

The Charter of Freedom

The Charter Of Freedom

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution addresses Students at the Graduate Ceremony of the Tarbiat Modarres University,

Tehran, Sept 3., 1998

in the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

This is, for me, a pleasant day. Of course, I had visited your university frequently during the terms of my presidency. But the present occasion has certain aspects which will turn it into a sweet, lasting memory in my mind: A few months ago, when I was informed of the holding of this student gathering, it was perhaps, expected by the honored chancellor that I would send a message about this occasion, or the students would come to have a meeting with me, but, I had made up my mind, from the very first moment, to attend this graduation ceremony to, personally, witness, the valuable output of this young university's activities for the past several years.

This university was founded on some great expectations and aspirations. Obviously our Revolution, our system, and the progress we have made, are indebted to all our universities for the services rendered to science and culture. Yet this university was a product of the Revolution, that was to grow and provide the academic brains and competent university teachers trained after the victory of our Islamic Revolution.

Perhaps today when, thanks to God, our universities have produced numerous faithful and revolutionary graduates, the importance of what I say, will not be fully, appreciated by many, but it was most meaningful in the first decade of the Revolution: The days when some university lecturers did not like to come and teach, some were not eager to cooperate with the Revolutionary movement, some had traveled abroad, and there were others who were not welcome by the students who often came to us and complained about their professor's lack of sympathy and devotion, and surely there were others who did continue their work faithfully and devotedly. All this meant that, for the improvement and expansion of our universities, we had to come up with some fundamental initiative, one such idea, was the foundation of this new university. And today, when I look around and see some several thousand students, young women and young men, graduated from this university, attending this ceremony, I am sure that this will be for me a durable and most pleasant memory.

Dear sisters and brothers! There's one thing I should emphasize to you in this regard: The university Generation today bears a special, weighty responsibility. Today, your country, your revolution and your honorable Islamic order are going through a phase which needs the cooperation of all responsible, administrative and able hands to enrich our system and our ideas; we have already left behind us some tough times, the war period, etc. Those were times of great hardships.

Today it's time to do away with every backwardness imposed on us during the long period of despotic rule in our country, through knowledge, science and scientific efforts, and to make up for those periods in our history when talents were not allowed to blossom, when the true and genuine identity of this nation could not be demonstrated,

when, as a result of the importation of industrial commodities, themselves products of scientific and industrial progress in the West, we came to be dependent on the West in every field, when they also exported to us their intellectual and cultural goods. Their first and foremost attempt was to alienate our educated sections from their own selves, from their own culture, from their own customs and traditions, from their own knowledge and science, and from confidence in the abilities and talents inherent in the Iranian nation; and, of course, this lack of belief and confidence in ourselves did have its own adverse effects.

Clearly it was a long time from the moment that this idea of humiliating the Iranian people, entered our country until it took roots in the thoughts and minds of the elite strata in this country and for the West to reap its fruits, but, in the long run, they were successful, and the final consequences of this alienation and humiliation are the concrete examples of backwardness that we witness today in this country despite our human resources, despite our great material wealth, despite our singular geographical position, despite all the glittering backgrounds of scientific and cultural greatness, and our great heritage of scientific treasures! Yes, despite all those brilliant factors, our present status in the fields of science, industry and various academic achievements, is not at all what it ought to be.

Even in the areas of our history, literature and geography, much more research has been done by foreigners than by our own researchers, the genius of the Iranian people has not yet succeeded in removing the existing backwardness. Certainly since the inception of the Revolution, we have witnessed a miracle: that feeling of helplessness has been replaced by an unshakable belief in ourselves, but, we must still work on.

Well, in the early years of the revolution, and especially during the eight years of the war imposed on us, we were indeed facing numerous problems. But today, it is your undoubted duty to do your best, to struggle hard, and the aim of this struggle should be: To elevate and glorify Islam and to make your Islamic Iran really independent in every respect. Obviously by this, we do not mean that we should close our borders and block the entrance of beneficial goods, this is surely not wise, and nobody is inviting you to do that: In the course of history, every human being has benefited from the achievements of others, but there is a clear distinction, for the exchange of ideas and material things, between two equals and the humiliated begging of one from an arrogant donor; and this is how things were, more or less, before the Revolution.

