

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

DISCOURSES ON THE REMEMBRANCE  
OF GOD AND SINCERITY

*(DHIKR ALLAH WA'L IKHLĀṢ)*



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Imām Khomeinī

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# 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	اَ	a
ای	ī	اِ	i
او	ū	اُ	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-radhā'il*).
9. On the virtues (*al-fadā'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 *madrassa* 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-Sa’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 *Miṣbāḥ 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



١ . قال أبو عبد الله عليه السلام: كل رياءً شرك؛ انه من عمل للناس  
كان ثوابه على الناس، و من عمل لله كان ثوابه على الله.

Al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) said: "*Riyā*" in any of its forms amounts to *shirk* (polytheism); verily, one who works for the people, his reward lies with them, and one who works for God his reward lies with God."<sup>1</sup>

*Riyā'* means to falsely make oneself appear to be virtuous, good natured or a true believer in God before the people for the sake of earning their respect and admiration, or with the purpose of gaining good reputation among them. The hypocrite feigns integrity, uprightness, virtue, honesty and piety without an authentic intention of acquiring these traits for the sake of God. It has several grades and degrees.

The first stage is comprised of two steps:

1.1. At the first step an individual makes a display of his religious beliefs, and shows off his knowledge of the

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1. Muḥammad Ibn Ya'qūb Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, Vol. II, Chapter concerning *riyā'*, Ḥadīth, No. 3, 293.

religious teachings in order to project himself as an honest person in the eyes of people to gain their confidence and respect. Such a kind of person tries to make a display of his trust in God and His Power, saying that he does not believe in any being except Him. He also tries to present himself as a staunch believer through various means, especially by declaring that he depends on none but God. Or such a person, with his gestures and utterances, poses himself to be a staunch follower of the true faith, and this is a more common kind of *riyā'* than the first one. For instance, when the trust in God or submission to His Will is discussed, he wags his head in affirmation with a sigh, and thus deceives people giving an impression that he is one of the true believers.

1.2. The second step on the path of *riyā'* is represented by those who eradicate false belief from their hearts and, through such purification, want to attain power and respect among people; they sometimes articulate their belief overtly, sometimes make a covert display of their purity.

The second stage, too, is comprised of two steps:

2.1. At the first step an individual demonstrates his piety and virtuous deeds.

2.2. At the second step one pretends to have done away with the antitheses of piety and virtue, and behaves in such a manner as if he is free from all vices, and the aim of all this is to win the confidence of others.

The third stage of *riyā'*, which is considered to be overt by the *fuqahā*, also consists of two steps:

3.1. The first step is marked by an individual's performance of the prescribed forms of piety, prayers and good deeds in front of other people with the intention of demonstrating his good qualities and praiseworthy habits, or by his posture as a person who strictly adheres to the religious commands on purely rational grounds, and thus wishing to win the hearts of people and attracting their attention towards himself. Such acts, whether performed in total or in part, with the motive of *riyā'*, to please the others, are discussed in the books of *fiqh*.

3.2. At the second step, one abstains from evil deeds for the purpose of *riyā'* only.

### *First Stage*

Remember that hypocrisy in religious faith is the worst kind of hypocrisy; its retribution also is the severest and its bad effects are far greater and more dangerous than those of other forms of hypocrisy. One who is guilty of this sin, if he does not believe genuinely in those ideas which he pretends to believe in, is counted among the *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites), whose place is in the Fire, and he is doomed to eternal damnation and his punishment is the severest of punishments. But if he believes in them, and for the sake of winning peoples' hearts and for obtaining worldly honour and dignity he makes an ostentation of them, though he is not

reckoned among *munāfiqūn*, this kind of hypocrisy will cause the light of faith to fade away from his heart and to make the darkness of infidelity and faithlessness to occupy the domain of his heart. Because in the first instance this person commits polytheism (*shirk*) of the covert type; while his religious beliefs and acts should purely be meant for God and His Holy Essence, he is guilty of committing the sin of doing them for others and thus makes them to share what should absolutely belong to Him only. In this way he makes others partners to God and has given permission to the Devil to occupy his heart as if it does not belong to God. It has been mentioned earlier that faith emerges from the depths of the heart, and in this matter mere abstract knowledge does not suffice. It has been stated in the tradition that any kind of *riyā'* is polytheism, but this vice, this disastrous atrocity, this hidden cruelty (to one's own self), and this vicious habit, results in nullifying the good deeds, and in surrender of the realm of the heart to other than God. The darkness of this vice causes man to leave this world as an unbeliever in God, and the feigned faith that he had assumed proves nothing more than a senseless and empty profession; it is a form without content, a body without soul and a skull without brain; and in no way is acceptable to God. This fact is confirmed by the following tradition:

