with the West who advocate a Western style of freedom for women.

Qum have learnt lessons from you dear ladies. You are in the vanguard of the movement. (272)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

They are in the front line because the men are made brave by them, are emboldened by their struggles. (273)

6 April 1979 (17 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

You ladies here have proved that you are at the forefront of this movement. You have a great share in our Islamic movement. The future of our country depends on your support. (274)

10 April 1979 (21 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

May God keep you all. This victory has come to us first and foremost because of the women rather than the men. Our respected women were in the front line. (275)

12 April 1979 (23 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

The men found strength and courage because of our dear women. We are indebted to you ladies for your pains, and you are all, as indeed all the people are, in my prayers. (276)

12 April 1979 (23 Farvardīn 1358 AHS)

I thank you respected ladies who took part in this movement shoulder-to-shoulder with your brothers, or, more accurately who led them. I hope you will once again be in the front line and will take this movement to its culmination so that, God willing, an Islamic government will be established and all segments of the population, all the deprived, will attain the rights that are legitimately theirs. May God protect you and keep you for Islam and the Muslims. (277)

24 April 1979 (4 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

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

sacrifice. The great name of Chāhār Mardān¹ has gone down in the history of the world for its devotion and self-sacrifice. The great name of the Iranian ladies, the great name of the ladies of Qum and the great name of the ladies of Chahār Mardān have gone down (in history). The ladies of Qum and Chahar Mardan spearheaded this Islamic movement. They proved their political maturity; they led the movement. You, the ladies, are the leaders of our movement; we follow you. I accept your leadership and am at your service. (278)

25 April 1979 (5 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

Our movement is indebted to them. The men poured into the streets after the women; the women encouraged the men; they formed the vanguard. Women are creatures who can destroy a power that seems everlasting, a demonic power. (279)

16 May 1979 (26 Ordībehesht 1358 AHS)

Stand together all of you; all of you must stick together. You play an important part in this movement; one can even go so far as to say that it was the ladies who took this movement forward because they poured into the streets even though they were not expected to do so. This dispelled any fears the men may have had, it emboldened them to see the women doing something, it gave them courage. It was you who gave Islam this victory; you participated in this triumph. Keep on participating. (280)

1 June 1979 (11 Khordād 1358 AHS)

I thank you respected ladies who have travelled far to come and see me. May God grant you all happiness and wellbeing. I thank you for being at the forefront of this movement. The ladies of Iran were in the vanguard of this movement, like the ladies in the early days of Islam, and it was taken forward because of them. I hope you will continue to advance this movement even further. (281)

18 June 1979 (28 Khordād 1358 AHS)

The ladies who have come here have a great part to play in this movement, they are partners or rather one should say they are the leaders. (282)

¹ Chāhār Mardān: a district in the city of Qum the people of which played a very significant role in the struggle against the Shāh's regime.

2 July 1979 (11 Tīr 1358 AHS)

We are indebted to the ladies much more than we are their brave men folks. The ladies in Iran played a great role, for when they came out into the streets the men were spurred on, their morale strengthened two-fold, nay several-fold, even though they had nothing save the power of faith. (283)

25 August 1979 (3 Shahrīvar 1358 AHS)

I hope that you ladies who always spearheaded this movement, guiding the other ladies and making others stronger in the process, will be successful, happy and healthy, God willing. I hope that just as you have reached this stage through unity of purpose and the power of faith, so too, hereafter, you all, all the nation, will promote Islam step by step, so that eventually all our affairs are handled in conformance with the decrees of Islam. Peace be upon you all. (284)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrīvar 1358 AHS)

When you ladies came into the streets and entered the battle arenas, it gave the men renewed strength and boosted their morale. You have a great part to play in this movement and we are still only half way there. (285)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrīvar 1358 AHS)

We must thank the ladies who were steadfast in this movement and who helped the nation greatly. It was these women who spurred on the men and renewed their strength several-fold when they spilled out into the streets and alleys crying out. Thus, in addition to making themselves stronger, they made others stronger too. (286)

10 October 1979 (18 Mehr 1358 AHS)

Women are sometimes observed taking part in the Crusade for Reconstruction. Of course, they are not able to work like a farmer or like people who are accustomed to such tasks, but the very fact that they have joined the farmers and are helping to the best of their ability is enough to spur the farmers on and give them several times the strength. When they see these female students and these respected ladies are willing to come from the towns and cities to help their brothers in the villages, it has an encouraging effect on them. The action

of these ladies is a very valuable one, even though it may not produce much in terms of volume, its psychological value is very great. (287)