You must take your country to the necessary, elevated status; this is the great mission of the enlightened, educated, young Generation of this country, and you, brothers and sisters, who have studied at this university, have, in my opinion, a heavier task to fulfill than the others, and, God willing, you shall meet with greater success.

Today I only meant to be among you, I did not intend to necessarily raise any issues for discussion; I was thinking of spending an hour or so with you, speaking with you and answering your questions, that would be most enjoyable and pleasant to me. Yet, there is an issue that is being currently debated, it is a useful discussion under the present circumstances in our country, and for this reason, I shall briefly speak about a few points I have noted down:

It's the question of freedom, which, as I said, is being enthusiastically discussed today in the press and among the thinking people in our country, this is a blessed phenomenon: for the principle and basic topics of the Revolution to be the objects of an exchange of ideas, and many people be persuaded to think about such matters, is something we, always waited for, and, of course, many other related issues are being debated too. Anyway, freedom is the point in question today, and I personally do read and study most of what is discussed or printed, and some of them I find quite useful. The ideas being expressed are various and oppositional, I mean, they are not following a certain line, they often oppose one another, and on both sides of the opposing views, you find many correct and truthful conceptions, and it is good to continue such trends, and I do hope that our scholars and specialists will be urged to engage in the provision of more instructive and thought provoking discussions for the benefit of the public. I have often encouraged you to further deepen the culture of the Revolution: attaining to those depths will require such previous debates.

There are two points, however, to which special attention should be paid. The first is this: In any discussion of the question of freedom, the concept of independence, which has been one of the three mottoes of the Revolution, must not be overlooked; not only that, but it must be seriously taken into account. This means: we must think independently, we must not follow a submissive and imitative mode of thinking. If we were to imitate others in this issue, which is a cornerstone of our progress, and if we only looked in the direction of the thoughts coming from the West, we would be making a big mistake, and bitter consequences would await us.

First of all, I should mention that the question of freedom, is one of the categories that are frequently emphasized in

the Holy Qur'an and in the traditions of the Imams, Peace of God be upon them. Certainly our understanding of freedom is not that of absolute freedom, which I do not think, has any adherents in the world, I mean, I do not think there is any body in the world inviting people to absolute freedom. Neither is our understanding of freedom, a spiritual one, which does exist in Islam and throughout our sublime Islamic literature, no, that is not the question either: Spiritual freedom is something believed and approved by all the faithful, and we are not to debate it. The sort of freedom under discussion is in fact social freedom, that is, freedom as a human right, freedoms of speech, thought, choice and the like. This interpretation of freedom has been lauded in the Qur'an and in the Sunna; verse 157 of the Sura Al-A'raaf says: To those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own Scriptures, in the Taura and the Gospel, for he commands them what is just and proper and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good and pure, and prohibits them what is bad and impure; he releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them." God says this, with regard to an important characteristic of the Prophet: he releases people from their burdens, that is, he relieves people from restrictions imposed on them; this has a vast, glorious meaning. If you look back at the religious or non-religious communities of those times, you shall see that this, releasing from yokes and burdens means freeing people from innumerable obligations and covenants imposed on people, many sorts of superstitious, primitive, crooked and wrong ideas and beliefs, and unlimited social bonds and chains imposed on humanity at the hands of despotism, distortion and deceit.