Al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) said that God

Almighty had said, "I am the best of friends; one who makes others My partners in any matter, his deeds are not acceptable to Me. I accept only those acts that are purely done for My sake."<sup>1</sup>

Hence, it is clear that if the spiritual acts (of the heart) are not performed with sincerity of the heart, they will neither be the object of attention of the Almighty, nor will He acknowledge them, and they will be credited in the account of that partner-the person, for whose sake they were performed. Thus the spiritual acts performed for the sake of somebody else, not for God, will surpass the limits of polytheism, and will enter the domain of *kufir* (infidelity). It may even be said that the performer of such adulterated acts would be treated as one of the *munāfiqūn*.

As his polytheism is not visible, his hypocrisy also is hidden. He, the poor fellow, considers himself to be a believer, whereas in reality he is an idolater, and he is condemned to taste the chastisement prescribed for the *munāfiqūn*. How pitiable is the plight of one whose good deeds are to terminate in *nifāq*.

### *The Difference between Knowledge and Faith*

Know that faith or belief is something different from the knowledge of God, the Unity of His Being, and His other

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1. Ibid, Vol. II, Ḥadīth, No. 9, 295.

Attributes--like *ṣifāt-e kamāliyyah* (the Attributes of Perfection), the Positive Attributes, *ṣifāt-e jalāliyyah* (the Attributes of Glory), and the Negative Attributes, etc. and the knowledge of angels, holy scriptures, and the Last Day. Anyone who possesses the knowledge of all these things is not necessarily a believer. The Devil possesses the knowledge of all these things more than I and you or any other individual, but still he is an unbeliever. The faith is a yearning of the heart-an inner experience, which if not genuine, does not become faith. Anyone who has gained knowledge of religion through rational demonstrations and arguments, ought to submit to them whole-heartedly with the totality of his being and obey the call of his heart dutifully i.e. with complete surrender to God, with humility and fear-and accept all the responsibilities expected of him sincerely without any question. Only then he can become a perfect *mu'min*. Culmination of the faith is tranquillity and peace of mind. When the light of faith is stabilized, it brings with it tranquillity of the heart, and this is something which does not issue from knowledge.

It is possible that reason may accept something which is according to its dictates and logic, but the heart may not be ready to agree with it, thus making knowledge useless. For instance, you know through your reason that a dead person cannot do any harm and that all the dead in the world do not possess any power of action, even as much power as is possessed by a fly, and that all

the physical and spiritual faculties depart as soon as one is dead; but since your heart has not accepted it and has not approved of the judgement of the mind, you cannot spend a dark night with a dead body. But if your heart yields to your mind and approves of its judgement, this job will no more be difficult for you. After some effort the heart resigns to the dictates of reason, then no dread of the dead remains in the heart.

Therefore, it is clear that the submission which is the gratification and comfort of the heart is quite a different thing from knowledge, which is the gratification of the mind. It is possible that one can logically prove the existence of the Great Intelligent Designer, the Unity of His Divine Being, the Day of Judgement and other true beliefs, but such a belief cannot be considered as faith (*īmān*), and the person cannot be regarded as a *mu'min*, but he may be counted among the non-believers, hypocrites and polytheists.

Today my eyes and yours are closed, and we do not possess any divine vision. Our terrestrial eyes are unable to perceive, but when the hidden is revealed and the kingdom of heaven is manifested, the physical world vanishes and reality is disclosed; you will realize that you were not a believer in God, and your rational judgement was not congruous with your faith. Unless the words: (there is no god except God) are inscribed on the tablet of the heart with the pen of reason, man is not a true believer in the Unity of God. When this sacred

and holy dictum is impressed on the heart, the domain of the heart turns by itself into the kingdom of God Almighty. Then only man does not see anyone else as efficient in the realm of truth; he does not expect any rank, any distinction or riches from anybody else; he does not seek for honour and fame with the help of others; and his heart does not become hypocritic and profane. Therefore, if you see that *riyā'* is stealing into your heart, you should realize that your heart has not really surrendered itself to reason, and faith has not illuminated your heart yet; for you consider others to be your God and see them as efficient agents in the world, and you do not trust Him, the only God; it means that you have joined the company of hypocrites, polytheists and idolaters.