10 October 1979 (18 Mehr 1358 AHS)

You sisters played a worthy role in this movement. You helped in everything, leading the men and making them strong. I thank you for this. (288)

12 October 1979 (20 Mehr 1358 AHS)

You went through a great deal of hardship; may God keep you all. All these men and women of this country, in particular the ladies, who were in the front line of this movement and suffered much hardship so that Islam could be brought into effect, they all wanted an Islamic republic to be established, divine justice to be implemented. (289)

16 December 1979 (25 Āzar 1358 AHS)

The service the men performed also owes much to the service rendered by the women. Men have a certain sensitivity where women are concerned, so if they see women leaving their homes to fulfil a certain aim, they are encouraged and made stronger by this. This is what happened in our country. The women left their homes and shoulder-to-shoulder with the men, or rather ahead of them, struggled and suffered for this Islamic cause, giving their young ones, their husbands and their brothers and yet continuing to struggle, to act and to support Islam. And the men, many of them following in their footsteps, did the same. (290)

31 December 1979 (10 Dey 1358 AHS)

This movement rose from the soul of the masses, the soul of the ordinary men and women, and just as the men entered the arena, so too did the esteemed ladies. Indeed one must say that they played a greater part in this movement than the men; they made more effort. For when the ladies take action, it spurs the men on, it doubles their strength or even bolsters it ten-fold, because men cannot simply stand by and watch as the women take action. (291)

12 July 1980 (21 Tīr 1359 AHS)

The ladies do not come out (into the streets) and risk their lives and those of their children for some personal benefit or position. It is Islam and the Qur'an, which brings them out and into the political scene alongside, or rather ahead of, the men. (292)

12 July 1980 (21 Tīr 1359 AHS)

These commentators should realise the profundity of what has taken place in Iran. When during these past fifty years, or these past ten or twenty years which are easier for you to remember, can you recall a time when women entered the battlefield along with the men and began leading the men? (293)

12 July 1980 (21 Tīr 1359 AHS)

A nation whose women stand in the front line for advancing the aims of Islam will not be harmed. (294)

18 August 1980 (27 Mordād 1359 AHS)

I thank you esteemed ladies who have travelled great distances from the border regions to be here today. I hope that just as hitherto you have been determined in your efforts to bring to fruition the plans of the Islamic Republic, so too from here on you will maintain that resolve and with serried ranks in front of the men you will be active in advancing the aims of Islam. (295)

19 August 1980 (28 Mordād 1359 AHS)

If the role of the women was not greater than that of the men, it was certainly no less. Their presence on the various fields of battle made the faint-hearted strong and doubled the strength of the strong. And you yourselves can vouch for the fact that the role of you ladies throughout this Islamic movement, this Islamic revolution, has been greater. For you were both active yourselves and inspired the men to be active too. You have been a source of pride and it is much appreciated. (296)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardīn 1363 AHS)

If a number of women enter an arena, let us say a war arena, then in addition to the fighting they do, they also act as inspiration for the men, emboldening them. For where women are concerned men are very sensitive. It is not the case that if they embark on a defence (of their country), they do so alone, no, they defend, but they also inspire others to take part in that defence. Men are sensitive where women are concerned. If a man sees a hundred men being killed, he may not be moved, but if he sees one woman, even a woman who is a stranger to him, being treated disrespectfully, his sensitivity will force him to react. Thus your spearheading role in all affairs, including matters of

defence, *jihād* and assisting in the war effort, will encourage the men to do more, it will embolden them. (297)

2 March 1985 (11 Isfand 1363 AHS)

. . . Hitherto we have been successful in our aims, and we attribute much of that success to the service rendered by you ladies, and for that we are deeply indebted to you. You are the ones who, in addition to the activities you yourselves carry out, redouble the activities of the men. You are the ones who suffered psychological torture during the *tāghūt* 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. (298)

12 March 1985 (21 Isfand 1363 AHS)

Defence of Islam and the Islamic country, incumbent on women

Question: What is the duty of Muslim women in the battle of truth against falsehood?