The famous scholar, George Jordaq, author of the book "The voice of justice", an investigation of Imam Ali's thoughts and manners, makes a comparison, at some place, between two statements uttered by His Imminence Omar, the second Khalif, and Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful (Peace and Salutation of God be upon him). He says that in the region of Omar, some governors of the Islamic states, against whom certain complaints and reports of bad administration had been received, were in the Khalif's presence, and the Khalif, being angry at them, addressed them and uttered a lasting, memorable statement: You have turned the people into slaves, but God created them as free men. The other statement, also quoted in Nahj-al-Balagha, by Ali is: Never be a bondsman to other men, for God has created you free. Now, George Jordaq, as I said, compares the two statements and opines that Ali's statement is by far the more preferred one, and he reasons in this manner: Omar is addressing governors who presumably did not value freedom and liberty, and freedom could not at all be guaranteed by them, because they were the very persons who, as Omar reproached, had brought people into bondage; Omar is actually telling them, You have turned people into slaves, but you must give them freedom. This is, of course, one way of expression. On the other hand, Ali is addressing all the people, the masses being put in bondage, advising them that only they themselves could guarantee their human freedoms and liberties: Do not be a slave of another, because God has created you free.

Well, in both of these Islamic statements, apart from the fact that in Ali's statement, the power of people themselves guarantees freedom', there are two fundamental features, one of which, in agreement with God has created you free, says that freedom is an innate Attribute of man; I shall touch upon this point in a comparison between the Islamic and Western ways of thinking in this respect.

Of course, today, I do not intend to enter into a detailed discussion of this subject, perhaps, I shall, if God will, at some future occasion, do that; as there are a lot to be said about the matter. Today, however, I shall only focus on the two points I mentioned, one of which is to think about freedom freely and independently.

Well, as I said, social freedom as defined today in the world's political lexicon, does in fact have a Qur'anic root. There is no need for us to turn to the 18th century liberalism in Europe and follow what Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill and others have said. We ourselves have a lot to say on this subject, logical and rational. And I shall tell you why it is that what the West says may not guide us to any straight paths.

I advise you to treat the issue of freedom as an Islamic subject. There are two groups, in my opinion, who are actually in league against the Islamization or nativization of the issue of freedom.

The first group consists of those who in their lectures or writings are incurably citing examples and illustrations by the philosophers of the West of the last two or three centuries and what they wrote on the question of freedom: so and so said this, such and such said that! These, of course, are supposed to be the gentlemen among this group, because they do mention the names of the philosophers they quote from, but there are other journalistic philosophers" who copy from, say, what Mill has said, or narrate the opinions of some French, German or

American philosopher, but never mention their names, they pretend what they are saying is indeed their own opinions! They simply cheat, but certainly they do to help create the impression that all free thinking and the whole concept of social freedoms are ideas coming from the West, that they are Western gifts bestowed upon us!

The second group ignorantly helping the first group, consists of those who, as soon as freedom is mentioned, panic seizes them, and cry out in frustration: Oh, God, our religion is lost, all is lost! No, sir! Religion is the greatest harbinger of freedom; how could religion be lost? Rational and decent freedom is the greatest gift of religion to any community, to all nations, it is by the blessings of freedom that ideas grow and talents blossom, tyranny is the adversary of talent where there is tyranny, no talents bloom; Islam is for the enriching and fructifying of talents, great human resources must, like natural resources, be properly exploited, to enable mankind to make the earth prosperous. This is impossible without freedom, it is impossible by despotic ordering and regimentation. Therefore, this second group who fear freedom are also in error. These two groups, let's call them: The West-Orientated and the Conservatives are actually, without knowing, in close cooperation to drive the concept of freedom out of the domain of religion! But this is not true, the concept of freedom is an Islamic conception.

I should perhaps add a note here: Even the kind of freedom we've been discussing, that is, social freedom, is much more valued and respected than in different Western schools; of course, Western liberalism has its diverse interpretations, the Renaissance concepts, liberal ideas fostered in France and in other European countries, they all grew and led to the French Revolution, and later, in a distorted form, were exploited during the Independence movement in the United States leading to that famous American Charter. All these need a lot more time to go into, but, to put it in a nutshell, today we do have dozens of interpretations of liberalism, and there have been fresher ones in recent times, and the American ideologues or American-fostered theorists are most actively engaged in this field. You must also know that many such thinkers are not themselves American, but they do write under the patronage of American institutions, especially on the subject of liberalism, Books may be written in Germany, France or Australia and published in New York, and in other forms and places, but they are commercial orders by Americans, and that is another story. Despite all those different interpretations, I would like to briefly explain to you that the idea of freedom in Islam is superior to them all.