O, you given to *riyā'*, who have entrusted your truthful beliefs and religious understanding to the custody of the enemy of God-the Devil, and have attributed to others what specifically belongs to God, you have exchanged those lights which would have illuminated your heart and spirit, and would have proved to be the source of your salvation and eternal bliss, which would have been responsible for being blessed with Beatific Vision and acquiring Divine nearness, with the dreadful darkness of eternal misfortunes; you have lost the other-worldly treasures, and have alienated yourself from the most sacred threshold of the Beloved, and have deprived yourself of

the sight of the visage of the Most High. Be prepared for the darkness, which is not to be followed by any ray of light; the scorn and shame from which there is no release; the diseases which have no cure; the death after which there is no life; and the fire which is ignited from within the depths of the heart to engulf the whole region of your spirit, as well as the realm of the body. It is beyond your capacity and mine to conceive or perceive the intensity of that fire, as God Almighty has mentioned in His Holy Book:

(It is) the fire of Allah, kindled, which leapeth up over the hearts (of men). (104:6-7)

The effect of the fire which is kindled by God will be that it would consume the hearts as well. No fire can consume the heart except that which is kindled in the hell. If the belief in the Unity of God, which is inherently engrained in human nature, is abandoned and is replaced with idolatry and infidelity, no intercession of any intercessor will be available to him, and man will be destined to suffer eternal damnation. What kind of chastisement will it be? It will be the effect of the Divine wrath, issuing from His sense of Honour.

Thus, my friend, do not make yourself an object of the Divine wrath for the sake of an illusion, an insignificant and trivial popularity in the eyes of weak creatures of God, and for the sake of worthless attention of hopeless human beings. Do not make a bargain of those Divine blessings, those infinite favours and benevolences with

popularity among people, which is not even effective and long-lasting, from which you cannot derive any benefit except inviting ultimate shame and regret. And while your relations are severed with this world of illusion and deception and you cease to act, no regret and sorrow will be of avail.

### *An Advice for Destroying Riyā'*

What I am going to mention here to you is expected to work effectively for curing this disease of the heart, your as well as others'. It shall be also according to the rational dictates as well as is in conformity with the truths of revelation and traditions. It is as well verifiable on the basis of the teachings of the Qur'an and your and my reason. God Almighty, by means of His all embracing power and might, which governs the whole universe and is immanent in the realms of all possible beings, takes under His control the hearts of all His servants, as no one is outside the range of His power and the domain of His domination; and no one should occupy the hearts of human beings without His permission and His creative Will; not even the person himself has any control over his own heart without the permission of God Almighty. This fact has been revealed implicitly and explicitly in the Qur'an as well as the traditions of the members of the Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*) of the Prophet (S). Hence, God Almighty is the real owner of the hearts

and has sovereignty over them, and you, a helpless and weak creature of Him, you cannot claim to be the master of your heart, without His leave. His Will is predominant over ours and other creatures' resolution. Therefore, your hypocrisy and deceit, if it is meant for attracting the attention of His servants and for earning respect and popularity among them, know that it cannot bear any fruits, for this is totally beyond your powers, and it belongs to the jurisdiction of His power. He is the owner and the ruler of the hearts. He makes the hearts of the people a seat of love for whomsoever He likes. It is possible that your act produces a result just contrary to your wish. Pay attention to what we have seen and heard about the double-faced hypocrites, whose hearts were not pure; they were ultimately condemned to be disgraced; whatever they intended, they could not achieve, but something that they did not desire happened to them. The following tradition points to the same fact:

