

*Ivan Jakovlev*  
TESTAMENT  
TO THE CHUVASH PEOPLE

**In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit!**

I address myself first to you, my Chuvash friends and relatives. Your welfare is much on heart; in this hour my thoughts turn to you and to you first I want to convey my last wishes.

More than anything hold fast that which is most sacred: faith in God. Faith gives wings to the power of the spirit and heart, provides inner peace, comforts and encourages the soul in times of trouble and sorrow and illuminates it in hours of success and joy. With faith in jod, you will not fail in the trials of life. Without faith the world is cold and dark. Believe in the final reward for good and punishment for evil, in ultimate truth and God's judgment—terrible and just.

Honour and love the good and wise Russian people who hold in themselves the inexhaustible forces of spirit, heart and will. They received you into their family as brothers; they did not deceive nor oppress you. Providence is leading them to great goals unknown to us. May that people be the leader of your development! Follow them and trust them. The Russian people's life has been difficult, encountering — on its long and painful way — much grief and pain, but the light of the spirit never died out in it. The vision of its great mission was never lost.

May Russia's joys be your joys and her sorrows your sorrows! Then you will participate in her coming, brilliant future. Her people did not fail you in the past; they will not let you down in the future. Love them and get closer to them. Every field has its weeds but take my experience as a guarantee: you will always find, among the Russians, good and wise persons who will support a just cause. Russia has gained her rights through suffering; without a doubt she will share those rights with you. Trust the people of Russia, love her, and Russia will be for you a mother. May the immortal name of my teacher, Nikolai Ivanovitsch Hminski, serve you as a pledge and lodestar; it personifies for me the greatness and beauty of the Russian national character.



I turn to those of you who have had the privilege of an education.

Remember that you must help your less fortunate compatriots. Don't hope that someone else will help them! Never forget that it is your first duty to work for the education of the Chuvash because they are your own. Go back to your people with the treasure of scientific knowledge. Promote in them civic responsibility. Teach them law and justice. These matters are up to you because these people are yours.

Do not despise your compatriots' poverty, weakness and ignorance. You have come from them and now you must work for them. You were educated for their sake and at their cost. Now you must pay that debt. Don't forget your obligation to your younger brothers. Your reward? The people's love.

Remember, though, that you won't win their hearts unless you speak Chuvash. Using your native language will not betray the Russian cause! You can serve the great country of Russia without forsaking your mother tongue.

Complete what I have started, if I cannot do so: give the Chuvash people the Holy Scriptures, completing the translation of the Old Testament. Serve the cause of Christianity; spread the light of the Gospel among the many nationalities which people the eastern part of Russia. By your language and spirit you are closer to these people than the Russians are. Your efforts in this great field of endeavour will partly repay the debt you owe the Russian people: from them you received the light of Christian faith.

Honour the family. Keep it together. Families support the people and the state. Chuvash family links have always been strong; guard this treasure. A strong family is a bulwark against life's adversities; a close, happy family is not afraid of them. Be chaste. Beware of wine and such temptations. In protecting the family, you protect the children and provide a solid foundation for quiet, peaceable work.

Live harmony with each other. Avoid petty quarrels. Remember the great command of the Saviour: «Do good to them which hate you.»



True strength is the privilege of those who do not insist on their rights.

Believe in diligent work and do it willingly. Perform even the smallest task with patience and good humour. Don't grumble over life's problems. When we tackle small tasks enthusiastically, they become important. When we approach important tasks negligently, we diminish them. Success follows all work done willingly and well. Avoid devious methods. Dirty means produce temporary ends.

This is what I wanted to say to you as I prepare myself to appear before the Supreme Judge. If I have offended someone, I ask him to pardon and pray for me. To you, my compatriots and the many Russians who with willing hearts have supported my work. I express my deep gratitude for your warmth and affection which I do not deserve. I remember with warm thankfulness my comrades and fellow-workers. Without their non-partisan zeal, my work could never have been achieved.

I greet my own students. The hours spent with you have been the happiest of my life. May God protect each one of you on your journey through life.

**IVAN IAKOVLEV**

4th August, 1921