The Western thinkers are always facing big problems in putting forth some philosophy for freedom. What is the philosophy of freedom? Why should man be free? You must put forward some sort of logic, reason or philosophical principle for it. To solve this problem, they resort to all sorts of things: Utility, the common good, collective joy, individual pleasure and the like, or at its best, an item of civil rights. Well, all these claims may be refuted, and they are often engaged in, in the West.

If you were to look at what has been said and printed in our own country in recent years, on the subject of freedom or liberalism, you will also come across a good deal of time-consuming useless arguments, very similar to those pronounced on the topic of freedom in the Middle Ages! One person claims something, another one refutes him, and the first defends his position, so on and so forth; it is really not a bad entertainment for the intellectuals in the Third World! One intellectual becomes the proponent of one theory, another one defends another theory, the third approves of the theory of the first, the fourth writes an explanation for the theory of the second, and the fifth publishes one of the theories in his own name.

As I was saying, the maximum in the theories of the West on the origin or the philosophy of freedom is that it is a human right. Well, what Islam has said is far superior to this; as you noticed in the tradition quoted, it is innate in the human existence, and clearly it is right, but a sublime, superior right as the right to life, the right to live; and I may not include the right to live in the same category as the right of voting or the right of having a decent housing, therefore, freedom is superior to other rights, and that is what Islam says about freedom.

Surely there are exceptions, this right may be suspended in certain cases. An example is the people's right to be alive, if a man kills another man, then there is the law of Talion, for him, when a person spreads corruption, he must be punished, the same is true in the case of freedom, yet these are the exceptions according to the Islamic outlook. Thus it would be absolutely wrong to imagine that the idea of social freedom was something bestowed upon us by the West, so much so that whenever some people mean to speak something nice and interesting on this subject, they would at once cite the name of a book written by somebody who sat down and wrote something in the atmosphere of the West. No, no, we must be independent thinkers, we must consult our own sources and authorities, our own Islamic references; a thinking man will obviously consult other people's thoughts for the purposes of explanation and

clarification and for enlightening his mind, not for a parrot-like imitation; were we to imitate, we would certainly incur a great loss.

What I notice in this conflict relating to ideas and the press - which is an auspicious phenomenon, as I said - that many do not pay attention to this principle. Here I will mention two or three main points of difference between the Islamic and Western approaches to freedom. As I said, liberalism is the main source of all the viewpoints and tendencies relating to this approach. There might be some difference between some of these viewpoints and tendencies in some regards, but together they make up liberalism.

In Western liberal thought, human freedom is a concept devoid of any such entity as religion or God. Hence they do not consider freedom to be something God-given. None of them says that freedom is something bestowed by God on man. They seek to find some other philosophical grounds and roots of freedom.

They have suggested some philosophical foundations and sources and have offered various interpretations.

In Islam freedom has a divine source and this is by itself a fundamental difference which is the source of other differences. Therefore, from the Islamic viewpoint any action injurious to freedom is one which is hostile to a divine value. That is, it gives rise to a religious obligation in the opposing party. Such is not the case with the Western notion of freedom. Some social struggles that are waged for the sake of freedom do not have any logical justification on the basis of Western liberalism. For instance, one of the justifications which is offered is 'the common good' or 'good of the majority.' This is considered the origin of social freedom. But why should I risk my life for the sake of the good of the majority? There is no logical justification for this. Of course, seasonal and short-lived passions drive many to the battlefield. But whenever any of those who have struggled under the banner of such notions - if, in fact, any struggle has ever taken place under their banner - emerge from the passing passions of the arena of struggle, they would have doubts about their avowed goal: Why should I get killed for its sake?

Such is not the case in Islamic thought. The struggle for freedom is a duty, for it is for the sake of a Divine goal. If you see someone's life being threatened, it is your duty to do and help him. It is a religious duty, something which if you fail to carry out you will be guilty of a sin. The same is true of freedom. It is a duty to struggle for its sake.

