

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

DISCOURSES ON SOME CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE FAITHFUL
(ŞIFĀT AL_MU'MINĪN)

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Imām Khomeinī

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Transliteration</i> | 7 |
| <i>Publisher's Note</i> | 9 |
| <i>Biography of the Author</i> | 13 |
| The Meaning of Trial..... | 20 |
| The Prophets And Divine Trial | 25 |
| The World Is Not a Place of Reward or Punishment | 35 |
| Severity of Tribulation Is Subject to Intensity of Perception.... | 38 |
| Some Justifications concerning Ascription of hesitation to God, the Exalted | 43 |
| God's Reforming of the State of the Faithful through Poverty And Wealth | 52 |
| Nearness Relating to Obligatory And Supererogatory Acts And Their Result..... | 55 |
| <i>Bibliography</i> | 67 |
| <i>Index</i> | 69 |

TRANSLITERATION

| Symbol | Transliteration | Symbol | Transliteration |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| ء | ' | أ | a |
| ب | b | ت | t |
| ث | th | ج | j |
| ح | ḥ | خ | kh |
| د | d | ذ | dh |
| ر | r | ز | z |
| س | s | ش | sh |
| ص | ṣ | ض | ḍ |
| ط | ṭ | ظ | ẓ |
| ع | ' | غ | gh |
| ف | f | ق | q |
| ک | k | ل | l |
| م | m | ن | n |
| ه | h | و | w |
| ی | y | ة | ah |
| Long Vowels | | Short Vowels | |
| آ | a | ـَ | a |
| ای | ī | ـِ | i |
| او | ū | ـُ | u |
| Persian Letters | | | |
| Symbol | Transliteration | Symbol | Transliteration |
| پ | p | چ | ch |
| ژ | zh | گ | g |

At the end of Farsi words, 'eh', '-e', and '-ye' have been used.

Publisher's Note

Forty Ḥadīths is one of the invaluable works of Imām Khomeinī which is written by his eminence as detailed commentaries on forty selected *ḥadīths* of the infallible-innocent personalities. To select and expound forty *ḥadīths* has been a tradition of Muslim scholars from a very long time ago, being inspired by the celebrated Prophetic *ḥadīth* which states, “Whosoever preserves for my followers forty *ḥadīths* concerning their religious affairs God will raise him up among jurists and scholars in the Day of Judgment.” This book is entirely devoted to the inquiry of reality of some *ḥadīths* of the infallible-innocent personalities being brimful of ethical advices and mystical-philosophical points.

This book has originally been delivered by Imām Khomeinī in the form of speech and later written down by his eminence in Fārsī in 1358 A.H. (1937). Then, it was translated into English by Mahliqā Qarā'ī and published in 2003 by International Affairs Department, The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imām

Khomeinī's Works in collaboration with the Qum-based Ansāriyān.

In order to make that invaluable book more beneficent and applicable for a wider audience, the publisher decided to categorize its *ḥadīths* and publish them in the form of some booklets. Thus, 36 *ḥadīths* were chosen on the one hand, and some formal changes were made in the book on the other: First, whereas the book has originally been delivered in the form of speech and then written down, it contains several invaluable points on Islamic knowledge which are not directly related to the topics of each *ḥadīth*. Hence, for the sake of making the work more coherent and thereby more beneficent for readers, such discussions were omitted. Secondly, chosen *ḥadīths* were divided into 9 parts (to be published in 9 booklets) as follows:

1. On the knowledge (*al-'ilm*).
2. On the heart and its states (*al-qalb wa aḥwāl*).
3. On *tawḥīd*.
4. On the theological Problems (*al-masā'il al-kalāmiyya*).
5. On the remembrance of God and sincerity (*dhikr Allah wa'l ikhlāṣ*).
6. On some characteristics of the faithful (*ṣifāt al-mu'minīn*).
7. On the love of mundane affairs (*ḥub al-dunyā*).
8. On the vices (*al-radḥā'il*).
9. On the virtues (*al-faḍā'il*).

The publisher hopes that readers would take the advantage of reading these booklets for the acquisition of very high level knowledge of Islamic teachings and learning ways of purifying their souls.

Biography of the Author

Imām Rūḥullāh Mūsawī Khomeinī, the founder of the Islamic republic of Iran, was born on 20 Jumadī al-Ākhir 1320/ 24 September 1902, the anniversary of the birth of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭima, in the small town of Khumayn, some 160 kilometers to the southwest of Qum, Iran. He was the child of a family with a long tradition of religious scholarship. In Dhu'l-Ḥijja 1320/ March 1903, some five months after the Imām's birth, his father, Sayyid Muṣṭafā, was attacked and killed while traveling.