The narrator of the tradition reports from al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) that he asked the Imām about the words of the Almighty that 'whosoever is desirous of meeting his Creator, he should perform virtuous deeds and should not ascribe any partner to God in his worship,' seeking an explanation. Al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) said, 'A person who performs good deeds but not for the sake of

being blessed with the vision of his God, his acts are aimed at being considered as pious by the people, and he wishes that people should know about his deeds; such a person is counted among polytheists, who have ascribed partners to God.' The Imām (A.S.) continued: 'There is none in the world, who has concealed his good deeds and after passage of time God has not revealed them. And there is none in the world who could conceal his wicked deeds for ever, for they were exposed by God before he passed away from the world.'<sup>1</sup>

Hence, my dear friend! Try to be worthy in the eyes of God. Try to win the hearts of the creatures by first pleasing the real owner of the hearts, so that He comes to your rescue. Work for the sake of God. As a consequence God Almighty, besides showering His favours and excellences upon you in the Hereafter, will bestow His honours and favours on you in this world as well, and will befriend you. He will raise your status in the eyes of people and will exalt you in both the worlds. But the only thing that you have to do is to sincerely cultivate the love of God in your heart, untainted and unspoiled, with struggle and effort. Purify your inner self so that your actions also will be pure and untainted by the love of the world or hatred of fellow beings; your

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1. Ibid, Vol. II, Ḥadīth, No. 4, 293.

spirit should be pure and untainted and all the infirmities and corruptions of the soul should be eliminated. Of what advantage is the love or hatred of the weak creatures of God, and gaining favour and name among them? Even if it has some benefit, it is insignificant and short-lived. It is possible that this love of the world may lead you to hypocrisy, and God forbid, it may convert you into a polytheist or a hypocrite or an unbeliever. If you are not disgraced in this world, you will be surely disgraced in the other world, in Almighty's court of justice, in front of His truthful and worthy servants, in front of His esteemed prophets and those angels who are nearest to God, and you will have to hang down your head in shame, and you will be left in a state of utter helplessness. Can you imagine the disgrace of that day? God alone knows what sort of darkness is to follow that disgrace. It will be the day, as God Almighty has said:

... And the disbeliever will cry: 'Would that I were dust'. (78:40)

Then it will be of no good. You, poor fellow, for the sake of a trifling love, for the sake of a fame of no avail among the creatures of God, you did not care for the promised Divine favours and have failed to gain His good pleasure, and have incurred His indignation and wrath instead.

The deeds by means of which you could have gained Divine favours, could have secured a happy and blissful

life in eternity, and could have attained the highest station in the highest heaven; you have replaced it with the darkness of polytheism and hypocrisy, and have procured for yourself regret, shame and the severest chastisement, and have converted yourself into a *Sijjīnī* (an inhabitant of the lowest or dungeon of hell) instead. It occurs in the tradition in *al-Kāfī* that it has been reported from al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) that the Prophet (S) said: 'Indeed when the angel of God joyously takes to the higher heaven the good deeds of a man, as he carries the good deeds heavenward, God Almighty orders him to place those deeds in 'Sijjīn', since they were not performed for Him alone.<sup>1</sup> You and I cannot imagine what '*Sijjīn*' is, and which kind of demons are appointed there; and you cannot contemplate the horrors inflicted upon the sinners there. And once we have been made to face it, it will not be possible for us to get rid of it, as all the means of repentance shall be cut off. Wake up my friend! And cast away your negligence and carelessness, and weigh your actions in the balance of your reason, before they are weighed and measured in the other world. And cleanse the mirror of your heart of the rust of polytheism, hypocrisy, and two-facedness. Do not allow the rust of impurity of polytheism and infidelity to gather in such a way that it cannot be cleansed with the fire of the other world. Do

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1. Ibid, Vol. II, Ḥadīth, No. 7, 295.

not allow the light of your nature to be turned into the gloom of apostasy. Do not be a traitor to yourself and do not destroy what God has entrusted to you, calling it:

...the nature (framed) of Allah in which He hath created man .... (30:30)

Therefore, burnish the mirror of the heart, so that the light of Divine magnificence may be reflected in it, and may make you forget this world and everything in it, and your heart is kindled with the fire of His love, so that all other attachments and associations may be dissolved in such a manner that you do not spurn a single moment for the sake of the worldly things; and you derive such a pleasure from His remembrance that all the animal pleasures may appear to you a gimmick. If you cannot attain this station, even then do not give up the gifts of God that are promised to be given in the next world and are mentioned in the Qur'an and the traditions of the Ma'sūmīn (A.S.), for the sake of gaining the short-lived favour of the weak creatures of God. Do not deprive yourself of all the Divine favours and do not make a bargain of the eternal felicity with the everlasting distress.