Other differences originate from this basic difference. As truth and moral values are relative from the viewpoint of Western liberalism, freedom is unrestricted. Why? Because someone who believes in certain moral values has no right to blame anyone who violates those values because it is possible that he does not believe in those values.

Accordingly, there is no limit to freedom from a moral and spiritual viewpoint. As a result freedom is unrestricted.

Why? Because there are no immutable truths. Because, in their opinion, truth and ethical values are relative.

In Islam freedom is not such. In Islam there are incontrovertible and immutable values and an unchanging truth.

Man's movement is towards that truth which consists of values and is value-generating and conducive to perfection. Accordingly, freedom is limited by those values. As to how these values are to be understood and attained is another matter. Some people may possibly make errors in understanding these values and some may have the right approach. That is outside the scope of our discussion. In any case, freedom is limited by values and truth.

Social freedom is a great value in Islam. But if this social freedom is used for purposes detrimental to the invaluable spiritual or material interests of a nation, it is harmful-exactly like human life. The Qur'an states: Whoever slays anyone, barring retaliation for homicide or the guilt of working corruption on earth, it is as if he had slain all mankind. In the logic of the Qur'an killing one human being unjustly is like killing all mankind. This is an amazing conception. Someone who murders a person is like someone who murders all humanity. That is, because his act is a violation of the sanctity of human life. But there are exceptions which consist of the penalty for murder or for working corruption on earth. That is, someone who has violated another person's right to life or has worked corruption forfeits his own right to life. Immutable and definite values and truths limit one's social freedom in the same way as they limit his right to life.

Another difference is that in the West the limits of freedom consist of materialistic interests. Primarily they have set certain limits on social and individual freedoms, and this is one of them. When material interests are endangered, they limit freedom - material interests like the power and prestige of these countries and their scientific hegemony. Education and dissemination of knowledge is one of the areas in which freedom is one of the most indubitable of human rights. Human beings have a right to learn, yet this freedom is limited in the major universities of the Western world. Science and high technology to certain countries is prohibited on the grounds that if this know-how is transferred it will go out of the monopoly of these powers and their material power and domination will not

remain as they are. Hence frontiers are imposed on freedom. That is, the teacher has no right to communicate certain scientific secrets, for instance, to a Third-World student or research scholar from Iran or China.

The same is true of information and news. Today there is world-wide clamor for information and news, so that people become better informed. It makes one of the major points of the agenda of propagation of freedom in the West. However, in the course of the U.S. attack against Iraq, during the days of the presidency of George Bush, for a period of one week or more all information was officially censored. They declared proudly that no reporter has any right to broadcast or publish any news or photographs about the U.S. offensive against Iraq. Everyone knew that the offensive had begun, and the Americans had also sent out the news. But no one knew the details, because it was claimed that this matter compromised military security. Military security limited the right to freedom. This was another material limit and restriction on freedom.

Consolidation of the foundations of the State imposes another limit. Four or five years ago a group emerged in the United States and the episodes [of the Branch Davidians] is known to all newspaper readers. I came to know about some more details at that time and the news of the episode was published by our newspaper. It was a group following a certain cult that set itself against the present U.S. government during Mr. Clinton's time. Certain security and military measures were taken against them which did not prove fruitful. At last they set fire to the building in which they were gathered. In this incident about eighty persons were burnt alive. Photographs of the event were published and the whole world has seen them. Among the eighty victims there were also women and children. Perhaps not one of them was a militia man. See to what extent the right of life, the right to belief, and the right to political struggle is curtailed. Hence freedom in the materialistic Western world has also limits, with the difference that they are of a materialistic character.

There moral values do not pose any limitation for freedom. For instance, the homosexual movement in the U.S. is one of their popular movements. They are even proud of it and hold rallies in the streets and publish their photographs in magazines. They mention with pride that such and such a businessman or statesman is a member of this group. No one is ashamed of it and no one denies it. Rather, some people who are opposed to homosexuality are severely attacked by some of these newspapers and periodicals and condemned as opponents of homosexuality. This means that ethical values pose absolutely no barrier to freedom.