Imām Khomeinī began his education by memorizing the Qur'an at a *maktab* operated near his home, then embarking on the study of Arabic grammar, syntax, and literature. In 1339/1920-21, Sayyid Murtaḍā, the eldest brother, sent the Imām to the city of Arāk, an important center of religious learning because of the presence of Āyatullāh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī (d.1936), one of the principal scholars of the day, in order for him to benefit from the more ample educational resources available there. There, the Imām commenced learning logic and

jurisprudence. Then, following immigration of Āyatullāh ‘Abd al-Karīm Ḥā’irī to Qum, he moved to that city and started receiving all his advanced spiritual and intellectual training. From his early days in Qum, the Imām showed an exceptional interest in subjects that not only were usually absent from the *madrasa* curriculum, but were often an object of hostility and suspicion: philosophy, in its various traditional schools, and Gnosticism (*‘irfān*).

Gnosis and ethics were the subject of the first classes taught by the Imām. It proved popular to the extent that the townsfolk of Qum as well as the students of the religious sciences attended it, and people are reported to have come from as far cities as Tehran and Isfahan simply to listen to the Imām. While teaching ethics to a wide and diverse audience, Imām Khomeinī began teaching important texts of gnosis such as *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and *Manāzil al-Sā’irīn*.

As for the earliest writings of the Imām, they also indicate that his primary interest during his early years in Qum was gnosis. In 1928, for example, he completed the *Sharḥ Du‘ā’ al-Saḥar*, a detailed commentary on the supplicatory prayers recited throughout Ramaḍān by Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir. Two years later, he completed *Miṣbāh al-Hidāya ilā’l-Khilāfa wa’l-Wilāya*, a dense and systematic treatise on the main topics of gnosis. Another product of the same years of concentration on gnosis was a series of glosses on

Qayṣarī's commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*.

In a brief autobiography written for inclusion in a book published in 1934, the Imām wrote that he spent most of his time studying and teaching the works of Mullā Ṣadrā; that he had for several years been studying gnosis with Āyatullāh Shāhābādī; and that at the same time he was attending the classes of Āyatullāh Ḥā'irī on *fiqh*.

The sequence of these statements suggests that *fiqh* was also among his concerns. However, gnosis was for the Imām never simply a topic for study, teaching, and writing. It remained an integral part of his intellectual and spiritual personality, and as such infused many of his ostensibly political activities in later years with an unmistakably gnostic element.

In 1946, the Imām began teaching *uṣūl al-fiqh* at the *khārij* level, taking as his text the chapter on rational proofs from the second volume of the *Kifāya al-Uṣūl* of Ākhūnd Muḥammad Kāẓim Khurāsānī (d. 1329/1911). Initially attended by no more than thirty students, the class became so popular in Qum that five hundred were in attendance the third time it was offered.

According to the reminiscences of some of those who took the class, it was distinguished from other classes taught in Qum on the same subject by the critical spirit the Imām instilled in his students, as well as his ability to connect *fiqh* with all the other dimensions of Islam - ethical, gnostic, philosophical, political, and social.

The emphases of the Imām's activity began to change with the death of Āyatullāh Burūjirdī, the great *marja'-i taqlīd*, on March 31, 1961, for he now emerged as one of the successors to Āyatullāh Burūjirdī's position of leadership. This emergence was signaled by the publication of some of his writings on *fiqh*, most importantly the basic handbook of religious practice entitled, like others of its genre, *Tauḍīḥ al-Masā'il*. He was soon accepted as *marja'-i taqlīd* by a large number of Iranians.

The Imām continued teaching *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* at the highest level and wrote several invaluable books on those two fields most of which being still treated as very high level references for the highest level students of *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* at different Islamic seminaries (*ḥawza*). Although the Imām was forced to leave Iran and go to exile in Turkey and Iraq, he pursued his both political and scholarly activities there and contributed an invaluable literature to *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* as well as political sciences.

Finally, the Imām passed away on 4 June 1989 in Tehran while being respected by Millions of people throughout the world as the great religious-political leader of Iran.

ḤADĪTHS
AND
COMMENTARIES

1. عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: إنّ في كتاب على عليه السلام أنّ أشد الناس بلاء النبيون، ثم الوصيون، ثم الامثل فالامثل. و انما يتلى المؤمن من على قدر أعماله الحسنة، فمن صح دينه و حسن عمله اشتد بلاؤه . و ذلك أن الله تعالى لم يجعل الدنيا ثوابا لمؤمن من و لا عقوبة لكافر . و من سخط دينه و ضعف عقله قل بلاؤه . و ان البلاء أسرع الى المؤمن التقى من المطر الى قرار الارض .

Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq(A.S.) said: "Verily, it is mentioned in the Book of 'Alī that of all mankind the prophets undergo the severest of trials, and after them the *awṣiyā*, and after them those who are closer to the extent of their nobility. Indeed, the believer undergoes trial in proportion to his good deeds. So one whose faith is sound and whose deeds are good, his trials are also more severe. That is indeed because God Almighty did not make this world a place for rewarding the believer and punishing the unbeliever. And one whose faith is feeble and whose (good) deeds are few faces fewer tribulations. Verily, tribulations hasten

towards the believer with greater speed than rainwater towards the earth's depths.¹