Know that the real King of kings, the true Giver of real bounties, has bestowed upon us all these favours. He created all these things for us and prepared them for us even before we came into this world. He made our food a balanced diet and acceptable to our weak stomach-a patron and servant who serves us with an instinctive

and natural love. He created for us suitable climes and weathers and has bestowed upon us all other seen and unseen favours here and in the other world, and after piling up all these gifts for us, He asks us to keep our hearts pure for His occupation, so that we ourselves may be benefited from His presence. In spite of all these warnings and cautions we still do not obey Him and do not pay heed to His words and do not act according to His wish. What an act of gross transgression. With whom are we trying to wage a war, the consequences of which we will have to face? Any slightest harm cannot be caused to His Kingdom, and we cannot exclude ourselves from His reign of power either. If we are acting like the polytheists we are causing harm to ourselves, because:

...Lo! Allah is independent of (all) creatures. (3:97)

He does not need our worship, our service or our obedience. Any disobedience, polytheism and two-facedness on our part will not cause any harm to His Empire, but as He is the Most Merciful of the merciful, His boundless mercy and compassion, and His perfect wisdom require of us the pursuance of the right path, and for this purpose He made clear the difference between good and evil, beautiful and ugly to us and warned us of the perils and hazards to be met on the road of human perfection and the path of true felicity. We are indebted to God Almighty for this great guidance

and we have to show, with all humility, great respect towards Him in our worships, our devotion and our supplications, whose importance we cannot comprehend unless we gain an other-worldly vision. As long as we sojourn in this narrow physical world, confined to the limits of the sequence of time and shackles of space, we cannot comprehend the infiniteness of the realm of His power, and we cannot even thank Him in our prayers and supplications for His guidance.

### *The Second Stage*

At this stage, though *riyā'* is of lesser intensity than it is at the first stage, but it is possible that if the hypocrite does not heed the warnings, and repeatedly behaves in the same way (the *riyā'* of action) it is likely to terminate in the *riyā'* of the former stage—the *riyā'* of faith. We have already mentioned in the exposition of the previous tradition that in the *ālam al-malakūt* (the celestial world) man may have a different form other than the human form. Those forms will be in accordance with the state of one's soul and its traits. If you possess good human qualities, in the other world those qualities will retain you in the human form, provided they are not deviated from the path of moderation. Good faculties will be considered as true merits only when the sensual self does not interfere with them, and the self does not play any role in their

formation. Our respected teacher and Shaykh Āyatullāh Shāhābādī used to say that the measure of the false and invalid spiritual practice and true religious spiritual struggle is as to what extent selfishness is involved in such practices, i.e. whether all spiritual effort is for God or for selfish motives. If the wayfarer on the heavenly journey treads a selfish path and his spiritual exercises are meant for acquiring powers for worldly ends, his efforts are rendered invalid, and his *sukūk* (progress on mystic path) will lead him to the calamity of the other world. The false claims of spirituality are usually made by such people. And if the wayfarer treads the right path, and is genuinely in search of God, his devotion is within the bounds of the *Sharī'ah*, and God will help him, as promised in the following verse of the Qur'an:

As for those who strive for Us, We surely  
guide them to Our paths .... (29:69)

Hence, his actions will lead him to felicity; egoism will be eliminated and self-conceit and pride will recede. This is quite clear that anyone who demonstrates his good deeds before people, his aim is a selfish aim, and he will be branded as a selfish, self-conceited, egoistic and egocentric person, and his godliness will be considered as nothing but false and pretentious, which will invalidate his good deeds. As the domain of your existence is replete with the feelings of self-love, the lust for wealth, power and fame, and the wish for ruling

over the creatures of God, your good deeds and your excellences cannot be adjudged as virtuous deeds, and your moral behaviour is far away from truly religious morality. The operating force in your realm is satanic and your inner state is not a human condition. When you will open your eyes in the other world, you will perceive yourself in an unhuman form, similar to one of those of the devils. For such selves, which are dens of the Satan, it is impossible to gain religious knowledge and learn the spirit of *tawḥīd*. Unless the realm of your inner self is converted into a human state and your heart is purged of impurities and unholiness, you cannot be benefited from spiritual exercises, as God Almighty states in a *ḥadīth qudsī*:

There is no clearer sign in the earth and in the heavens of the elegance of the Beloved than the heart of a true believer (*mu'min*).