Another example pertains to the European countries. For instance, they impose restrictions on freedom of expression and press on any propaganda in favor of fascism, which is again a matter of materialistic character relating to government. However, pornography, which is also one of their movements, is not restricted. That is, in Western liberalism, on the basis of its philosophy and philosophical grounds, the limits on freedom are materialistic not moral. However, in Islam there exist moral limits on freedom. In Islam there exist moral and spiritual limits beside material limits.

If someone holds heretical beliefs it is not objectionable. When we say that it is not objectionable what is meant is that it is objectionable before God and before faithful human beings, but the government has no responsibility in regard to it. In a Muslim society there are Jews, Christians and persons belong to various religious creeds. They exist at present in our country also, as they existed during the early Islamic era. This does not pose any problem. But if someone holding corrupt beliefs should make encroachments on the minds of other individuals who do not possess the power to defend themselves and try to mislead them, such efforts are prohibited.

Here freedom is limited. Such is the case from the viewpoint of Islam. Or if anyone tries to propagate corruption in political, sexual, or intellectual matters, such as the pseudo-philosophers who write articles suggesting that higher education is not beneficial for the youth and enumerate the inadequacies of higher education-of course, most probably, it would not have any effect on ninety percent, but it may possibly affect a ten percent of lethargic youths-they cannot be permitted to discourage people from higher studies by the means of insinuations and lies.

There is no freedom to lie in Islam and no freedom to spread rumors and create alarm. I have a complaint that no reference is made to Islamic sources and fundamental in discussions relating to freedom. In the Qur'an, in the Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 60, it is stated that if the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is sickness and the alarmists do not desist, we will arouse you to take action against them. The alarmists are mentioned in this verse by the side of the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a sickness. The hypocrites are one group, those with sick hearts are a second group, and the alarmists are mentioned along with them. The alarmists are those who continuously intimidate the people. In a newly established Islamic society with so many enemies and the general mobilization brought about by

the Qur'an and the Prophet everyone should be mentally prepared for the defense of the Islamic country and its great human and popular system. But a group of rumor-mongers, like a plague, assault the people and they are the alarmists. The Qur'an says that if the alarmists, who constantly create general anxiety and stop the people from mobilization, do not desist, God will arouse the Prophet to take measures against them. Here is a limit on freedom. Hence from the Islamic viewpoint, there is another difference, which is that freedom has moral and spiritual limits. There is yet another difference, which is that freedom in Western liberal thought is not consistent with duty and responsibility. Freedom means freedom from all duty. In Islam freedom is the counterpart of duty. Basically, human beings are free because they have responsibilities, and if they were not responsible there would have been no need for freedom. They would have been like angels, in the words of Rumi:

A Tradition says that the Glorious Creator

Made the creatures of three sorts:

A group were blessed with intellect, knowledge and generosity,

Another, of angels, knew nothing except adoration...

It is characteristic of man that he is a collection of conflicting urges and motives. His duty is to traverse the path of perfection despite these various motives. He has been granted freedom to traverse the path of perfection. This freedom with its great value is for the sake of movement towards perfection, in the same way that human life itself is meant for perfection: We did not create mankind and the Jinn except for Our service. God created mankind and the Jinn for the sake of reaching the rank of servant hood, which is an exalted station. Freedom, like the right to life, is a prerequisite for God's service.

In the West they have gone to such lengths in negating duty and responsibility that they rule out all religious and non-religious ideas and ideologies which involve do's and don'ts, duties and prohibitions. In the works of liberal American and quasi-American writers and their disciples and followers in other countries, including unfortunately our own, it is observed that they say that free Western thought is opposed to the ideas of do's and don'ts and the notion of ideology. Islam is diametrically opposed to this position. The position of Islam is that it considers freedom to be necessary by the side of duty so that man can fulfill his responsibilities with the means of his freedom, make great achievements, and make great choices so as to attain perfection.