The Meaning of Trial, Its Result and How It Can Be Attributed to God

Let it be known to you that the human souls exist at a level of potentiality from the beginning of their origin, their attachment to the bodies, and their descent to the realm of corporeal existence (*mulk*), in respect of all things, including knowledge, good and evil traits, and all kinds of perceptive and behavioural faculties. Gradually they move from potentiality to actuality with the grace of God, the Almighty and the Sublime. At first, weak impressions related to particulars (as opposed to universals) emerge in the soul, such as impressions of touch and other outward senses, moving from the lower to the higher. Following that, the inward perceptions also arise in it. However, all its faculties exist only at a level of potentiality, and they do not grow without proper stimulation. For instance, if the base kind of faculties come to dominate it, it becomes disposed to ugliness and evil, for its inner powers, such as *shahwah* (lust), *ghaḍab* (anger), etc., impel it towards sin,

¹. Muḥammad Ibn Ya'qūb Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, Vol. II, Kitāb, al-īmān wa al-kufr, Bāb, Ḥadīth, No.29, 259.

licentiousness, aggression and tyranny. After following them for some time it grows into a strange monster and a highly grotesque devil.

However, since the grace and mercy of God Almighty have been accompanying the Children of Adam since eternity, He bestowed upon them two educators and teachers which are like two wings with which they can fly from the depths of ignorance, defectiveness, ugliness and wretchedness to the heights of knowledge, perfection; beauty and felicity, and deliver themselves from the narrow valley of nature to reach the expansive and open horizons of the realms of the spirit (*malakūt*). The first of these is the faculty of intellect and Insight, which is the inner teacher; and the second, the outward teacher, is represented by the prophets and the divine guides who shove the path of felicity as distinct from the ways of wretchedness. None of these two can singly achieve this end without the other. For the human intellect by itself can neither identify the paths of felicity and wretchedness nor find the way to the hidden world and the realm of the other-worldly existence. Similarly, the guidance of the prophets cannot be effective without the exercise of the discerning faculties of the intellect.

Thus God, the Beneficent and the Sublime, gave them

these two educators so that through them all the potentialities and hidden faculties and capacities, latent in the human soul, should be realized and actualized. God Almighty blessed them with these two great bounties in order to try and test human beings, for it is through these bounties that individual human beings are separated into the felicitous and the wretched, the obedient and the rebellious, the perfect and the defective. And so the Great *Walī* of God said:

And by Him who sent him (the Prophet (S)) with the Truth, you shall indeed be mixed and intermingled and then separated in the sieve (of Divine trial and tribulation)?¹

Al-Imām al-Ṣādiq(A.S.) said:

It is inevitable that mankind should be purified, separated and sieved so that a great number is excluded by the sieve.²

Al-Imām al-Ṣādiq(A.S.) also said:

There is no *qabḍ* (extension) and *baṣṭ* (contraction)

¹. Imām ‘Alī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Khuṭbah No. 16, 57.

². Muḥammad Ibn Ya‘qūb Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, Vol. I, Kitāb, al-ḥujah, Bāb al-tamḥīṣ wa al-imtiḥān, Ḥadīth, No, 370.

except that in it there is for God a purpose, a decree, and a trial.¹

In another tradition he is reported to have said:

Indeed there is no *qabḍ* and *baṣṭ* in that which God has commanded or forbidden except that there is in it from God a trial and a decree?²

Qabḍ means *imsāk* (withholding), *man* (obstruction, prevention) and *akhdh* (seizure). *Baṣṭ* is *nashr* (unfolding, spreading, resurrection) and ‘*aṭā*’ (gift, bestowal). Hence every gift, expansion and obstruction, and every command, prohibition and duty is for the sake of trial.

Thus we came to know that the sending of prophets and the revelation of heavenly scriptures is all for the sake of the separation of humanity, of the separation of the wretched from the happy and the felicitous, of the obedient from the sinful. And the meaning of Divine testing and examination is this very separation of men from one another, not the *knowledge* of their separateness, because the knowledge of God Almighty is pre-eternal; it encompasses all things prior to their

¹.*Ibid.*, vol. I, Kitāb, al-tawhīd, Bāb al-ibtilā’ wa al-ikhtibār, Ḥadīth, No.1, 152.

².*Ibid.*, Ḥadīth, No. 2, 152.

creation. The *ḥukamā* have elaborately discussed the reality of trial and *ibtīlā'* and it is beyond the scope of this exposition to mention their opinions.

In any case, the result of this trial and examination is the separation of the felicitous from the wretched. In the course of it the proof (*ḥujjah*) of God is established against the creatures. Thereafter, their life, felicity and salvation, or their destruction and damnation occurs after the establishment of the proof and testimony (*bayyinah*), and there remains no room for objection for anyone. One who attains felicity and eternal life does so through Divine succour and guidance, for God has bestowed all the means of attaining them. Also, one who earns wretchedness and falls into destruction, following Satan and his carnal self, his wretchedness and damnation are also earned by him out of his own free will, because he does so despite the availability of all the means of guidance and felicity. The conclusive proof of God is established against him and there is no room for any pretext. Hence the Qur'an says:

For it (the soul) is what it has earned and against it is what it has merited. (2:286)