The believer's heart is in the occupation of God, not at the disposal of the self. The heart of the believer is not self-willed, nor is it vagrant. It is said of it:

The heart of the true believer (*mu'min*) lies between two fingers of God, that He may turn it whatever way He pleases.

O you, the poor creature, who worships the self and the Devil and ignorance are the agencies operating in the realm of your heart, you yourself have prevented the hands of God from handling your heart. What sort of faith you are required to possess that your heart be the

object of Divine illumination, absolute rule of the Truth may prevail there? Make it a point that unless you change yourself, and as long as the bad habit of ostentatiousness and vanity dominates your deeds, you will be branded as an unbeliever and you will be grouped with the *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites), even though you imagine yourself to be a believer in God and as one who has resigned himself to the Will of God.

My friend! Wake up from the slumber of forgetfulness and carelessness, be aware, do not let sleep overtake your senses, and know that God Almighty has created you for His own sake, as stated in one *ḥadīth qudsī*:

O progeny of Adam, We have made everything for you and you for Our service.

He has made your heart His own habitation. You and your hearts are the abodes of Divine Honour. God Almighty is intolerant regarding His Dignity and Honour. Do not be careless in this regard, and do not justify any violation of the Divine principles; and be afraid of His retribution so that you may not be disgraced and made infamous in this world in such a way that despite all efforts you are not able to undo what may befall you. You are guilty of violation of Divine Honour in your heart that belongs to the celestial world, in front of the angels of God and His prophets. The moral excellences through which the saints of God (*awliyā Allah*) acquired resemblance to Him, are being surrendered by you to others than God, and you are

surrendering your heart, the seat of God, to His enemy, thus committing *shirk* (polytheism) in the heart of your hearts. Be afraid of God Almighty, Who besides bringing down your other-worldly image and degrading you in front of His angels and His prophets, will also expose and dishonour you in this world itself and you will be condemned to unmeasured indignity which shall be also irreparable, and irremediable, an infamy that cannot be redressed. God Almighty is *Sattār*, He conceals the sins, but He is jealous also. He is the Most Merciful of the merciful, but at the same time He is the severest of the punishers also. He Himself says that He covers up bad deeds as long as they do not cross certain limits. God forbid, lest the gravity of your deeds should arouse His anger and should it overcome His tolerance and willingness to conceal sins, as you have read in the *ḥadīth*.

Hence, come to your senses, seek refuge in God and turn back to Him, for God Almighty is the Compassionate and always seeks for an excuse to shower His mercy. If you ask for His forgiveness, He will readily forgive you, and will cover up your blemishes and past deeds, so that no one will be able to know about them, and He will make you a man of great distinctions, a paragon of virtues and an image of His Attributes. He will make your will consummate in the next world as His own Will is executed throughout the cosmos. It is narrated in a *ḥadīth* that when the people are placed in the Paradise, a message from the Almighty

will be given to them and its purport will be as follows: `From the One who is Eternal and Immortal to him who is also eternal and immortal: Whatever I desire to bring into existence I command it to be and it comes into being; from this hour it has been decreed that you also command whatever you desire to bring into existence and your wish would be obeyed.'

Therefore, do not be egocentric, and subordinate your will to the Will of God Almighty; He will then make you an instrument and manifestation of His Will. He will give you power in the realms under His control, and bestow upon you the capacity to create in the Hereafter. (Of course, this is not the same as *tafwīd*, which is a false notion, as proved elsewhere.)

Now, my friend, do as you please; either accept it or reject it. But know, that God Almighty is not in need of you or me or any other creature, and He has no need of our service and sincerity.

### *The Third Stage*

The *riyā'* of this kind is more common and manifest than those mentioned above. Because we ordinary human beings usually do not belong to the above-mentioned two states. For this reason, the Devil cannot get hold of us in the way he encroaches upon those who belong to the other states. But since the majority of the worshippers express their devotion to God through