Reply: *Jihād* is not incumbent on women, but defence is incumbent on everyone in line with their ability and means. (333)

Istifā'āt, Vol. 1, p. 503

Dear sisters and brothers, in whatever country you may live, defend your Islamic and national honour! Defend fearlessly and unhesitatingly the peoples and countries of Islam against their enemies: America, international Zionism, and all the superpowers of East and West. Loudly proclaim the crimes of the enemies of Islam. (334)

29 September 1979 (7 Mehr 1358 AHS)

If, God forbid, an attack is made on an Islamic country, then all the people, women as well as men, must take action. Defence is not a duty confined to men or something that pertains exclusively to one group, everyone must defend their country. (335)

27 December 1979 (6 Dey 1358 AHS)

I ask the brothers and sisters of Kurdistan to stand together in a fraternal manner with the rest of their Muslim brothers and defend their country. (336)

1 April 1980 (12 Farvardīn 1359 AHS)

Now that we are confronting the world's major powers and are on the defensive, defending the things that our movement, our uprising has brought for us, defending Islamic objectives, our Islamic country and everything to do with Islam and the country, the mobilisation must be a general one. *Jihād* is one matter and defence another. *Jihād* has particular conditions attached to it, only certain people or groups can take part, whereas defence is for everyone, men, women, young and old alike. Just as reason dictates that if someone forces their way into another person's home, the people of that house will defend themselves, or if a city is attacked the inhabitants of that city will defend themselves in order to protect their lives and property, so too there are no conditions attached to the defence of one's country. If our country, our Islamic country, is attacked and invaded, then it is the duty of everyone living there, women and men, young and old, to help defend it. So defence is different from *jihād*, it has no conditions attached, everyone must take part; even the old man who is not able to do much must defend his country to the extent that he is able. (337)

15 April 1980 (26 Farvardīn 1359 AHS)

My brothers! My sisters! We are in a situation that we must handle wisely. We are faced with one superpower in the West and one in the East, both of whom want to swallow us up. But by the will of God the Blessed and Exalted, and through the determination of the devout brothers and sisters of Iran, we are standing against them both with the utmost resolve. Indeed, we will not allow any power to

threaten us and try to take control of our destiny. Do not fear big powers, for you are under God's protection and all powers are transient before that of God the Blessed and Exalted. (338)

17 May 1980 (27 Ordibehesht 1359 AHS)

The men and women of this country are all guards of Islam. It is a matter of faith, not of material gain; they are not seeking to gain something so that when they fail to do so they give up trying. No, this is a matter of faith, it is a matter of defending Islam, and this must be carried out until the last person left standing. In other words, if necessary, a population of 35 million must perish and then there will be no country left for a coup d'état to take place. Of course, a coup d'état is something that will never happen, those who think it possible are mistaken, they don't understand. (339)

12 July 1980 (21 Tir 1359 AHS)

Oh brave tribes of the Tigris and the Euphrates! Oh fighters and warriors! Rise up and defend Islam, protect the Qur'an and its decrees, for defending Islam and the Most Noble Qur'an is a duty incumbent on all Muslims, women and men alike. (340)

4 October 1980 (12 Mehr 1359 AHS)

We have a duty to safeguard this Islam, which has been handed down to us, until, God forbid, the last person left standing. Everyone, women, men, young and old, has a duty to protect Islam, to defend the nation and defend their Islamic country to the last. Defence is a matter that concerns all, it is incumbent on all, whoever is able to defend his or her Islamic country must do so to the best of his or her ability. (341)

18 August 1981 (27 Mordād 1360 AHS)

When an Islamic country is threatened by enemies of Islam, it is incumbent on us all to strive to the best of our ability to defend that country and the honour of the Muslims. When we found ourselves in such a situation, you all, all the men and women of our country, praise God, proved yourselves ready to handle it, so you should not be intimidated by talk of a group coming from Paris or somewhere else to do whatever. They made one attempt by setting Saddām loose to attack Iran, and what a slap in the face he was dealt! (342)

18 August 1981 (27 Mordād 1360 AHS)

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

Defending Islam, defending the Islamic country, is an indisputable duty of the clerics, of those whose lives are Islam and who are Muslim. That which is disputable is women's role in the lesser *jihād*.³ It is not incumbent on women to take part in this *jihād*. However, defending oneself, one's country, one's life, one's property and defending Islam is the duty of us all. (343)

2 March 1985 (11 Isfand 1364)

You ladies must bear in mind that just as it is necessary for the men at the fronts to push forward and spearhead the battle, so too it is necessary for you to help on the home front and to prepare yourselves so that if, God forbid, there comes a time when national defence is obligatory for everyone, for every able-bodied person without exception, you are ready to fulfil this obligation. Education is, of course, also a bastion, a bastion of the Islamic culture. You know that throughout these past centuries, from the period after the demise of the Prophet, upon whom be peace and blessings, to the present, the Islamic culture has been trampled underfoot, the laws of Islam falling into abeyance. This culture must be

³Refer to footnote 53.

