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| **Are You Afraid of America?** |  |

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| 13/02/2008 |
| Me, Mr Hashemi and another person - I do not want to mention his name - left Tehran for Qom to pay a visit to Imam Khomeini and ask him what we should do with the [American] spies. We wanted to know if we should release them or keep them, especially because there was a serious quarrel in the interim government over what we had to do with them. When we went to Imam Khomeini and my companions told him about the situation and what the foreign radio reports, America and government officials said. His Eminence paused for a moment and asked a simple question: "Are you afraid of America?" We said that we were not afraid. "Then keep them," he said. We felt that this man himself did not at all fear the superficial and material glory of this superpower which was armed with everything. His courage and his disregard for the material power of the enemy originated from his shrewd personal fearlessness. Shrewd fearlessness is different from silly and ignorant risk-taking. For example, both a child and a strong person are not afraid of strong people or ferocious animals. All the same, people make mistakes in their evaluation of their own power, and there are some aspects of power that they fail to observe.  (The anecdote was told in a meeting with the members of the Expediency Council's secretariat.) |

Just take a look at those who were in charge and their mentality. They were generally corrupt, especially their new generation who had no principles. They were even worse than Hoveida's generation! I refer to Hoveida as an example because he is considered among the worst. He was one of the most corrupt Iranian statesmen. His generation was, however, far better than Raji's generation. Raji was the author of the book "The Servant of Takht Tavoos". If you read this book, you will understand the nature of his generation. Raji wanted to take Hoveida's place. It is not right to refer to Hoveida as good, but compared with Raji, he was much better. Hoveida was undoubtedly one of the most corrupt statesmen in Iran, but at the bottom of his heart and the hearts of the like-minded people you could still find some vestiges of the past - which you may call nationalism, patriotism, or whatever. But the following generation that was represented by Raji was ... I really do not know how to describe them!   
(This anecdote was told in a meeting with the managing director, editor-in-chief and editing board of Howzah magazine.)

There was this man who was well-versed in the events that had taken place in the U.S.S.R and the part which is populated by Shia - the Republic of Azerbaijan. He told us that when the communists dominated Azerbaijan, they eliminated all signs of Islam. For example, they turned mosques into sheds and they used religious buildings and hussayniahs for other purposes. They left no signs of religion and Shia there. There was only one thing that they allowed and that was the "Qame Zani" [a religiously prohibited ritual in which people cut their foreheads with a dagger. This act has been declared haraam by all religious authorities in the Shia world]. The order that the communist leaders issued to their subordinates specified that Muslims were not allowed to pray, hold public prayers, mourn for their religious figures or hold any religious ceremonies. They were, however, allowed to practice this self-mutilating ceremony! Why did they allow it? They allowed it because the very act of self-mutilation was used by them as tool to promote their own anti-religion campaign. You see how the enemy uses some things against religion. Whenever superstitions step in, pure religion is defamed.   
(This anecdote was told in a public meeting with the people of Mashahad on the Persian New Year's Day.)