



March 6, 1979

Auslim

Address to a Group of Women in Qum

Imam Khomeini gave this address at his residence in Qum. Source: text provided by the Consulate-General of the Provisional Islamic Government of Iran, San Francisco.

GREETINGS WITHOUT LIMIT to the women of Iran! Peace be upon you, respected sisters. The mercy of God be upon you, lion-hearted women, whose noble efforts have delivered Islam from the fetters of enslavement to foreigners. Beloved and courageous sisters, you fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the men and ensured the victory of Islam. I thank you, women of Iran and women of Qum. May God and the Imam of the Age be pleased with you. Carrying your infants in your arms, you came into the streets and supported Islam with your ardent demonstrations. I have heard what happened in Qum and other cities; I have heard what happened on Chahar Mardan Street in Qum. I take pride in all the courageous deeds accomplished by the women of Iran, in Qum and other cities, for you have been in the vanguard of our triumph and have encouraged the men. We are all indebted to your courage, lion-hearted women.

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. 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 had reared men of courage. Like the Noble Qur'an itself, women have the function of rearing and training true men. If nations were deprived of courageous women to rear true men, they would decline and collapse.

The laws of Islam are for the benefit of both man and woman, and woman 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.

In the earliest age of Islam, the women participated in wars together with the men, and we see that then as now the women fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the men, or even in front of them. They might lose their infants and children, but they would still resist the enemy.

We want our women to attain the high rank of true humanity. Women must have a share in determining their destiny. The repressive regime of the Shah wanted to transform our warrior women into pleasure-seekers, but God determined otherwise. They wanted to treat woman as a mere object, a possession, but 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 bequeathed to us; the hands of men alone will not suffice to accomplish the task. Men and women must collaborate in this respect.

There is one particular question to which attention should be paid. When women wish to marry, there are certain prerogatives they can stipulate for themselves that are contrary neither to the *shari'a* 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.⁸⁸ 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. 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 and the *mujtahid* will grant the wife a divorce.

May God Almighty adorn all of you with dignity, health, happiness, and perfect faith and character.

Peace be upon you, beloved and respected ladies.

April 1, 1979

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*This declaration was is
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pp. 135-136.*

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