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. (344)

2 March 1985 (11 Isfand 1364 AHS)

What is at stake here is not simply a government or one aspect of life; it is Islam. Islam is the concern. So it is incumbent on the men and women of this country to defend it to the best of their ability. And this defence must be continued until we attain the victories that God the Blessed and Exalted wants for us, if He so wills. (345)

19 July 1986 (28 Tir 1365 AHS)

Military training for women

Question: I am a girl who would like to serve the revolution by entering the Revolutionary Guards Corps, but my father does not approve. Please could you tell me what my position is according to the *shari'ah* law?

Reply: The sisters may become revolutionary guards so long as Islamic precepts are observed. You had better seek your father's consent. (346)

Istiftā'āt, vol. 1, p. 503.

As I said earlier, women can join the army. That which Islam opposes and which it forbids as something sinful (*harām*) is corruption, whether on the part of the woman or the man, it makes no difference. (347)

28 December 1978 (7 Dey 1357 AHS)

Bearing in mind all that has been achieved so far through the efforts of the noble and crusading men and women, I hope that, with the support of Almighty God, they will be successful in their multidimensional mobilisation for military, ideological, moral and educational training, and that they will complete their practical military training in a manner befitting an Islamic nation that has risen. (348)

20 February 1979 (1 Isfand 1358 AHS)

Praise Almighty God, our dear nation has young combatants among the sisters and brothers who, through their military instruction throughout the country, have perplexed the enemies of Iran and Islam. With confidence in God's power and a willingness to make sacrifices for the cause of Islam, they will surmount all difficulties and triumph over all satanic powers. (349)

8 September 1980 (17 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

Consequently, if defence is a duty incumbent on us all, then the preparations for this defence must be carried out, and these include military planning and military training for those who are able. For it is not the case that it is our bounden duty to defend ourselves and we have no idea how to do so. We have to know how to defend ourselves. It goes without saying, however, that the environment in which you receive military training must be a sound one, an Islamic one, all aspects of decency and modesty, all Islamic aspects being upheld. (350)

2 March 1985 (11 Isfand 1364 AHS)

It makes me proud to see the ladies, young and old alike, playing a role in the educational, economic and military arenas and shoulder-to-shoulder with the men, ahead of them even, actively involving themselves in the cause of exalting Islam and advancing the aims of the Most Noble Qur'an. Those who are able to fight are partaking in military training—for this is one of the important duties that must be carried out in order to defend Islam and the Islamic homeland. They have bravely and resolutely freed

themselves from the restrictions that have been imposed on them, as indeed on Islam and the Muslims in general, by the enemies' plots and the friends' unfamiliarity with the laws of Islam and the Qur'an. They have thrown off the shackles of superstition in which the self-seeking enemies, using people suffering from ignorance and some *ākhūnds*^۲ oblivious to the interests of the Muslims, had bound them. (351)

5 June 1989 (15 Khordād 1368 AHS)

Women's presence on the fields of battle

Question: What are the rules governing female relief and medical workers going to the war fronts, where their presence would be useful, without the consent of their parents?

Reply: If it is going to cause the parents distress, their consent must first be obtained. (352)

Istiftā'āt, Vol. 1, p. 499

They are trying to frighten you away from an Islamic government. They say that if an Islamic government were set up, women would be locked up in rooms for all time. This is not so, in the early history of Islam, women went to battle! They stayed with the armies throughout the years of battle and tended to the soldiers' wounds. (353)

8 November 1978 (17 Ābān 1357 AHS)

They say they are afraid that Islam will take power and keep the women behind closed doors, that it will lock the doors of their homes so they can't come out. Such talk and such myths come from abroad, God forbid that some of our own youth should be taken in by these. In the earliest age of Islam, women participated in the wars. They were there on the battlefields tending to the wounds of the injured, and many were killed there! Who has told you that women will be locked up?! They are free like men. (354)

9 November 1978 (18 Ābān 1357 AHS)

This regime has disseminated propaganda to the effect that were Islam to come to power, women, for example, would have to remain at home with the doors locked to prevent them from getting out! Such falsehoods they spread about Islam. In the earliest age of Islam, women formed part of the army and entered the field of battle together with the men. (355)

11 December 1978 (20 Āzar 1357 AHS)

In the earliest age of Islam, the women participated in wars together with the men. We saw how in this movement the women, the honourable ladies, stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the men, in front of them even, in the line of battle. They lost their infants and youth, but still they bravely resisted the enemy. (356)

6 March 1979 (15 Isfand 1357 AHS)

You are on a par with the soldiers of Islam and the ladies of the early days of Islam. Just as those ladies assisted Islam and helped in the Islamic movements and wars of that time, so too you ladies today, ladies everywhere in Iran, particularly the ladies of Qum, play a role in this movement and shoulder-to-shoulder with the men helped in our struggle against despotism and imperialism. (357)

10 May 1979 (20 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

A nation whose women enter the arenas to battle with the superpowers and confront satanic powers ahead of the men will be victorious. (358)

18 August 1980 (27 Mordād 1359 AHS)

The sacrifices made by women during the sacred defence

^۲ *Ākhūnd*: a word of uncertain etymology that originally denoted a scholar of unusual attainment, but was later applied to lesser-ranking scholars, and then acquired a pejorative connotation, particularly in secularist usage.

Greetings to the disabled brothers and sisters who bravely rose up in the way of truth and victory, who made sacrifices and gave the nation cause to hold its head high in the world. (359)

30 December 1979 (9 Dey 1358 AHS)

Greetings to you all, sisters and brothers, who are bravely living your lives in the war-stricken areas, and who are not afraid of dying for God at the hands of His enemies. You are defending your beloved homeland tooth and nail to please God, and you have inspired the fighters of Islam. You have given everything you had with the purest of intentions, and through your repeated sacrifices, episodes of bravery and gallantry have been recorded in the annals of your unremitting struggles, and will continue to be so. Through your lessons of self-sacrifice and valour, you teach the meek of the earth the truth of God's pledge that they shall inherit the earth. I salute you who through your struggles have brought shame upon the superpowers, and I stand humble before your forbearance and steadfastness. (360)

31 March 1980 (11 Farvardin 1359 AHS)

May the Islamic movement of the great women of Iran be victorious and glorious. Glory be to this exalted segment of the population who with their valuable and brave contribution to the defence of the Islamic homeland and the venerable Qur'an brought victory to the revolution, and who today are actively involved in the war effort, either at the front or in other areas, and are prepared to make sacrifices. (361)

24 April 1981 (4 Ordibehesht 1360 AHS)

You can see how the people are making sacrifices in this war, how these young people, these mothers and these fathers are making sacrifices. (362)

13 April 1982 (24 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

The resistance demonstrated by these great women in the imposed war and the sacrifices they are making are so astonishing that pens and tongues cannot adequately describe them, indeed they put them to shame. Throughout this war, I have seen the mothers, sisters and wives who have lost their dear ones do things that I don't think could be witnessed anywhere else other than here in this revolution. One event in particular stands out in my mind from all the rest, and that is the marriage of a young girl to a dear revolutionary guard who had lost both his hands in the war and had received injuries to both his eyes. That brave young girl whose magnanimous spirit overflowed with sincerity and genuineness said: 'Since I cannot go to the war front, let me pay my debt to the revolution and my religion through this marriage.' No writer, poet, speaker, painter, artist, mystic, philosopher or jurisprudent, indeed anyone you care to name, can adequately convey the spiritual magnificence of this event or the human worth and the divine tones contained therein. No one can evaluate this great girl's self-sacrifice, her otherworldliness and devotion to God using current criteria.