Accordingly my first suggestion to those who write and discuss issues is that, let us be independent in our understanding of freedom. Let us think independently, without aping others. My second suggestion is that freedom should not be misused. Nowadays some people consistently repeat the phrase 'newly acquired press freedom.' In my view it does not refer to any fact. It is something whose sources are hostile foreign radios. Of course, nowadays they write certain things in newspapers and periodicals and express hostile views. Some of these persons did not do this in the past. But some others did so in the past as well. In the past we have witnessed many instances of harsh criticism of the then president and various officials and even dissent with the principles of the Revolution itself. But nobody bothered them.

Yes, there were some persons whose background was dubious and their hands were tainted. They did not dare to express their views. Even if they had done it nobody would have bothered them. They could have said the same things that they say today. Nobody would have stopped them. But they themselves were afraid because they had bad records. Their enmity of the Revolution, of the Imam and the Imam's Islamic thought was known since long and they themselves lacked the courage to enter the field. However, after the last presidential elections they suddenly found the courage on the basis of a wrong analysis of those elections. That wrong analysis was that they thought that 30 million people had voted against the system and this made them glad, whereas those 30 million had cast their vote for the sake of the consolidation of the system. One of the things that constitutes a matter of pride for the Islamic system in that 18 years after the victory of the Revolution a 30 million out of 32 million eligible voters - that is, about 90 percent - participated in that election. However, they considered this strong point of the system as a weak point.

Of course, from the very first days of the elections, the foreign radios had raised a clamor in order to give a direction to those who were prone to this error, by insinuating that thirty million people has expressed discontent against the system. They wanted to project the system's strong point as a weak point and these poor guys believed it, worthy fooled themselves. They thought that a country where 30 million people were opposed to the system they too could also come and express their views. Now they have found courage and express their opinions whereas nothing

in fact has changed. Had they committed any offense in the past and violated the logical limits they would have been prosecuted. The same is the case today and nothing has changed. Today also the same measures will be taken against those who work corruption and cause alarm. There has been no change. Accordingly, one should not say 'newly acquired press freedom.' We see that some officials repeatedly advise the press not to overuse their freedom because that would endanger freedom itself. What kind of logic is that? As much use as they make of freedom it is better. But they should not violate the limits. The more individuals make use of this God-given right, the nearer will it bring the Islamic system to its goals. Our complaint against the writers has always been as to why they did not write, investigate, and analyze as much as they should.

The correct limits must however be observed. Of course, these limits are not something which a government or system determines in its own interest

Even if there should be governments in the world - and there certainly are - which lay down such limits, the Islamic system is not such. The system of the Islamic republic is based on justice. Should the leader violate the criteria of justice he is automatically dismissed from leadership without the interference of any other agent. In such a system there is no meaning in setting limits in the interests of any group or clique or for imposing the views of a particular kind. The limits are Islamic limits, the same things which are stated in the Qur'an and hadith and recognized as such by a correct understanding of Islam. These are valid, and they should be observed. If they are not observed, it is the duty of the authorities, judicial and executive, as well as Ministry of Guidance and others to monitor their observance. Should they fail to carry out this responsibility they will have committed an offense and sin. They are responsible to see that these limits are observed. Within these limits - which of course make the exceptions - it is the luminous principle of freedom which must be made use of. I do not like these irresponsible statements to be repeated.

To sum up, that which I wish to say today is that the concept of freedom is an Islamic conception and we should think about it in Islamic terms and have faith in its fruits as an Islamic movement and responsibility. We should consider as an opportunity that which exists today on the plane of society and make maximum use of this opportunity. Thinkers and scholars should increase their efforts. Of course, there are some topics which are of a specialized journals and forums. But there are other topics which are of a general interest and all can benefit from such discussions.

I hope that God the Exalted will provide us with the opportunity to witness the blossoming of this system and the ever greater success of this great and dear nation, and it is hoped that you, university people, especially the youth, on whom the country's hopes and future depend, will play a great role in its blossoming.

Was salamu alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatu.