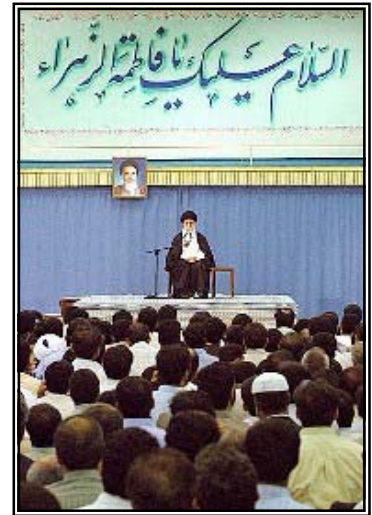


What Has Made Iraq Difficult for Imperialists to Swallow Is the Faith and Willpower of a Group of Defenseless and Downtrodden People

The following are excerpts from the speech of Ayatollah al-Udhma Sayyed Ali Khamenei on August 7, 2004 to a group of religious eulogizers on the birth anniversary of the Prophet of Islam's daughter, Sayyeda Fatimah al-Zahra, peace be upon her:

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Firstly, we would like to congratulate you on this great day and this blessed Eid. We would like to welcome you dear brothers, eulogisers, announcers and composers of eulogies and elegies for the household of the Prophet, peace be upon them...

One of the gentlemen here pointed out that the events in Iraq and Najaf meant that the enemies of Islam and Muslims turned the sweetness of this blessed day into bitterness. That is true. God will punish those imperialist, tyrannical and hypocritical powers which are avaricious liars and con artists. For them, neither the people's dignity, ideas and rights nor the independence of other countries or achievements of other nations, matter at all.



Anyone who thinks that they can achieve something by flattering those people or getting close to them or surrendering to them, is wrong. The only cure is steadfastness and hitting them with the sharp sword of the logic of the righteous and the serious determination of the righteous. There is no other cure for such people. That means strong willpower, strong logic and a strong fist. These imperialists and these bullies can only be cured like that. They are desperate when faced with such people.

What has made Iraq difficult for them to swallow and made them choke on it, is nothing but the faith and willpower of a group of defenseless and downtrodden people. You can see that the Iraqis do not have any money, weapons or international support. However, they are determined, faithful and steadfast and they have not permitted those people to swallow their country which they had been dreaming about. I have repeatedly said, and I am saying this once again, the Americans have reached a standstill. If they go forward they will be hit. If they back up, they will still be hit. If they continue, they will be hit and if they withdraw, they will still be hit. They are mired down there and a wolf which is caught in a trap might frighten some people by screaming. Those who go near it might be frightened when they see its paws. However, it is entrapped.

We hope that God will enable the Islamic world to rid itself of them. (Audience says Amen). God willing, Almighty God will grant success to the Muslim people of Iraq and the Shia Muslims in all parts of the world, as well as to all Muslim and faithful people and enable them to restore their dignity. (Audience says Amen)

. . . Dear brothers, today, we need a model like Fatimah al-Zahra (AS). You can see that organizations that are engaged in propaganda campaigns throughout the world are trying to mislead human beings by presenting them with various models, albeit models which are not particularly attractive or successful. They bring on the scene some actors, some writers, people who make a lot of noise and who look nice, but who are evil. They bring on the scene

people who are hollow inside and who do not understand anything. They are constantly showing them off to various generations of human beings. They are not doing this just for us, but they are doing this for humanity throughout the world.

This applies to the entire humanity throughout the world. They are trying to use the power of example in order to move human beings in a certain direction. They are spending a lot of money. Films are produced in Hollywood and you can see and hear about such things. You know about them. Most such things are biased. This is despite the fact that they say that art must not be politicized and that it must not be politically biased.

However, their own behavior is not like that. The imperialists of this world have employed art in the service of their interests as well. This is true of art, cinema and films. The same applies to poetry, writing, intellect, reasoning and philosophy. They have employed such things to further their own imperialist interests to plunder the resources of others. Today, these things are the symbols of global capitalism. America is a military power and the companies behind the American government are the economic powers. They use all their resources to create models. Some nations are empty-handed. They do not have any models or examples that can compete with what those people have and they have nothing to show for themselves. However, our hands are full. We have great women and that if we only want to talk about women's issues. There have been great women throughout Islamic history. The pinnacle of their achievements were symbolized by Fatimah al-Zahra, peace be upon her.

You should try to find out which lesson taught by the household of the Prophet we need in our political and social life. You should try to learn that about the lives of those magnanimous people. You should express it in the language of poetry. These things are necessary. Otherwise, eulogies in themselves do not mean much, especially because, sometimes, one notices that ambiguous expressions are used. Ambiguous things have been said. Listeners do not understand the purpose of the eulogy. Sometimes, even the speaker does not understand it. That is not sufficient. You should express your respect and that is the best thing one can do.

Eulogisers, artists, film-makers and those who manage this country's cinema are all responsible for doing so. Those who manage the country's television station and those who go to the pulpit are responsible for dealing with the matter as well.

Today, thanks to the blood shed by Imam Hussain (AS), and the uprising staged by Imam Hussain (AS) and thanks the blessings of the Hussaini spirit, we are a country and a nation that managed to stage an uprising and overthrow a dictatorial, corrupt, evil and vile system which perpetrated vile deeds. They managed to bring that system to its knees and create a government of the people which was based on Islamic tenets and spiritual principles.

Its (reference to the government) actions are relatively Islamic. Our spirit is Islamic. I cannot say that our actions are totally Islamic. They are relatively Islamic and, God willing, they will have to become more and more Islamic every day. They brought such a state to power.

The existence of this state is like swearing at all the world powers. The very existence of the Islamic republican state is like swearing at America. That will still be the case if you do not even say Death to America. The very fact that this thing is here is a challenge to all the powers that oppose the spirituality, sagacity, independence and honor of other nations. Everyone is duty-bound to enable this state to overcome its flaws and weaknesses. They must strengthen elements which contribute to its spiritual and financial strength.