

# Message of the Reza Pahlavi on the Occasion of the New Academic Year 1388-89

First of Mehr 1388 (September 21, 2009)

In the name of God, creator of life and wisdom

My fellow countrymen,

The new academic year has begun at a time when our people are in mourning for some of their best and brightest children. In mourning for their Nedas and Sohrabs, in mourning for their Taranehs and Mehdis, in mourning for their wise, lionhearted daughters and sons who, though at the beginning of their journey of learning, taught us and the whole world the greatest lessons and the ultimate knowledge. By denying the monster of violence and surrendering to the benevolent Lord, and by their unconditional stand against tyranny and ignorance, they taught us liberty! Hence it is fitting at the beginning of this new academic season to honor the names of those eternally blessed and to praise their pure spirits.

Students and educators,

Our nation has withstood many dark periods, periods which, like today, existed under complete cultural occupation. It was during these periods that our Ebn Maqhfes were burned in the ovens of the caliphate, our Hallajs were hung by stale, backward thinkers in order to keep secrets hidden, and our Sohravardis were executed in the dungeons of the cretins of the deceitful. Yes, we have suffered through the ages, yet we are still standing and deny the culture of death and submit to life.

My dear teachers, professors and scholars,

I am well aware of how much the burden of making a living weighs on your shoulders. I know how they proudly break your pens and consider it an art form. I know that once more the Supreme Leader has sharpened his teeth in order to tear out the heart of knowledge from the chest of this land; to replace intellect with superstition; and to reduce philosophy and the natural sciences to the level of mysticism and conjuration. Do not forget, however, that these are all the despairing wails of a dying monster, and each day that passes by, the magnitude of darkness decreases and the light grows brighter.

My dearest compatriots,

Traditionally in our culture, school has been a place where we teach honesty and integrity and discourage vileness and lies. The evil regime of jurisprudence, however, in its backward nature and its tradition of combating righteousness, has tried to replace truth with lies and right with wrong in order to disrupt and create contradiction from within our historic cultural values. Therefore it is apparent that the first of Mehr, the day of renewal of the covenant between the seekers of knowledge and culture with enlightenment and wisdom, is likewise a time of deadly night terrors for the proprietors of darkness and backward thinkers and the protectors of the vast deserts of ignorance. Eventually the backbone of this hellish regime which, from the start, came to kill knowledge and shatter thought in order to establish the rule of Zahhak in the absence of

knowledge and freedom and to unleash darkness and fury upon our country, will be broken by the seekers of wisdom at the universities.

My fellow countrymen,

The regime of jurisprudence which today is lording over our country is the consequence of our historically distorted beliefs and wrongdoings. This sacrilegious regime represents all things that have been stitched to our history with the thread of ignorance and the needle of force. Theocracy as a piebald patch is atypical of Iran and Iranians, and today it is upon us, the true children of Cyrus, to use illustrious wisdom to straighten all crookedness and rebuild all that is scattered.

Iranians,

Iran is the cradle of wisdom; the land of enlightenment and respect for nature; and the country of joyful thinking. Iran is the same country where at one time, in its Jundi Shapurs, scholars gathered from the four corners of the world to obtain knowledge and exchange ideas. Iran is the same country where at one time the city of Ctesiphon provided refuge for some of the greatest philosophers who escaped Europe. Iran is the same country where wise scholars established the very first encyclopedia for all humanity.

My fellow countrymen,

Truthfully, for a country that has always valued knowledge and demonstrated generosity toward scholars, it is embarrassing and shameful that today, at the beginning of the new millennium, not only is thought a crime and are thinkers jailed, but the descendants of the same runaway philosophers of yesterday are tried in court and found guilty in absentia and their ideas are hung from the gallows. Executing and dismembering ideas and thinkers is the result of the abominable tradition that Khomeini established and that today Khamenei further develops in increasingly shameful ways.

Educators,

The occupation of culture and civilization can in itself create a culture and civilization of resistance. Our Ferdowsis and Khayyams, Birunis and Ebn Ravandis are the pinnacles of resistance against foreign domination. Today it is upon educators to teach the children of our nation the tradition of resistance and to prevent the Zahhaks of our time from feasting on the brains of the youth of this ancient land. Khayyam's lyrics and Ferdowsi's poetry are the antidotes to the potent venom which has been force-fed to our culture and civilization by the regime of jurisprudence and its tradition of dark thoughts. Let us trust in the eternal flame that burns in our hearts and raise from the four corners of our nation the torch of wisdom that the Ferdowsis and Khayyams held and kept ablaze in the face of the dark thinkers.

My fellow countrymen,

The lock on every science can be turned with the language of that same science, and the lock on every civilization can be turned with the language of that civilization. Our nation which links all cultures and which is located at the crossroads of all civilizations could not have survived historically unless it learned those civilization's languages. And during its ages of glory, it played the role of the arbitrator and the great interpreter of cultures in order to join the hands of other civilizations. It was as such that the world looked to Iran in search of peace and cultural harmony and many times found it.

My dearest compatriots,

It has been centuries that Iran, this major player in the history of civilization, has been estranged from her own “language of civilization”. So the question is this: In the absence of cultural familiarity, how can one properly understand other civilizations as well as one should; and more importantly, enter into a dialogue with them and effectively play the role of the arbitrator and facilitator of peace, a role that has historically been entrusted to us? How can one understand the foundations of European civilization, meaning Athens and Rome, when we haven’t discovered the foundations of our own civilization, meaning Ctesiphon and Susa? How can we appreciate the great civilization of China or the rich culture of India when we have yet been able to completely understand our own glorious history? In reality, the precondition of any “dialogue of civilizations” first is to have an internal dialogue with one’s own civilization and culture. Only through self-recognition can one recognize others. Therefore in order to understand the world, first we must understand Iran.

Students, educators,

It is my belief that it is against our nation’s character and impossible for it to close the door on other civilizations and cultures. At the same time I believe it is against our nation’s character and impossible for it to play the role of an inferior to other cultures and civilizations. The national pride of our ancient people would not accept such a thing. Therefore let’s gather together at the beginning of this new season and once more enter into a cultural covenant, grasp one another’s hands and rediscover, cherish and rebuild our nation from its roots.

The older the tree, the deeper the roots. And in the fully-flowered garden of civilizations, which tree is more ancient than our tree? Let us reeducate the children of this land about the Iranian languages, the language of the Cyruses and Dariuses and the language of the Jamasps and Bozorgmehrs and create such conditions that any Iranian can be an interpreter and proprietor of Iranian civilization no matter where she or he may be. Our strength and durability as a civilized nation lies in the ability and the right to be that interpreter.

My fellow countrymen,

Let us rediscover Iran in its roots; not superficially but in depth. As the inheritors of a propagating civilization, let us through collaboration, cooperation and unanimity move our world out of darkness and thrust it toward light, happiness and wellness. Although we are going through hard times, let us not doubt that we will be victorious.

God bless Iran!