This blessed day is the day of women such as her, may God keep them for Islam and Iran. (363)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

Martyrdom and the martyrdom-seeking spirit of women

This is the light of the Qur'an and Islam that has appeared in your hearts and the hearts of the entire Iranian nation. It is the light of faith that stops you ladies from fearing martyrdom. (364)

6 May 1979 (16 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

Our young people are ready for martyrdom; our men and our women both are ready for martyrdom. (365)

9 May 1979 (19 Ordibehesht 1358 AHS)

A group of honourable ladies were here. One of them insisted that I allow them to go to Kurdistan. I told her it was not necessary for the women to go there, that their going would not solve Kurdistan's problems. Another lady came after me asking me to pray that she be martyred. I told her to serve her country and I would pray that she would receive the reward from God that the martyrs receive. This is

a transformation that has taken place. In the early days of Islam, they advanced with just such a spirit, they sought martyrdom, and in only half a century they had conquered the civilised world of that time. (366)

3 September 1979 (12 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

Some ladies would come here asking me to allow them to go to Kurdistan to fight, and to pray that they would be martyred there. I would tell them that I did not think it advisable for them to go, that the people and the army would deal with the situation there. (367)

2 October 1979 (10 Mehr 1358 AHS)

Some of the ladies come here asking me to pray that they attain martyrdom; some of the brothers do the same. This spiritual transformation that came about in all classes of the nation, this change in attitude whereby all sought the same thing, that is an Islamic republic, this is what led to victory. For it is right, and rightness will prevail. This transformation must be safeguarded. (368)

3 October 1979 (11 Mehr 1358 AHS)

When I see the esteemed ladies treading the path towards their goal with a firm resolve and prepared for all kinds of suffering, prepared even for martyrdom, I am confident that this path will lead to victory. (369)

31 December 1979 (10 Dey 1358 AHS)

A young couple once came here to be married by me. Before she left, the young lady handed me a note, in it she asked me to pray for our young people, and at the end she wrote 'I long for martyrdom'. There are many like her. This is a transformation wrought in you by God, it is God's gift to you; cherish it. (370)

2 January 1980 (12 Dey 1358 AHS)

You know that our young people seek martyrdom, sometimes when they meet with me, some of them, some of the women, ask me to promise them that I will pray that they may become martyrs. But I tell them I will pray that they receive the same reward from God a martyr receives, and that they will be victorious. (371)

15 April 1980 (26 Farvardin 1359 AHS)

Since this movement's inception, women and men have frequently come to see me insisting I pray that they become martyrs. I tell them I will pray that they are successful and that they receive the reward from God a martyr receives. Serve Islam. This spirit you possess will bring progress; strive to preserve it. (372)

15 May 1980 (25 Ordibehesht 1359 AHS)

From the very beginning of the movement almost—when I was in Najaf—up to the present, young men and women have come to me imploring me to pray that they are martyred. I pray they will receive the reward from God a martyr receives. Here in Tehran not long ago we had a marriage ceremony. When the ceremony was over, the lady handed me a note, in it she asked me to pray that she would become a martyr. A lady who had just got married asked me to pray that she may attain martyrdom. A people who seek martyrdom, who ask for prayers to be said for their martyrdom, are they afraid of military intervention? (373)

4 June 1980 (14 Khordad 1359 AHS)

A nation whose martyrs in the way of Islam are from the class of women as well as men and whose women actually seek martyrdom along with its men will not suffer harm. We have confidence in this thunderous torrent of people led by the esteemed ladies, who form the most precious class of the nation and who struggle to advance the aims of Islam.

I congratulate the Iranian nation; we fear no power for none can confront a nation whose men and women are ready to make sacrifices and who seek martyrdom. Your power is a divine power. (374)

18 August 1980 (27 Mordād 1359 AHS)

Today our people, our men and women, young and old alike, are determined to stand against aggression as they have already demonstrated by curbing that perpetrated against them up until now, and sacrifice their lives for freedom and independence and for freeing themselves from the yoke of oppression. We have this expectation, as human beings, of all nations and governments. (375)

11 February 1981 (22 Bahman 1359 AHS)

May God's blessings be upon the women who in this revolution and in the defence of the homeland attained the high rank of martyrdom. (376)

24 April 1981 (4 Ordībehesht 1360 AHS)

A nation, the hearts of whose women and men, young and old alike, beat for martyrdom, whose people vie with one another for attaining it, who flee from carnal desires and who believe in the invisible world and in the Supreme Companion, will not give up and leave the scene because of these losses, no matter how great they may be. (377)

11 February 1982 (22 Bahman 1360 AHS)

These exemplary women, men and children who under air bombardment and from hospital beds sing the song of martyrdom, who with limbs amputated wish to return to the fronts where true human beings are fashioned, are beyond the bounds of human conception, they transcend that about which a philosopher or gnostic could write, are beyond that which an artist or painter could portray. That which the latter found through a scientific, gnostic or rational approach; the former found through a belief in that which is transcendent. That which the one found in books and papers, the other found in arenas of blood and martyrdom and in the path of Truth. (378)

28 August 1983 (6 Shahrīvar 1362 AHS)

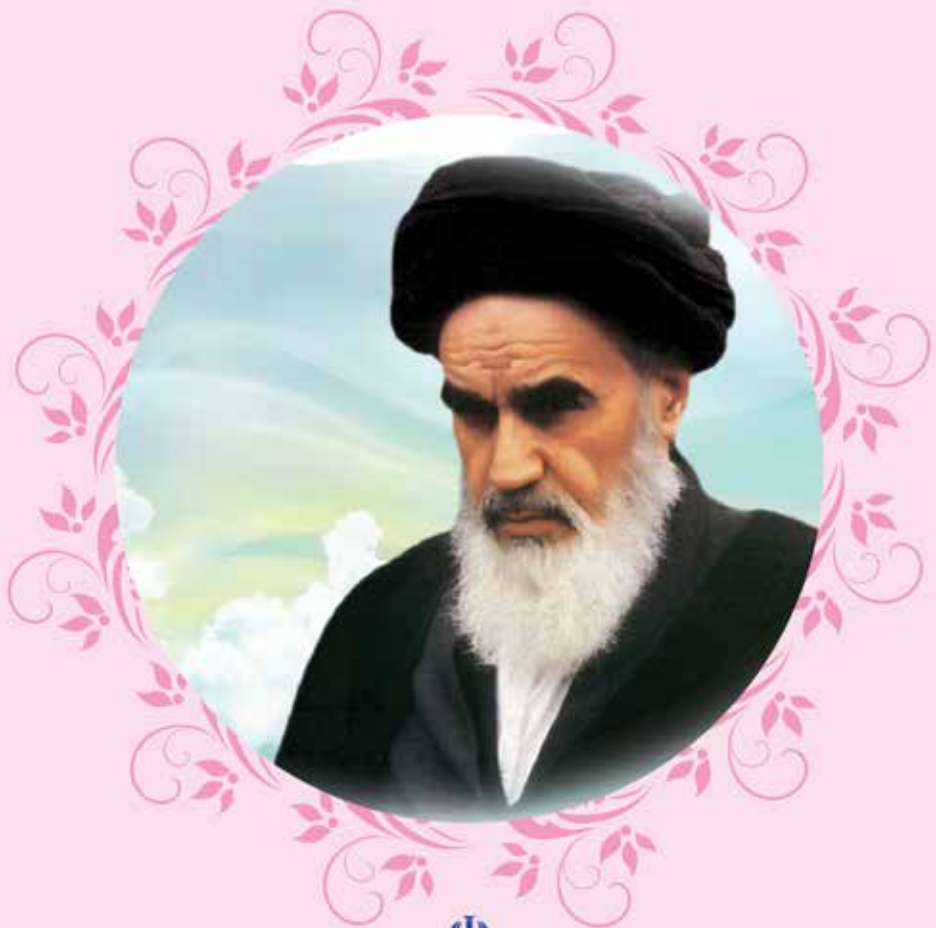
A nation that aspires after martyrdom, a nation whose women and men long for martyrdom, who cry out for it, such a nation does not care whether something is in short supply or in abundance. It doesn't let the state of the economy bother it, this is for those who are tied to the economy, who have given their hearts to the economy. Those who have given their hearts to God don't care whether something can be found easily on the market or not, whether something is cheap or expensive. (379)

18 February 1985 (29 Bahman 1363 AHS)

You came and attacked the Friday Prayer gathering thinking that by so doing our nation would back down! But you saw how the people at the Friday Prayers reacted. What happened there will go down in history. It had to be seen to be believed. Women with their infants in their arms, men with their small children at their sides remained where they were despite the distressing circumstances. On one side there was the explosion set off by those inhuman cowards, and on the other the shooting,¹ yet no one moved, everyone kept their composure and remained where they were sitting. This nation is such a nation. (380)

15 March 1985 (24 Isfand 1363 AHS)

¹This refers to the bomb that went off during the Friday Prayer ceremony in Tehran on 18 February 1985 (29 Bahman 1363 AHS).



International Affairs Department

